

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Canada's Childcare Policy Choices through a
Children-Centred Lens

by

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Abstract

The state of childcare in Canada is an issue of children's rights that warrants critical examination. Grounded by a children-centred lens, this study reveals the ways in which systems of power in Canada exert their control over policy issues related to children through political discourse. Using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, integrated with Fairclough and Fairclough's Political Discourse Analysis, key moments in the history of childcare in Canada were explored between 1984 and 2017. The research question that guides the analysis explored change and continuity related to the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children embedded within the political discourse of three governing political parties in Canada: The Progressive Conservatives (1984-1993), the Liberals (1993-2006), the Conservatives (2006-2015), and the Liberals (2015-present). Analysis reveals the ways childhood and children are viewed and valued by these governing bodies of power, and how these views and values have influenced the development of childcare policies, which have, thus far, ignored children-centred considerations to childcare. The main conclusion from this research study is that the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, and the views and values related childcare, have changed significantly throughout history. What remains constant is how these constructions and values are influenced by adult-centric economic, social and political interests of the era. As such, policy decisions made in the "best interests of children" warrant scrutiny and demand a level of accountability, through a human rights framework, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). While Canada is a signatory to the UNCRC, thus committing the country to upholding children's rights, including that of childcare, its Federal governments, throughout a history that spans more than three decades, have never promoted children's rights in a meaningful way.

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Dedication

The journey toward a PhD is long and tumultuous, and I simply could not have done it without the love, support, and patience of my family. I dedicate my dissertation to my husband, Tony, and our daughter, Maggie. They have been my cheerleaders and an enduring source of encouragement. I would also like to acknowledge a very important role model in my life: my mother, Marlene. Throughout my life, my mom has taught me that anything is possible with hard work, patience, and a good dose of stubbornness.

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CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH STUDY OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of my research study is to examine the political discourse of childcare, including the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, to reveal how it has enacted, reproduced and legitimized the Federal government of Canada's childcare policy choices. For many scholars, childcare in Canada has been a central issue of study and advocacy for several decades. According to national and international critics, Canada's childcare system is fragmented, marked by jurisdictional division on such key issues as philosophy, curricula, governance, quality, accessibility, and financing (Friendly, 2008; Friendly & Prentice, 2012; OECD, 2003). The system of childcare in Canada was ranked last place—tied with Ireland—in an international review of twenty-five developed countries (UNICEF, 2008). More recent monitoring corroborates this assessment and suggests that Canada's approach to childcare policy is one which perpetuates systemic inequities that unduly impact many children (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 2011; Ferns & Friendly, 2014; Friendly & Prentice, 2012).

According to critical discourse theorists, systems of power exert their control over our social world through discourse (Bacchi, 1999; Fairclough, 2001; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012; Foucault, 1977; van Dijk, 1996). Through language and the discursive conventions of language, social constructions are embedded into the fabric of society, shaping our cultural values, beliefs, norms, and social practices (Fairclough, 1992, 2001, 2003). According to noted critical discourse analyst, Norman Fairclough (1992, 2001, 2003), the relationship between discourse and power is dialectical. That is to say, discourse is shaped by systems of power and their surrounding social structures, yet discourse influences power and social structures, in turn. In this way, critical discourse theorists recognize the capacity of continuity and change in the social world wherein

systems of power enact, reproduce and legitimize social constructions through discourse, alongside opposition to such power through counter-hegemonic discursive efforts. Extending from this, the purpose of critical discourse analysis, as both theory and methodology, is to explain and expose the relationship between discourse and power in order to emancipate society from its control. Using Fairclough's well-established Critical Discourse Analysis (1995, 2001, 2003) integrated with Fairclough and Fairclough's newly-established Political Discourse Analysis (2012), my research study reveals the dialectical relationship between how children are viewed and valued within political discourse, and how these views and values have influenced the development of Federal-level childcare policy choices in Canada over the past three decades. As such, I have exposed the ways in which systems of power in Canada exert their control, manufactured through discourse, over policy issues related to children.

1.2 Definition of Childcare

The term childcare can mean different things to different people, including informal babysitting arrangements, kinship care, nanny care, daycare, preschool, nursery school, early learning and child care, and early childhood education and care. References to *childcare* herein refer to the regulated care of a child, under the age of twelve, by someone other than the child's parent, guardian or relative. I refer to the informal and unregulated care of a child by someone other than the child's parent or guardian as *child-minding*. Within the Canadian context, the definition of childcare includes centre-based and home-based services for infants, pre-school children and school-aged youth. It is important to note that in Canada childcare services are: delivered across a scope of regulatory control (i.e., jurisdictional differences for quality and safety standards); financed through a variety of models (e.g., public, private, mixed); and administered through a range of governance approaches (e.g., voluntary-based boards, municipal governments, Provincial governments, school boards, private administration).

It is also important to distinguish childcare from children-centred childcare, an approach endorsed by international childcare policy experts that includes *rights-based entitlement, universal access, equitable provision, quality assurance, and democratic participation* (Hevey & Miller, 2012; Moss, 2012; OECD, 2006). These children-centred considerations also reflect the principles of high-quality early education and childcare as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A central principle of the UNCRC is the obligation of parents, guardians, society, and governments to create the conditions, through progressive social policies, wherein children can exercise their rights (Smith, 2007b). As signatory to the UNCRC since 1991, Canada has made a commitment to ensuring children's rights through progressive social policies, including that of childcare.

Some scholars have adopted the term *rights-based childcare* in referring to the UNCRC-defined principles of childcare (Kiersey, 2011; Kiersey and Hayes, 2010). I use the term *children-centred considerations of childcare* in order to distinguish my definition from the UNCRC-defined considerations of childcare. I make this distinction because I believe the term rights-based childcare may reduce the definition of childcare to a legal framework, narrowing the policy focus to entitlement-based provision and universal-based access, and ignoring, for example, children-centred considerations of quality such as social pedagogical models of curricula and democratic participation. Further, I believe the term rights-based childcare may be at risk of overly connecting children's rights to the UNCRC. In contrast, a broader view of children's rights—one that transcends the UNCRC—ensures a *socially-defended* argument for children's rights, including that of childcare. In this way, children are viewed as rights-bearers regardless of their country's status as signatory to the UNCRC and in historical times that pre-date the proclamation of the UNCRC. My use of the term children-centred childcare is meant to reflect both legally-defined and socially-defined considerations of children-centred childcare,

and a legally-defended and socially-defended view of children as rights-bearers. Thus, while children-centred considerations of childcare and the view of children as rights-bearers may, indeed, reflect the principles of the UNCRC, they are not solely defined or defended by them. I further discuss the articles of the UNCRC related to childcare in further detail in chapter three.

1.3 Methodologies

Employing the methodologies of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 2001, 2003) and Political Discourse Analysis (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012), I examined select sources of political discourse surrounding Federal-level children's policy choices, covering key moments in the history of childcare in Canada, including: 1) Bill C-144, the Canada Child Care Act proposed by the Progressive Conservative government in 1988; 2) the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Progressive Conservative government in 1991, and the subsequent monitoring of progress related to the Convention by the Liberal government (1993-2006) and the Conservative government (2006-2015); 3) the National Children's Agenda, established by the Liberal government in 1997; 4) the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, established by the Liberal government in 2003; 5) the Child Care Spaces Initiative and the Universal Child Care Benefit, established by the Conservative government in 2006; and 6) the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework established by the Liberal government in 2017. These data sources included the Government of Canada's childcare policy documents, including on-line materials; the Government of Canada's reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on its progress toward implementing the UNCRC, specifically related to its updates concerning childcare; and a selection of the Government of Canada's Speeches from the Throne and Budget Speeches.

In selecting samples of political discourse from these key moments in childcare policy history, I secured a distribution of policy choices from three governing Federal parties: Progressive Conservatives (1984-1993), Liberals (1993-2006; 2015-present), and Conservatives (2006-2015). Extending from this, I organized my analysis findings by four key periods, as follows:

Period 1: Progressive Conservative Federal government administration (1984-1993). The data sources for this period included: Government of Canada Budget Speech for February 10, 1988; Bill C-144, the Canada Child Care Act proposed by the Progressive Conservative government in 1988; and Canada's Speech from the Throne for April 3, 1989.

Period 2: Liberal Federal government administration (1993-2006). The data sources for this period included: the National Children's Agenda, established by the Liberal government in 1997; the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, established by the Liberal government in 2003; Canada's monitoring reports for the UNCRC released in 1994 and 2001; Canada's Speech from the Throne for September 23, 1997; Canada's Speech from the Throne for February 2, 2004; the Government of Canada's February 18, 1997 Budget Speech; and the Government of Canada's March 23, 2004 Budget Speech.

Period 3: Conservative Federal government administration (2006-2015): The data sources for this period included: the Child Care Spaces Initiative; the Universal Child Care Benefit; the monitoring report for the UNCRC released in 2009; Canada's Speech from the Throne for April 4, 2006; and the Government of Canada's Budget Speech for May 2, 2006.

Period 4: Liberal Federal government administration (2015-2017): The data sources for this period included: the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework released in 2017; Canada's Speech from the Throne for December 3, 2015; the Government of Canada's Budget Speech for March 22, 2016; and the Government of Canada's Budget Speech for March 22, 2017.

Examining this vast representation of political discourse afforded me the opportunity to investigate the views and values related to the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children of three differing political parties, starting from the point in history when the proclamation of the UNCRC firmly entrenched the children's rights movement in 1989. I further describe these data sources and the methodologies of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis in chapter five.

1.3.1 Research Question

The research question that guided my analysis is: *How have the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, embedded within political discourse, established, defended and legitimized Federal-level childcare policy choices in Canada?* In answering this question, I reveal how the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children are viewed and valued by those in positions of power, and how these views and values have influenced the development of Federal-level childcare policies. While one can approach the study of childcare policy through a variety of well-established theoretical perspectives and analytical approaches (e.g., citizenship regime theory, feminist political economy theory, regime theory, discourse theory), which I review in chapter two, I examined childcare policy through a children-centred lens. In so doing, my study provides an important window through which to extend the knowledge base related to childcare and explore the landscape of children's policy within the social world.

1.4. The State of Childcare in Canada

Aptly captured in UNICEF's Innocenti Report Card 8, *The Child Care Transition*, there has been a great change in the way children are being raised in today's developed countries. With two thirds of women returning to employment within a year of having children, the majority of children now spend a significant portion of their early childhoods in childcare settings (UNICEF, 2008). Based on the global recognition of early childhood development as a key social determinant of health, playing a critical role in shaping the physical, cognitive, and social development of children throughout the life course (Ferguson, 2010; Friendly, 2009; McCain, Mustard & McCuaig, 2011), many countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) value childcare as an important public investment (OECD, 2012). Indeed, a growing number of developed countries have responded to the global childcare transition with nationally-coordinated policies that support universal, accessible and high-quality childcare programs; to date, Canada's Federal-level policy responses to the childcare transition have not paralleled this international trend (OECD, 2012; UNICEF, 2008). Importantly, however, the recent release of the *Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework* (2017) by Canada's current Liberal administration indicates the Federal government's interest in childcare policy, though its resulting implementation details, including nationally-coordinated standards of quality, accessibility, and universality of the new framework remain to be seen at time of this writing.

A complicating factor in Canada's system of childcare relates to federalism (Friendly & Prentice, 2012; Mahon, 2008; Prentice, 2000). Under Canada's constitution, childcare falls under Provincial/Territorial responsibility and Provinces and Territories have taken markedly different policy approaches in developing their respective models of childcare. In Canada each of its fourteen jurisdictions—ten Provinces, three Territories, and the Federal government—support

licensed childcare programs that, together, comprise Canada's childcare system (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 2004). This approach to childcare has been criticized for failing to ensure children's equitable access to quality-assured childcare space (Ferns & Friendly, 2014; Friendly & Prentice, 2012). While important gains in childcare have been made by Provinces and Territories (e.g., Quebec, Manitoba), some scholars state that the development of a universally-accessible, high-quality childcare system is much too costly for Provinces and Territories to undertake without Federal cost-sharing and partnership (Ferns & Friendly, 2014; Findlay, 2013; Friendly & Prentice, 2012).

While Canada's constitutional division of powers is often cited as the reason its Federal government has not taken steps toward a nationally-coordinated childcare system, some policy experts believe Canada's constitution does, indeed, provide space for a Federal role (Cameron, 2014; Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012; Friendly & Prentice, 2009; Howe & Covell, 2007; Mahon, 2000), including that of spending power whereby conditions of funding are attached to Federal social transfers. According to Cameron (2014), the primary purpose of Federal social transfers is to expand the social citizenship rights of members of Canadian society. As such, she suggests, the rights afforded to children under Canada's commitment to the UNCRC, including that of childcare, fit well within the scope of Federal responsibility. Cameron (2014) and others argue that the Federal government of Canada has the constitutional authority to lead the establishment of a childcare system in Canada, in partnership with Provinces and Territories, should it choose to do so (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012; Friendly & Prentice, 2009). These scholars identify cases of Federal leadership in matters of Provincial/Territorial jurisdiction that have been established in the past or that currently exist (e.g., Canada Assistance Plan, Old Age Pension) and cite Canada's current healthcare system as an example of precedent (Cameron, 2014; Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012;

Friendly & Prentice, 2009). I present a review of federalism-based studies of Canada's childcare policy history in chapter two.

1.4.1 The Issue of Children's Equity in Childcare

Data suggests there are regulated childcare spaces for 20% of young children in Canada, though more than 70% of mothers are in the paid labour force (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 2011, p. 1). Further, 62% of children under age six who received care while their parents work or study received such care in unregulated settings (OECD, 2006, p. 299). Moreover, studies have shown that the quality of care in unregulated childcare settings is generally poorer compared to that of regulated childcare (McCain, Mustard & McCuaig, 2011; UNICEF, 2008). And, because poor-quality childcare has been linked to negative outcomes for children, especially those living in poverty (McCain et al., 2011; UNICEF, 2008), it could be argued that the risks related to the inaccessibility of regulated childcare are especially pernicious for a great number of economically-disadvantaged Canadian children.

Research studies have demonstrated that the caliber of childcare that children receive can impact their physical, social and emotional well-being and their ability to learn and succeed in school: children who benefit from stimulating and nurturing childcare have greater social skills and language ability compared to children who do not receive such quality in childcare (Davis & Powell, 2003; UNICEF, 2008; Vandebroek, 2010). International researchers have argued that impoverished families struggle the most to secure high-quality childcare for their children, suggesting that the advantages of high-quality childcare are more likely to benefit children of affluent families while the harmful effects of poor-quality childcare are more likely to fall to those from economically-disadvantaged homes (Meyers, Rosenbaum, Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2003; UNICEF, 2008; Vandebroek, 2010).

A Canadian study suggests early childhood disadvantage is a reality for many of Canada's children (Friendly, 2000; Prentice, 2007), perpetuating a cycle of inequity and entrenching a form of oppression called *generational discrimination* (Ravnbøl, 2009, p. 13): the discrimination against parents (e.g., systemic barriers that preclude them from securing high-quality childcare for their child) which causes further discrimination against their child (e.g., being denied the benefits of high-quality childcare and having to attend unregulated and poor-quality childcare). Some childhood theorists suggest this generational discrimination results from systemic *adulthood*¹ (Honig, 2009, p. 64; LeFrançois, 2013), the oppression against children whereby the legislations and policies of our social world fail to recognize and uphold children's rights. In light of this evidence, many experts suggest a universally-accessible, high-quality childcare system has the potential to be a great equalizer in today's developed countries, helping to close the gap in equity within a generation (OECD, 2003; UNICEF, 2008; World Health Organization, 2008). I discuss childcare policy as a children's equity issue in further detail in chapter three.

1.5 Theoretical Framework of Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis and its objective to reveal the relationship between discourse and policy is an important component of, and a growing trend in, social sciences research (Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012; Luke, 2002). Critical discourse analysis² is more than a research methodology, it is a political and epistemic stance based on the tenets of critical social theory, a key premise of which concerns power relations and power struggles (Luke, 2002). Fairclough (1995, 2001, 2003) posits that in today's liberal societies those in

¹ Adulthood refers to a concept, coined by scholars of the new studies of childhood, to describe systemic discrimination toward children.

² Herein, references to critical discourse analysis (not capitalized) refer to the category of critical approaches to discourse analysis.

positions of power exert their influence over society not through coercion but through control-by-consent. Thus, he argues, it is through discourse—language and the taken-for-granted practices and conventions of language—that societal consent is manufactured by those in positions of power (Fairclough, 1992). While there are many different approaches to critical discourse analysis, I employed Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis³ (1992, 2001, 2003) because of its well-established theoretical underpinnings, and integrated Fairclough and Fairclough’s lesser-established Political Discourse Analysis (2012) because of the added value it afforded me in exploring policy arguments, claims, goals and values, as represented by those in positions of power.

1.5.1 Critical Realist Research Paradigm

My research paradigm reflects the epistemology and ontology of critical realism (Papa, 2009; Tikly, 2015), a philosophy that integrates well with Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (2001, 2003) and the theoretical perspective of the new sociology of childhood, which I describe in the next section. Critical realists suggest this research paradigm balances the poststructuralist influence of social constructionism with the empiricist perspective of the natural sciences (Papa, 2009; Tikly, 2015). By integrating critical realism with Critical Discourse Analysis, the non-material aspects of the social world that are constructed through discourse are distinguished from the material aspects that are found within the domain of the natural world. Such a distinction reflects the ontological view that not all aspects of the social world can be reduced to social constructions alone. For example, the oppression of children in our social world may best be explained by the interplay of the (non-material) power imbalances embedded within discourse and the (material) biological dependence of children on adults.

³ Herein, references to Critical Discourse Analysis (capitalized) refer to Fairclough’s specific approach to critical discourse analysis.

Further, the epistemic stance of critical realism reflects the political objectives of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis, namely that the analyst reveals how systems of power exert their control through the critical analysis of discourse, predicated on her expert knowledge of the social issue. I will further describe the epistemology and ontology of critical realism in chapter four.

1.5.2 Children-Centred Lens

According to Fairclough (2001) and Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis, respectively, should be integrated with other theoretical perspectives in order to enrich the analysis of an issue. The techniques of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis are not simply descriptive, they are also political in nature, seeking to reveal injustices and oppressions that can only be understood through a critical understanding of the issue under study. Incorporating a children-centred lens with Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis allowed me to reveal the ways in which Canada's Federal-level childcare policies have largely ignored children's needs, children's equity, and children's rights. Thus, while my theoretical and methodological frameworks were guided by Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1995, 2001, 2003) and Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) Political Discourse Analysis, a children-centred lens provided an important foundation to my theoretical framework.

My research study is grounded by the emerging body of scholarly work called *the new studies of childhood*, informed by a theoretical perspective called *the new sociology of childhood* (Mayall, 2013). The new sociology of childhood is referred to as *childhood theory*⁴ by some leading scholars in this emerging area (e.g., Childwatch International Research Network) and it

⁴ Herein, the term childhood theory refers to the theoretical perspective of the new sociology of childhood.

is a term I've adopted herein to describe this theoretical perspective. The integration of childhood theory with Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis is considered an effective approach to maximizing the explanatory power of discourse theory. According to some childhood theorists, discourse analysis is the cornerstone to the new studies of childhood (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009). Moreover, childhood theory, and the children-centred lens to analysis derived from it, is commensurable with my research paradigm of critical realism.

According to some childhood theorists, it is important to use a *children-centred lens*⁵ in research studies regarding children and children's policy issues (Alderson, 2013; James & James, 2004; Lange & Mierendorff, 2009; Mayall, 2013). Failure to do so, they suggest, might put researchers at risk of promoting policy recommendations that may work against children's best interests, despite good intentions. Further, they argue, in studies of the social condition of childhood, children should be extricated, conceptually, from parents, family and professionals in order to ensure children their unique and rightful place in the social order (Alderson, 2013; James & James, 2004; Lange & Mierendorff, 2009; Mayall, 2001; Mayall, 2013).

The theoretical body of work related to the new studies of childhood is closely connected to the UNCRC, the children's rights movement, and human rights theory (Quennerstedt, 2016; Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2014; Woodrow & Press, 2007). Through a children-centred lens, childhood is viewed and valued through a human rights construction in which children are valued as citizens, fully human, with a voice that must be listened to and rights that must be upheld through progressive social policy and a caring society (Ife as cited in Hick, 2005). Within this perspective, childcare is valued as a non-stigmatized right, that which belongs to every child, irrespective of family type, parental employment status and income level (OECD, 2006, 2012).

⁵ Herein, references to a children-centred lens refers to the analytical application of childhood theory.

Human rights theory (Bobbio, 1996) shares many of the same principles of childhood theory, including the view that children are legitimate holders of human rights. However, it has been argued that childhood theory places greater emphasis on the cultural, economic, political, and historical contexts within which children's rights are actualized—an approach that, according to childhood theorists, deepens the theoretical exploration of children's social issues (Quennerstedt, 2016; Quennerstedt & Quennerstedt, 2014; Woodrow & Press, 2007). Thus, while both human rights theory and childhood theory underpin the construction of children's rights, and, indeed, share the rights-based objective of social justice for children, I adopted childhood theory in my study because it more clearly positions children's rights as contextually-situated. In so doing, I have extended the theoretical understanding of children's rights toward a critical sociological analysis of the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children that surround such rights, including that of childcare. I further ground my decision to integrate childhood theory with Critical Discourse Analysis in chapter three.

1.6 Researcher's Political Stance, Social Location, and Use of Reflexivity

The endeavour of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis is political in nature (Fairclough, 1992, 2001, 2003; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). That is to say, the analyst's main objective is to explain and expose the relationship between discourse and power in order to emancipate society from its control. Indeed, my decision to employ such an overtly political methodology stems from my own motivation to reveal the ways in which systems of power in Canada have failed to uphold children's rights. Having worked as a child policy analyst and researcher, employed by a Provincial-level government within Canada for fifteen years, my professional experience has influenced my political stance. As an instrument of political discourse, a government-employed policy analyst is tasked with 'holding the pen' in matters of creating strategy documents, speeches, and accountability reports related to policy

choices. In my experience, this proved to be a challenging position at times when my moral ethics contrasted with my employer's demands. And yet, I recognize that those years of confliction afforded me an insider's viewpoint into the inner-workings of government and the political processes involved in creating political discourse. Indeed, as I conducted my analysis, I could imagine myself at the writer's table of political staffers, debating how best to craft a sentence or two that would promote the government's achievements while admitting the need for improvement—striking that perfect balance of strength and humility. I have little doubt my professional history as a political writer provided me with an advantaged behind-the-scenes position from which to conduct my analysis.

There is, of course, an inherent limitation in children-centred research in that such research is conducted by an adult researcher who sees the world through her adult-centric perspectives, values, and biases. As an older adult, my memories of childhood and living as a child in a social world largely determined by adults are faint. More so, my experience as a young girl growing up in rural Manitoba during the 1970s, raised by a single-earner father and a stay-at-home mother, are far removed from the experiences of children living in today's world. I do, however, know first-hand the obstacles of work-family balance that face today's working parents. As the mother of a now-teenaged daughter, I was both primary caregiver and sole breadwinner of a single-parent/only-child family. And, without affordable childcare, there is no question I would have been forced to leave my job and live off of social assistance. Despite my university education and secure employment, raising a young daughter as a single mother without the affordable access to childcare would have rendered me a 'welfare mom', a position in society stripped of power and tainted by stigma. What would this future have held for me and my daughter? Admittedly, this is a question I revisit every time I present an argument in favour

of publicly-supported childcare. And, while it is an experience that may add value to my role as a researcher of childcare policy, it remains the experience of an adult, not a child.

To this end, the use of reflexivity is a recognized method to help address the inherent limitation of children-centred research (Alderson, 2013; Bloor, 2011; Elwick, Bradley & Sumsion, 2014; Lange & Mierendorff, 2009). Scholars suggest reflexivity adds credibility to knowledge created through qualitative research (Ahmed Dunya, Lewando, & Blackburn, 2011; Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2006; D’Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007). Callaway (1992), an anthropologist, defines reflexivity as “opening the way to a more radical consciousness of self in facing the political dimensions of fieldwork and constructing knowledge” (p.33). In recognizing the factors of self, including nationality, race, ethnicity, class, and age, reflexivity becomes a continuing mode of self-analysis and political awareness (Callaway, 1992). It is also argued that the use of reflexivity in qualitative research goes beyond that of a reliability and validity tool. Rather, reflexivity provides an ethical consideration in the creation of knowledge. Described by Hertz (1997), “the outcome of reflexive social science is reflexive knowledge: statements that provide insight on the workings of the social world and insight on how that knowledge came into existence” (p. viii). Further, reflexivity, as defined by Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) is the process of critically reflecting on the self as researcher and the “conscious experiencing of the self as both inquirer and respondent, as teacher and learner” (p. 124). According to these scholars, “reflexivity sheds light on all areas of the research process....[and] keeps the researcher honest to her identified values and perspectives and philosophical paradigms by demanding constant self-reflection, self-critique and self-discovery” (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 124).

To conduct my discourse analysis study through a children-centred lens, I employed a process of reflexive journaling whereby I continuously reflected on my critical analysis of childhood, detailed in chapter three, which articulated the historical constructions of childhood,

the collective identities of children, and the ways in which society's values and objectives may subjugate children, particularly as they relate to policy choices in childcare. Included in this historical account is an examination of the origins of childcare, Canada's childcare policy choices, Canada's commitment to the UNCRC, and the ways in which Canada's childcare political discourse has constructed childhood and the collective identities of children. This history provided me with a comprehensive historical, political, economic, and social context, wherein I could better locate my position as an adult, a social role through which I am afforded power over children in numerous arenas in the roles of mother, parental user of childcare, child policy analyst, childcare researcher, and voter in civic, provincial and federal elections.

Guided by the practice of reflexive journaling, I logged my personal reactions to the political discourse I analyzed throughout my study. For example, in my review of the political discourse of Period One, I recognized that my adult-self was angered by policy statements related to the need to create childcare for *those* women who *choose* to work. Notwithstanding the argument over what constitutes the definition of choice in this statement, as a woman who *required* childcare because of her *need* to work, this government discourse made me feel 'othered', defined as an undesirable social problem for which intervention was deemed necessary. In contrast, as I reflected in my journal entry notes, the system of healthcare is not simply for *those* who fall ill. Rather, there is a socially-accepted and non-stigmatizing assumption that all people will one day require healthcare services and, as Canadians, the universal right to healthcare—when we need it—is a source of pride and one of our most sacred entitlements. Extending from this, I could imagine how it would feel to be 'othered' as one of *those* children for whom childcare is deemed necessary because of the societal and economic costs related to intergenerational poverty. In applying my own experience as a single mother for whom childcare would have been made available because of the inherent risks related to my

social group status, I could see how childcare policy, when targeted as a government program for ‘othered’ children, stigmatizes them and diminishes their sense of self and pride as rights-holders. Using this process of continuous reflexivity throughout my analysis, I was reminded to take the perspective of children when imagining how the discourse surrounding childcare policy might impact their sense of identity, dignity and agency.

1.7 Conclusion

The state of childcare in Canada is an issue of social justice and a matter of children’s rights that warrants critical examination. Grounded by a children-centred lens, informed by the theoretical framework of the new sociology of childhood, my study reveals the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children that are embedded within the political discourse surrounding childcare policy in an effort to reveal the ways in which systems of power in Canada exert control-by-consent over policy issues related to children. As such, my research study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between discourse and power, specifically the ways in which such power impacts children.

Applying a children-centred lens to discourse analysis research is an emerging field, key of which is to reveal the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, shaped by political, economic, and social contexts throughout history. Integrating this historical understanding of childhood and the collective identities of children strengthens my use of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis, which is best built upon a strong understanding of the social group under study. And, while there will always exist inherent researcher bias in the interpretation of qualitative research data, my use of reflexivity is an acceptable approach to mitigate interpretive bias—though I recognize such bias can never truly be removed.

CHAPTER TWO: CHILDCARE POLICY LANDSCAPE

2.1 Introduction

The following section provides a detailed account of Canada's childcare policy history, followed by an empirical review of global childcare policy literature and a critical exploration of Canada's Federal-level childcare policy choices, as examined through a variety of theoretical perspectives. This review locates my research study within the existing knowledge base and grounds my decision to employ the theoretical and methodological frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis, integrated with a children-centred lens, in my research study.

2.2 The History of Canada's Childcare System

The history of childcare in Canada goes back nearly 200 years, beginning with the early establishment of infant schools in Canada in 1828 and the crèche movement in 1908 (Prentice, 2001; Prochner, 2000). These early programs were directed toward poor children, immigrant children, and those of working, single and widowed mothers in order to “decrease crime, ignorance, disease, and political instability through early intervention” (Prochner, 2000, p.14). However, it was the era of World War II that brought childcare policy to the full attention of the general public, both in Canada and in other Western countries. Wartime nurseries provided childcare for all types of families, not just for those that were poor or headed by single mothers. Administered by the Women's Division of the National Selective Service in the Ministry of Labour, Canada's wartime women's labour recruitment initiative ushered in the country's first national childcare program in 1942 (Prentice, 2001; Prochner, 2000). It was to last thirty-six months (Friendly & Prentice, 2009, p. 73).

Following World War II, further attempts were made to establish a national childcare strategy for Canada. In 1967 the Royal Commission on the Status of Women released a report calling for a national childcare program, and, while this report received much political attention, its call for childcare was not addressed by the Liberal Federal government of that time (Friendly & Prentice, 2009). The Liberal government did, however, adopt the report's recommendation to establish the Child Care Expense Deduction in 1972, choosing a demand-side funding approach to childcare (i.e., funding is provided to the service-user in order to support the purchase of said service) over that of a supply-side model (i.e., funding is provided to the service provider to support the growth and enhancement of said service). Soon after, in 1984, the Liberal Federal government established a task force to further examine the issue of childcare. Appointing Katie Cooke, the first president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, as its chair, the Report of the Task Force on Child Care was released in 1986 to the newly-elected Progressive Conservative government. This report made a number of recommendations regarding childcare, including the call for both Federal and Provincial/Territorial governments to work together to support a national system of quality childcare (Scherer, 2001).

In response to this recommendation, the Progressive Conservative government promptly commissioned another study on childcare by an all-party Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care (Scherer, 2001). This new Progressive Conservative-commissioned report, *Sharing the Responsibility* (1988), informed the development of Bill C-144, the Canada Child Care Act (1988), however it, too, was interrupted by a Federal election. Following the re-election of the Progressive Conservative party, the Canada Child Care Act died on the order table in the Senate with no further attempts to revive it under the Progressive Conservative Federal government administration (Scherer, 2001).

A decade later, under the new administration of the Liberal government, political interest in childcare was re-ignited through the establishment of Federal/Provincial/Territorial agreements under the National Children's Agenda, a cost-sharing agreement that would channel \$2.2 billion of Federal funding to Provinces/Territories over five years to support programs for young children and their families (Findlay, 2015). Childcare was one of four areas of investment, along with supporting healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; parenting and family supports; and community supports. Soon following the launch of the National Children's Agenda, childcare received further Federal government interest. The Liberal Federal government established the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (2003), which directed \$1.05 billion in Federal funding for childcare to Provinces/Territories over five years (Findlay, 2015). By 2005, bilateral agreements were in place between all Provinces/Territories and the Federal government through which \$5 billion of Federal funding, over five years, would go toward developing a national childcare system (Cameron, 2014; Findlay, 2015). At last, it looked like Canada would have a national childcare system built on Federal-Provincial-Territorial partnership and the commitment to quality, universality and accessibility. This iteration of Federal-level childcare policy, however, would also be short-lived, interrupted by another Federal election.

When the new Conservative Federal government came to power in 2006, its first act of power was to terminate the Liberal-era bilateral agreements among the Provinces/Territories and the Federal government (McKenzie, 2014). In so doing, Canada's Conservative government replaced the Liberal's national childcare plan with the Choice in Child Care Allowance, later renamed the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), and the short-lived Child Care Spaces Initiative (CCSI) (Beach, Friendly, Ferns, Prabhu & Forer, 2009). The UCCB would represent Canada's Federal-level policy choice for childcare over the next ten years. The CCSI, a fund of

\$250 million per year for five years, intended to provide financial incentives to businesses and non-profits in order to create 25,000 new childcare spaces, saw little uptake and was soon rolled into the Canada Social Transfer (CST) (Findlay, 2015).

Most recently, Canada's Liberal government, elected in October 2015, released its plan for childcare in Canada through the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (2017), which I include as a key data source in my study.

2.3 Canada's History of Child Benefits and Direct Funding to Parents

It is important to position this history of childcare within the broader context of children's policy. To this end, an examination of child benefit programs, including direct funding to parents, is imperative. The Federal government has a long, albeit, complicated, history of providing direct financial support related to child-rearing to parents and caregivers. According to one economic analyst, cash payments on behalf of children have "historically pursued two fundamental and related purposes: poverty reduction and parental recognition" (Battle, 2008, p. 4). The first benefit, the Children's Tax Exemption, established in 1918 by the Federal Unionist Party, a coalition government of Conservatives and Liberals, reflected regressive targeting (i.e., benefits increased for the wealthiest families). Following this came the Universal Family Allowance, established in 1945 by the Federal Liberal government, which reflected a funding approach of untargeted universality. Enhancements made to this family allowance benefit in the following years were indexed to the cost of living, which shifted the funding formula of this benefit toward progressive universality.

Over the next decades, further progressive targeted approaches combined several benefits: the non-refundable Child Tax Credit replaced the Children's Tax Exemption from 1918; and the Child Tax Benefit and the Working Income Supplement for low income families replaced the Universal Family Allowance, the refundable Child Tax Credit (established in 1978),

and the non-refundable Child Tax Credit. In 1998 an integrated child benefit was introduced by the Federal Liberal government with the goal to reduce poverty: The Canada Child Tax Benefit and the National Child Benefit Supplement (which replaced the Child Tax Benefit and the Working Income Supplement from 1993). However, a shift away from progressive targeting came in 2006 when the newly-elected Conservative government introduced the UCCB (which replaced the Canada Child Tax Benefit's young child supplement) and resurrected the non-refundable child tax credit from the 1980s. These changes have been described by one analyst (Battle, 2008) as “undoing decades of progress—by Conservative and Liberal governments alike—towards a single, progressive and fair program, the Canada Child Tax Benefit” (2008, p. 2). In 2015, the newly-elected Liberal government terminated the UCCB and established the Canada Child Benefit, which I describe in section 2.3.3.

2.3.1 The Child Care Expense Deduction

The Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) was introduced by the Federal Liberal government in 1972 through a provision in the Income Tax Act. Representing Federal spending of \$700 million per year, its objective was to recognize and offset childcare costs incurred by parents in the course of earning income, and in so doing, it recognized many types of non-parental childcare expense, including regulated and non-regulated childcare, as well as programs such as summer day camps. Since it was first established over forty years ago, this tax deduction was increased several times (Battle, 2008). A defining feature of the CCED is that it allows the lower-earning spouse in coupled families to claim portions of childcare costs as a deduction from taxable income. Under the Federal Conservative government (2006-2015) the maximum deduction was \$7,000 per child under seven years old; \$4,000 per child between seven and sixteen years old; and \$10,000 for a child who has a disability; these rates were then increased by \$1000 in 2015, rates that remain under the current Liberal Federal government at time of writing.

There has been little research on the CCED, though two studies (Fraser as cited in Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2014) indicate it has benefited families of higher income over others; thus reflecting regressive targeting. One such analyst describes the flaw inherent in the CCED as “the more you have, the more you get” (Fraser as cited in Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2014, p. 1).

2.3.2 The Universal Child Care Benefit

When the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) was first established in 2006, parents were provided directly with a child benefit of \$100 a month or \$1,200 a year for each child under the age of six (despite the fact that children who require childcare because their parents work or attend school/training outside the home require such care until age twelve). In 2015, the UCCB increased by \$60 a month (\$160 per month for every child under age six), and expanded to include older children by providing \$60 per month for every child up to the age of seventeen (despite the fact that children over the age of twelve do not require childcare). The UCCB was taxable in the hands of the lower-income parent in the case of coupled families, and the sole parent in the case of single-parent families. Several economic analysts argue that this funding formula was unfair: single-earner coupled families ended up with more in-pocket benefit compared to one-earner single parent families (Battle, 2008; Battle, Torjman & Mendelson, 2006).

Alongside the introduction of the UCCB, other children-related policies were enacted during the Conservative government era, including the Children’s Fitness Tax Credit (established in 2007), the Children’s Arts Tax Credit (established in 2011), and income splitting through the Family Tax Cut (established in 2014). According to Battle, Torjman and Mendelson (2012) income splitting for two-parent families with children under the age of 18 (whereby the higher earner could transfer up to \$50,000 to the lower earner in order to reduce one’s payable income

tax) was a regressive measure that favoured two-parent families and ignored the needs of single-parent families, especially those living with low income. Moreover, the financial benefits from the children's tax credit programs benefited affluent families over those with low income (Battle, Torjman & Mendelson, 2012)

2.3.3 The Canada Child Benefit

With the election of Justin Trudeau's Liberal government in October 2015 came the promise to redress the above-noted formula flaws of the UCCB through the new Canada Child Benefit (CCB). Effective July 2016, the CCB provides direct funding support to families with children based on a formula that favours low income families, single-earner families, and multiple-children families. The non-taxable benefit promises to lift children out of poverty by providing up to \$6,400 per child under age six (with low income families receiving the most benefit), and \$5,400 per child between the ages of six to seventeen. An additional \$2,730 is also provided for each child with a disability. With the establishment of the new CCB, other programs have been eliminated, including the UCCB, the Canada Child Tax Benefit, the National Child Benefit, and the Children's Fitness Tax Credit and Children's Arts Tax Credit. The CCB signals the Liberal government's return to a single, progressive program such as the previous Canada Child Tax Benefit. And, while such a return does, indeed, benefit those families who are in the greatest need, it seemingly replaced political interest in childcare with that of child poverty reduction.

2.3.4 Maternity and Parental Leave

As stated earlier, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1967) released a report calling for a national childcare program, and, while this report received much political attention, its call for childcare was not addressed by the Liberal Federal government of that time (Friendly & Prentice, 2009). Interestingly, however, the Liberals did choose to adopt two other

recommended child and family policies, that of the Child Care Expense Deduction in 1972, and the first paid maternity leave payment program in 1971 (Friendly & Prentice, 2009, p. 76). Administered and financed under the Federal Unemployment Insurance program, eligible new mothers were provided with up to fifteen weeks of maternity leave, at the same rate of unemployment coverage. While enhancements have been made to this program since it was first introduced (e.g., in 1989 parental leave was added, and in 2001 this parental leave was extended to thirty-five weeks), it continues to be administered as an employment program through the Federal government, with stringent eligibility criteria (i.e., accumulation of at least 600 hours of insurable employment within the last fifty-two months) and limited financial benefit for parents (i.e., 55% of the recipient's wages). The maternity leave portion of Canada's leave policy is only payable to biological mothers, while parental benefits for up to thirty-five weeks of leave are payable to biological, adoptive or legally recognized parents. The newly-elected Liberal government (2015-present) committed to increasing the parental leave duration—without additional financial benefit—by an extra twenty-six weeks, which will extend parental leave, in combination with maternity leave, to eighteen months.

2.4 The Evolution of Canada's Federal Social Transfers

Canada's constitutional division of powers was often cited by the Federal Conservative government (2006-2015) as the reason behind its demand-side funding approach to childcare (Findlay, 2015). Reflecting what it called a commitment to "open federalism" (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012, p. 30), the Federal Conservative government denounced the Federal/Provincial/Territorial partnership and cost-sharing model of childcare that had been initiated in 2005 by the previous Liberal administration, opting, instead, to provide direct financial support to parents to help offset the cost of their preferred childcare option. Critics suggest this stance against a Federal/Provincial/Territorial partnership and cost-sharing model for

childcare was based on an ideological commitment to “absentee federalism” (Coyne as cited in Findlay, 2015, p. 11), one marked by a refusal to engage with Provinces and Territories. Indeed, this Conservative government era represented a unique approach to federalism, as evident by Canada’s long history of Federal/Provincial/Territorial partnership and Federal social transfers (Cameron, 2014; Mahon & Brennan, 2012).

According to Cameron, the primary purpose of Federal social transfers is to expand the social citizenship rights of members of Canadian society (Cameron, 2014). To this end, she argues, mechanisms must be established to facilitate public engagement and accountability, including public education about the shared Federal and Provincial responsibility for social rights and the role of Federal social transfers (Cameron, 2014). Different accountability regimes have been used to administer Federal social transfers throughout Canada’s history: the administrative regime, in which enforcement is largely located with Federal officials; the political regime, in which enforcement is located with the political executive; and a third regime embodied by the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) (Cameron, 2014). Cameron suggests that the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) is an exemplary example of the administrative regime, while the Canada Health Act is reflective of the political regime. Next, I introduce examples of Federal social transfer accountability to illustrate how these governing mechanisms have been used to both facilitate and stymie the growth of Canada’s social welfare system, including that of childcare.

2.4.1 Canada Assistance Plan

Established in 1966 by the Federal Liberal government, many economic and policy analysts view the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) as a progressive funding formula that enabled the country to establish a strong social welfare system over the following three decades, until it was terminated by the Federal Liberal government in 1995 (Cameron, 2014; Canadian

Association of Social Workers, 2012). In the era of CAP, childcare also saw considerable growth across Canada, including an increase in the number of licensed spaces, the establishment of early educator training programs and quality standards, and successful subsidy programs for low-income parents (Friendly & Prentice, 2009). This progressive social welfare era came to an end when CAP's uncapped 50-50 cost-sharing model was replaced in 1995 with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), a funding model put in place by the Federal Liberal government (Cameron, 2014).

2.4.2 Canada Health Act

Notwithstanding the current context of Federal transfer funding negotiations related to healthcare funding (discussed in section 2.4.4), some scholars suggest a good example of Federal/Provincial/Territorial partnership and cost-sharing is the Canada Health Act, established in 1984 by the Federal Liberal government (Cameron, 2014; Friendly, 2006). While some analysts caution against describing Canada's medicare system as a national health service—choosing instead to describe it as ten Provincial medicare programs that are based on common principles that are ensured through Federal spending power and consistent enough to provide the same kind of service to all Canadians—it is, nevertheless, a nationally-coordinated and Federally-funded system of healthcare (Kent as cited in Friendly, 2006, p. 10). This example of healthcare is often referenced as evidence that Federal/Provincial/Territorial levels of government do and can partner together in the interest of developing important Canada-wide social welfare programs. Moreover, childcare advocates and economic analysts suggest that the Canada Health Act is an example of a tried and proved model upon which to develop a national approach to childcare: pan-Canadian standards and principles upheld by Provinces and Territories through Federal funding transfer conditions (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012). However, this suggestion has been criticized by those opposed to a Federal role

in childcare; they suggest it puts forward the notion that the Federal government would insert itself into the operations of running childcare centres (Friendly, 2006, p.10). Of course, this need not be the case. Similar to its approach in Canada's healthcare system, a Federal government role in childcare would be one that establishes and ensures pan-Canadian standards of a national childcare system through its funding arrangements over a role related to operations (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012; Friendly, 2006).

2.4.3 Social Union Framework Agreement

Established in 1999 by the Federal Liberal government, the objective of the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) was to finance cost-shared social programs and promote national equity across the country (Cameron, 2014). However, it could also constrain the Federal government from implementing new social programs that did not have broad support from the majority of Canada's Provinces and Territories. Moreover, SUFA was not a mechanism that facilitated public engagement and accountability; rather, it emphasized "technocratic, administrative accountability rather than democratic accountability" (Cameron, 1999, p. 132). And, by focusing on jurisdictional powers between governments it failed to build a relationship between the state and its citizens (Cameron, 2006). These limitations aside, Cameron argues that there did exist space within SUFA for Federal government involvement with social programs, should they have wished to take such action (Cameron, 1999, p. 129). For example, within SUFA there was no requirement for the Federal government to obtain Provincial support before exercising its spending power. Moreover, though the agreement did require the Federal government to obtain the support of the majority of Provinces to proceed with Canada-wide initiatives, any six Provinces would have met this threshold (i.e., it did not require a proportion of the total Canadian population). And, given the precedent of the 2005 bilateral agreements for

childcare, Canada's history illustrates that all Provinces and Territories had been willing to enter into partnership with the Federal government to establish a Canada-wide system of childcare.

2.4.4 Canada Health Transfer / Canada Social Transfer

The introduction of the CHST represents a shift in the evolution of Federal social transfer funding. With the CHST, there came a substantial reduction in Federal dollars for childcare, and the funding that was transferred to Provinces and Territories called for very few regulations in spending conditions, in contrast to the earlier CAP. Analysts suggest that the objective of the CHST was “to control Federal spending commitments for Provincial social programs and to encourage Provinces to control excess expenditures relative to the matching grants of CAP” (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012, p. 26). CHST took the form of a block fund formula in which dollars to support childcare were lumped together with health, post-secondary education, and other social service priorities, an approach that hid from the public the proportion of funding that Provinces/Territories spent on childcare (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012). Later, in 2004, CHST was split into the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) and the Canada Social Transfer (CST); analysts reveal that 62% of spending is channeled to the CHT, while 38% of spending is directed toward the CST (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012, p. 19). As I will further demonstrate in this chapter, this period marks a significant decrease in Federal social transfers, influenced by globalization, neo-liberalism and social welfare retrenchment based on monetarist economic ideas.

2.5 Research Paradigms of Childcare Policy Study

Following this historical account of Canada's Federal-level children-related policy choices, it's important to examine Canada's approach to childcare within the global context. In undertaking an empirical review of international and national childcare policy literature, I have organized my findings by epistemological and ontological research paradigms. White (2002)

argues that studies of childcare policy can be classified by two such paradigms: those that examine the institutional foundations of the social world, termed *historical institutionalist* approaches; and those that examine the ideational dimensions, termed *social constructionist* approaches. The first approach is often represented by path dependency models in which childcare policy is explained by social structures and the policy legacies of these structures; the second, by models that consider the influence of ideas upon such structures and their policy decisions. Some scholars believe that policy change is best explained by models that consider both research paradigms (Béland, 2009; White, 2002). For purposes of my study, I have aligned my chosen research paradigm with this third approach, one which straddles both historical institutionalism and social constructionism: the epistemological and ontological paradigm of *critical realism*, a recognition of both the material and non-materials aspects of the social world (Fairclough, 2001).

2.6 Historical Institutionalism-based Approaches to Childcare Study

The following section presents an empirical review of historical institutionalist approaches to the study of childcare, organized by differing theoretical perspectives. The aim of this review is to reveal how each theoretical and analytical perspective contributes to a broad and comprehensive understanding of childcare policy. Moreover, this review demonstrates a knowledge gap in the literature related to historical institutionalist-based studies, namely, the need to complement such literature with an explicit children-centred lens in the analysis of childcare policy.

2.6.1 Regime Theory-Based Studies

There is a well-established and important scholarly body of work related to the study of childcare through historical institutionalist models of theory (Beaujot, Jiangqin Du, & Ravanera, 2013; Dobrowolsky & Saint-martin, 2005; Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999; Findlay, 2015; Mahon,

2008; McGrane, 2014; White, 2002). A significant contribution to such approaches, Esping-Andersen's path dependency regime theory (1990, 1999) offers an important lens through which to examine and compare the childcare policy choices of different countries and the relationship of these policy choices to the surrounding social conditions of these nations.

According to Béland (2009), regime theory “sheds much light on the conditions of policy change” (p. 703). However, he also suggests it fails to address factors related to “agenda-setting and the construction of the problems and issues policy actors seek to address” (p. 703). Critics of regime theory argue that the dynamics of policy change within welfare regimes indicates that the policy-making process is highly complex, influenced by many challenges and contexts—including the role of ideas and discourse—that cannot be accounted for simply by regime type (Béland, 2009; Mahon et al., 2012). Despite these limitations cited by critics, regime theory is a prominent approach to the study of childcare policy, particularly in comparative analyses of childcare policy choices by different states (Karila, 2012; Lundy, Kilkelly & Byrne, 2013).

According to Esping-Andersen, a welfare regime is the interaction and the interdependence between the labour market, the family, and the welfare state (1990; 1999). These structures vary within differing welfare regimes, and, according to regime theorists, it is these important differences that are essential to understanding why and how childcare policies have developed, or have not developed, across nations (Friendly & Prentice, 2012; Karila, 2012; Lundy et al., 2013). There are three types of welfare regimes: social democratic; liberal; and conservative. Each of these welfare regimes is organized around its own unique logic of social stratification and societal integration, originating from distinct histories and political dynamics. Of note, the social rights afforded to individuals within these three welfare regime typologies vary tremendously (Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999).

Social democratic welfare regimes, such as those of Finland, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, reflect the principles of universalism and the decommodification of social rights, and emphasize the responsibility of the welfare state in promoting equality of the highest standards for all to benefit. This regime socializes the financial costs of family-hood, often through grants transferred to children, and takes direct responsibility for the care of its vulnerable citizens through the provision of generous universal and comprehensive risk coverage. Rooted in the nineteenth century poor relief laws, this regime diverged from its neoliberalist history between 1920 and 1940 to embrace a rights-based, egalitarian approach to the welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Fundamental to this regime is the role of the state, with its strong regulation of the market and its direct responsibility in the care of its citizens, including children. The role of market and family are marginal in comparison with the role of state in social democratic regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990), reflecting an important philosophical distinction in the cultural values of social democratic societies.

The common approach to childcare policy in social democratic regimes is one that recognizes early childhood development (ECD) as a critical social determinant of health and sees childcare as an important public good and government responsibility (OECD, 2006). Further, social democratic welfare regimes have developed publicly-funded and regulated childcare programs that are tied directly to children's rights of citizenship. Alongside universal, high-quality childcare programs, social democratic regimes also provide parents with other childcare choices that are fully integrated within a universal system of family supports, including strong parental leave policies and home care allowances that enable parents to temporarily withdraw from the labour market in order to provide stay-at-home care for their children (OECD, 2006, p. 74).

An exemplary example of a social democratic approach to childcare policy is that of Finland. Shortly following its declaration as signatory to the UNCRC in 1989, Finland was the first country to adopt domestic legislation to uphold its promise of childcare as a universal right afforded to its youngest citizens, irrespective of their parents' financial or employment status (Karila, 2012; OECD, 2006). This approach reflected an important shift from the view of childcare as a charity service or a labour support program to one that honoured a child's entitlement to quality early experiences as the foundation for physical and mental health, emotional security, cultural and personal identity, and developing competencies. Finland's Child Day Care Act (1990) legislated for its government the responsibility of guaranteeing a childcare space for all of its young children. Soon following Finland's leadership, other Nordic countries enshrined children's rights to childcare in domestic law, including Sweden and Norway (Lundy, Kilkelly, Byrne & Kang, 2012). Thus, the 1990s marked an important shift in the childcare policy of Nordic countries. Some regime theory scholars, however, suggest the foundation of this progressive response to the UNCRC was laid in the 1970s through the Nordic welfare state project, an approach to social welfare that positioned the State as having significant responsibility for providing universal social welfare services (Karila, 2012; Hujala, Fonsn & Elo, 2012; OECD, 2000; Viitanen, 2011).

Other childcare policy characteristics of Finland and other Nordic countries that reflect a social democratic regime include its social pedagogical approach to childcare curriculum, an approach that encourages "play, relationship, curiosity and the desire for meaning making based on activities that value both children and educators in a co-constructing environment" over that of school preparation objectives (Karila, 2012, p. 588). In this way, the curriculum for childcare reflects a children-centred consideration related to quality, as defined in section 3.9.4.

The case study of Finland brings to light other important findings. While the guarantee of childcare is a universal right for all children under 7 years of age, Finland's approach has fallen short on its promise to safeguard a sufficient level of equal opportunities for childcare throughout the country. In order to meet the overwhelming demand for childcare, Finland made subsequent amendments to its childcare legislation in order to offer private childcare providers with state subsidies on par with public non-profit providers, which some suggest has impacted on standards of quality (Hujala et al., 2012; OECD, 2000, p. 5; Viitanen, 2011, p. 3203). Moreover, the delivery of its childcare system is decentralized, with varying levels and standards of provision by local and regional authorities. Thus, it has been argued, the childcare system of Finland, while first to legislate a rights-based approach to universal provision, reflects a mix of welfare regime principles which contrast with its classification as a social democratic regime (Ellingsaeter, 2012; Viitanen, 2011).

Recent childcare policy studies of Nordic countries illustrate further evidence of a shift toward neo-liberalism, including a recent move in Finland and Sweden to adopt individual educational planning for children that emphasizes academic learning objectives over the social pedagogical values of democratic practice and co-creation (Karila, 2012). This is evidenced by a practice whereby children are provided with an individual educational plan in order to document their learning objectives and account for their progress related to same. Karila (2012) suggests this practice is connected to a neo-liberalist discourse of individual freedom of choice (p. 589). Another trend in Nordic countries, Karila notes, relates to an emphasis on partnerships with parents, which has been criticized as disguising a power imbalance wherein the state controls the early education of children via family-state partnership (2012, p. 592).

Conservative welfare regimes, such as those of France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and Austria, have a welfare state history rooted in a corporatist-statist legacy that served to preserve

status differentials whereby social rights were attached to class (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The conservative regime has typically been shaped by the church and reflects a strong commitment to traditional nuclear family values. The welfare state promotes these traditional values by providing social supports that discourage mothers from working outside of their home, and attaching social rights to the male bread-winner of the household (Esping-Andersen, 1990). While the social democratic regime emphasizes the role of the state, the conservative regime emphasizes the role of the family.

The approach to childcare policy in conservative welfare regimes is one that targets childcare to families living in poverty, either to help facilitate the employment of parents or to mitigate the effects of childhood poverty and its associated social costs. This welfare approach, rooted in the child-saving movement of the 19th century, has its limitations: advocates caution that this approach does very little to champion a high-quality childcare system that benefits all children (Findlay, 2015; Prentice & Friendly, 2012). Moreover, a targeted model may stigmatize disadvantaged children and their families as inferior, and promote the view that governments should only be responsible for certain children, rather than upholding the rights of all children. In conservative regimes, a generous family benefit system provides special supports and financial incentives to stay-at-home mothers. In this way, conservative regimes promote certain types of families (i.e., male-breadwinner families) over others (OECD, 2006), similar to the way in which Canada's Federal Conservative government did through its UCCB policy choice for childcare (i.e., two-parent single-earner families over lone-parent earner families), as I will demonstrate in chapter eight.

With its corporatist-statist roots, France represents a conservative welfare regime (Esping-Anderson, 1990, 1999), however, its robust childcare system and high childcare participation rate is unusual for this regime classification. France's childcare policy is strongly

rooted in the clerical/anti-clerical conflicts of the 1880s, epitomized by the French Revolution (Morgan, 2003). The nineteenth-century disputes over religious and secular powers provide an important backdrop to examining the deep-seated cultural values concerning the development of France's public education system of which preschool, for children age three to five, is a part (Morgan, 2003, p. 261). Control over education, including early education, was considered a significant force in influencing and shaping the development of a national identity, and, as such, the anticlerical republicans took ownership of its public education system through education laws designed to eliminate the influence of the Catholic Church (Morgan, 2003, p. 274). This early demonstration of national bureaucratic power marked a period of considerable development in publicly governed preschool education, which was then further expanded upon in the following century, between the 1960s and 1970s (Morgan, 2003, p. 261). With pre-school education placed under national control early in its history, the childcare system in France was afforded a "secure institutional home, with the result that preschool education quickly became a right of citizenship for all French children" (Morgan, 2003, p. 274).

Reflective of its conservative regime classification, France's post-World War II era ushered in a welfare state that promoted the one-earner, male-headed family. A generous family benefit system established in this era ensured special supports for housewives and provided significant fiscal incentives for stay-at-home mothers. Like other conservative regimes, social spending is quite high in France and its resulting welfare state yields only a moderate level of decommodified social rights. Social benefits are delivered in a way that entrenches social stratification and class ranking. Further, the common response to unemployment in recent decades has been through "labour shedding" (Morgan, 2003, p. 263), an approach that discourages women from participating in the labour market.

However, France's classification as a conservative welfare state is an imperfect fit with this regime type once its childcare policy is taken into consideration (Morgan, 2003). For example, France ranks near to or above the Nordic states in the provision of public childcare with over 30% of its children under three years of age in either publicly run or publicly subsidized early childhood education or day care services (Morgan, 2003, p. 264). France is renowned for its universal, entitlement-based provision and high-quality pre-school system, a system, however, that emphasizes school-readiness objectives over a social pedagogical approach. In contrast, its childcare system for children under three is under-developed, and positioned as targeted welfare state program for non-traditional families. Thus, despite its clerical/anti-clerical roots, France elevated the role of the state over the role of the family in an effort to secure its secular control over a developing national identity. However, it remains faithful, as a conservative regime, in its view of the family as the key provider of social welfare as evidenced by its promotion of its family supports for stay-at-home mothers and its reliance on family childcare providers. Its pre-school system for children aged three years and older, however, represents another departure from conservative regime principles. In this way, France, like Finland, reflects a mix of welfare regime principles.

Liberal welfare regimes are also rooted in the poor relief laws of the nineteenth century. While the role of the state is central in social democratic regimes, and the role of family is central in conservative regimes, the cornerstone of liberal regimes is that of a free, unregulated market. The liberal regime reflects a residual, needs-based, means-tested approach to welfare state provisions and an individualist approach to social responsibility. Any universal social rights provided to its citizens are modest, with strict entitlement rules accompanied by sanctioned stigma to deter possible state dependency. To this end, social risk coverage is minimal and provided only as a last resort (Esping-Andersen, 1999, p. 83).

In liberal welfare regimes, governments are reluctant to support childcare programs, and do so only to facilitate labour market growth or to prepare young children for school success, motivated by the interest in growing a skilled and healthy workforce. Public investments in childcare are limited, particularly in the case of children under the age of three (OECD, 2006). When childcare shortages result in liberal regimes, as they often do, the solution is for working mothers to temporarily withdraw from the labour market, scale back to part-time employment that accommodates the working father's schedule, or find inexpensive and informal childcare arrangements, commonly unregulated. Liberal regimes generally acknowledge government responsibility for pre-school education for children over three years, in particular for children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, as these investments ultimately serve their economic agenda by developing the next generation's labour force. For children under three, however, a fragmented childcare system is the norm, and securing a childcare space for these young children is viewed as the private responsibility of parents (OECD, 2006).

Typical of liberal regimes, public funding for childcare is commonly provided to for-profit providers. These regimes endorse childcare as a laudable business venture and governments that support private for-profit child care operations frame these investments as responsible ways to promote liberal market ideals such as competition, lower costs and greater consumer choice in service (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004). Levels of quality, especially children-centred considerations of quality, are overlooked in favour of trimming costs for maximized profit margins, usually by employing less expensive and less qualified staff. This is evident by research that demonstrates the quality of for-profit childcare to be of poorer quality when compared to not-for-profit child care (OECD, 2006, p. 212).

Some childcare analysts suggest that the issue of demand-side funding versus supply-side models reflects an ideological debate between those who believe in markets as the solution to

social welfare, and those who are suspicious of markets as a way of ensuring public services (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004). A market-driven approach to childcare often employs demand-side funding by providing cash benefits and targeted subsidies directly to parents, the consumer. While demand-side funding provides parents with some resources to support the purchase of childcare it does not ensure that childcare options exist for parents, and it does nothing toward developing a regulated childcare system that promotes children-centred considerations of access, quality and equity in the way that a supply-side funding model does (Bacchi, 1999; OECD, 2006).

Moreover, research suggests that parents are often not well-informed to assess the level of quality offered by a childcare provider (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004). And, for-profit providers are less likely to ensure equitable access for children who have additional support needs because of the increased costs associated with their care (Prentice, 2007). In this way, childcare is similar to other social welfare areas, such as universal healthcare and public education that require government-level oversight to ensure fairness and equitable access for all.

Canada's welfare state is classified as a liberal regime (Esping-Andersen, 1999), and several scholars have described Canada's market-driven approach to childcare as one that fits within the liberal category (Findlay, 2015; Mahon, 2008; Warner & Prentice, 2012). However, some have argued for a more nuanced analysis of Canada's childcare policy. For example, Mahon has conducted an analysis of Canada's childcare policy changes by using varieties of liberalism (Findlay, 2015; Mahon, 2008). These include: a) classical liberalism, rooted in the era of the poor relief laws and onset of industrialization; b) social liberalism, reflective of Keynesian notions of a welfare state; c) neo-liberalism, characteristic of an economic value toward open markets; and d) inclusive liberalism, an approach which shares the economic values of neo-liberalism, but embraces social policies as a way in which to support workers through the

challenges of a globalized economy (Mahon, 2008). Through this lens, Mahon argues that Canada's social welfare approach has undergone significant changes throughout history. She classifies its introduction of the Old Age Pension in 1928, the social welfare growth made possible through CAP, and the establishment of the Canada Health Act in 1984 as Canada's inclusive liberalism period. Mahon argues that this period of inclusive liberalism shifted toward neo-liberalism with the election of the Federal Progressive Conservative government in 1984 (Mahon, 2008). Then, under the Liberal Federal government's reign (1993-2006), its attempt to establish a national childcare strategy and Federal social transfers to support early childhood development, marked a return to an inclusive liberalism period. Mahon argues that this period ended in 2006 when the Conservative Federal government came to power and brought with it an era of neo-liberalism (Mahon, 2008). However, some have argued that the Conservative administration was actually better classified as a time of neo-conservatism (Findlay, 2015).

The challenge in analyzing Canada's childcare system through a welfare regime lens relates to Canada's federated model of government. In Canada each of its fourteen jurisdictions—ten provinces, three territories, and the federal government—support programs that, together, comprise Canada's childcare system. Notwithstanding the funding the Government of Canada provides to childcare programs for special populations that fall under Federal jurisdiction (e.g., Aboriginal Head Start, Military Family Resource Centres), childcare models are primarily developed and administered under the jurisdiction of provinces and territories, resulting in several different approaches—representative of different welfare regimes—to the funding and regulation of childcare. I demonstrate this in my overview of three Canadian provinces and their differing approaches to childcare: Quebec, representative of a social democratic regime; Alberta, representative of a liberal regime; and Manitoba, representative of a mix of social democratic and liberal regime models.

The province of *Quebec* represents Canada's strongest investment in childcare, and its low regulated parental fees are touted by childcare advocates (Japel, 2012). In 1997, Quebec first implemented reduced-contribution child care spaces, a \$5-a-day per child parental fee for its regulated child care program. Initially, this subsidized program was first made available to children who had reached the age of four years, and was later expanded to children of younger ages. This low regulated parental fee is similar to Finland's approach in that the rate is afforded to parents irrespective of their income or employment status. In this way, Quebec's childcare system is children-centred, similar to Finland's social democratic approach.

Quebec's approach is also known for its supply-side funding approach. Government grants are provided to childcare providers, not the parental users, and this supply-side funding represents 37% (\$2.4 billion) of its Provincial budget for family supports (Japel, 2012, p. 287). Further, Quebec favours a regulated approach to childcare provision. When the reduced-contribution program was first implemented, for-profit providers were given an option to convert their status to non-profit, or to agree to offer reduced-contribution child care spaces to families—the \$5-a-day per child rate—if they wished to receive government funding grants. Most of these operators chose to retain their for-profit status, and entered into agreement to offer reduced-contribution child care spaces (Japel, 2012, p. 287).

With the launch of its childcare program in 1997, established by its Parti Québécois government, Quebec signaled several important values concerning its view of childcare: affordability, regulation, quality, and accessibility. And, importantly, Quebec demonstrated to its citizens that it would not wait for Canada's Federal government to implement a national childcare system. Further, similar to Finland's approach, Quebec's childcare system has adopted a social pedagogical approach to curriculum that serves to promote the emotional, social, moral, cognitive, language, physical, and motor development of all children (Japel, 2012).

However, while Quebec's model is still the most expansive regulated model in Canada, representing 37% of all regulated spaces in the country, it still fails to meet current demand (Japel, 2012, p. 287). Data for 2008 show that for children under the age of six, only 25% of them are provided with a regulated full or part time centre-based space. In 2003, under its new Liberal government, Quebec raised its legendary \$5-a-day per child rate to \$7-a-day per child. This new government also lifted the moratorium the previous government had placed on for-profit providers, signifying a market-driven approach and the embrace of liberal regime values. Further, research shows that almost half of children attending childcare in Quebec are attending in home-based settings, and it is this home-based child care option that has seen the greatest level of expansion in the last few years (Japel, 2012, p. 301). While home-based settings are, indeed, regulated, this type of childcare does not require the same level of staff qualifications, suggesting that the quality in home-based settings is not guaranteed to the same level as centre-based care (Japel, 2012, p. 301). Further, quality reviews of Quebec's regulated child care program indicate overall poor quality of service (Japel, 2012, p. 293), suggesting that, in Quebec, accessibility and expansion may come at the expense of quality. A commitment in 2004 to implement its Ongoing Quality Improvement Plan affirms, however, Quebec's current pledge to enhance quality and accessibility within an ECEC system that is regulated and affordable (Japel, 2012). At present, Quebec's current Liberal government has increased its parental fees yet again. Now, based on a sliding scale, parents whose income is under \$55,000/year will pay \$7.30-a-day per child. However, this rate will increase, based on income, to a maximum of \$20-a-day per child (another fee formula targets parents with more than two children in childcare; these parents pay a reduced rate for their third and subsequent children). This change to fee structure represents a significant increase in parental fees for Quebec, however its childcare fees still remain the lowest in Canada.

While the province of *Alberta* has a very different approach to childcare compared to the Quebec model, it is a model representative of many Canadian jurisdictions, in large part because of its proliferation of for-profit and commercial childcare operators among its licensed providers (Langford, 2011). In fact, half of licensed childcare centres in Alberta are private, for-profit operations; the Canadian rate of comparison is 25%. Alberta's for-profit child care providers include both large commercial enterprises and small "mom and pop" shops. One such large operation, Edleun, a mostly Calgary-based venture, has received \$12.1 million in government subsidies between April 2010 and December 2011 (Pratt, 2012). In 2011, Alberta received criticism for cancelling its childcare expansion grant, Creating Child Care Choices Plan. Further, while family-based childcare is a significant type of licensed childcare provided in Alberta, it is not well regulated by the provincial government. Indeed, the launch of Kin Child Care, introduced in 2003, provided funds to eligible parents to pay non-resident relatives of the child to care for their children, further evidence of a system lacking in quality assurance and safety standards. Alberta's Five Point Child Care plan, established in 2006, focused its investments on subsidy rate increases, stay-at-home subsidy program, wage enhancements, and a parent information line to support parents in making informed choices regarding childcare (Beach et al., 2009), policy choices that reflected conservative regime values. Further, Alberta's childcare plan provided even more public funding for commercial childcare operations and for-profit providers, reflecting principles of a liberal regime. At present, the parental fees in Alberta are set at a maximum of \$25-a-day per child. And, under a new New Democrat Party government elected in 2015, after more than four decades under Progressive Conservative party administration, it appears its funding model is shifting toward one that favours non-profit providers. With its forthcoming Early Learning and Child Care pilot, a three-year partnership with funding from the

Federal government, the province of Alberta has signaled its plan to expand its non-profit-based childcare system after a long history of commercial and for-profit provision.

The province of *Manitoba* has often been held up, albeit, second to Quebec, as one of Canada's most progressive provincial models for childcare because of its second-lowest parental fees in the country, its commitment to supply-side funding to non-profit providers, and its financial investments in expansion of provision (Beach et al., 2009). In fact, when the Federal government canceled the 2005 bilateral agreements, signed under the previous government's Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, Manitoba remained committed to implementing its Five Year Action plan despite a lack of Federal financial support (Beach et al., 2009).

Following its Five Year Action plan (2002-2007), Manitoba launched its next five-year plan, Family Choices, to further expand and enhance its childcare system, however, data suggest that Manitoba falls short in meeting the demand for childcare (Beach et al., 2009, p. 183). In 2008, only 20.6% of children under the age of 6 are provided with a regulated full or part-time centre-based childcare space. Currently, after two decades of New Democratic Party leadership, Manitoba's new Progressive Conservative government has committed to significant changes to its childcare policy. Its Budget 2017 promise to provide operating grants to family-based childcare signals a departure from Manitoba's earlier approach of promoting centre-based childcare over that of family-based options (Government of Manitoba, April 2017). In this way, Manitoba's earlier preference for centre-based childcare options is set to diminish in favour of an approach that now promotes home-based childcare options. Some scholars argue that home-based options reflect socially conservative values in that they appear to replicate the family home environment, despite the fact that childcare experts argue centre-based options reflect higher standards of quality and demonstrate better outcomes for children (Broad & Foster,

20Vandenbroeck, 2006). Further, the new government of Manitoba's proposed amendments to its childcare legislation signals its intention to reduce the burden of licensing standards on home-based providers (Government of Manitoba, November 2017), suggesting an approach that favours less government oversight and quality assurance similar to that of Alberta's Kin Child Care model.

2.6.2 Citizenship Regime Theory-Based Studies

Citizenship regime is another path dependency model that has been used to examine childcare policy. Jenson and Sineau (2001) define citizenship regime as the "institutional arrangements, rules, and understandings that guide concurrent policy decisions and expenditures of states, problem definitions by states and citizens, and claims-making by citizens" (p. 8). The theoretical underpinnings of this model are: a historical institutionalist approach, used in comparative studies through which representations of social relations between state, family, and market are described; and Regulation Approach, through which change and continuity of social relations are explained as the by-product of context and crisis (Jenson & Sineau, 2001). The concept of citizenship is grounded in the theoretical work of T.H. Marshall (cited by Kymlicka & Norman, 1995 in Jenson & Sineau, 2001, p. 9), which is predicated on an understanding that everyone is entitled to be treated as a full and equal member of society, through a welfare state that guarantees civil, political and social rights. Within this definition, citizenship is a social construction which changes throughout history and differs by state.

Jenson and Sineau suggest that the social rights of citizenship is an important theoretical perspective through which to examine social policy debates, including the matter of public responsibility for childcare as it relates to gender equality in neo-liberal times (2001, p. 8). Through a social citizenship regime perspective, Jenson and Sineau examine four case studies (Belgium, Italy, Sweden, France) to reveal how state policy choices related to childcare are an

issue of gender relations and women's employment (2001). Common to all four countries, the call for women labourers during World War II signified a key moment in the history of childcare policy; a finding not surprising, as most systems of non-parental childcare across developed countries are rooted in this era (Jenson & Sineau, 2001).

In the decades following World War II, culminating in the 1970s, the growing shift of women's employment outside the home influenced the redesign of social policy in significant ways. According to Jenson and Sineau's study, by the mid-1970s the values of equality and democracy established women's claims for full citizenship. Notwithstanding the male breadwinner 'traditionalists', these four countries enhanced state commitments to gender equality and democratic participation across race and class. Moreover, childcare was heralded as the means through which women would achieve gender equality, allowing them full integration into the labour market (2001, p. 250).

Starting in the 1980s and 1990s, however, the ideology of neo-liberalism threatened these values by shifting power away from state to market (Jenson & Sineau, chapter 9). In so doing, the authors claim, citizens were repositioned from rights-holders to consumers, and the values of democracy and equality were replaced with the ideals of consumerism and individual choice (Jenson & Sineau, 2001, p. 241). This redefinition of citizenship impacted upon childcare policy, too. In Belgium, France, and Italy, policies were developed to entice mothers to remove themselves from the labour market in order to care for their own children, as a way for the state to avoid fiscal responsibility for childcare. In Sweden, however, state support for childcare rose, thus facilitating the highest labour participation rate for women, including mothers, of the four case studies (Jenson & Sineau, 2001, p. 216). Despite this progressive history, recent analysis demonstrates that the Swedish model of childcare is undergoing retrenchment in the face of growing the global neoliberal ideology (Daune-Richard & Mahon, 2001). Indeed, the growing

trend across all four case studies is the move toward decentralization of provision, increased variety in childcare type, and the increased focus on individualized parental choice of childcare type (Jenson & Sineau, 2001, p. 255). This trend echoes the findings cited in section 2.6, within my regime-based review (Ellingsaeter, 2012; Hujala et al., Karila, 2012; Viitanen, 2011).

Another study employing citizenship regime theory is the feminist-focused research by Dobrowolsky and Jenson (2004), through which they seek to reveal the ways in which the identities of women and children have shifted within the discourse surrounding childcare in Canada. Based on their discourse analysis, Dobrowolsky and Jenson suggest that representations of citizenship have been redefined, shifting the rights of women to the rights of children. The authors suggest that this shift occurred in the 1990s when the dominant frame for childcare became that of child welfare over that of women's equity. Moreover, they suggest that in order for countries to move away from neo-liberalism, discourses of citizenship must take root (Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004).

An important comparative analysis study (Lundy, Kilkelly, Byrne, & Kang, 2012) that takes a children's rights view to citizenship examined the varying ways that twelve countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden) have chosen to incorporate the UNCRC. At the time of their 2012 study (Lundy et al., 2012, p. 446), three countries (Belgium, Norway and Spain) of the twelve studied had incorporated the UNCRC into domestic law, while another four demonstrated steps toward incorporating some of the UNCRC's provisions into their constitutions (Ireland, Iceland, South Africa, and Sweden). In those countries that have moved toward incorporating parts of the UNCRC into domestic law, the focus has been on the best interests principle and the right to be heard principle, which I describe in further detail in chapter three. Authors of this study call for reports using annual disaggregated data on indicators of child's rights to enable

identification of discrimination, which would be reviewed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (currently a report is aggregated and submitted every five years) and other state advocacy groups. Further, they argue, training and education on children's rights must be implemented, with a robust infrastructure to monitor and enforce implementation.

Another path dependency study (Te One, 2005) that examined implementation of the UNCRC illustrates the challenges of adopting this children's rights treaty into the domestic law of New Zealand. According to the author, full implementation of the UNCRC, including the upholding of children's rights to childcare, is challenged by economic constraints and policies of fiscal austerity. The main conclusion of these two citizenship regime studies on children's rights is the important role that education can play in garnering public support and building political will toward the full implementation of the UNCRC (Lundy, et al., 2012; Te One, 2005).

2.6.3 Theory of Family-Based Studies

Skrypnek and Fast (1996) use the theory of family to examine childcare, citing that changes in the labour market have resulted in changes in family structure, with the traditional male breadwinner family model being replaced by dual-earner families and single parent families, thus resulting in the increased uptake of and demand for childcare. As defined by the theory of family, there are three types of family: 1) the patriarchal model of the family, which assumes gender inequality and a strict division of labour; 2) the individual responsibility model of the family, which assumes gender equality and shared responsibility for all roles; and 3) the social responsibility model of the family, which assumes gender equality, recognizes social value of care work, and believes this work requires welfare state support (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996). These scholars describe Canada's current approach to childcare as a combination of the patriarchal and individual models of the family, a finding that reflects Canada's classification as a liberal regime as described earlier in section 2.6.

Both citizenship regime theory and the theory of family demonstrate their value to comparative analysis research in social policy, the examination of welfare state development trends, and, importantly, to the understanding of gender relations embedded within citizenship regime and family structure types. Similar to regime theory, their theoretical perspectives are rooted in historical institutionalism. They also attribute change in citizenship regimes and family structure types to societal and economic crises that erupt throughout history, including the recent global trends of a market-based neo-liberalist ideology and the significant increase in women's labour participation.

2.6.4 Feminist Political Economy Theory-Based Studies

Authors Bezanson and Luxton (2006) define social reproduction as the “processes involved in maintaining and reproducing people, specifically the labour population, and their labour power, on a daily generational basis” (p. 3). Included in these processes are the provision of food, clothing, shelter, safety, health care, and the development of knowledge and social values. In this way, the theoretical perspective of social reproduction deepens the debate about domestic labour embedded within a feminist political economy framework. Moreover, it “offers a basis for understanding how various institutions interact and balance power so that the work involved in the daily and generational production and maintenance of people is completed” (Bezanson & Luxton, 2006, p. 3). Through this feminist-based political economic lens, neoliberalism is explained as a way through which to concentrate power in the hands of a core group of decision makers. As such, the state downloads its responsibility for social welfare to local levels, including the social economy, described earlier. According to Luxton (2006), feminist political economy developed in the 1980s, through merging political economy and feminist theory, in order to advance the analysis of progressive social change. Moreover, feminist political economy puts working class women and issues of labour at its focus, which

reveals the agenda of patriarchy, the prevailing mode of reproduction, which is based on male domination over women.

Through a feminist political economic lens, ideologies of motherhood are examined to reveal how middle-class mothers took on the role of raising children, as the social problems (e.g., poverty, crime) associated with the onset of capitalism began to rise (Fox, 2006, p. 235). Fox suggests that these new societal pressures of “intensive mothering” (Hayes, 1996, cited in Fox, 2006, p. 236) were emphasized further for middle-class mothers rather than working-class mothers; thus creating and sustaining a divide between stay-at-home mothers and those mothers who work outside the home. Fox suggests John Bowlby’s monotropism theory (1953) further contributed to this divide, suggesting that anything short of full-time mothering constituted maternal deprivation. According to Fox, such societal pressures and values underpin the state’s avoidance of developing a publicly-funded childcare system. Bowlby’s theory of monotropism has had a significant and lasting influence on Western society’s values regarding parenting, including a wariness of non-parental care arrangements and a deep-seated desire to keep children in the family home, protected from the public world (Woodhead, 1997). I further examine the impact of monotropism in chapter three, as it relates to my overview on the history of childhood and its impact on childcare policy.

2.6.5 Human Capital Theory-Based Studies

Campbell-Barr and Nygard examine childcare policy through the lens of human capital theory in England and Finland (2014). They suggest that due to economic challenges in the past two decades, related to globalization, the welfare states of these two countries have had to modernize their design to include a focus on human capital development. Human capital, is described as the “knowledge, skills, competences and attributes that allow people to contribute to their personal and social well-being, as well as that of their countries” (Keely, 2007, p. 3).

Findings from their study, Campbell-Barr and Nygard (2014) indicate that while both countries position childcare policy as a tool through which to develop the social and cognitive development of children, there are some key differences. While Finland, a welfare state described as a social democratic regime, does position childcare policy through a human capital lens, this frame is secondary to the emphasis it places on childcare as a solution to work-life balance, gender equality, and a rights-based focus on child development. Ironically, the study reveals that although the goals of human capital theory are not the dominant policy frame for its national childcare system, Finland's national PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) data reveal it has achieved some of the highest human capital objectives around the globe (Campbell-Barr & Nygard, 2014, p. 352). In contrast, England, a welfare state described as a liberal regime, positions its childcare policy as both a solution to work-life balance and as a means to achieve human capital objectives through an approach that emphasizes a school readiness curriculum over that of a social pedagogical approach. From this comparative analysis, the authors conclude that Finland's model of childcare has progressed along the lines of its social democratic regime legacy, whereby England's model of childcare has diverted from its liberal regime by embracing a focus on quality and access that is atypical in market-based approaches. The authors further suggest that their study provides an example of how path dependency models do (e.g., Finland) and do not (e.g., England) account for the development of childcare policy (Campbell-Barr & Nygard, 2014).

2.6.6 Federalism-Focused Studies

A complicating factor in Canada's system of childcare relates to federalism. As defined by Friendly and Prentice (2012) a federation is a "system of government in which power and authority are divided between the national government and sub-national units" (p. 70). Among federations, Canada's system is considered very decentralized, and is the sole federation across

the globe that has no national department of education or any Federal involvement in education (Wallner, 2010 cited in Friendly & Prentice, 2012). Notwithstanding the funding the Government of Canada provides to childcare programs for special populations that fall under Federal jurisdiction, per Canada's constitution, childcare falls under Provincial/Territorial responsibility, and each of its fourteen jurisdictions—ten Provinces, three Territories, and the Federal government—support licensed childcare programs that, together, comprise Canada's childcare system (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 2004). This approach has been criticized for failing to ensure children's equitable access to quality-assured childcare space (Ferns & Friendly, 2014; Friendly & Prentice, 2012); many scholars suggest that the development of a universally-accessible, high-quality childcare system is simply a task far too great and much too costly for Provinces and Territories to undertake without full Federal partnership (Ferns & Friendly, 2014; Findlay, 2013; Friendly & Prentice, 2012). While Canada's constitutional division of powers is often cited as the main reason its Federal government has not taken steps towards a nationally-coordinated childcare system (Friendly & Prentice, 2012), some scholars believe Canada's constitution does provide space for a Federal role, citing cases of Federal leadership in matters of Provincial/Territorial jurisdiction, including Canada's healthcare system (Cameron, 2014; Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012; Friendly & Prentice, 2009).

Brennan and Mahon (2011) suggest that path dependency studies that compare the welfare states of different countries must do so bearing federation in mind. They argue that most welfare regime studies ignore state architectures by assuming unitary state forms are the norm, and focus their work on nation-state governments. In their examination of state architectures on women's political mobilization around childcare, Brennan and Mahon (2011) examine the federated models of Australia and Canada. While similar in federated model, they find striking

differences related to the advancement of childcare policy between the two countries. In Australia, the 1970s represented a significant time of progressive childcare policy development, attributed to an influential feminist movement (Brennan & Mahon, 2011). In Canada, there was a similar era of progressive childcare in the Province of Quebec. Through this important study, the authors provide evidence to suggest that federation did not prevent the advancement of a national-level childcare program in Australia during the 1970s (it was later dismantled in the 1990s), nor did it stymie the development of childcare within a sub-state, that of Quebec, in Canada.

In addition to this study, Irvine and Farrell (2013) further the examination of Australia by examining its childcare policy redesign between the 1970s and the 1990s. With the successful development of a national approach to childcare in the 1970s, this system would undergo a complete transformation in the decades following, including the extension of parent fee subsidies to private for-profit childcare providers and the abolition of operational subsidies for community-based, not-for-profit childcare centres (Irvine & Farrell, 2013). Attributed to an ideology of “economic rationalism” (Irvine & Farrell, 2013, p. 100), these changes were made to meet the growing demand of childcare concentrated expansion efforts in the private for-profit childcare sector. Further, a “new public management” discourse (Irvine & Farrell, 2013, p. 102) reduced the government’s role in public service provision, replaced by an emphasis on the values of accountability and competition. Currently, Australia is moving toward an integrated model of childcare provision, represented by a mix of not-for-profit and for-profit models.

Tremblay and Vaillancourt’s (2002) study of social policy in four provinces of Canada, through a social economy lens, finds that responsibility for health and welfare is divided among four major groups of social actors: the family, the state, the market, and the third sector (non-government, non-profit sector). Further, Tremblay, Aubrey, Jette and Vaillancourt (2002),

suggest that with the crisis of the welfare state in recent neoliberal times, greater emphasis has been placed on the role of the social economy in “regenerating and democratizing public policy” (p. 29). Rooted in the church, the social economy has grown in significance, responding to society’s needs that the state cannot or will not address (Tremblay et al., 2002). This is shown to be the case in the early iteration of childcare, which was positioned as a social welfare measure for vulnerable and poor families. Indeed, Federal funding for childcare, through the Canada Assistance Program (CAP) in the 1970s encouraged provinces to develop childcare systems that were targeted rather than universal, and delivered by non-profit organizations versus public provision, as the formal education system is delivered (Tremblay et al., 2002). The reliance on the social economy for the development of childcare throughout Canada was described in my historical examination of childcare in Canada.

Rice and Prince’s book (2000) represents another body of scholarly work that examines the history of Canada’s changing politics and the roles of the family, the state, the market, and the third sector. Through their historical account of the changing social policy directions of Canada, Rice and Prince point to economic globalization and social pluralization as the impetus for social welfare state redesign. According to Rice and Prince, in today’s era, economic globalization is the current expression of market liberalism, and the latest stage in the development of global capitalist economics (2000). Through economic globalization, corporations have increased their influence on society, in turn, shifting political power away from the state to corporations. As a result, the authors suggest, nation states, including Canada, have abandoned their social obligations and responsibilities, offloading the welfare state as a responsibility to Provinces, Territories, Local Municipalities, and, ever increasingly, the third sector. In so doing, the relationship between government and citizens has been transformed; citizens are no longer afforded social welfare rights, they are now consumers, defined by their

purchasing power. This shift toward consumerism is further impacted by social pluralization, the growing division between social groups, based on gender, age, socio-economic status, and race. Resulting from social pluralization, according to Rice and Prince (2000), the variations among Canadians, including education, employment, income level, and family structure are more diverse than ever, resulting in a period of significant variance related to societal views of the welfare state.

In their historical examination, Rice and Prince (2000) describe Canada's welfare state as rooted in colonial history, enshrined through the British North America Act of 1867. In this colonial era, the welfare state reflected the following principles: residual; targeted; conditional; and minimal. It was this early era wherein Provinces were assigned major responsibility for certain groups of vulnerable peoples (e.g., the aged, the sick, and children), a decision, the authors argue, that was limited in understanding the potential social role of the Federal government, thus leading to a narrow view of social welfare. Later, following the Great Depression in the 1930s, a shift occurred whereby the welfare state was viewed as a necessary system of social security for Canadians in times of economic crisis. This led to significant expansion based on Keynesian economics. This period of growth came to an end by the mid-1970s, when a new period of welfare crisis and restraint took hold with the oil crisis and economic problems of the early 1970s (Rice & Prince, 2000). During this third period of change, Canada's Family Allowance and Old Age Security, both universal programs, were replaced by geared-to-income programs, and the Canada Assistance Program (CAP) was replaced with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), bringing significant cuts to Federal spending. By the 1990s the responsibility of social programs shifted from the Federal government to Provincial/Territorial governments. The authors suggest that today's current era of neo-

liberalism, and further retrenchment based on monetarist economic ideas, is the welfare state's fourth shift in history, evidenced by decreasing Federal social transfers as previously described.

2.7 Strengths and Limitations of Historical Institutional-based Studies

While welfare regime theory is a broadly-accepted and widely-used theory through which to examine social policy and conduct comparative analyses of social policy across countries, some scholars have pointed to its limitations, arguing that it does not fully account for the differentiation between countries that are categorized as the same regime type, nor does it account for the fact that some countries take on characteristics of more than one regime type, including the example of Canada (Béland, 2009; Mahon, 2008). Moreover, some scholars argue that regime theory, by itself, does not fully explain how childcare has evolved in Canada (Friendly & Prentice, 2009), suggesting that a path dependency thesis explains the trajectory of its social welfare state only so far (Béland, 2009; Mahon, Anttonen, Bergqvist, Brennan & Hobson, 2012; White, 2002). Moreover, some scholars have criticized regime theory for ignoring a gender lens when examining social relations between state, family, and market, suggesting that Esping-Andersen's focus on the decommodification of labour focuses solely on men's labour (Jensen & Sineau, 2001). Despite these limitations, however, regime theory contributes much to the knowledge base of childcare policy, and, as such, I relied heavily on this literature to inform my descriptive and normative critique in the macrosociological analysis of my Critical Discourse Analysis research study.

As theoretical frameworks, citizenship regime theory and the theory of family could have been integrated with my research design, as part of my macrosociological analysis. Indeed, the objectives of citizenship regime theory, the theory of family, and the new sociology of childhood are not dissimilar; all three serve to reveal the histories of systemic discrimination related to particular social groups. However, the children-centred lens afforded to me through my adoption

of the new sociology of childhood is best suited to a study of children-related policy insofar as it extends my analysis to include the history, social conditions, and social structures that impact the constructions of childhood. Moreover, a children-centred lens serves to reveal the relationship between discourse and power, specifically the ways in which these power relations impact upon children, a key area of focus in the new studies of childhood.

Studies that employ feminist political economy theory and human capital theory examine the interplay between economic and social conditions and the effect of these conditions on the welfare state. Indeed, the studies I examined illustrate the ways in which economic globalization has led to the dominance of neoliberalist ideology, which has impacted the welfare states across the globe. However, similar to the limitations cited by critics of regime theory, these theories do not fully account for the differentiation between countries that are impacted by the global-wide influences of economic and social crises, nor do they account for development of welfare state redesign that departs from their path dependency-defined social policy legacies. Further, while feminist political economy attributes change in welfare state design to gendered power imbalances within a patriarchal society, this gender-focused lens does not reveal other intersections of systemic discrimination, including those related to children. As such, my research study, which contributes a children-centred analysis of childcare policy, addresses this gap in the knowledge base.

While many scholars point to federalism as the reason Canada has not developed a national childcare system, there are examples of federated states that have developed national approaches to childcare. Indeed, Quebec is an important example of a sub-state that has developed a childcare system despite a lack of Federal support. Further, Australia is an example of a federated state that has developed a national-level childcare system, yet it also represents an example of a federated state that has dismantled its national childcare program in an effort to

expand provision through a market-based approach. As such, federalism-based studies demonstrate the explanatory power of federalism, as a barrier to state-level welfare state design, though they also suggest that federalism alone cannot explain the development and dismantlement of childcare policy. In this way, these path dependency models provide an important explanation to the changing design of childcare policy, though they do not account for the whole story. I now turn to social constructionist-based discourse studies to further examine global childcare policy.

2.8 Social Constructionist-Based Approaches to Childcare Study

Many scholars have approached the global study of childcare policy using social constructionist approaches (Calder, 2015; Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004; Dobrowolsky & Saint-martin, 2005). Such approaches challenge the previously-cited limitations of path dependency-based studies, concentrating their study on discourse, ideas, social change, actors and agency. Theories and methods related to the broad area of social constructionist-based studies encompass a wide range of approaches informed by a multitude of disciplines (e.g., linguistics, sociology, cultural studies, political science, and media studies). Critical social theory perspectives to discourse analysis, such as Critical Discourse Analysis, examine the connections between the micro-level aspects of language and the macro-level aspects of discourse, including, in some cases, the relationship between discourse and power. I further describe discourse theories in chapter four. In the following section, I present an empirical review of international and national discourse studies of childcare policy. Research studies that analyze the discourse surrounding childcare policy reflect a variety of theoretical perspectives, methodologies and analytical lenses. In presenting an empirical review of these studies, I have categorized them as feminist-focused studies, media-focused studies, and children-centred studies.

2.8.1 Feminist-Focused Discourse Studies

Osgood's study (2005) brings a post-structuralist lens to the examination of the political discourse surrounding childcare. Employing a feminist perspective, she examines childcare discourse to reveal the collective identities of childcare workers in England. Through her self-identified Foucauldian approach, Osgood argues that her analysis of government policy documents reveals the ways in which England's neo-liberal discourse constructs its state's childcare workforce through discourse. She concludes that, through political discourse, childcare has been positioned in a state of perpetual crisis and the collective identities of childcare workers have been framed through a *deficiency discourse* thereby constructing the childcare workforce as lacking in quality and professionalism. Moreover, Osgood draws the conclusion that England's *individualization discourse* has rendered childcare workers as both invisible as individuals, yet individually responsible for the failing of the government's childcare system (2005, p. 747).

Osgood's study integrates a feminist lens with her Foucauldian examination of the childcare workforce, thus enhancing the creditability of her analysis, given the workforce under her study was predominantly female. In this way, Osgood's study is an example of integrating an additional theoretical lens to a discourse study in an effort to strengthen the analyst's critical eye and enhance the study's credibility, paralleling the approach I have taken in integrating a children-centred lens in my discourse study. However, her Foucauldian-based post-structural analysis is limited by its inability to reconcile the dialectical relationship between the material and non-material world. With its sole focus on the macrosociological aspects of discourse, Osgood's methodology does not include a textual or microsociological analysis to demonstrate the ways in which discourse, as text, talk, and social practice, positions the collective identities of childcare workers. My use of Fairclough's methodology represents a more rigorous technique of discourse analysis, and reconciles the important material components of discourse (through

textual analysis) with the non-material components of discourse (through microsociological and macrosociological analysis).

A study by Wild, Silberfeld and Nightingale (2015) undertakes a textual analysis by using what they suggest to be a Fairclough-based methodology. In actuality, this study does not appear to employ Critical Discourse Analysis, but, rather, analyzes policy document texts to identify themes based on frequency counts of key words. The authors suggest that the policy documents under study position childcare as early education, rather than as nurturing care-giving. In so doing, childcare workers are constructed as early years professionals, and the collective identities of children are constructed as future workers through an *investment discourse* (Wild et al., 2015). While this study does not employ an intentional feminist perspective, its findings parallel the results of the previously-cited Osgood study (2005).

Another study that employs a feminist lens to the discourse analysis of childcare is by Dobrowolsky and Saint-Martin (2005). Authors of this historical examination of discourse find that shifts in discourse have repositioned childcare as a social investment over that of a women's equity issue. Similarly, Mahon's (2000) feminist-focused historical examination of childcare policy points to a shift in discourse rooted in the 1970s, whereby a *social citizenship discourse* displaced the *women's equity discourse*, thus repositioning childcare policy as investment and the collective identities of children as future-beings. Further, Dobrowolsky and Jenson (2004) also reveal the ways in which the identities of women and children have shifted within the discourse surrounding childcare. Integrated with citizenship regime theory, this historical analysis of discourse appears to follow a Foucauldian approach to analysis, although the authors do not explicitly describe their methodology. Based on their discourse analysis, Dobrowolsky and Jensen (2005) suggest that representations of citizenship have been redefined, thus shifting the rights of women to the rights of children. The authors argue that this shift occurred in the

1990s when the dominant frame for childcare became that of child welfare over that of women's equity.

Susan Prentice (2009) employs a feminist lens to the historical examination of the political discourse surrounding childcare in Canada; she reveals a *business case discourse* surrounding childcare displaced a women's equity discourse that had been used to frame childcare between the 1960s and 1990s. Prentice suggests that the economic argument for childcare positions children as an investment in the future workforce which does little to promote progressive policy action for purposes of social justice. Prentice's study is another example of integrating a feminist lens with a discourse analysis methodology. Her research study, however, is limited by its failure to apply a rigorous methodology of analysis. Rather, Prentice identifies main themes among political documents which yields findings related to gender-based power relations, however, a Critical Discourse Analysis approach to textual analysis would have revealed the myriad ways through which discourse enacts, reproduces and legitimizes those power relations that disempower women.

Building on Prentice's work, Whiteford's (2014) study applies a rigorous methodology to its textual analysis of political documents related to Manitoba's childcare policy from 1999 to 2013. Through her study, Whiteford illustrates the prevalence of a Social Investment State (SIS) model within an investable child discourse. While not explicitly a three-dimensional methodology such as Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, Whiteford includes both a textual analysis of political discourse and a microsociological and macrosociological analysis of Manitoba political history related to childcare. Identifying a *future-worker discourse*, Whiteford suggests the SIS model is the dominant frame behind Manitoba's Provincial childcare policies. Expanding upon Prentice's (2009) conclusion that an investment model of childcare neglects the agenda of women's equity, Whiteford astutely observes that such discourse also neglects the

social rights of children. In this way, Whiteford extends Prentice's feminist-focused analysis by offering a children-centred analysis to her study, thus demonstrating that while an investable child discourse may shift public attention away from the frame of childcare as a women's equity issue, it does not necessarily lead to a children's rights discourse nor to a recommendation for children-centred childcare policy responses. Whiteford's study could be enhanced by unpacking this observation further through a purposeful children-centred analysis. Like Prentice (2009) and Whiteford (2014), Mahon (2000) also warns that a social investment discourse limits the public's support of social welfare to poverty-reduction measures, thus jeopardizing the larger women's equity and social justice agenda.

Last, Broad and Foster (2003) examine the historical political discourse surrounding childcare policy in Canada in order to reveal the ways in which the responsibility for childcare has been framed. In so doing, they reveal a neo-conservative/neo-liberal ideology that opposes the institutionalism of childcare based on the fear that it erodes the importance of family and the role of parents in child-rearing. Like the other studies previously cited, their historical analysis of discourse would be strengthened by a rigorous method of textual, microsociological and macrosociological analysis.

2.8.2 Media-Focused Discourse Studies

Two important discourse analysis studies related to childcare policy, conducted in the United States, reveal a paucity of childcare media coverage in comparison to the significant coverage found for other children-related issues such as child welfare and youth crime (Dorfman & Woodruff, 1999; McManus & Dorfman, 2002 in Rauhala, Albanese, Ferns, Law, Haniff, & MacDonald, 2012). These findings raise important questions about the relationship between the dearth of childcare-related articles in the media and the scarcity of childcare services available to

children and families (Dorfman & Woodruff, 1999; McManus & Dorfman, 2002 in Rauhala et al., 2012).

Discourse analysis studies in Canada have raised similar questions about the relationship between the political discourse surrounding childcare and childcare policy responses (Rauhala et al., 2012; Rinehart, 2007). For example, in his discourse analysis study of *The National Post* coverage of the 2004 Federal election, Thériault (2006) demonstrates how this national newspaper profiled news stories that, collectively, favoured the Conservative party's "choice in care" childcare policy proposal over the Liberal party's national childcare policy plan (2006). While not academically rigorous in its analysis, Thériault's study (2006) provides an example of a media discourse study surrounding the childcare policy choices of two Federal political parties in Canada, the Liberals and the Conservatives. In analyzing the newspaper coverage of *The National Post*, Thériault concludes that this national media outlet demonstrated significant reporting bias against the then-Liberal government and its plan to establish a national childcare system for Canada in 2004. He argues that in framing its coverage of the Liberal's proposed childcare plan as 'nanny state' interference with the Canadian value of parental choice, *The National Post* profiled this childcare policy choice as discriminatory against stay-at-home parents. Further, Thériault, argues, *The National Post* profiled the Conservative's proposed childcare policy choice as a positive way to allow parents to make independent choices on how best to raise their children, thus aligning its support with the Conservative party's proposed plan of a childcare financial benefit for parents. Thériault's study (2006) provides a look at the ways media have influenced the debate surrounding childcare in the political and public arena.

Through Rinehart's (2007) analysis of the 2006 Federal election, it is argued that that the media coverage of childcare policy, as an election issue, was shallow and lacking in critical analysis, and, as a result, denied the electorate valuable knowledge with which to make an

informed voting decision on the platform plank of childcare (p. 48). Other research of the 2006 Federal election (Richardson, Langford, Friendly & Rauhala, 2013) suggests that the Conservative party promoted a *consumer choice discourse* related to its Choice in Child Care benefit program proposal, later renamed the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB). Discourse analyst, Nordgren (2010) argues that a consumer choice frame reflects a market-based discourse that is connected to the neo-liberalism movement of the 1970s, meant to create an illusion of power for the citizen-as-consumer (p. 109). Inherent in the frame of choice, Nordgren (2010) suggests, is the emphasis on individual responsibility and the duty of the consumer to make his or her own choice in service; an emphasis that overshadows the role of government in providing real choices from which to choose.

A study by Richardson (2011) undertakes an examination of The National Post and The Globe and Mail news story coverage of childcare during the 2006 Federal election using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis methodology. In her analysis, Richardson examined how the balance of family, state, and market responsibility for children's well-being was presented through media discourse surrounding the 2006 Federal election. Further, she examined political speeches and election debates of Federal parties, in an attempt to understand how language and the conventions of language might have influenced the public's understanding of the parties' proposed policy plans. With strict fidelity to Fairclough's three-dimensional methodology of textual, microsociological and macrosociological analysis, Richardson's study was guided by research questions that focused on unpacking political campaign discourse. Using Esping-Anderson's (1999) regime theory to guide her macrosociological historical examination of Canada's childcare policy, such as the approach I adopted in my study, Richardson positions Canada as a liberal welfare state and suggests its dominant discourse surrounding the Federal election, propagated by the Conservative party, was a *discourse of choice*. Richardson suggests

that this discourse drew favour among the general public for its connection to the cultural value of parental choice (2011). Second to the dominant discourse of choice was a human capital discourse, promoted by the Liberal party in the 2006 Federal election. Similar to the findings of the feminist studies cited earlier, Richardson suggests a human capital discourse positioned childcare as an investment in the country's future workforce, thus constructing children as future-beings. Through her Critical Discourse Analysis methodology, Richardson reveals the textual and social practices of conversationalization, nominalization, and recontextualization as the primary ways through which the ideologies of choice and investment were embedded in discourse (2011, p. 58). She concludes that a discourse surrounding children's rights was absent from the discourse surrounding Canada's 2006 Federal election.

Similar to Richardson's examination (2011), a study by Richardson, Langford, Friendly and Rauhala (2013) employed Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis methodology to examine the newspaper coverage of Canada's Federal election in 2006. Analyzing discourse from two national newspapers, The Globe and Mail and The National Post, as well as the Liberal and Conservative party platforms, and key speeches by party leaders, their study examined the ways in which family and state responsibility for children's well-being was portrayed. This study is an exemplary example of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis; it applies a textual, microsociological, and macrosociological analysis to its data sources and reveals the discourse of choice was the dominant discourse to surround childcare during this election period. Richardson, Langford, Friendly and Rauhala (2013) further suggest that this discourse of choice positioned childcare through a consumer frame; thus constructing a *freedom ideology* that gained popularity and support from the voting public. Similar to Richardson's (2011) finding cited earlier, the authors suggest a discourse of children's rights was conspicuously absent (Richardson, Langford, Friendly and Rauhala, 2013). My study builds on these important contributions to Critical

Discourse Analysis studies of childcare policy in Canada by integrating a children-centred lens and expanding the span of analysis across several important decades related to childcare policy in Canada.

Authors of another discourse analysis study (Rauhala, Albanese, Ferns, Law, Haniff, & MacDonald, 2012) compared the media coverage of childcare in four Canadian newspapers (The National Post, The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, and The Ottawa Citizen) during Canada's 2006 Federal election. They found that while there were differences in how each newspaper sourced and framed childcare, they commonly favoured politicians as the primary sources and relegated childcare scholarly experts and advocates as secondary and tertiary sources. According to this study, the authors found that media coverage of childcare "did not expand the public conversation about the issue, nor was there much indication that childcare activists moved from the margins to the centre [as sources]" (Rauhala et al., 2012, p. 104). Further, they argue that none of the four newspaper outlets profiled parents' views concerning childcare policy choices (Rauhala et al., 2012, p. 104), a note-worthy finding given the significance of the policy issue to the majority of parents. The authors conclude that "the public narrative about childcare is less likely to be rooted in informed expert opinion when the subject becomes part of an electoral campaign" (p. 104). They suggest that while elections present opportunities through which to profile childcare policy because of increased media attention, childcare advocates must undertake careful planning to ensure their messages are heard and that the public is fully-informed on the issue.

Some researchers suggest "choice in care" has been the dominant theme in childcare policy debates over the past 15 years in Canada's Federal-level politics (Richardson, Langford, Friendly & Rauhala, 2013). Further, some scholars argue that the childcare advocacy movement has been reluctant to challenge this consumer choice discourse, opting instead to promote a

social investment discourse (Langford, Prentice, Albanese, Summers, Messina-Goertzen & Richardson, 2013). However, some scholars caution that an emphasis on the social investment frame for childcare may reinforce a neo-liberal ideology and a market-driven cultural value towards childcare (Bacchi, 1999; Langford et al., 2013), an approach that does little to elevate a discourse related to children's needs, children's equity and children's rights

2.8.3 Children-Centred Discourse Studies

One cannot examine childcare policy through a children-centred lens without considering the UNCRC, an international human rights treaty, grounded by the theory of human rights (Bobbio, 1996), proclaimed in Canada in 1989 and then ratified in 1991. Kiersey and Hayes' study (2010) provides an exemplary example of a children's rights-based discourse study, one which demonstrates the rigorous application of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis methodology. The aim of this study is to examine the extent to which Ireland's childcare policy choices reflect its commitment to the UNCRC. The authors present a macrosociological overview of Ireland's childcare policy history, as part of Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to analysis. Moreover, they analyze the textual aspects of Ireland's monitoring report related to its implementation of the UNCRC, specifically the components concerning childcare, as well as the microsociological aspects related to the process and structure of the monitoring report. The authors find that Ireland's monitoring report focuses its content on celebrating its progress toward implementing a childcare system that reflects a children's rights-based approach, and positioning future policy steps as evidence of its commitment to the UNCRC. Through this discourse analysis, the authors suggest that the monitoring report process is limited in its effectiveness to hold states accountable to implementing the UNCRC. This study presents an example of examining the political discourse of a government for purposes of revealing its commitment—or lack thereof—to upholding children's rights.

Building on Kiersey and Hayes' study (2010), Kiersey's doctoral thesis (2011) similarly integrates a children's rights-based lens to the examination of Ireland's childcare policy choices. Kiersey (2011) includes a well-articulated understanding of childhood theory, and her use of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis methodology presents an example of integrating childhood theory with a critical approach to discourse analysis, such as the approach I've adopted in my study. One limitation of her study concerns the way in which she states her research question. With a stated goal of examining Ireland's political discourse to determine the extent to which it constructs and obstructs a rights-based approach to childcare policy, Kiersey's main research question is: "Does the knowledge constructed within Irish ECEC policy discourse hinder the development and implementation of early childhood education and care policy from a rights basis?" (p. 6). My understanding of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis methodology is that its aim is to answer "how" questions through its methodical and systematic analysis of textual, microsociological and macrosociological elements of discourse. Given that Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis approach implies a dialectical relationship between discourse and systems of power, as described earlier, one can presume the answer to Kiersey's research question is "yes". That is to say, the theoretical work behind Fairclough's discourse is predicated on the assumption that discourse is shaped by systems of power and their surrounding social structures, and vice versa. Based on this underlying philosophy, the purpose of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is to explain and expose the relationship between discourse and power by answering "how" questions. While Kiersey's study does yield a comprehensive analysis that answers these important "how" questions, I believe the research question should have been phrased accordingly. Moreover, in targeting a specific discourse to examine—that of children's rights—Kiersey's research assumes a predetermined path to investigate how childcare policy hinders the development of a rights-based approach to

childcare. While my discourse analysis led me to examine a children's rights discourse surrounding childcare, I entered my research study with an open-ended research question in order to allow my investigation to encompass a wider range of constructions surrounding children. That is to say, my interest was not limited to exploring how discourse has constructed or obstructed a rights-based approach to childcare; rather, my aim was to explain how the political discourse surrounding childcare constructs childhood and the collective identities of children, and how, in turn, these constructions enact, reproduce and legitimize the Federal government of Canada's policy choices. Importantly, while our two approaches to conducting children-centred Critical Discourse Analysis do differ, our analyses reveal similar findings within the Irish and Canadian contexts. Kiersey's main conclusion is that "the truths that are known about ECEC [early childhood education and care] within Irish policy discourse have yet to evolve to an understanding where they strengthen the argument for the provision of a robustly defined concept of high quality services to all young children as a right" (p. 314). Her recommendation, stemming from this research, is for a reframing of the ECEC political discourse so that children's rights principles are more prominently connected to child care.

Dobrowolsky and Saint-Martin (2005) focus their work on the representations of collective identities (e.g., children, poor families), and find that children-centred approaches to social policy have shifted from a welfare protectionist construction of childhood, from the 1980s and 1990s, to a social investment construction of childhood, from the early 2000s to present. The social investment construction of childhood is reflected in such policies and strategies as Canada's National Children's Agenda and the Early Childhood Development Initiative. Such a construction views and values children's programming as a fiscally-sound investment, promoting the economic growth of a nation by maximizing the learning and earning potential of the next generation. Importantly, these scholars connect the social investment construction of childhood

with the *new science of early childhood development discourse*, which I describe in chapter three. Childcare scholars have argued that childcare has not progressed as a social investment because of a persistent neo-conservative/neo-liberal ideology that opposes childcare (especially ‘institutionalized’ childcare, such as out-of-home centre-based care) because it undermines the family’s role in teaching young children, takes away parental freedom (Broad & Foster, 2003) and contrasts with taken-for-granted values that romanticize childhood as a sacred site wherein children must be protected from the outside world (Campbell-Barr & Bogatic, 2017).

Karila’s study (2012) identifies a discourse of “institutionalised childhood” (p. 585) in the Nordic countries wherein this notion of childhood is a socially-accepted cultural belief. In these countries, which I described earlier as social democratic regimes, parents “take it for granted that public institutions are required for the appropriate education of young children” (Karila, 2012, p. 585). The rights-based model of childcare in the Nordic countries is thought to have brought about economic gender equality and economic welfare for the whole of society. However, an investment discourse can be seen in the recent history of these countries, that which parallels the international trend of positioning childcare as a social investment and the valuing of children as future citizens (Karila, 2012). Karila’s study contributes to discourse-focused childcare studies and illustrates the capacity for change and continuity related to social welfare and children’s policy among differing nations.

Pacini-Ketchabaw’s (2005) study employs Foucault’s historical discourse analysis approach to examine Ontario’s Day Nurseries Act. Her historical analysis reveals differing discourses of childcare throughout time, which in turn have led to differing constructions of children throughout time (e.g., targets of needed medical supervision, targets of behavioural correction, and targets of financial support). Pacini-Ketchabaw’s study (2005) is an example of a children-centred lens to critical discourse analysis. Her historical approach offers insight into the

changing ways that discourse has influenced and shaped the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children. My study builds upon her contribution to children-centred research by employing a more rigorous and systematic approach to textual analysis, an aspect of discourse analysis that is limited by a Foucauldian analysis. Moreover, my study examines a selection of more current policy documents, which expands upon this historically-focused study.

Mtahabwa's research (2010) on pre-primary education in Tanzania is an international study that examines the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children through discourse analysis. Purporting to use Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, the study's fidelity to this methodology is not clearly established. Mtahabwa suggests that there exist two main arguments that frame the debate surrounding childcare: a rights argument and an investment argument. He further suggests that the rights-based frame of childcare has been subservient to an economic investment frame in historical policy documents. Pointing to examples of policy action by the Tanzania government, Mtahabwa concludes that the absence of children-centred considerations of quality (e.g., democratic participation, social pedagogical approaches) positions the needs of children below the needs of the state's economic pursuits.

2.9 Strengths and Limitations of Social Constructionist-based Studies

The above-cited feminist-based studies demonstrate the integration of a gendered perspective with discourse analysis. Through a gender lens, the authors of these studies have revealed the relationship between discourse and the disempowerment of women. I expand upon these feminist-based studies by integrating a children-centred lens with critical discourse analysis to reveal the relationship between discourse and the disempowerment of children. Moreover, my use of Critical Discourse Analysis, with its emphasis on the "how", reveals the myriad ways through which discourse—via text, talk, social practices, and systems of power—subjugates children.

The children-centred studies I examined provide important examples of children's rights-based discourse studies that reflect a UNCRC-derived definition of rights-based childcare. However, while I support the UNCRC tenets of childcare, I believe there is merit in defining children-centred considerations of childcare from a critical childhood theory lens, as I have done in chapter three. That is to say, my interest was not limited to exploring how discourse has constructed or obstructed a rights-based approach to childcare; rather, my aim was to explain how the political discourse surrounding childcare constructs childhood and the collective identities of children, and how, in turn, these constructions enact, reproduce and legitimize the Federal government of Canada's policy choices. In this way, my understanding of children-centred childcare is grounded in a theoretical perspective—that of childhood theory—separate, yet complementary, to that of the definition of childcare found within the UNCRC. Further, as some scholars suggest, examining childcare solely through a human rights perspective may limit childcare to a legally-defined construct rather than as a socially-defined construct. Indeed, scholars have pointed to the problem of legalism as a limitation of human rights theory (Ferguson, 2013; O'Byrne, 2012). In contrast, childhood theory constructs the rights of children through a sociological lens, regardless of a legal framework, such as the UNCRC. Through this theoretical perspective, children are considered rights-bearers not because of the UNCRC, but because they are socially accepted as such. In this way, my study builds upon these important children-centred studies of childcare and contributes to this emerging body of scholarly work. Last, the research paradigm of critical realism that underpins my study allows me to straddle the epistemologies and ontologies of historical institutionalist-based and social constructionist-based approaches to policy study. To this end, the textual, microsociological, and macrosociological components of the methodologies of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse

Analysis recognize the dialectical influence of the material and non-materials aspects of the social world.

2.10 Conclusion

While one can approach the study of childcare policy through a variety of well-established theoretical perspectives and analytical approaches, as I've reviewed throughout this chapter, I chose to critically examine childcare policy discourse through a children-centred lens, an approach validated by Karila (2012), Kiersey and Hayes (2010), Kiersey (2011), Pacini-Ketchabaw (2005), and Mtahabwa (2010). I believe a children-centred lens provides an important window through which to extend the knowledge base related to childcare and explore the landscape of children's policy within the social world.

As demonstrated in this chapter, non-institutionalist social constructionist-based approaches that concentrate their study on discourse, ideas, social change, actors and agency may complement historical institutionalist approaches, serving to address research questions that relate to change and continuity of policy trends. Within the broad area of discourse studies, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1995, 2001, 2003) and Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) Political Discourse Analysis provide a way through which to examine the connections between the textual and micro-level aspects of language and the macro-level aspects of discourse, including, in some cases the relationship between discourse and power. As demonstrated, integrating a children-centred lens into my discourse study is an approach that other researchers have taken in order to strengthen the explanatory power of discourse. I build upon the existing examples of children-centred discourse studies in the current knowledge base by adopting a theoretical and methodological approach that provides a rigorous and systematic approach to analysis.

CHAPTER THREE: CONSTRUCTIONS OF CHILDHOOD AND THE COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES OF CHILDREN

3.1 Introduction

My research study is grounded in the emerging body of scholarly work called the new studies of childhood and a children-centred theoretical body of work called the new sociology of childhood (Mayall, 2013), referred to as “childhood theory” by some scholars and a term I adopt herein. The integration of a children-centred theoretical lens with the theory and methodology of critical discourse is an approach that has been used to maximize the explanatory power of discourse theory in the area of childcare studies (Karila, 2012; Kiersey, 2011; Kiersey and Hayes, 2010; Mtahabwa, 2010; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2005). While my research methodology was guided by Fairclough’s critical approach to discourse theory, childhood theory provided an important foundation to my theoretical framework; one which integrates well with Fairclough’s approach (Alderson, 2013). According to Fairclough (2001), Critical Discourse Analysis should be integrated with other theoretical perspectives in order to enrich the analysis of an issue. A central tenet of Critical Discourse Analysis is the emphasis on the normative and explanatory critique of discourse. In this way, the techniques of discourse analysis are not simply descriptive, they are political in objective, seeking to reveal injustices and oppressions that can only be understood through a critical understanding of the issue under study (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012), such as the way childhood theorists seek to reveal systemic oppression against children, termed *adultism* by some childhood theorists (Honig, 2009, p. 64; LeFrançois, 2013), in the analysis of children-related policy. Incorporating childhood theory with Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis allowed me to examine the political discourse surrounding childcare through the critical lens of childhood theory, revealing the ways in which

Canada's childcare policies have placed little consideration on children's needs, children's equity, and children's rights.

Childhood theory is a distinct theoretical perspective that puts children and childhood at the centre of its concern (Wells, 2009). Established a few decades ago "the social study of childhood has become, in a relatively short time, an international and interdisciplinary research field with a recognized place in the scientific community and an acknowledged voice in the public discourse about children" (Honig, 2009, p. 62). Proponents of this approach suggest that in studies of the social condition of childhood, children should be extracted, conceptually, from parents, family and professionals. In other words, children's unique needs are more easily revealed when they are regarded as the subject of study, rather than as part of a unit of study (e.g., family, household). I describe the application of a childhood lens to research in section 3.3.

3.2 Definitions

As defined by James and James, *childhood* is the structural site occupied by the collectivity of *children*, within which a *child* may exercise agency (2004, p. 14). The construction of childhood can be viewed as both a period of time in an individual child's life and as a permanent structural form that is a component of societies (Qvortrup, 2009). As a structural form, childhood is the social space in which children live their lives. While this social space changes throughout history, it remains a continuous existence and reality for children across time. In this way the construction of childhood as a social site reflects continuity and change (Qvortrup, 2009). Moreover, the structural site of childhood is considered socially, historically, politically, and culturally-constituted. This lens allows one to see changes in the construction of childhood as "the product of the relationships that adults have with children, relationships that are located within the broader social, political and economic frameworks that structure societies

and give shape to institutional arrangements (e.g., work, school, families)” (James & James, 2004, p. 27).

At the same time, some childhood theorists recognize that childhood has basic physical and developmental patterns that are near-universal to all children, though the ways in which these biological factors are interpreted vary considerably across cultural contexts (Alderson, 2013; James & James, 2004). This recognition of children’s biological development reflects the epistemology and ontology of critical realism, a research paradigm which acknowledges both the material (e.g., biological features of children) and non-material (e.g., social construction of childhood) aspects of the world. In this way, critical realist theorists caution against reducing the concept of childhood to one that is purely rooted in discourse, a limitation often levied against wholly-interpretivist approaches (Tikly, 2015). Critical realism has been integrated with childhood theory most notably in the recent work of Alderson (2013), through which she distinguishes the natural characteristics of children from those that are considered social constructions. The biological characteristics of children’s development are thus considered to have “transcendental realism” (Alderson, 2013, p. 53).

Just as there are opposing perspectives toward the agency-structure debate in social research (Elder-Vass, 2008; Prout, 2011; Turner, 1986), there exists, too, opposing perspectives toward the relationship between *social structure* and *children’s agency* within childhood theory (James, 2009). While children’s agency is a central tenet of childhood theory, scholars have debated the extent to which children are able to exert their agency within the social world (Alderson, 2013; James, 2009; Prout & James, 1997). A critical realist lens acknowledges agency, including children’s agency, while at the same time recognizing that such agency is constrained by societal structures (Bhaskar, 1998), especially for young children, given their biological dependence on adults. In this way, Bhaskar’s approach to structure-agency is similar

to structuration theory (Giddens, 1993) and actor network theory (Callon & Latour in Prout, 2011) in that these approaches recognize the interplay between social structures and agency (Alderson, 2013; Houston, 2001; Prout, 2011). However, those who favour critical realism argue that structuration theory and actor network theory do not give enough weight to the constraining influence of structure, especially in the context of children's agency in the social order (Alderson, 2012; Alderson, 2013; Elder-Vass, 2008).

3.3 Strengths and Limitations of Applying Childhood Theory to Research

Childhood theory has made an important contribution to social research by ensuring children are considered in the examination of the social world (Mayall, 2013). In this way, the objective of childhood theory is similar to that of feminist theory: just as feminist theory reveals the gendered effects of society, childhood theory reveals the *generational order* within society (Alanen, 2009; Honig, 2009; Prout & James, 1997). The objective of a generational lens, or a children-centred lens, as I've termed it, is similar to that of a gendered lens: to expose and redress the ways in which children are over-looked and disempowered in the social world (Alanen, 2009). As *generations* are social groups formed within certain cultural and historical contexts, a generational perspective reflects the idea that there exists a system of social ordering that pertains to a collectivity of children based on their particular social location from which they act and participate in society (Alanen, 2009). Such a lens acknowledges the intersection of many social orders and recognizes that the social world is simultaneously gendered, classed, raced and generationed (Alanen, 2009).

In social research on children's issues, childhood theory ensures the recognition of the important cultural, social and political contexts in which the generational order shapes the power relationship between children and adults (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009). Moreover, a childhood theory lens to social research demands careful attention is paid to the selection of methodology,

methods of data collection, and interpretation of data. For example, ethnography is considered an important methodology to investigate children's issues because it does not test hypotheses. Instead, ethnography attempts to discover the knowledge and competencies of groups of actors, including children, in its studies (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009). As well, methods such as interviews and focus groups can also be used to gather information directly from children. In doing so, however, childhood theorists argue that it is essential to accommodate children under study by allowing them to present their experiences in their own way, without having to conform to adults' expectations related to language and social rules (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009).

There is an inherent limitation in children-centred research in that such research is near-always conducted by an adult researcher who sees the world through her adult-centric perspectives, values, and biases. No more is this true than in an ethnographic research study on infants' experience in family-based childcare settings (Elwick, Bradley & Sumsion, 2014). In their large-scale study, the authors draw upon the principles of Dillon's ethics of particularity and reversibility, a practice whereby researchers engage in continuous ethical reflection during their interactions with infant research participants (Dillon, 2012). Ethical reflection is a process whereby researchers are deeply mindful and aware of their research participants in order to emphasize and identify with them in a meaningful way. In this study, researchers engaged with their infant subjects through a process of ethical reflection within which they "created space" (Elwick et al., 2014, p. 882) for the infants to evoke an embodied response in the researchers. The authors of this study conclude that through ethical reflection it is possible to conduct participatory-based research approaches with children, including young infants, while recognizing that, as in all research, observation is always limited by our own perspectives, values and biases (Elwick et al., 2014).

As I have described in chapter one, in conducting my critical discourse analysis, I employed a process of reflexive journaling whereby I continuously reflected on the historical constructions of childhood, the collective identities of children, and the ways in which society's values and objectives may subjugate children, particularly as they relate to childcare. While there will always exist inherent researcher bias in the interpretation of qualitative research data, including that of Critical Discourse Analysis, the process of reflexivity and ethical reflection is generally considered an acceptable approach to help mitigate interpretive bias (Alderson, 2013; Bloor, 2011). Further, per the approaches of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis, the claim of research objectivity is never made. Rather, the analyst, steeped in the theoretical body of work she has chosen to integrate into her analysis, claims a political objective for the social group or social issue under study. As an analyst adopting this methodology, I reveal my own political objective as follows: my decision to integrate childhood theory with Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis affords me the opportunity to focus my examination on children-centred considerations of childcare policy—aspects of childcare policy that affect children, rather than parents, families, communities, and economies—in order to bring attention to the issue of childcare within the context of children's needs, children's rights, and children's equity.

3.4 Historical Constructions of Childhood and Collective Identities of Children

Applying a children-centred lens to discourse analysis research is an emerging field, the key of which is to “deconstruct the ideas, the models, and knowledge about children and childhood as social constructions that are embedded in specific historical situations and interests” (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009, p. 89). The studies of Therborn (1993, 1996) and Hendrick (1997b, 2003) represent important examples of approaching discourse analysis through a children-centred lens, the key to which relates to the necessary attention the analyst must pay to the

historical sociological conditions of childhood. With a focus on political discourse, including laws, policies, and parliamentary debates, these studies reveal the ways through which such discourse has shaped the changing constructions of childhood, over time. As such, I have conducted a historical analysis of the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children in the following section. Included in this historical analysis is an examination of the origins of childcare, Canada's childcare policy choices, Canada's commitment to the UNCRC, and the ways in which Canada's childcare political discourse has constructed childhood and the collective identities of children. History is essential to the study of childhood as it facilitates critical thinking about childhood as a social construction (James & Prout, 1997) and allows one to see how today's values related to children, are, in fact, the product of historical, social, economic and political contexts. However, it must be noted that a history of childhood is written from an adult perspective, which inevitably results in a disassociation between the historian and subject (Hendrick, 2009).

Many childhood theorists acknowledge Phillippe Aries' book, *Centuries of Childhood* (1962), as having a significant influence on the establishment of the new studies of childhood and credit Aries with the paradigm-shifting view of childhood as a historically-situated social construction (Hendrick, 2009; Wells, 2009). Though his assertion that childhood did not exist prior to modernity (Aries, 1962) was contested by many, his theory was arguably the first to present childhood as an ever-changing social construct rather than a timeless and universal stage of life (Hendrick, 2009; Wells, 2009).

Following Aries, a sociologist of childhood studies, Lee (1982), put forward a theory that illustrated the changing nature of childhood over time and the three paradigms of childhood. He theorized that the view of childhood evolved first from a property construction in pre-industrial times in which children were viewed not unlike pets, slaves, or chattel; to a protection

construction at the turn of industrial times in which children were viewed as dependents in need of saving; to a rights construction of childhood, which emerged through the children's rights movement in the early 20th century whereby children are viewed as having some level of independence from their parents and family (Lee as cited in Shanahan, 2007). These three paradigms of childhood are elaborated upon through the following abridged history of childhood.

3.4.1 Childhood in the Middle Ages

While Aries first proposed that childhood, as a concept, did not exist in the Middle Ages, most scholars of today's childhood studies agree that childhood did, indeed, exist in this early era, although it was a short period of time in a child's life (Davidson, 2010; Te One, 2005). By age six or seven years old, children were viewed as small adults, with adult-like responsibilities and obligations to contribute to the economic well-being of the family (Davidson, 2010). In these pre-industrial times, homes of the rich – big houses – embodied the predominant mode of production tied to the free/cheap labour provided by poor children (Gillis, 2009). The single family house, as is now the norm in today's Western society, was uncommon back then; home was the place that nurtured you at the moment, not a special place associated with the biological family of origin (Gillis, 2009).

Along with their economic responsibilities, children were legally under full parental control and viewed as a form of chattel or property well into their adolescence (Davidson, 2010; Te One, 2005). Reflected in the legal principle of "reasonable chastisement" (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2005, p. 22), parents had the right to subject their children to corporal punishment, dangerous and grueling work conditions, and, could even sell their children into apprenticeship. Children in this era were considered not-fully human, thus belonging to a group of *others*, along with women, slaves, Indigenous peoples, and poor people. With uncontested parental power of control, children were, in fact, the legal property of their parents:

voiceless and without rights of their own (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2005). Further, the period of childhood in the Middle Ages was protected only until children, namely, poor children, were physically able to provide cheap labour for the wealthy. This exploitation of poor children was sanctioned by multiple systems of power including the family, the market, and the state because of the broad acceptance of the economic priorities of that time (Gillis, 2009).

While people today might argue that children are treated more fairly in contemporary society, it is easy to see the vestiges of these pre-modern cultural attitudes toward children: children are still commonly considered the private responsibility of parents (Broad & Foster, 2003); their rights, while ratified through the UNCRC, are often ignored and denied (including the right to childcare) (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 2011); and their subjugation to power differentials within the family unit continues to put them at great risk of abuse (Alderson, 2012; Jensen, 2009).

3.4.2 Childhood in Modernity

During the early period of modernity a different social attitude toward children emerged, thus moving the construction of childhood from the property perspective to that of protection. Rooted in the era of Romanticism, childhood was considered a special period of time to be kept safe from the corruptions of adulthood (Hendrick, 1997a). Philosopher John Locke's (Locke cited in Hendrick, 1997a) concept of *tabula rasa* constructed young children as a blank slate: that, in order to learn and develop, must draw upon their sensory experiences from the environment. And philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Rousseau cited in Hendrick, 1997a) viewed children as having natural goodness, virtues at risk of being corrupted by negative types of experience and education (Hendrick, 1997a). These romantic views became changed with the onset of the industrial revolution and the increased need for cheap/free child labour. Soon the value of the obedient child worker became favoured, and with it the religious concept of original sin gained

in social acceptance (Hendrick, 1997a). Through this religious sanction, society embraced the value of a firm and disciplined approach to parenting and the family ideals of duty and respect (Hendrick, 1997a). Children became prized for being disciplined, obedient and pious (Hendrick, 1997a), and parents were valued for their contributions to raising such children.

In this period of early industrialization, few people were concerned with child labour. In fact, child labour was regarded as an appropriate way for poor children to learn economic, social and moral principles. This view changed in the nineteenth century when the mode of production became mechanized and the demand for high-skilled workers, rather than low-skilled child labourers, was deemed critical to economic success (Hendrick, 1997a). With this production shift, child labourers became viewed in society as victims forced into unnatural employment, denied the right to a protected and innocent childhood. According to Hendrick, the cultural campaign to reclaim the laboured child for civilization was one of the first steps toward the social construction of a universal childhood (1997a) whereby Western values concerning children were inserted into the cultures of other countries.

In this examination of child labour, it is important to regard the laboured-child within the historical and cultural context. The majority of children labourers worked in agriculture, industry and services, and their employment was mostly seasonal, as opposed to fixed days and hours. Working children moved seamlessly between domestic tasks, the labour market, school and play (Hendrick, 1997a), and their work ensured their place within the public sphere, in contrast to the private world of children today. In the context of today's developing countries, some scholars see Western attitudes toward child labour as naïve and paternalistic (Nieuwenhuys, 2009; Wells, 2009). Currently, one in five of the world's 1.5 billion children are involved in production either for the market or for their own family (Wells, 2009, p. 99). And many of these children are defending their right to work. Children-centred research in the area of child labour indicates that

these children they do not want their work to be prohibited; they want to be valued as contributing members of their society and not seen as victims of ignorant or unfeeling parents. These children call for policy solutions that include flexible schooling options that allow them to work, rather than the imposition of schooling as a way of preventing them from work (Nieuwenhuys, 2009). A non-Western view of the laboured child is markedly different compared to that of developed countries whereby laws and societal norms prohibit young children from labour (Wells, 2009). Such an example illustrates how easy it can be to think of today's Western values toward children as timeless and universal rather than historically and culturally-situated.

To meet the demand for a skilled labour force, public schools became an essential tool in production and capitalist endeavour, serving as training grounds for the next generation of skilled workers in Western society (Boyden, 1997). At this point in history learning became separated from the sphere of paid labour, and was placed in a private world for children. With the onset of mass education, the concept of the schooled child emerged; public education was considered to be an essential prevention tool to stop the reproduction of dangerous and non-desirable individuals and social classes, and a way to impose a vision for societal norms (Hendrick, 1997a). The construction of the schooled child brought about a number of adult attitudes toward children, including the acceptance of physical discipline of children to gain their obedience in the classroom (Hendrick, 2009). As such, Western states could ensure their continuity through the transmission of particular sets of values and patterns of thought; in other words, a system of cultural reproduction. The history of school shows how public education for children established itself alongside the construction of juvenile delinquency and societal concerns about street children (Gillis, 2009). Such constructions of childhood helped to establish schooling as an instrument of state control, sanctioned by society (James & James, 2004; Wells, 2011).

The expansion of capitalism also changed the landscape of the Western family home (James & Prout, 1997). The sphere of the household, no longer the site of production, became a private and isolated world, separated apart from that of the public, male-dominated domain of the workplace. With this change, the ideal of a male-breadwinner family positioned children within the nuclear family, a societal structure that reflected a gendered division of labour that was often enforced through family-focused state legislation (James & James, 2004). Through this new family norm, childhood became an increasingly isolated place for children, as it was, too, for women (Gillis, 2009; Zeiher, 2009). This historical examination of child policy trends reveals how societal shifts regarding children dovetailed with shifts in economic production, thus revealing the interconnectedness between economic and cultural values.

3.4.3 Childhood in Contemporary Time

According to childhood theorists, the shift toward globalization in today's world has revealed great diversity in family life experiences, including the pluralization of family forms, children being born outside of marriage, same-sex parents, the increase in single-mother families, and the rise in divorce rates and co-parenting arrangements (James & James, 2004; Jensen, 2009). The historical roots of the institution of marriage are an important consideration when examining family forms and the constructions of childhood, as it was through marriage that children were legitimated and granted citizenship in society (Jensen, 2009). Marriage was the social institution constructed to overcome the biological insecurity of fatherhood, and formalizing families through marriage proved an effective way of controlling children and protecting them as a family-owned resource (Jensen, 2009). In today's Western culture, children are still constructed as belongings of the family unit, rather than as persons within the social order. And they are also kept dependent upon their families for much longer than is considered necessary in other societies (Kitzinger, 1997), reflective of a sentimental construction of

childhood that is at the same time both nurturing and constraining (Boyden, 1997). Some argue that the sentimental construction of childhood unnecessarily shields children from the adult spaces of the public world and limits children's agency and freedom of movement. This sentimentality toward childhood is evident in other ways: family time, for example, is no longer something that just happens; instead it is organized and planned around special occasions, recorded and commemorated (Gillis, 2009).

A critical lens to examining the sentimental construction of childhood reveals a conservative tradition of adult-child relationships wherein children's power, autonomy and freedom are significantly limited under the guise of protection and children's "best interests" (James & James, 2004, p. 83). And, while parents and children may negotiate on decisions within the home the two parties do not have the same bargaining power: parents have authority and power to punish and reward, while children, generally, do not (Solberg, 1997).

Scholars suggest that today's social structure of family has a paradoxical relationship with the state. While on one hand it resists state intervention and clings to a claim for privacy, it also relies on "the law as a superordinate mechanism to reinforce the power relationship between adults and children" (James & James, 2004, p. 190). Similarly, the government's interest in the family is motivated by its concern to control children, approaching the family as ally in the battle for social control (James & James, 2004, p. 191). In many countries, scholars suggest, a government's claim to support the family is actually a veiled attempt to control and raise "the next generation of compliant citizens" (James & James, 2004, p. 192).

Interestingly, despite the dramatic increase in working mothers and this impact upon children's lives and family norms, studies have shown that since the early 1980s parental time spent with children has increased (Frones, 2009, p. 281). Some scholars suggest that this may be due to the increased pressure parents feel, especially mothers, to demonstrate that even though

they work outside the home, their children remain the top priority (Frones, 2009). As is now the new Western norm, parents provide their children with multiple forms of costly recreational and learning experiences (Gillis, 2009). However, such opportunities are not the reality for all children: poor children are vastly under-represented in these types of programs (Lareau as cited in Frones, 2009), thus the divide between affluent children and poor children, evident as far back as the Middle Ages, continues into present time.

3.5 Discourses of Childhood

In contemporary Western society, the psychology of child development has long influenced the constructions of childhood and the identities of children (Apple, 2006; Alderson, 2013; Cahan, 2006; Finkelstein, 2006; Wells, 2009; Woodhead, 1997). A historical childhood analysis by Barbara Finkelstein (2006) suggests the discourse of *developmentalism* was taken to prominence in the early twentieth century, an era marked by the “battle for the minds and hearts of children, youth, and families by scientific experts” (p. 235). Finkelstein uses the term child science to refer to the many natural and social sciences that regard children as objects of inquiry including: psychology, medicine, sociology, economics, anthropology, and political science. She argues that child psychology emerged as the dominant childhood discourse of the twentieth century, and, with it, the tremendous influence in defining the “normal” child through developmental measurements. Along with the influence of developmentalism, Finkelstein argues, came a pathological and deficit-based view of childhood and children, an influence, she suggests, that influences the policy arenas of education, welfare, and parenting to this day.

Beginning with the work of pioneer G. Stanley Hall at the turn of the twentieth century, developmental psychology strived to gain intellectual credibility with its crop of scientific journals, meetings, and public and private sponsorship (Cahan, 2006, p.17). The 1930s saw a behaviourist approach to child development, one that profiled itself as a strictly scientific

endeavour modeled on biological and medical sciences and isolated from the broader social sciences (p.22). Further, according to Woolworth (2006), the described turf war between the medical sciences and the psychological sciences, over which scientific expert could be the ruling authority in diagnosing a child's deficient mental state, and, subsequently determining their continuation or discontinuation in formal schooling, was settled in the 1920s. It was in this era of history when, Woolworth argues, "the disciplinary authority of clinical psychology, exemplified by the institutionalization of intelligence testing, had surpassed the biomedical discourse on schooling (2006, p. 112).

Following this, according to Cahan (2006), the 1960s brought a new "cognitive revolution" (p. 31) as child science moved from the laboratory toward the environments of school and home, in the study of children. Through this new approach to scientific inquiry, no longer were the effects of family, school, community, class, race and culture discounted as "noise in the data" (Cahan, 2006, p. 31); social and cultural contexts were now recognized and included under the purview of child study. This shift, according to Apple (2006), led to the deskilling of parents and the notion of "scientific motherhood" whereby modern motherhood was based on scientific knowledge, not maternal instinct (p. 198). Lasch (1977) has suggested that this era of deskilling brought forth a destruction of the family, whereby the authority of parents became overruled by child professionals. Some historians of childhood (Beatty, Cahan & Grant, 2006) argue for the critical examination of any discourse that privileges child science due to the epistemic privilege of power inherent within positivist-based claims. Child science, they caution, continues to influence the views, values and roles of children, families, and parents (including, motherhood). Moreover, they argue, decisions regarding childhood research, children's policy, and child-rearing must never be based on science alone; ethical and moral considerations must guide scientific pursuit.

Today's cross-cultural studies of childhood reveal that developmentalism is not the universal way of viewing children and measuring their abilities against normative benchmarks. In many non-Western cultures, age has not been the most salient factor shaping childhoods (Woodhead, 1997). However, this does not discount the knowledge of developmentalism entirely. A critical realist lens to this child science recognizes the near-universal phases of development in children's lives, while at the same time acknowledges the role of culture in interpreting these phases and attaching to them expectations of children's abilities (Woodhead, 1997). The wide social acceptance of one such developmental discourse, Bowlby's attachment theory (Bowlby, 1953), espoused the following taken-for-granted truth claim: "what is believed to be essential for mental health is that an infant or young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute—one person to steadily mother him) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment" (Bowlby as cited in Woodhead 1997, p. 70). This Western-based theory of "monotropism" (Woodhead, 1997, p. 72), whereby children have a predisposition to become attached to only one parental figure, has had a significant and lasting influence on Western society's values regarding parenting, including a wariness of non-parental care arrangements and a deep-seated desire to keep children in the family home, protected from the public world (Woodhead, 1997). Cross-cultural studies, however, demonstrate that non-Western parenting practices reflective of multiple care-giver family models yield positive outcomes for children and positive relationships between caregivers and children (Boyden, 1997; Woodhead, 1997). A critical realist analysis to attachment discourse illustrates that while, indeed, positive attachment is a biological need for children, there are different ways in which caregivers and families can fulfil this need—Western society's monotropism approach is just one of the ways (Alderson, 2013; Wells, 2009).

Most recently the discourse of the *new science of early childhood development* (ECD), including epigenetics and early brain development (McCain, Mustard & McCuaig, 2011, p. 39), has led to a rejuvenated government interest in children's potential to advance the economic goals of prosperity and growth (Cleghorn & Prochner, 2012). Alongside the new science of ECD discourse, an *investable child* construction (Prentice, 2009, p. 689) regarding young children has taken hold, and within it the goal of maximizing children's potential for their contribution to the economy (Prentice, 2009; Wells, 2011). A critical lens to this discourse reveals the taken-for-granted assumptions surrounding children's early developmental needs and the connection between such needs and the pursuit of economic growth. This is not to suggest that the new science of ECD must be dismissed outright, rather, it requires a critical realist lens in order to discern biological truths from those based on economic and social interests. For example, international research illustrates the many health benefits for breastfeeding infants, especially for those children who are breastfeed in the first year or two of life (World Health Organization, 2008). As such, children benefit from child and family policies that promote breastfeeding such as extended maternity leave. A critical realist lens reveals the biological difference between infants' needs and the needs of older children, and promotes the importance of a variety of policies that respond to children's varying and differing needs.

3.5.1 The Paradigms of Childhood

Lee's three paradigms of childhood (1982) illustrate the dominant constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children: a *property* construction, a *protection* construction, and a *rights* construction. Applying this paradigm to the study of childcare, Davidson (2010) suggests that these constructions, enacted, reproduced and legitimized through discourse, influence the views and values of childcare. For example, when childhood is viewed and valued through a property construction, children are considered the property of the family,

and, as such, they are positioned as an obstacle to working parents (namely, women). From this, childcare becomes viewed and valued as a labour support program, that which addresses the obstacle of children to working parents, and does little to address children-centred considerations of childcare, such as social pedagogic approaches to quality or democratic participation.

When childhood is viewed and valued through a protection construction, children, particularly the needy and poor, are considered the object of child-saving intervention (Davidson, 2010).

Through this construction, childcare is viewed and valued as a targeted, and, often, stigmatized, program for those children who fit a criterion based on their family's status. And, when childhood is viewed and valued through a rights construction, children are considered citizens—rather than citizens-in-the-making—fully human, with a voice that must be listened to and rights that must be upheld through progressive social policy and a caring society. Through this construction, childcare is viewed and valued as the right of all children, irrespective of family type, parental employment status and income level (OECD, 2006).

In recent years, some countries—those reflective of social democratic regimes, reviewed in section 2.6—now view the access to high-quality childcare as a children's right (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2012). A rights-based perspective to childcare implies that childcare must be upheld through progressive social policy and a caring society (Ife as cited in Hick, 2005). Such an approach honours the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which includes children's rights to childcare (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005) as stipulated in Article 18 and sub-sections 18.2 and 18.3 (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Before I describe this movement for ensuring children's rights to childcare, I provide a critical examination of the origins of childcare to illustrate the dialectical relationship between the historical constructions of childhood and contemporary approaches to childcare policy.

3.6 Examining the Origins of Childcare through a Children-centred Lens

Foucault's concept of bio-politics (Foucault cited in Bundy, 2012) suggests that in the seventeenth century medicine became a way of regulating the life and death of populations, especially with impoverished populations (p. 598). Further, Foucault argued, sickness and disease became health issues to be managed and controlled by governing authority, leading to the taken-for-granted assumption about the authority role of medicine, a "politics of health" (p. 596). With the rise of industrialization, the governing authority's focus on health turned toward the economic-driven objective of ensuring a healthy labour force, in addition to protecting the upper classes from the diseases of the poor (Bundy, 2012). This attention to health was then targeted to children, and the family-as-institution was constructed as an ally to government in the common pursuit of producing the healthiest next generation of labour as possible (Bundy, 2012). This "family-as-alliance" (Foucault as cited in Bundy, 2012, p. 597) mechanism became a taken-for-granted assumption about the family's role in society, which soon extended to the expectations surrounding motherhood. Women, as mothers, were ultimately responsible for children's health and well-being, as opposed to the recognition of systemic supports (e.g., ability to afford nutritious food, access to safe housing), and failure to uphold this duty was met through harsh societal criticism and punitive government intervention (Bundy, 2012; Vandebroek, 2006; Wall, 2013). Donzelot (1979), a student of Foucault's, extends the concept of "family-as-alliance", suggesting the modern family is both "queen and prisoner" (p. 7) with women—more so, upper-class women—bestowed "civil authority" by male health professionals through the social status of mother (p. 21). The vestiges of these societal expectations toward mothering is evident today, however, cross-cultural researchers argue that they are based on Western values rather than biological determination. For example, Boyden (1997) shows that in many non-Western societies children are the responsibility of the extended family rather than the nuclear

family, and the role of relatives other than parents in child-rearing is vital for many cultures (p. 204).

Further Foucaudian analysis suggests that in the period of industrialization, the politics of health shifted toward a “politics of education” (Bundy, 2012, p. 601; Donzelot, 1979). While schools became sanctioned as the best educational site for older children, they were considered to be a waste of resources on young children, who were considered too biologically immature to learn; as such, they were to remain at home under the responsibility of mothers (Wong as cited in Wong, 2007). Some critical discourse scholars (Cannella, 1999; Vandebroek, 2006) suggest that the roots of the politics of education continue to bear on today’s childcare policy discourse, especially within liberal countries where childcare for young children is constructed as a “necessary societal evil” (Vandebroek, 2006, p. 371). Such a view acknowledges that childcare provides needed labour support for certain families—those with working mothers—yet such a service comes at a high societal price: it removes young children from the ideal situation of stay-at-home mothering and the surveillance and protection afforded through the private and domestic world of the family home. This history can help to explain why in many of today’s developed societies, including Canada’s, the responsibility for securing a childcare provider commonly falls to the working mother. Moreover, such history also explains the distrust some parents feel toward out-of-home childcare centres and their preference for home-based childcare solutions. Such home-based options appear to replicate the family home environment so they seemingly provide the next best thing to the stay-at-home domestic world for children (Broad & Foster, 2003; Vandebroek, 2006), despite the fact that international childcare experts suggest centre-based options reflect higher standards of quality and demonstrate better outcomes for children (Vandebroek, 2006).

3.7 The Children's Rights Movement

The history of the children's rights movement dates back nearly a century with the establishment of the Save the Children International Union (SCIU), based in Geneva, shortly after World War I; this era was influential in establishing the first international Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1924 (Eichsteller, 2009). The next international declaration on children's rights emerged in 1959, and, though it was not legally binding, this declaration was adopted by unanimous vote in the General Assembly signaling a shift towards a human rights-based perspective on children within the international community (Eichsteller, 2009). These two Declarations influenced the UNCRC (1989), a treaty instrument of international law which began to be drafted in 1979—the year declared the International Year of the Child, a watershed moment in the international child rights movement.

According to Freeman, the children's rights movement recognizes that children “have agency; that they are participants in social processes; that they are persons not property; that they constitute multiple voices rather than a collective and undifferentiated class” (Freeman as cited in Smith, 2007a, p.151). Central to children's rights is the obligation of parents, guardians, society, and governments to create the conditions through progressive social policies wherein children can exercise their rights (Smith, 2007b). The UNCRC reflects these important principles, and, with its nearly universal ratification, countries across the globe have entered into agreement to create the conditions in which children's rights can be truly honoured, including the right to childcare.

3.7.1 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UNCRC has made a significant contribution to the children's rights movement. It is a widely-supported international treaty; more countries have ratified the UNCRC than any other human rights treaty (Howe & Covell, 2007). Released in 1989, it was proclaimed and

subsequently ratified by all but two United Nations countries (Somalia and the United States of America) in 1991. At present, the United States of America remains the only United Nations country that has not ratified the UNCRC (OECD, 2012). According to Canada's noted children's rights advocate and Canadian Senator (1994-2005), Landon Pearson, the UNCRC sets the highest norms of civilization because it protects a vulnerable population, children, defined as all persons under the age of eighteen years, that has inherent rights (Pearson cited in Howe & Covell, 2007). The guiding principle of the UNCRC is that children have a right to the conditions and supports they need for healthy development; conditions and supports that are not provided out of pity, sympathy, benevolence or paternalism, but because children are entitled to them as natural rights holders (Howe, 2007). According to children's rights activists, it is important that the gap between principle and practice does not rule out the importance of the UNCRC and children's rights; rather, the UNCRC's global standards of children's rights, as the highest norms of civilization, should be the pursuit of every society. Howe, 2007; Howe & Cowell, 2007).

The UNCRC defines children's rights as rights of provision, rights of protection, and rights of participation. Rights of provision ensure that all children have access to health care, education—including early education and childcare, the term used to describe childcare by the UNCRC—and, economic welfare. Rights of protection ensure that all children are protected from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. Rights of participation ensure children have a voice in all of the decisions that affect them, based on their evolving capacity. These rights are guided by three principles: 1) non-discrimination; 2) the best interests of the child; and 3) participation, a right afforded to children in accord with their age, maturity and capacity (Howe, 2007).

When governments ratify international human rights treaties such as the UNCRC, they are entering into a legally-binding international treaty of law, pledging their official commitment

to pursuing courses of action and policies that work toward its implementation (Howe & Cowell, 2007). However, international law is difficult to enforce given that it is not incorporated directly into a nation's domestic law. As such, the UNCRC is considered "soft law" (Howe, 2007), a type of law some scholars consider to be without legal teeth. For example, instances of soft law violations, including failure to take action toward implementation of the UNCRC, do not result in legal action taken against a government. It is only when human rights treaties are incorporated into domestic law (as is the Canadian Human Rights Act, 1977) that they become "hard law" (Howe, 2007). Thus, some suggest, the UNCRC, as soft law, must be enforced through the court of public opinion, relying on public awareness and the political pressure lobbied by advocates and citizens (Howe, 2007; Howe & Cowell, 2007).

In ratifying the UNCRC, governments have pledged their official commitment to its implementation, and are obligated to publicly report on their progress to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, a panel of ten children's rights experts, every five years. In turn, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child reviews each country's report, as well as the shadow reports offered by child advocacy organizations, and issues their observations regarding each country's progress, including its failures and shortcomings. Due to the soft law nature of the UNCRC, countries are not legally obligated to implement the UN Committee's recommendations.

It is important to distinguish a country's official commitment toward implementing the UNCRC from its actual commitment. Actual commitment refers to when governments take real and sustained policy action toward implementing the UNCRC despite obstacles that may impede its progress (Howe, 2007). As UNCRC analysts explain, all countries that have ratified the UNCRC must overcome the obstacles that challenge its implementation. Such obstacles are par for the course, and a government's commitment to overcome such impediments demonstrates its

commitment to the UNCRC, and, thus, to its children. Governments vary in their actual commitment to the UNCRC, and UNCRC analysts have described these variations as symbolic (actual commitment is weak, commitment is largely one of symbolism), wavering (actual commitment can be positive and enthusiastic at times, but such efforts ebb and flow), expanding commitment (wavering commitment grows in strength over time), and deep commitment (actual commitment is of high-level and involves sustained action which achieves results). Analysts have classified Canada's actual commitment toward implementing the UNCRC as wavering commitment (Howe & Covell, 2007).

Article 18 of the UNCRC pertains to children's rights to childcare—a right of provision—and sub-sections 18.2 and 18.3 specifically refer to the government's responsibility to develop childcare services and facilities from which children may benefit. Further clarified in 2005, General Comment 7 urges state parties “to adopt comprehensive, strategic, and time-bound plans for early childhood within a rights-based framework. This requires an increase in human and financial resource allocations for early childhood services and programmes” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2005, p. 52). Further still, General Comment 7 defines education and development as beginning at birth and calls for a children-centred approach to such early education whereby “the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2005, p. 173) and children's evolving capacity to participate in decision-making concerning their early education is recognized (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2005, p. 87).

The Articles within the Convention on the Rights of the Child that relate to childcare, referred to as early childhood education and care, are rooted in the belief that children are entitled to special care and assistance, and that children's parents or guardians must be supported

in their efforts towards upholding the rights of the child (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006; Cohen & Naimark, 1991). Of the UNCRC's three categories of rights—protection rights, participation rights and provision rights—the Articles pertaining to childcare are primarily concerned with provision rights (Friendly, 2006, p. 16). Specifically, Article 18 of the UNCRC reads:

1. States Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern.
2. For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children.
3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child-care services and facilities for which they are eligible.

While this Article clearly articulates its position regarding childcare and the role of government in ensuring childcare is available for those families who require it, the monitoring body of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child further clarified its position on the right of childcare through General Comment 7, released in 2005. General Comment 7 notes that “in order to ensure that young children’s rights are fully realized during this crucial phase of their lives... state parties are urged to adopt comprehensive, strategic, and time-bound plans for early childhood within a rights-based framework. This requires an increase in human and financial resource allocations for early childhood services and programmes (United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2006, p. 52)”. Further, General Comment 7 reaffirms the role of parents, restating that parents or legal guardians have primary responsibility for promoting children’s development and well-being, while recognizing the role of States in taking all necessary steps to ensure that parents are supported to fulfill their parental responsibilities. Further still, General Comment 7 clarifies the link between education and development, defining education and development as beginning at birth and the right of young children’s right to maximum development (i.e. a provision right). Linking education to development means that “States parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential” (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2006, p. 173), clearly reflecting a children-centred curricula approach to quality of childcare. Last, under the category of participation rights, the UNCRC recognizes children’s evolving capacity to participate in decision-making concerning their early education as they develop and grow, once again reflecting a children-centred approach to participation rights (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2006, p. 87).

3.7.2 Analysing the UNCRC through the Lens of Childhood Theory

A concern with the UNCRC and a human rights-based approach to children stems from the criticism that the UNCRC reflects a neoliberal ideology in its portrayal of children as autonomous beings, responsible on an individual level to exercise their rights. In so doing, they argue, the UNCRC implies a construction of the universal child and universal needs based on Western notions of childhood (Boyden, 1997; Ferguson, 2013). This can be seen in its use of the singular form of children: the rights of *the child*. Others argue that this cultural dominance is an inevitable consequence of establishing a globalized standard of children’s rights, suggesting it is impossible to reflect all cultural values and contexts that affect children’s lives (Alderson, 2012;

O’Byrne, 2012). Moreover, some theorists argue that a theory of human rights can be misinterpreted as asocial, providing solely a legal framework through which to defend human rights (Bobbio, 1996; O’Byrne, 2012). A critical realist epistemological and ontological paradigm, on which my research study is based, reconciles this nuanced theoretical debate by acknowledging the stratification of children’s rights (e.g., protection rights, participation rights and provision rights); understanding that such rights will evolve over time; and accepting that different cultures will have their own ways of meeting these rights (Alderson, 2012; O’Byrne, 2012). In other words, a critical realist understanding of the UNCRC cautions against the dominant Western influence on globalized children’s rights; yet acknowledges the need for a universal consensus on the “boundaries of minimal adequacy” (Woodhead, 1997, p.75).

Another concern raised by childhood theorists relates to the UNCRC’s reliance on the best interests principle, arguing that this makes it difficult to establish universal boundaries of minimal adequacy because best interests are often determined in light of the cultural contexts in which every child lives (James & James, 2004; Woodhead, 1997). Further, the best interests principle may allow adults to act on behalf of children without having to recognize children’s evolving capacities to represent their own interests in decision-making (James & James, 2004; Woodhead, 1997). It also may allow adults to dismiss the dissenting voice of children under the guise of protection (Qvortrup, 1997). For these reasons, I have chosen to use the term children-centred childcare to define the approach to childcare that best reflects children’s needs, children’s equity and children’s rights, rather than the term rights-based childcare that others have adopted (Kiersey & Hayes, 2010; Kiersey, 2011).

Another revealing finding related to the UNCRC is its suggested insignificance as an instrument of social change (James & James, 2004). Some scholars suggest a children’s rights discourse, especially as it relates to childcare, has garnered little public attention (Wells, 2011),

including within the Canadian context (Richardson, Langford, Friendly & Rauhala, 2013). A critical discourse lens would suggest that this is no accident. According to James and James (2004), because children's rights are not well known or understood by society—and efforts have not been made toward educating the public about these rights—governments have faced little political pressure to uphold such rights (p. 97).

3.7.3 Canada and the UNCRC

What does it mean to Canada to be a signatory to the UNCRC? It is important to note that Canada did not just sign and ratify the UNCRC: it was a proponent of the treaty, an international leader urging other countries to sign (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2005, p.10). In Canada, international human rights treaties, such as the UNCRC, are not incorporated directly into Canadian law, but are indirectly implemented by ensuring that pre-existing legislation is in conformity with the treaty's obligations. In other words, Parliament plays no role in ratification, thus international human rights treaties, such as the UNCRC, are not directly incorporated into domestic legislation. As such, some argue, those countries that ratified the UNCRC are entering into a moral commitment, rather than a legally-binding commitment, to uphold children's rights (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2005, p. 4).

As a signatory to the UNCRC, Canada was required to submit its first progress report within two years after ratification and, subsequently, every five years thereafter (Davis & Powell, 2003, p. 696). In Canada, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights is authorized by the Senate to make recommendations on how Canada can best implement the UNCRC and submits reports related to its progress (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2005, p. 4). One of the key recommendations brought forth by the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, in its reports to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child over the last two decades (Promises to Keep; A World Fit for Canada; and Children the Silenced Citizens) is for enabling legislation

tied to international human rights, as well as a formal statement from the federal government that it agrees to comply with the treaty (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2005, p. 5). Additionally, the Committee has recommended that Parliament establish a Children's Commissioner, arm's length to government, to monitor the implementation of the UNCRC, listen to and engage with children and youth, and ensure the protection of children's rights in Canada. To date, these recommendations have not been implemented.

With regard to early childhood education and care, the Standing Committee recommends a "comprehensive system of early learning and child care programs based on principles of inclusion, affordability, accessibility, quality and parental choice can provide the positive stimulation and nurturing in the early years that lays the foundation for learning, health and behaviour throughout a person's life" (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2004, p. 43). Further, in its following recommendation regarding early childhood education and care, it outlines a role for the federal government, recommending that "the federal government meet with provincial and territorial governments to help coordinate the establishment of measurable standards and guidelines for delivering early childhood development and child care to children across the country, matched by adequate funding. Consultations should begin immediately, with proposed solutions to be presented to the Canadian public by July 2009 (Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, 2007, p. 145). Again, this recommendation by the Standing Committee has not been implemented. In its review of Canada's child care system, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child made public its particular concerns regarding Canada's lack of access to quality, affordable early childhood education and care, and it recommended a nationally-coordinated approach to ensure quality and accessibility (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada). Further, the OECD recommended Canada increase public funding of its early childhood education and care system, citing that its current state of 0.5% of GDP spending

is markedly less than the recommended 1% (Friendly, 2017). Canada's response to the UN's monitoring report cites, heavily, its financial contribution towards Canada's Universal Child Care Benefit, a 'national child care program' that provides direct support to parents. However, the funding transfer for this program represents a reduction in federal spending since the 2007/08 termination of the 2005 Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care, established by the previous Liberal federal government (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 2011, p. 15).

Complicating the implementation of the UNCRC in Canada is the matter of federalism. Under Canada's constitution, the Federal government has the authority to ratify international treaties, but it does not have the sole authority to implement them. Thus, when a policy issue such as childcare falls under Provincial/Territorial responsibility, Provinces and Territories bear the constitutional responsibility for implementation. Thus, implementing the UNCRC requires a high degree of intergovernmental collaboration and cooperation, and, because Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments have different priorities and resources, such cooperation and collaboration has proved difficult (Howe & Covell, 2007). Howe and Covell (2007) argue that as a signatory to the UNCRC, Canada's Federal government must commit to a leadership role to overcome the obstacles of federalism—rather than use them as excuses—by working with Provinces and Territories to take real and sustained action toward upholding children's rights. Moreover, under the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, by which Canada is bound, a lack of Federal authority is not considered to be a valid excuse for the government of Canada to hide behind (Howe & Covell, 2007).

To this end, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended that Canada adopt a new Federal government structure that can monitor and coordinate the multiple efforts toward implementing the UNCRC by its Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments. The leadership role inherent in this proposed new Federal government structure would ensure all

governments throughout Canada work together to meet the global standards of children's rights, as stipulated in the UNCRC (Howe, 2007). Resting the blame for Canada's inaction toward implementing the UNCRC on federalism ignores a number of other contributing factors. Some children's rights within the UNCRC are governed entirely under Federal jurisdiction (e.g., youth justice) or entirely under Provincial and Territorial jurisdiction (e.g., child protection), yet even in these instances, government action has proved deficient (Howe, 2007).

In addition to a proposed new Federal government structure to coordinate and collaborate the multiple efforts of Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments toward implementing the UNCRC, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended that the Federal government establish a Children's Commissioner, arm's length to government, to monitor the implementation of the UNCRC; listen to and engage with children and youth; and ensure the protection of children's rights in Canada. This is policy action that several countries have taken (e.g., Norway, Sweden, Costa Rica, and Iceland). While Children's Commissioner Offices are mandated to listen to and advocate on behalf of all children, they also work to raise public awareness concerning children's rights and government's responsibility to the UNCRC. In so doing, Children's Commissioner Offices play an important role in placing political pressure on politicians to take action on the UNCRC.

Given that inadequate financial resources may be cited by governments as a reason for inaction regarding the implementation of the UNCRC, it is important to understand the principle of "first call for children" (Howe, 2007). In preparing to ratify the UNCRC, United Nations countries, including Canada, attended the World Summit for Children, co-chaired by then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, and committed to the first call for children. This principle holds signatory countries to the treaty, including Canada, to prioritizing the needs of children in favourable economic conditions, as well as in times of fiscal austerity. Moreover, children's

rights activists suggest Canada's failure to uphold the UNCRC cannot simply be excused by inadequate resources (Howe & Covell, 2007). They point out that many of the children's rights stipulated in the UNCRC are participation rights, those which do not require financial investments, but, rather, a sharing of power with adults. It is suggested that the adults who hold these positions of power, including the parents of children, fear sharing their power with children, and as a result, have actively ignored defending the participation rights of children (Howe & Covell, 2007).

3.8 Children-centred Considerations of Childcare

As described in chapter one, children-centred considerations to childcare policy reflect principles of best practice promoted by international childcare policy experts (Hevey & Miller, 2012; Moss, 2012, OECD, 2006). These considerations include rights-based provision, universal access, equitable provision, quality-assurance, and democratic participation (OECD, 2006, p. 219). The philosophy of children-centred childcare policy reflects the value of children as promoted by childhood theorists: children should be valued for who they are now, not for who they will become and whether or not they will make a positive contribution to the economy (Hevey & Miller, 2012). Such a philosophy has significant implications for how childcare is delivered and made available to children: it constructs the child as a citizen, not a citizen-in-the-making; it values the child as a learner with unique talents and interests that must be nurtured and allowed to develop (which may not dovetail with the school readiness objective of an adult-centric economic objective); it values the child as a social agent, capable of co-directing her development and learning experiences; and it recognizes that children have inequitable opportunities for maximizing their potential (e.g., poverty-related barriers), which must be addressed through progressive social policy (Hevey & Miller, 2012; Ife as cited in Hick, 2005; OECD 2006; OECD 2012).

3.8.1 Rights-based Provision

The ways in which society views and values childhood and the collective identities of children influence the ways in which childcare policy is viewed and valued, and, hence, positioned within discourse. For example, when childhood is viewed through a property construction (Davidson, 2010), childcare is valued as a labour support program, that which addresses the obstacle of children to working parents, but does not necessarily address issues related to children's needs (e.g., social pedagogic approaches to quality). When childhood is viewed through a protection construction, childcare may be stigmatized as a targeted program for children who fit a criterion based on their family's status.

In some countries childhood is viewed and valued through a human rights construction in which they are valued as citizens, fully human, with a voice that must be listened to and rights that must be upheld through progressive social policy and a caring society (Ife as cited in Hick, 2005). Within this perspective, childcare is valued as a non-stigmatized right: that which belongs to every child, irrespective of family type, parental employment status and income level (OECD, 2006; OECD, 2012). Such an approach honours the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which includes children's rights to childcare (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2005) as stipulated in Article 18 and sub-sections 18.2 and 18.3 (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1989).

3.8.2 Universal Access

Some scholars suggest that evaluation research on childcare to determine if it should be universally-delivered or targeted to specific populations is complicated by matters of methodology (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 2004; McLaren & McIntyre, 2014). It is difficult to conduct randomized controlled trials to determine the effects of childcare, and in evaluations that compare the outcomes of children who attended childcare against those children who did not, it

is challenging to control for compounding factors (e.g., quality of childcare, at-home environments of children) (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 2004). Proponents for universal childcare point to international meta-analyses that demonstrate successful universal approaches to childcare (McLaren & McIntyre, 2014). Others point to research that suggests that all children, including those from low-income families and those from high-income families, benefit from high-quality childcare (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004, p. 21). A children-centred approach to childcare that promotes universally-accessible childcare for all children recognizes this research. Moreover, universally-accessible childcare also reflects the consideration of equitable provision, an approach that honours the tenets of children-centred policy, as I review in the next section.

3.8.3 Equitable Provision

While it is important that childcare reflects the considerations of rights-based provision and universal-access, it is essential that childcare policies recognize and address children's equity. A meta-analysis of international studies shows that children from poor families are over-represented in poor-quality childcare programs (Vandenbroeck, 2010). While true, families living in poverty can access subsidy programs to offset the costs associated with childcare, in general, fee subsidies are severely limited (in some instances, even full subsidies fail to cover total parental fees) and the income eligibility threshold is very low (i.e., families must be well under the poverty line to qualify) (Prentice, 2007). As a result, many low income families do not qualify for subsidies and face childcare fees that are simply unaffordable (Ferns & Friendly, 2014). Lone parents are particularly vulnerable when childcare is unaffordable and inaccessible. Single mothers, for example, are often compelled to leave the labour market, and, as a result, are forced to subsist on inadequate welfare benefits (OECD, 2006; Rothman, 2009). Further, family poverty is often linked to poor school outcomes for children, thus repeating the cycle of inequity and intergenerational poverty effects (Rothman, 2009).

Further to this, the current governance model of regulated childcare within many Canadian jurisdictions requires the self-organization of parents and communities. As explained by Prentice (2006), one of Canada's leading childcare experts, "under the Canadian version of co-production, the role of government is mainly to license childcare facilities and provide fee subsidies to low-income parents, not to plan, start-up or deliver services" (p. 529). Such an approach has resulted in what she terms "geographic inequity" (Prentice, 2006, p. 529), a distribution of childcare spaces that results in less access to childcare in poor communities. Without government regulation to support the equitable growth of regulated childcare spaces in these communities, children living in low income neighbourhoods will continue to be denied access to high-quality childcare. Further, these disadvantaged neighbourhoods also reflect the greatest proportion of Indigenous peoples (Prentice, 2007, p. 64), indicating an intersection of oppressions for children living in poverty. In Canada, Indigenous children experience some of the poorest health and educational outcomes in the country, impacted by intergenerational poverty, oppressions of a colonial history, social exclusion, loss of cultural and family assets, and systemic racism (Ball, 2012). Ball (2012) suggests childcare has the potential to be a great equalizer for Indigenous children: In addition to structural reforms and infrastructure development that address poverty, health, food security, racism, education, and cultural inclusion, childcare programs that reflect the values, goals, and needs of Indigenous children are considered integral to closing the gap in equity for Aboriginal peoples (Ball, 2012).

3.8.4 Children-centred Quality

Universal childcare cannot be established without considerations paid to quality. Childcare policy analysts argue that it is simply not good enough to have a universally-accessible system, it must be of high-quality (Friendly & Prentice, 2009; Vendenbroeck, 2006). Many childcare analysts argue against for-profit childcare (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004; Findlay,

2015; Friendly & Prentice, 2006) because the quality of care purchased is generally of poorer quality (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004; Friendly & Prentice, 2009; Vandenberg, 2006). Economic analysts who oppose for-profit childcare argue that a market approach to social services works only if purchasers can effectively monitor the quality of service they are purchasing (Battle, 2008; Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004). And, because failure in choosing high-quality over poor-quality could likely result in negative impacts on children's development, the risk to children by a market approach to childcare is too great. Moreover, there exists the likely potential that low-quality childcare may be disguised as high-quality, thus profiting the business owner at the expense of children, the childcare purchasers, and society as a whole (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004; Prentice, 2006). This risk exists, too, when public dollars are used to subsidize for-profit providers: Business-minded childcare operators may mispend public funding on low-cost materials that suggest high-quality, rather than in areas that are more costly, such as professional salaries and workforce training (Prentice, 2006).

Moreover, high-quality within the context of children-centred approaches to childcare means that children are valued as learners with unique talents and interests that must be nurtured and allowed to develop. Progressive childcare systems, such as those in Nordic countries, reviewed in chapter two, promote a children-centred approach to quality by emphasizing a social pedagogic curriculum through which the focus is on promoting children's play and social development, with special attention to children's agency (Bennett, 2005; Dahlberg, 2009; Einarsdottir et al., 2015; Hevey & Miller, 2012). This approach also reflects the childcare principles promoted through UNCRC: the goal of childcare is to direct the development of children's personalities, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential (UNCRC, General Comment 7, 2005).

In contrast, different curricula approaches to childcare may be promoted as high-quality when viewed through the adulthood lens of goals and values. For example, through a protection construction of childhood, safe custodial care is commonly viewed as the most important—and, often, only—consideration of quality in childcare (Bennett, 2005; Dahlberg, 2009; Einarsdottir et al., 2015; Hevey & Miller, 2012). Through an investable child discourse, quality is gauged by the adherence to pre-primary models of childcare: teacher-directed curricula approaches that focus on cognitive development and primary school preparation (Bennett, 2005; Dahlberg, 2009; Einarsdottir et al., 2015; Hevey & Miller, 2012). While school success is an important objective, especially when one considers the impact of education on poverty reduction (Rothman, 2009), when the quality of childcare is strictly evaluated by school-preparation objectives, children-centred considerations of quality are ignored. Moreover, through this goal, children are constructed as future beings: future students, future graduates, future workers, and future citizens. In other words, they are constructed as “human becomings” (Woodhead, 2009, p. 54) rather than human beings, celebrated for who they might become rather than for who they are in the present moment. Conversely children-centred approaches to quality celebrate children’s present capacities, foster their agency and honour their voices. Moreover, valuing young children for who they are now “implies providing services and opportunities that enhance their experience and enjoyment...[which] might lead to questioning, for example, education policies that emphasise school readiness as the primary purpose of pre-school education” (Hevey & Miller, 2012, p. 172).

Children-centred quality also extends to considerations of physical space, the built environment, and access to outdoor experiences. Ensuring a safe place so that children are free to explore their surroundings, providing materials that allow children to engage their senses, and promoting outdoor activities that allow children to relate to their environments, are important

considerations for childcare spaces. Moreover, such an approach does not require costly resources; it simply requires a children-centred philosophy (Friendly, 2007).

3.8.5 Democratic Participation

Leading international experts have called upon nations to develop childcare systems that reflect democratic values wherein children are empowered to develop their agency and participate in decision-making opportunities within the context of a shared environment that supports their unique journey of human and social development (Hevey & Miller, 2012; OECD, 2003, p. 18). In these models, exemplified by the childcare systems of Nordic countries (Einarsdottir et al., 2015), emphasis is on the democratic relationships between teachers and children through which children are empowered and their voices and choices respected (Dahlberg, 2009). Childcare policy experts define democracy as “the fundamental belief that all human beings—children, as well as adults—have a right to participate in shaping their worlds” (Hevey & Miller, p. 172). This definition is in line with that of the UNCRC, which promotes democratic participation as children’s evolving capacity to participate in decision-making grows as they develop (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2005, p. 87). This means promoting childcare practices whereby childcare educators listen to children and represent their voices within the space and place of childcare provision. Such practice can also be extended to very young children through practices of pedagogical documentation, a Reggio method that ensures childcare educators are consciously reflecting on their practice and honouring children’s agency (Bennett, 2005; Dahlberg, 2009; Einarsdottir et al., 2015; Hevey & Miller, 2012).

The principle of democratic participation must also be extended to the ways in which governments position their approaches to child policies. According to Moss (2012), within political discourse certain policy choices are promoted as a one and only response to a one and only truth. In contrast, an agonistic approach to democracy assumes there are always different

needs and interests related to policy choices, and, as such, governments must allow for an exchange of diverse ideas when forming policy (p. 98). This principle of agonistic democracy promotes the importance of establishing childcare systems within nations that respond to differing needs and interests, including those of adults and of children. In Canada, such an approach would include policies of maternity and parental leave (including fathers' leave) and family allowances that work together with children-centred approaches to childcare. It would mean policies that support parents and families who wish to use alternative forms of childcare, such as child minding, kin care or drop-in arrangements, as well as those who choose not to access any type of childcare services. Policies that respond to diverse needs and interests, while at the same time addressing children-centred considerations of childcare, represent a system of progressive social policies that create the conditions necessary in which children can exercise their rights.

3.9 Conclusion

My examination of the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children illustrates that the cultural beliefs, values and norms related to the treatment of children have changed significantly throughout history. What remains constant, however, is that these constructions have been largely influenced by the economic, political and social interests of the time. Cultural beliefs, values and norms related to children are not always altruistic and policy decisions made in the best interests of children are not beyond reproach, rather, they require critical examination. Moreover, my historical review of childhood demonstrates the influence of history on contemporary society, revealing that some injustices toward children, dating back to the Middle Ages, continue in today's time as evident by the way children's rights, committed to through the UNCRC, are often ignored—generally, without penalty—by developed countries, including Canada. My illustration of children's policies as value-based, shaped by economic,

political, and social interests, provides me with an important foundation upon which to further my research study of childcare policy.

CHAPTER FOUR: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Theories and methods related to the broad area of discourse studies encompass a wide range of approaches informed by a multitude of disciplines (e.g., linguistics, sociology, cultural studies, political science, and media studies). These discourse theories and analytical methods may be classified by two types: 1) non-critical approaches to discourse based on models of text analysis and language studies; and 2) critical approaches to discourse based on micro and macro analysis models of language studies, influenced by critical social theories. These two types of discourse are distinguished by whether they recognize and analyze the connection between micro-level and macro-level aspects of language and the social world. Non-critical approaches to discourse focus exclusively on the micro-analysis of language, such as the linguistic aspects of text and talk. Critical approaches to discourse examine the connections between the micro-level aspects of language and the macro-level aspects of discourse, including, in some cases (e.g., Foucault's Historical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis) the relationship between discourse and power. My research study was guided by Fairclough's critical approach to discourse, which I further describe within this chapter. First, I describe the differing approaches to discourse theory which grounds my decision to employ the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis and reveals the unique contribution of my research study within the existing knowledge base.

4.2 Non-Critical Approaches to Discourse

As stated earlier, non-critical approaches to discourse focus exclusively on the micro-analysis of language, such as the linguistic aspects of text and talk. One such example, Linguistics, founded by Saussure (1966), is the study of language, including aspects such as

grammar, sound systems, sentence structures, word meanings, and semantics (Fairclough, 2001). The techniques of linguistics are well-developed, however, according to Fairclough, the technical achievements of linguistics have been “bought at the price of a narrow conception of language study” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 5). In narrowing its focus on the aspects of language, it offers nothing about the relationships between language and power,; thus embodying an asocial approach to the field of discourse.

Attempting to address this short-coming of linguistics, the field of sociolinguistics was developed under the influence of two disciplines outside the field of linguistics, those of anthropology and sociology (Fairclough, 2001). The focus of sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between linguistic variables and social variables. However, while attempting to expand the micro-analysis goals of linguistics with an inclusion of the social aspects of language, sociolinguistics is limited in its macro-level efforts. Influenced by a positivist conception of social science, sociolinguistics focuses on ‘what’ questions, thus ignoring the ‘how’ questions (Fairclough, 2001). In other words, while Sociolinguistics examines language practices and their inherent distribution of power, the focus is on description, not explanation. It does not seek to explain how language and discourse relate to social control and power. In contrast, addressing ‘how’ questions is an important focus of critical discourse approaches to discourse, which I explain in section 2.4.

Pragmatics, an area of language study associated with speech acts, is closely connected to the analytical work of Searle (1969). Proponents of pragmatics see language as a form of social action (Fairclough, 2001), which is beneficial in showing the social aspects of language. However, pragmatics has been criticized for putting too much emphasis on individualism – the idea that individuals are agents, choosing speech acts of their own free will – and not enough recognition on the determining effect of social conventions. In this way, Fairclough suggests that

pragmatics reflects a utopian image of language, describing discourse as it ought to be rather than how it actually is (Fairclough, 2001).

Discourse analysis—not to be mistaken with critical discourse analysis—is a cross-discipline influenced by the fields of linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and cognitive psychology. Techniques of discourse analysis, for example, conversation analysis, have well-developed methods for the micro-level study of language. As described by Fairclough, these techniques “investigate the production and interpretation of everyday action as skilled accomplishments of social actors and they are interested in conversation as one particularly pervasive instance of skilled social action” (2001, p. 9). A limitation of discourse analysis methods is that they do not include the macro-level analysis of the social aspects of language, including the power dynamics of the social order.

Conversation Analysis (Sacks, 1984) is one of the most well-known and well-developed analytical methods of non-critical discourse analysis. Conversation Analysis is a research method used to investigate the micro-level structure and process of social interaction between humans. While Conversation Analysis focuses primarily on text and talk, it also includes non-verbal aspects of communicative interaction. Thus, Conversation Analysis is said to examine talk-in-interaction (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 21). The objective of Conversation Analysis is to uncover the tacit reasoning procedures that govern the production and interpretation of talk in organized sequences of social interaction (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). Founder of Conversation Analysis, Harvey Sacks (1984), believed that talk-in-interaction should be treated as an object of study in its own right, not simply as the conduit through which to view social interactions and social order. As such, he believed that the analysis of talk-in-interaction should not be based on any prior theoretical assumptions, or with any specific research question in mind. This approach

marks an important philosophical difference from the approaches to discourse that I will describe next.

4.3 Critical Approaches to Discourse

I group together the different critical approaches to discourse under the category of critical discourse analysis. Like Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, the critical approaches of this category are more than methodology; they represent specific theoretical perspectives, epistemic stances, and political objectives. As a critical approach to discourse, critical discourse analysis emerged in the 1970s, spearheaded by Michel Foucault (1977). Since that time it has become one of the most influential and visible approaches to discourse (Bloomaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

While there are several different analytical approaches to critical discourse analysis, the commonality among them is that they include a micro-analysis of text and a macro-analysis of the social practices related to language (Luke, 2002). According to Luke, these varieties of critical discourse analysis all involve a "principled shunting back and forth between analyses of the text and the social, between cultural sign and institutional formation, between semiotic/discourse analysis and the analysis of local institutional sites, between a normative reading of texts and a normative reading of the social world" (2002, p. 103). In this way, critical discourse analysis is concerned with the "contingent relationship between discourse change and changes in corporeal, spatialized, and material conditions; the relative power of social structure and human agency; and the dynamics of bids at centralized state and corporate control versus local appropriation and resistance" (Luke, 2002, p. 103).

Gee's approach to critical discourse analysis (1990) focuses on what he refers to as semiotics (a concept different from Fairclough's definition, which I define in section 2.5.1), including word building, sentence building, activity building, identity and relationship building,

political building and connection building. The approach to critical discourse analysis of van Dijk (1997) is based on four categories of analysis: action, context, power, and ideology. Central to this approach is the integration of ethnography, Marxist theories of ideology (Marx in van Dijk, 1997), and speech act theory (Halliday, 1977). According to van Dijk, “one of the crucial tasks of his approach to critical discourse analysis is to account for the relationships between discourse and social power” (1996, p. 84). Thus, the purpose of discourse analysis is to “describe and explain how power abuse is enacted, reproduced or legitimised by the text and talk of dominant groups or institutions” (van Dijk, 1996, p. 84). Fowler’s Critical Linguistics (Fowler cited in Fairclough, 1992) approach marries linguistics with a social theory of the functioning of language in political processes, though it is suggested that this approach places too much emphasis on the grammar and vocabulary aspects of text and not enough emphasis on social practices of language (Fairclough, 1992). Neither van Dijk’s or Fowler’s approaches allow for a critical realist-based notion of social struggle such as Fairclough’s dialectical relationship of discourse and power (Fairclough, 1992). Pecheux’s (Pecheux in Fairclough, 1992) approach to discourse draws from Althusser’s Marxist theory of ideology (1971), and focuses its objective on revealing the effects of ideological struggle within the functioning of language (Fairclough, 1992). However, like van Dijk and Fowler, Pecheux’s approach also does not account for the dialectical struggle between power and discourse. While these approaches to critical discourse analysis have made important contributions to this area of social research and critical social theory, the best known approach to critical discourse analysis is Foucault’s Historical Discourse Analysis (1977), which I now describe.

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) is the French founder of the Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis. Foucault was a prolific writer and his approach to discourse analysis birthed a new theoretical influence—poststructuralism—that challenged the reigning epistemology of

positivism of that era (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997). Foucault's treatment of discourse as topic reflects a poststructuralist epistemology, one that cautions against interpretation of historical content. A defining feature of Foucault's approach to discourse is its historical tracing of the interrelatedness of knowledge and power that influence today's practices and ways of thinking (Perakyla & Ruusuvuori cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In describing the objective of his Historical Discourse Analysis method, Foucault explained that his was not simply an analysis of the history of the past, but, rather, the pursuit of a "history of the present" (Foucault, 1977, p. 30), an examination of the present through the lens of the past.

Foucault's approach to discourse is concerned with taken-for-granted assumptions within contemporary social existence by the use of historical resources to critically reflect upon these taken-for-granted concepts. Thus, the purpose behind Foucault's approach is a political one. Foucault's objective was not to just analyze and describe history but to discredit taken-for-granted assumptions by revealing their contingent, arbitrary, authoritarian, and repressive nature (Dean, 1994; Hughes & Sharrock, 1997). To do so, one must examine the historically and culturally-located systems of power-knowledge called discourses (Holstein & Gubrium in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Foucault viewed discourses as bodies of ideas, attitudes, modes of address, terms of reference and courses of action suffused into social practices (Holstein et al., 2011, p. 344). As such, discourse reflects power relations and the rules of practice within society by constructing subject positions and object positions, shaping and constituting identities, and legitimating social relationships between those identities – including those of power, dominance and control that bind people to these relationships (Wooffitt, 2005). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault theorized that power and knowledge directly imply one another in that "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault, 1977, p.

27). In other words, power and knowledge determine each other: there is no power without knowledge, nor is there knowledge without power (Foucault, 1977, p. 27).

It has been suggested that Foucault's approach is a "pointless burden on discourse analysis" (Major-Poetzl cited in Bloor in Silverman, 2011, p. 410), one which renders explanation as almost meaningless given its poststructuralist-based cautions against truth claims. Another criticism of Foucault's approach to discourse analysis is that it does not provide a micro-level analysis of text to demonstrate how systems of social order operate on the ground (Holstein et al., 2011). Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis draws upon the strengths of Foucault's approach to discourse while addressing these limitations.

4.4 Critical Discourse Analysis

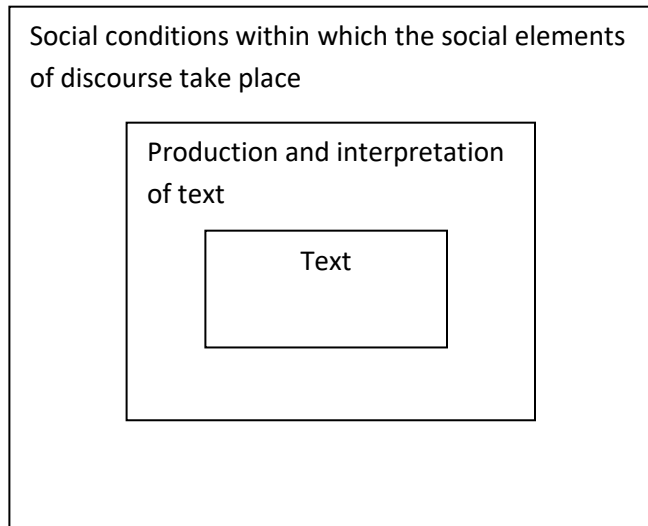
Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is strongly influenced by Foucault, sharing many similarities with a Foucauldian approach to Historical Discourse Analysis, namely the political objective of critical discourse analysis: to expose the relationship between discourse and power in the pursuit of emancipation from oppression. However, these two approaches to discourse have several important differences. One such difference relates to analysis techniques. A valid critique of Foucault's approach is that it lacks an articulated methodological technique for analysis (Dean, 1994; Perakyla & Ruusuvuori in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The Foucauldian approach to discourse analysis is not systematic and standardized as is Fairclough's methodology. Second, while Foucault treated discourse as topic, cautioning against investigating discourse as resource, Fairclough treats discourse as both topic (macro-level analysis of social practices of discourse) and resource (micro-level analysis of text).

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is both theory and method. Fairclough positions his critical approach to discourse in the tradition of critical social science, an approach that undertakes a critical questioning of social life (Fairclough, 2003). Luke describes such critical

approaches to discourse analysis as a “marriage between the theories and models of text analysis and the critical theories of social, political and cultural studies” (Luke, 2002, p. 100). According to Fairclough’s theory of discourse, language encompasses more than text and talk, it is viewed as a social practice determined by social structures (Fairclough, 2001). As such, language—or discourse, as Fairclough refers to it—is considered social, a part of the social world, constrained and shaped by its social structures. This conception of language stands in contrast to the way language is viewed by proponents of non-critical approaches to discourse whereby language is considered asocial. The concept of discourse, according to Fairclough, includes social elements of text and talk, social practices within orders of discourse (what he calls semiotics), and the social conditions that surround these practices (Fairclough, 2003, p. 24).

Fairclough’s methodology is a three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis that reflects this concept of discourse. In this way, Fairclough views discourse as being comprised of discursive elements that are embedded within social practices of discourse, which are shaped and influenced by the surrounding conditions of social life. As such, Fairclough’s methodology incorporates the elements of linguistics to the analysis of text; the tradition of a microsociological approach to analysis of the social practices that shape the production and interpretation of text; and a macrosociological approach to the analysis of the social conditions within which the social elements of discourse take place, including those of social structures (Fairclough, 1992). This shunting back and forth between the analyses of text and the social requires a thoughtful, methodical, and reflexive analyst; one who knows and understands the historical and social contexts of the issue under study. Figure 4.1 illustrates Fairclough’s three-dimensional approach.

Figure 4.1: Fairclough’s Three-dimensional Approach to Discourse Analysis (Source: Fairclough, 1992)



4.4.1 Applying Critical Discourse Analysis to the Study of Policy

According to some scholars (Finlayson, 2004; Martin, 2015), the discipline of political science has had a complicated relationship with political discourse. In their opinion, traditional political scientists have ignored the role of ideas in the study of policy, preferring, instead, to focus on political output or policy action (Finlayson, 2004; Martin, 2015). Moreover, Finlayson suggests that ideas tend to be a problem for political science analysts because of a belief that “politics is an ‘output’; a result of social phenomena rather than an influence upon them; a passive realm rather than a dynamic force that can transform social organizations and relations” (2004, p. 531). With a focus on producing testable hypotheses and models of political behaviour, traditional political scientists have ignored the harder-to-measure relationship between political ideas and political action. Finlayson further suggests that “if political phenomena are understood as an aggregate outcome of atomized individual actions which can in turn be understood in the terms of behavioural or rational choice, then the ideas held by those individuals can be regarded

as irrelevant since what matters is the action undertaken and its political result” (2004, p. 531). In this way, some critics suggest that within traditional political science ideas were often relegated as mental states that reflected or assisted political action, but did not necessarily merit themselves as subjects of interest (Finlayson, 2004; Martin, 2015).

Another approach to political science, that of the new institutionalist, has emerged in the last two decades to challenge this traditional disregard of the role of ideas, and, according to Finlayson, appears to “redress the balance and to return to politics an ‘input’ role” (2004, p. 531). However, in doing so, this approach, in Finlayson’s estimation, has misplaced its emphasis on the ideas of institutions rather than on the ideas of political actors (2004). While some political scholars have embraced the study of rhetoric and the role of ideas in their research (March & Olsen, 1984; McNamara, 1999), critics suggests such work does not reflect a critical approach to discourse analysis (Finlayson, 2004; Martin, 2015). For example, Hay’s contingent convergence thesis promotes the concept of a dialectical relationship between ideas and policy action (Hay, 2004), however, Finlayson believes this approach fails to consider the strength of ideas and the role of persuasion and argumentation within this relationship (2004, p. 537).

Finlayson points to Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis as a promising approach to political discourse analysis. For him, Critical Discourse Analysis applies a much-needed critical lens to rhetoric and the role of ideas—an aspect that, in his opinion, has largely been ignored by political theorists thus far. Importantly, however, while Finlayson commends Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis for its objective of exposing the taken-for-granted assumptions within political discourse, he cautions that this methodology is limited by its failure to consider the role of persuasion and argumentation (Finlayson, 2004, p. 538). For Finlayson and Martin, integrating the theory of political argumentation within a critical approach to discourse analysis is imperative (Finlayson, 2004; Martin, 2015). Importantly, Fairclough has addressed this

recommendation through his new theoretical work and methodology of Political Discourse Analysis (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012), as I describe in section 4.6.

4.4.2 Definitions

Fairclough's definition of *discourse* has a dialectical relationship with power. According to Fairclough, discourse produces effects upon social structures, and discourse is also determined by social structures. Through this dialectical relationship, discourse contributes to both continuity and change within the social world (Fairclough, 2001, p. 14). While text and talk are considered a product, discourse is considered a social process of which text and talk production is but one part (Fairclough, 2001). Discourse also includes the process of production, of which text is the product, and the process of interpretation, for which text is a resource. These are the microsociological aspects of discourse (Fairclough, 2001). Additionally, discourse includes the social practices of discourse that are shaped and influenced by the structural conditions of the social world. These are the macrosociological aspects of discourse (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough uses the term *semiotics* to distinguish these social practices of discourse from the textual aspects of discourse.

According to Fairclough, *orders of discourse* are a network of social practices (Fairclough, 2003). These networks are the conventions of discourse that embody particular ideologies (Fairclough, 2001, p. 23). The way orders of discourse are structured, and the ideologies they embody are determined by the relationships of power, in particular social orders (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough distinguishes between discourse and orders of discourse: discourse is determined by socially-constituted orders of discourse, which are the broader sets of conventions associated with particular social institutions (e.g., government, media) (Fairclough, 2001, p. 14). Connected to Fairclough's concept of orders of discourse, the discourse practices of social structures embody assumptions which legitimize power relations. These are the social

conventions of discourse which individuals draw upon without question or examination. In this way, such practices are taken-for-granted and invisible: such is the hidden power of discourse. Importantly, Fairclough's view of the relationship between power and discourse is dialectical, whereby social structures not only determine social practices of discourse, they are also a product of social practices of discourse (Fairclough, 2001, p. 31).

Existing orders of discourse reflect the histories of the struggle between continuity of power and the potential for social change. According to Fairclough, "seeing existing language practices and orders of discourse as reflecting the victories and defeats of past struggle, and as stakes which are struggled over" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 73) is a major characteristic of Critical Discourse Analysis, which differentiates it from those non-critical approaches to discourse previously described. In this way, there is always a varying degree of ideological diversity within the social world, though in democratic societies the level of ideological diversity is greater than in others (Fairclough, 2001).

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis features *ideology* as the way through which power is embedded within discourse. Similar to Foucault's interpretation, Fairclough sees ideology as the way in which those in power manufacture consent. Ideology legitimizes authority through taken-for-granted assumptions that present positions of power as common sense and natural. Ideology is most effective when its workings are invisible to society through the taken-for-granted assumptions that are never questioned or examined. Indeed, once ideology becomes visible and exposed, it loses its power to control. In modern neo-liberal societies, it is ideology through which those in positions of power are able to exert their dominance: what Fairclough calls control-by-consent (Fairclough, 2001). Ideologies are closely linked to power "because they are a means of legitimizing existing social relations and differences of power, simply through the

recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving which take these relations and power differences for granted” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 2).

Closely connected to Fairclough’s interpretation of ideology is his concept of *member resources*. Influenced by cognitive psychology, Fairclough views member resources as socially-determined and ideologically-shaped cognitive resources that people draw upon when they produce or interpret text, including the knowledge of language and the representations of the natural and social worlds, including cultural values and beliefs (Fairclough, 2001, p. 20).

Member resources refer to the knowledge of language that individuals carry, which become their internalized taken-for-granted assumptions which then serve as the mechanisms through which the control of those in power is exerted.

Fairclough describes the relationship between *structure and agency* as dialectical in nature. As such, resistance to systems of power is ever-present and social change is always possible. Importantly, however, Fairclough—like Foucault—views the potential of social change as possible only through the use of critical discourse analysis whereby ideologies are exposed. Without such critical analysis, the myth of free speech remains: that individuals are free to say what they like in today’s developed countries (Fairclough, 2001). In reality, the “power behind discourse” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 49) exerts a hidden and pervasive control on discourse – only certain actors are given authority to speak (those who have access to media) and what is spoken is dictated by the social conventions of discourse as governed by certain social institutions.

Related to Fairclough’s dialectical relationship between power and discourse is Gramsci’s theory of *cultural hegemony* (Gramsci cited in Lears, 1985), which Fairclough has integrated into his Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992). Cultural hegemony refers to the ways in which a dominant culture is imposed upon people within a society (Fairclough, 1992; Lears, 1985). Components of culture include the “values, norms, perceptions, beliefs, sentiments,

and prejudices that support and define the existing distribution of goods, the institutions that decide how this distribution occurs, and the permissible range of disagreement about those processes” (Lears, 1985, p. 569). While influenced by the Marxist concept of ideology (Marx as cited in Lears, 1985) and its emphasis on economic interests, Gramsci’s theory offers a more complex view of ideology, including religious, cultural, racial, ethnic, gender and social influences (Lears, 1985). Gramsci’s cultural hegemony theory is important to understanding how the dominant political discourse surrounding childcare has influenced cultural attitudes and values about childcare, which, in turn, has allowed for the imposition of policy choices by those in power.

However, while recognizing the power of dominant political discourse, Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony also acknowledges that such discourses have been, and will continue to be, challenged and opposed within societies through *counter-hegemony* (Gramsci as cited in Lears, 1985). Importantly, the success of such counter-hegemony efforts hinges on new and opposing discourses, those that compete and counter-act the discourses of the dominant structure. An important element of success for any counter-hegemony effort is a critical culture, one which reflects a “culture of questions” (Worsham & Olson, 1999, p. 3). This view of structure and agency is similar to those of Fairclough and Foucault: that only through the critical examination of discourse does the potential for emancipation emerge.

4.5 Critical Realism Research Paradigm

As stated earlier, Fairclough’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis reflects the epistemology and ontology of critical realism, a research paradigm unique to his methodology of discourse analysis (Flatschart, 2016). The key contribution that critical realism brings to Critical Discourse Analysis is a research objective that promotes scientific practice in balance with social constructionism (Flatschart, 2016). While critical discourse analysis offers an important social

constructionist perspective to the social sciences (Lange & Mierendorff, 2009), some critics believe a wholly interpretivist approach to discourse renders theoretical explanations meaningless by discrediting all truth claims regarding social life (Major-Poetzl as cited in Bloor, 2011; Sayer, 2012) and putting the discourse analyst at risk of “cultural determinism” (Prout & James, 1997, p. 26) whereby all aspects of the social world are reduced to social constructions. By integrating a critical realist lens to his discourse theory, Fairclough’s perspective of ontology (what is real, what is constructed) is stratified, thus allowing for the differentiation between biological and social realms (Al-Amoudi, 2007). I believe the integration of critical discourse theory with a critical realist perspective has an important implication for childcare policy, as well as other areas of public policy and social justice: it strengthens research efforts by exposing debates that are ideologically-based and, instead, re-focuses attention on policy considerations that are grounded in real truths.

The philosophical British movement known as critical realism (Papa, 2009) has found many followers across several disciplines. Critical realism serves as a basis for theoretical and methodological reflection toward understanding the dialectic interrelation between society and individuals (Papa, 2009). First referenced in 1887 (Papa, 2009), critical realism is associated with the transcendental philosophy of Kant (Kant as cited in Papa, 2009), though Bhaskar (1998) is credited with a developing today’s contemporary version. Central to critical realism is the understanding that life is an open system where it is simply not possible to identify definitive sequences of events (Papa, 2009). While this approach might appear to reflect an anti-positivist stance, critical realism “steers a course between empiricism and interpretivism in a way that draws on the advantages of both whilst avoiding the pitfalls” (Tikly, 2015, p. 238).

Critical realism offers a critical lens to empiricist claims, while at the same time acknowledging the limits of interpretivism (Tikly, 2015). It views interpretivism, including

social constructionism, as falling victim to “epistemic fallacy” (Tikly, 2015, p. 239) whereby all things, including an individual’s cognitive and biological factors, are interpreted as purely social construction, thereby confusing ontology with epistemology (Tikly, 2015). Critical realism offers a solution to this epistemic fallacy by distinguishing between the domains of the natural world and the social world: 1) the empirical (i.e., the experiences and sensed perceptions of knowing subjects); 2) the objects and events that occur in the world (i.e., those that exist independent of our perceptions and knowledge of them); and 3) the level of deeper lying structures and causal mechanisms that may be beyond our experience but give rise to the other two levels (Tikly, 2015, p. 243).

According to some scholars, an approach that focuses solely on discourse as the only valid unit of analysis fails to investigate how the dimensions of the material world, including the institutions that govern social structures, may impact upon the non-material aspects, such as discourse (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007). A critical realist approach to discourse analysis recognizes the dialectical relationship between the material and non-materials aspects of the social world. As such, critical realism enables the discourse analyst to reveal the ways in which discourse constructs our social realities and the ways in which these constructions are constrained and shaped by our material world. In so doing, there is recognition of a material dimension to our world that cannot be reduced as discourse. Such an approach enables the analyst to consider how certain discourses become dominant, while others do not, within the material constraints of differing societal contexts. A model of discourse analysis that incorporates critical realism allows for the analysis of discursive elements, and the ideological functions of same, while also enabling the analysis of the dialectical relationship between the discursive and non-discursive, the non-material and the material. Moreover, critical realism recognizes that the relationship between the material and non-material is complicated by the fact

that non-discursive elements of the social world, such as our social institutions, are not object-like or concrete. As such, they can “only be known through the phenomena that they generate, that is to say, their presence can only be deduced from the processes and experiences which they have made possible” (Sims-Schouten, Riley & Willig, 2007, p. 105). Importantly, critical realism allows the analyst to recognize the limits of understanding reality while, at the same time, acknowledging that there does exist a reality independent of our understanding and knowledge of it. In other words, a critical realist analyst understands that social structures interact with the elements of our social world in dynamic and dialectical ways, resulting in a complicated social system that can never be truly known by the analyst.

Importantly, a critical realist philosophy aligns with Fairclough’s critical discourse theory and his approach to discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003, p. 23). Reconciling the influence of social constructionism in the field of discourse through a critical realist lens, Fairclough’s discourse theory differentiates between those aspects of the social world that are constructed through discourse, such as abstract social structures, and those aspects that are concrete (Fairclough, 1992). For example, applying a critical realist lens to studies of childhood helps to recognize that while the biological laws of children’s development follow a particular ordering, such laws cannot account for the many differences in children’s development as evident from cross-cultural studies (Alderson, 2013).

Critical realism also provides a balanced perspective to explaining Fairclough’s concept of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. In viewing social structure through a critical realist lens, one recognizes the ways in which structure constrains individual agency, while, at the same time, positions individuals as agents, including children, with the ability to overcome the constraints of structure (Alderson, 2013). Importantly, however, a critical realist lens to agency recognizes the unique and vulnerable position of children as social agents. This

does not mean that children are viewed as not having agency; childhood researchers illustrate much evidence of such, including agential acts by young children and collective acts of agency by groups of children (Alderson, 2013; James, 1997; Wells, 2009). Rather, it means that children represent a unique and especially vulnerable group in the social order.

4.6 Cultural Hegemony

Fairclough integrates Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony (Gramsci in Fairclough, 1992) with his Critical Discourse Analysis theory and methodology. Cultural hegemony refers to the ways in which a dominant culture is imposed upon people within a society (Fairclough, 1992; Lears, 1985). As described earlier, components of culture include values, norms, perceptions, beliefs, sentiments, and prejudices. While influenced by the Marxist concept of ideology (Marx in Lears, 1985) and its emphasis on economic interests, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony offers a more complex view of ideology, including religious, cultural, racial, ethnic, gender and social influences (Lears, 1985, p. 571). Importantly, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony positions society in constant struggle where challenges to the dominant culture are ever-present (Fairclough, 1992; Lears, 1985). Such a view is in line with the tenets of critical realism and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis whereby the oppression of structure is significant, while the potential for agency and emancipation endure.

This lens is important to understanding the dialectical relationship between the political discourse surrounding Canada's childcare policy and the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children. Moreover, while recognizing the power of dominant political discourse, Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony also acknowledges that such discourses have been, and will continue to be, challenged and opposed within societies. According to childhood researchers (James & James, 2004; James & Prout, 1997), a cultural politics of childhood reflects the idea that childhood constructions are constituted and reconstituted through macro and micro-

level systems within society. As a macro-level system, the “rule of law” (James & James, 2004, p. 52) constitutes social norms within the framework of a legal system which embody and regulate normative expectations. In this context, law refers to all entities that exist within the legal structure of society, for example, children’s policies such as childcare policy. Importantly, these scholars contend that law has a fundamental role in managing social change and in mediating the interplay between structure and agency (James & James, 2004). In this way, law is considered a dynamic mechanism that changes over time. In addition to this macro-level system of structure, law also constitutes and reconstitutes the constructions of childhood at the micro-level through its influence on the everyday actions, practices and beliefs that take place within the context of the relationships between adults and children (James & James, 2004). Thus, the cultural politics of childhood reflects a “relationship between change and continuity in childhood [that] is a reflexive, flexible and evolutionary process in which ‘childhood’, as a social space inhabited and experienced by individual children, is continuously located within and shaped by successive generations of adults and children” (James & James, 2004, p 63).

This micro-macro view of the cultural politics of childhood reflects Gramsci’s dialectical process of hegemony in that systems of power at the macro-level of structure (e.g., childcare policy) influence cultural values, norms, and beliefs that are then reconstituted by adults through their everyday micro-level actions with children, including those within the family home. Since such actions are embedded within systemic adultism, an adult-centric society that serves the interests and objectives of adults, it is very difficult for children to act on their own behalf and defend their own values and goals. It is important to note that cultural hegemony does not enforce its dominance through efforts of control, but rather through passive consent (Carey & Foster, 2011). As such, cultural hegemony is maintained as the status quo until such time as counter-hegemony efforts find success in challenging societal norms and values. Fairclough

(2001) believes that the effectiveness of any counter-hegemony efforts hinges on the success of new and opposing discourses, those that compete and counter the discourses of the dominant structure.

4.7 Political Discourse Analysis

Dunmire describes political discourse as the “linguistic and discursive dimensions of political text and talk and the political nature of discursive practice” (2012, p. 735). Moreover, what counts as the political practices of discourse includes the discursive practices of professional politicians and the language conventions of political institutions (Dunmire, 2012, p. 737). Described by van Dijk (1997), *political discourse analysis* may refer to the micro-based analysis of the text and talk of politicians within political contexts, or it may encompass a macro-based approach to the analysis of the social practices of political discourse. In other words, political discourse analysis is delineated by non-critical and critical approaches to discourse similarly to the way in which discourse analysis is defined by non-critical and critical approaches (Dunmire, 2012). Critical approaches to political discourse analysis share a common emphasis: they reject rationalist models of policy-making that suggest policy choices are based on logical reason and evidence. Instead, proponents of critical political discourse analysis suggest that policy decisions are determined through the ideological arguments and cultural values of those in positions of power (Dunmire, 2012; Stark, 1992). It is this critical approach to political discourse analysis that will guide my research study.

According to the theoretical work by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), an understanding of political discourse is grounded by argumentation theory (Dryzek & Berejikian, 1993; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Habermas, 1984), a theory related to Halliday’s theory of speech acts (Halliday as cited in Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 37). Through this theoretical lens, the view of politics reflects the idea that political actors attempt to win acceptance for their policy

choices through discourse, thus legitimizing their policy choice and their position of authority. Policy choices are considered political in nature, meaning they are contested by different groups who have different values, interests and goals; and are competing to make their own policy choices prevail (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). In this way, Fairclough and Fairclough's understanding of political discourse focuses on how discourse provides agents, or political actors, with reasons for action, and how such agents make "choices about how to act in response to circumstances and events in light of certain goals and values" (2012, p. 11).

Fairclough and Fairclough's approach to political discourse is grounded in Aristotle's (Aristotle in Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012) concept of deliberation (p. 20). *Deliberation* is an argumentative genre of discourse that involves considering alternative practical arguments, supporting certain claims for action, and weighing alternative claims for action. Importantly, deliberation extends to all aspects of a policy, including the means (policy choices) and the ends (goals of the policy choice). Central to argumentation theory and deliberation are the notions of theoretical reason and practical reason. The former is guided by a search for knowledge, the latter by the need for appropriate action (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2001, p. 33). Fairclough and Fairclough believe that it is practical reason that guides political argumentation through activities of justifying, persuading or refuting certain claims (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 36).

Fairclough and Fairclough's understanding of political discourse has important differences compared to other theories related to political discourse, including those of Chilton (2003) and Wodak (2009). Fairclough and Fairclough view political discourse—and the discursive argumentation of political actors—as belonging to the social world, influenced by systems of power and ideologies. As such, political discourse must be critically analyzed to reveal the dynamics of the social world and the power relations that influence it. Chilton's (2003) and Wodak's (2009) approaches view argumentation as a strategy, through which a political

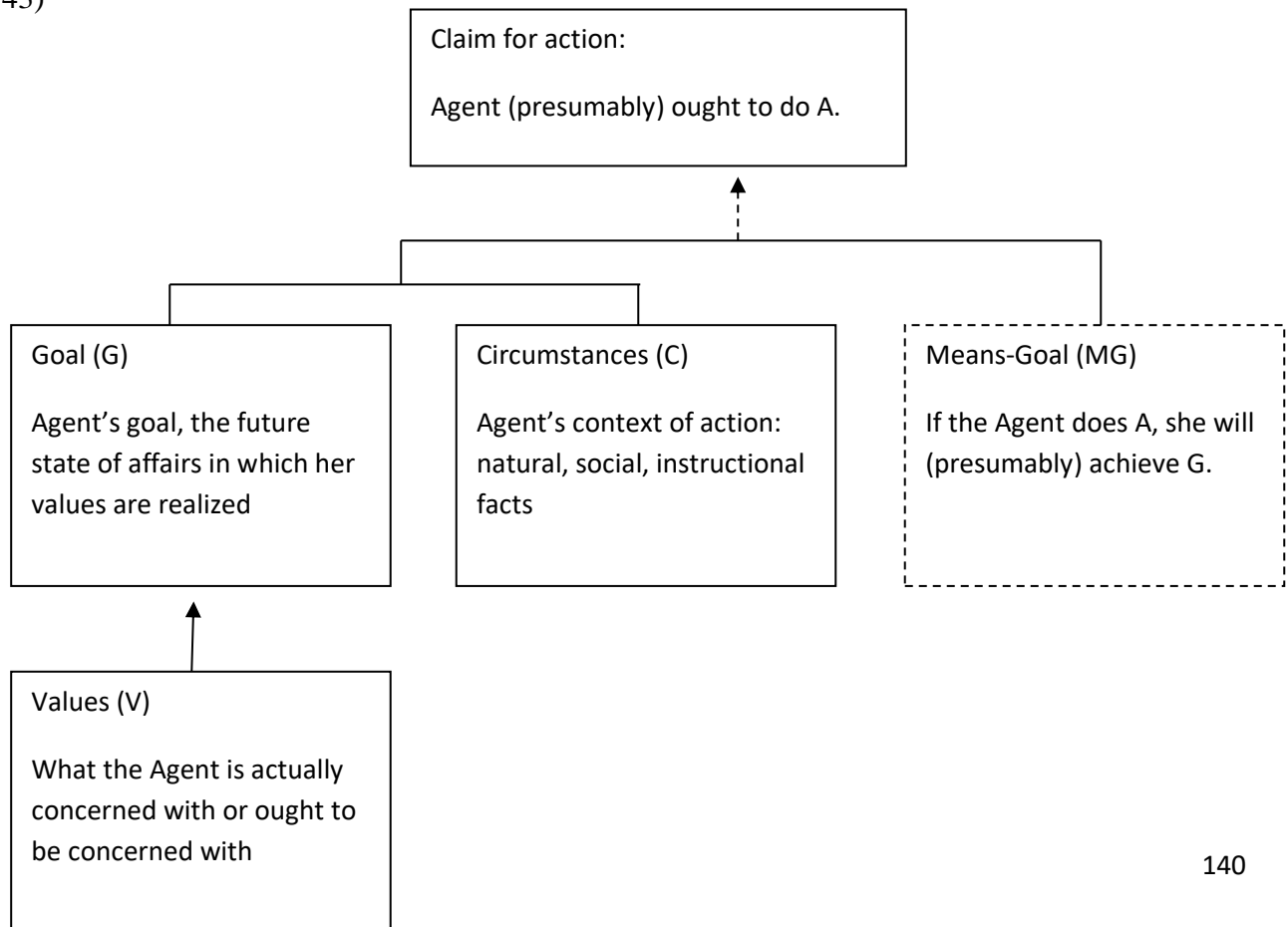
actor's strategic practices of discourse fall outside the influence of the social world. This view of argumentation as strategy aligns with theories of action. In contrast, Fairclough and Fairclough view argumentation as a complex speech act which aligns with their theory of discourse (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 23). This means that they recognize the influence of the social world upon a political actor's strategic practices of discourse. The difference between these two views of argumentation is similar to the difference between non-critical approaches to discourse and critical approaches to discourse. Non-critical approaches treat discourse as asocial, while critical approaches treat discourse as social. Another important tenet of Fairclough and Fairclough's approach to political discourse is their emphasis on *descriptive* and *normative critique*. In this way, they believe political discourse analysis is "concerned both with what politics is like [i.e., descriptive] and with what politics ought to be like [i.e., normative]" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 25). Extending from this, their concept of normative critique relates to the evaluation of social beliefs and practices as beneficial or harmful (p. 65). In this way, they argue, normative critique evaluates social realities against a standard of values the analyst believes belong to a "'good' [sic] society" (p. 79), in order to support the exploration of what is a 'good' policy claim. Moreover, their approach to political discourse analysis focuses on the uncertainty of political choices, a view of politics that is characterized by differing views of various groups, and the variety of interpretations that exist for circumstances and events.

Alongside Fairclough and Fairclough's theoretical work to examining political discourse, they have developed a methodology called Political Discourse Analysis (2012). The central technique of this methodology requires the analyst ask and answer specific critical questions surrounding a political issue under study. Figure 4.2 illustrates the processes of the descriptive and normative critique involved in the methodology of Political Discourse Analysis. The objective of Political Discourse Analysis is to reveal the ways in which the values of an Agent

(i.e., political actor, policy-maker, and decision-maker) influence the process of argument in political discourse. In this way, their methodology reflects a view of politics whereby political actors attempt to win acceptance for their policy choices through discourse, thus enacting and legitimizing their policy choice and their position of authority.

Central to their methodology of Political Discourse Analysis, an analyst must apply her knowledge about the historical and social conditions of the issue under study, as part of her normative critique. In examining the types of arguments that political actors use in defending or challenging policy choices, an analyst must determine—through critical questioning—what makes a political agent’s argument a ‘good’ one (p. 67). Such questioning is only made possible through the macro-analysis of the social conditions surrounding the political discourse, a method that also reflects Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis methodology.

Figure 4.2: Political Discourse Analysis Process (Source: Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 43)



Integrating Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) theoretical explanation of political discourse and their methodology of Political Discourse Analysis was an important consideration in my research study. Given the main objective of Fairclough and Fairclough's Political Discourse Analysis is to provide a normative critique of political discourse and to reveal the values and ideologies of political actors, their approach addresses a limitation of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (2003). According to Fairclough and Fairclough (2012), Critical Discourse Analysis "cannot in itself carry out normative or explanatory critique but can contribute to a focus on discourse and on relations between discourse and other social elements" (p. 80). As such, Political Discourse Analysis adds value to Critical Discourse Analysis by "posing critical questions which lead into and contribute to analysis of relations of power and domination...[which] shows how particular beliefs and concerns shape practical reasoning...and poses critical questions about how conflicts of action, values, and goals are represented in the premise of argument (p. 80). In this way, I believe the two methodologies complement each other well. While they explore similar questions, they do so through different analytical lenses. I describe these two methodologies in further detail in chapter five.

4.8 Conclusion

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is a well-established approach to the theory and analysis of discourse. Integrating a critical realist lens, Critical Discourse Analysis strikes a balanced approach to interpreting discourse, revealing its influence on the social world while recognizing that it cannot provide a full and generalizable explanation. Moreover, Critical Discourse Analysis positions discourse within the relationship between structure and agency in a manner that recognizes the unique and vulnerable position of children as social agents. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis also integrates the concept of cultural hegemony with his methodology. By recognizing the influence of the dominant culture within a society, cultural

hegemony offers a way to explain how values, beliefs and norms, including those related to childhood and the collective identities of children, are constructed and reconstructed in the social world. Importantly, however, cultural hegemony also recognizes the potential to oppose these dominant values, beliefs and norms through counter-hegemony discourse, a position that reflects Fairclough's own understanding of change and continuity in the social world. This theoretical perspective is important for my research study of childcare policy, as my objective is to examine childcare policy from the time Canada signed the UNCRC in 1989 to the release of the Federal government's most recent childcare policy in 2017. Examining childcare policy over this period of time reveals change and continuity related to Federal-level policy choices and the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children.

Moreover, my inclusion of Fairclough and Fairclough's theoretical and methodological understanding of political discourse complements my use of Critical Discourse Analysis. Like Critical Discourse Analysis, Political Discourse Analysis supports the view of political discourse as belonging to the social world, influenced by systems of power and ideologies. Central to the methodology of Political Discourse Analysis, the analyst must apply her knowledge about the historical and social conditions of the issue under study, as part of her normative critique, through critical questioning. I describe the methodologies of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis further in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1995, 2001, 2003) and Political Discourse Analysis (2012), as theory and methodology, is to explain and expose the relationship between discourse and power in order to emancipate society from its control. As such, the purpose of my research study is to explore how the political discourse surrounding childcare constructs childhood and the collective identities of children, and how, in turn, these constructions enact, reproduce and legitimize the Canada's Federal-level childcare policy choices. Central to my investigation, I examine the dialectical relationship between discourse and power, including its impacts on children.

5.2 Methodological Rationale

There are a number of research studies that analyze discourse related to childcare policy and children's issues. These employ a variety of approaches to discourse analysis, from a historical-focused Foucauldian approach (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2005), to a text-focused sociolinguistics approach (Prentice, 2009; Thériault, 2006; Whiteford, 2014) to a Fairclough-based micro-macro analysis approach (Kiersey & Hayes, 2010; Mtahabwa, 2010; Osgood, 2005; Richardson, 2011; Richardson & Langford, 2014; Richardson, Langford, Friendly & Rauhala, 2013; Wild, Silberfeld & Nightingale, 2015). Of these studies, some focus on the political discourse surrounding childcare policy (Kiersey & Hayes, 2010; Mtahabwa, 2010; Osgood, 2005; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2005; Prentice, 2009; Whiteford, 2014; Wild et al., 2015), while others examine media discourse (Richardson et al., 2013; Thériault, 2006) and advocacy discourse (Richardson & Langford, 2014; Langford, Prentice, Albanese, Summers, Messina-Goertzen & Richardson, 2013)

Those studies that focus on political discourse use a variety of official government documents as their data source, including Budget Speeches and Speeches from the Throne (Rounce, 2013; Whiteford, 2014), strategy and next steps planning documents (Mtahabwa, 2010), web-based government materials (Osgood, 2005), government responses to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on its progress toward implementing the UNCRC (Kiersey & Hayes, 2010), government legislation (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2005), and government policy documents (Prentice, 2009; Whiteford, 2014; Wild, Silberfeld & Nightingale, 2015). Other types of political discourse that are analyzed in political discourse studies include, speeches by politicians (Sowinska, 2013), parliamentary debates (Stark, 1992), government press releases (Farrell, 2010), and election manifestos (Chaney, 2013). Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis methodology has been used in several studies of childcare policy (Kiersey & Hayes, 2010; Mtahabwa, 2010; Osgood, 2005; Wild et al., 2015), including two within a Canadian context (Richardson & Langford, 2014; Richardson et. al., 2013). As such, Fairclough's methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis demonstrates its strength as a valid approach to the micro-macro analysis of discourse. The lesser-established Political Discourse Analysis complements the more rigorous Critical Discourse Analysis, and represents a value-add to the strength of my study.

5.3 Data Sources

I focused my research study on the political discourse surrounding Canada's Federal-level policy choices related to childcare. While I recognize that Provinces and Territories have demonstrated policy choices related to developing childcare systems within their respective jurisdictions, I chose to analyze Canada's Federal-level policy choices because of the various attempts that have been made by past Federal governments to establish a national system of childcare in Canada. Moreover, I chose to analyze government childcare policy documents, as

was done by Prentice (2009); Whiteford (2014); and Wild, Silberfeld and Nightingale (2015) studies; Budget Speeches and Speeches from the Throne, as done by Rounce (2013) and Whiteford (2014); and responses to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on its progress toward implementing the UNCRC, as done by Kiersey and Hayes (2010) and Kiersey (2011).

I studied the following political discourse surrounding Federal-level child policy areas covering key moments in the history of childcare in Canada:

- 1) Bill C-144, the Canada Child Care Act proposed by the Progressive Conservative government in 1988;
- 2) the proclamation and ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Progressive Conservative government in 1989 and 1991, respectively, and the subsequent monitoring of progress related to the Convention by the Liberal government (1993-2006) and the Conservative government (2006-2015);
- 3) the National Children's Agenda, established by the Liberal government in 1997;
- 4) the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, established by the Liberal government in 2003;
- 5) the Child Care Spaces Initiative and the Universal Child Care Benefit, established by the Conservative government in 2006; and
- 6) the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework, established by the Liberal government in 2017.

Through purposive sampling, I selected samples of political discourse from these key moments in childcare policy history, which yielded a distribution of policy choices from three governing Federal parties: the Progressive Conservatives (1984-1993), the Liberals (1993-2006; 2015-present), and the Conservatives (2006-2015). Examining a representation of political

discourse afforded me the opportunity to investigate the views and values related to the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children of differing governing political parties starting from the point in time when the proclamation of the UNCRC firmly entrenched the children's rights movement in 1989.

The data sources I chose from these key moments in childcare policy history include the Federal Government of Canada's childcare policy documents (including on-line materials) related to the Canada Child Care Act (1988), the National Children's Agenda (1997), the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (2003), the Child Care Spaces Initiative and the Universal Child Care Benefit (2006), the Canada Child Benefit (2016), and the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (2017). I also examined the Federal Government of Canada's reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on its progress toward implementing the UNCRC, specifically related to its updates concerning childcare; and a selection of the Federal Government of Canada's Speeches from the Throne and Budget Speeches. I describe each of these data source types below.

5.3.1 Rationale for Selecting the Following Childcare Policy Documents

Government policy documents have been used as data sources in a number of critical discourse studies focusing on political discourse (Prentice, 2009; Whiteford, 2014; Wild et al., 2015). My study focused on the political discourse surrounding the policy choices of three political parties who have held power as Canada's Federal government, under my chosen period of study. I obtained on-line descriptions of the childcare policy choices by these governing political parties from the government of Canada's archival data. I chose these policy documents because they prominently feature the childcare policy choice of each respective governing party. Moreover, given the embedded constructions of childhood and the collective identities of

children within these differing discourses my historical examination revealed the different ways that differing political parties position children through policy.

5.3.2 Rationale for Selecting the Following Government of Canada’s Speeches from the Throne

In Canada, the Governor General delivers the Speech from the Throne to open each session of Parliament. While the Speech is spoken by the Governor General, it is written by the governing administration and is deemed to represent the values of the elected government in power (Rounce, 2013; Whiteford, 2014). Though it could be argued that Throne Speeches do not necessarily reflect the political action of the governing party, my focus was not on political action, per se, but, rather, the values and views of childhood and children put forward by those in positions of power. As such, I used selected Speeches from the Throne in order to analyze the government of Canada’s views and values, embedded within its political discourse, related to children and its childcare policy choices. I purposefully selected the following Throne Speeches because they represent key moments in childcare policy history, and, as articulated in Table 5.1, they significantly feature each governing party’s childcare policy choices.

Table 5.1: Selected Speeches from the Throne for Analysis

- | |
|---|
| <p>a) Second Session of the 34th Parliament, delivered on April 3, 1989. I have selected this speech because it references the National Child Care Act.</p> <p>b) First Session of the 36th Parliament of Canada, delivered on September 23, 1997. I have selected this speech because it references the Liberal government's plans to establish the National Children's Agenda.</p> <p>c) Third Session of the 37th Parliament of Canada, delivered on February 2, 2004. I have chosen this speech because it references the Liberal government's plans to develop a Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care.</p> <p>d) First Session of the 39th Parliament of Canada, delivered on April 4, 2006. I have chosen this speech because it references the Conservative government's plans for the Universal Child Care Benefit and the Child Care Spaces Initiative.</p> <p>e) First Session of the 42nd Parliament, delivered on December 3, 2015. I have chosen this speech because it references the Liberal government's plans for replacing the Universal Child Care Benefit with the Canada Child Benefit.</p> |
|---|

5.3.3 Rationale for Selecting the Following Government of Canada’s Budget Speeches

Each year the Finance Minister of Canada presents the Government of Canada’s Budget Plan by making a Budget Speech. The Budget Speech is written by the governing administration and is deemed to represent the expenditure and policy priorities of the elected government in power (Rounce, 2013; Whiteford, 2014). As such, I used selected Budget Speeches in order to analyze the government of Canada’s expenditure and policy priorities surrounding its childcare policy choices. In purposefully selecting Budget Speeches, I reviewed all of the Federal Budget Speeches within the time period under my study. The results of this overview have yielded the following selection of Budget Speeches, as presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Selected Budget Speeches for Analysis

a)	February 10, 1988, 33rd Parliament
b)	February 18, 1997, 35th Parliament
c)	March 23, 2004, 37th Parliament
d)	May 2, 2006, 39th Parliament
e)	March 22, 2016, 42nd Parliament

5.3.4 Rationale for Selecting the following Progress Reports to the UNCRC

As a signatory to the UNCRC, Canada is required to submit regular reports on its efforts to implement the treaty to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. This reporting cycle began in 1993, when Canada’s first report was due two years following ratification in 1991. Subsequent to this, Canada submits a progress report every five years. Kiersey and Hayes (2010) feature state responses to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child as key data sources to evaluate Ireland’s commitment to the treaty. Given the establishment of these reports in critical discourse analysis studies, I chose to include Canada’s progress reports in my study.

Moreover, as my study investigated Canada's childcare policy choices as they respond or ignore children-centred considerations, my inclusion of Canada's UNCRC progress reports was appropriate. Since it ratified the UNCRC in 1991, Canada has submitted three reports: 1) 1994-released report (covering progress from 1991-1993); 2) 2001-released report (covering progress from 1993-1997); and 3) 2009-released report (covering progress from 1998-2007). The report covering progress from 2008 to 2013 is due in 2018/19, and is therefore not included in this analysis. I accessed the 1994, 2001, and 2009-released reports from the Senate of Canada's webpage.

5.4 Research Question

Employing the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2001, 2003), I examined select sources of political discourse surrounding Federal-level child policy choices, covering key moments in the history of childcare in Canada, as previously described. The research question that guided my analysis was: *How have the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, embedded within political discourse, established, defended and legitimized Federal-level childcare policy choices in Canada?*

In answering this question, I expose how children are viewed and valued by those in positions of power, and how these views and values have influenced the development of childcare policies, which may or may not reflect children-centred considerations of childcare.

5.5 Discourse Analysis Method

After describing the theoretical tenets behind Critical Discourse Analysis in chapter two, I now illustrate its discourse analysis methods. Fairclough's methodology is a three-dimensional approach to discourse analysis that reflects his concept of discourse—that it is both text and social (or, semiotic, as Fairclough terms the social practices of discourse). In this way, Fairclough views discourse as being comprised of discursive elements that are embedded within

social practices of discourse that are shaped and influenced by the social conditions of social life. As such, Fairclough's methodology incorporates the elements of linguistics to the analysis of text; the tradition of a microsociological approach to the analysis of the social practices that shape the production and interpretation of text; and the macrosociological approach to the analysis of the social conditions within which the social elements of discourse take place (Fairclough, 2003). Some have described his approach as a "principled shunting back and forth between analyses of text and the social" (Luke, 2002, p. 103). In this way, Fairclough's approach requires a thoughtful, methodical, and reflexive analyst; one who knows and understands the historical background and social conditions of the issue under study, including, in the instance of my study, an understanding of the historical constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children. My earlier description of the historical and social conditions of childcare in Canada aided me in my macro-level analysis of the political discourse surrounding childcare. A step-by-step outline of the critical questioning that is prescribed in Fairclough's shunting process can be found in Appendix A. Importantly, however, while the three-dimension model of analysis is delineated in Figure 5.1 as separate activities, the process that unfolds is interwoven. In other words, an analyst cannot simply undertake her textual analysis separate and apart from her macrosociological analysis; the three approaches to analysis are entwined.

Last, for personal preference reasons, I conducted the critical questioning process of Fairclough's method using a paper and pencil mode of analysis and note-taking, and developed an electronic organizational system for my analysis and interpretation using word and excel office products. I did not employ qualitative analysis software; as found by Kiersey (2011) in her Critical Discourse Analysis study, the use of NVivo software did not add value to her analysis, a finding which supported my personal decision to forgo such software.

5.5.1 Textual Analysis

Textual analysis is considered the first phase of Fairclough's three-dimensional approach. According to Fairclough, text analysis can be organized under the main headings of: vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure (Fairclough, 2003, p. 75). In examining *vocabulary*, Fairclough recommends the analyst think of the alternative wordings that could have been used instead of the chosen words. This enables the analyst to discover the values and ideologies that are meant to be conveyed by certain word choices. In examining aspects of *grammar* the analyst reveals how grammatical decisions, such as the present tense form of a verb, render the text as authoritative and above reproach. With regards to *cohesion*, Fairclough suggests the analyst look at how clauses are linked together in sentences through the use of repeating words, near-synonyms, and conjunctive words. By focusing on cohesion, Fairclough suggests it will reveal the argumentation and rationality of the text (Fairclough, 2003, p. 77). Last, the focus on *text structure* demonstrates the architecture of text and the higher-level design features of text. Text structure is used to convey assumptions about social relationships and social identities (Fairclough, 2003, p. 78). *Modes of sentences* are another component of textual analysis: much can be revealed by examining the ways in which the mode of a sentence (e.g., declarative, grammatical question, imperative) positions the subject. Included in text structure characteristics are *modalities*, including deontic modality whereby the speaker/writer's authority is inherent in the sentence structure through the use of verbs such as "must" and "should".

5.5.2 The Processes of Text Production and Text Interpretation

According to Fairclough the relationship between text and social structures is indirect, "mediated first of all by the discourse which the text is a part of, because the values of textual features only become real, socially operative, if they are embedded in social interaction, where texts are produced and interpreted against a background of common-sense assumptions (part of

member's resources) which give textual features their values" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 117). It is these social interactions—the processes of text production and text interpretation—that are under study in the second phase of Fairclough's three-dimensional approach.

One of the most significant processes of text production and text interpretation is *intertextuality* (Fairclough, 2003, p. 84). Intertextuality is the "property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 84). As it relates to text production, intertextuality stresses the repetition of text from other sources. As it relates to text interpretation, intertextuality stresses the influence that preceding texts have on the repeated text. According to Fairclough, intertextuality is integral to the power behind discourse. The repetition of text ensures a historical context of discourse, which then contributes to its naturalization; its messages are considered taken-for-granted assumptions (Fairclough, 2001, p. 127).

Another important element of text production and text interpretation relates to *nominalization*, which is the purposeful strategy of transforming a verb into a noun. In so doing, action is removed from the text so that the cause of a specific verb becomes invisible, and the existence of the entity becomes taken-for-granted rather than as the by-product of human agency (Fairclough, 2003, p. 13). A second element of the processes related to text production and interpretation is that of *genres*. According to Fairclough, "genres are important in sustaining the institutional structure of contemporary society – structural relations between (local) governments, businesses, universities, the media, etc." (Fairclough, 2003, p. 32). One example of a genre is *conversationalization*, which refers to the way in which journalists or politicians adapt certain features of conversational language in their text or talk so as to blur the boundaries

between news and entertainment, drama and documentary, fact and fiction (Fairclough, 2003, p. 35).

The use of *irrealis* statements is another way in which the processes of text production and interpretation exact their influence on discourse. An irrealis statement is a statement that appears factual, when in fact it is predictive (Fairclough, 2003, p. 175). By conveying a prediction through an irrealis statement, the statement becomes a taken-for-granted assumption and is rendered as beyond question. The use of *presuppositions*, or *assumptions*, is another way in which power behind discourse is manipulated. Assumptions are cues embedded within text, and they assume the character of common sense. Such cues are effective ways through which to manipulate the reader, leading them to characterize subjects in a certain way (Fairclough, 2001, p. 127).

Described earlier, member resources are essential to power behind discourse. The meanings that people hold in their minds—their member resources—have developed throughout their life course, influenced steadfastly by text producers who are in positions of power. Conventions of speech and the socially-accepted practices of language, established by those in positions of power, are taken as common sense, beyond examination. According to Fairclough, such conventions embody ideological representations of subjects and social relationships, thus embedding within discourse taken-for-granted assumptions of authority and power relations (Fairclough, 2001, p. 131).

5.5.3 Social Conditions of Discourse

Last, the third dimension of Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis is the examination of the historical and social conditions of discourse. Similar to Foucault, Fairclough's approach to this macrosociological tradition of discourse is to reveal the *social relations* and *social identities* represented in discourse (Fairclough, 2003, p. 124), such as the

constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children. To do so, Fairclough's approach involves identifying the main parts of the world that are represented in the discourse under study, and the particular perspective or view point from which they are represented (Fairclough, 2003, p. 129). In this way, the third approach of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis is concerned with explanation: to "show how discourse as a social process is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourse can cumulatively have on those structures" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 117). Moreover, these social effects are mediated by member's resources, those taken-for-granted assumptions that people have developed over time, because of their exposure and re-exposure to such social conventions. As stated earlier, this phase of analysis requires a thoughtful, methodical, and reflexive analyst; it was imperative for me to consider the historical and social contexts of childcare in Canada in my study during this phase of analysis. My earlier description of Canada's welfare regime served as important background to my macrosociological analysis of the social conditions surrounding Canada's childcare system.

A macrosociological analysis requires a critical lens. As Fairclough states, "explanation is a matter of seeing discourse as part of a process of social struggle, within a matrix of relations of power" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 135). As such, it was important for me to recognize, through my reflexive analytical lens of childhood theory, how these power struggles impact upon children and their rights, and the ways in which our social world establishes, defends and legitimizes policy decisions and structural institutions.

5.6 Political Discourse Analysis

I chose to integrate Fairclough and Fairclough's Political Discourse Analysis (2012) with Critical Discourse Analysis because of the important contribution it adds when examining discourse that is political in nature, including the role of critical questioning. The purpose of

Political Discourse Analysis is to reveal the ways in which the values of an Agent (policy-maker, decision-maker) influence the process of argument in political discourse. As previously stated, the objective of Political Discourse Analysis is to show that decisions made in the arena of politics are based on choices about how to act in response to circumstances and events in light of one's values. This view of politics reflects the idea that political actors attempt to win acceptance for their policy choices through discourse, thus legitimizing their policy choice and their position of authority.

An important component of Political Discourse Analysis is its use of both descriptive and normative critique. This approach to analysis is similar to the third step of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, the explanation phase. The task of descriptive and normative critique requires knowledge about the historical and social conditions of the issue under study. In this way, the analyst must determine, through normative questioning, what makes a political agent's argument a "good" one, based on the analyst's broad knowledge of the global policy landscape. By integrating Political Discourse Analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis, I adopted its recommended critical questioning process, described in section 5.8, as part of my reflexive journaling while I conducted my analysis. Figure 4.2 from chapter four illustrates Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) process of critical questioning.

5.7 Organization of Analysis and Presentation of Findings

To examine my selected sources of political discourse surrounding Federal-level child policy choices, I organized my data sources and my findings by four key Periods. *Period One* represented the Progressive Conservative Federal government administration (1984-1993). The data sources for this period include: Government of Canada Budget Speech for February 10, 1988; Bill C-144, the Canada Child Care Act proposed by the Progressive Conservative government in 1988; and Canada's Speech from the Throne for April 3, 1989. *Period Two*

represented the Liberal Federal government administration (1993-2006). The data sources for this period include: the National Children's Agenda, established by the Liberal government in 1997; the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, established by the Liberal government in 2003; Canada's monitoring reports for the UNCRC released in 1994 and 2001; Canada's Speech from the Throne for September 23, 1997; Canada's Speech from the Throne for February 2, 2004; the Government of Canada's February 18, 1997 Budget Speech; and the Government of Canada's March 23, 2004 Budget Speech. *Period Three* represented the Conservative Federal government administration (2006-2015): The data sources for this period include: the Child Care Spaces Initiative; the Universal Child Care Benefit; the monitoring report for the UNCRC released in 2009; Canada's Speech from the Throne for April 4, 2006; and the Government of Canada's Budget Speech for May 2, 2006. Last, *Period Four* represented the new Liberal Federal government administration (2015-2017): The data sources for this period include: the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework released in 2017; Canada's Speech from the Throne for December 3, 2015; the Government of Canada's Budget Speech for March 22, 2016; and the Government of Canada's Budget Speech for March 22, 2017.

Using Fairclough's (2003) three-way analytical method of Critical Discourse Analysis, I include, for each of the Four Periods of my study, the description of the corpus, an interpretation of the corpus, and an explanation of the corpus. Further, I provide a descriptive analysis and a normative critique of the childcare policy choice put forward by each government in power by using the method of Political Discourse Analysis (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). I integrate my data findings and the discussion of these findings throughout the next four chapters, as organized by each of the four periods under my study.

In my conclusion of each chapter, I present the commonalities and differences in the political discourse that emerge between the Four Periods, and the trends of change and continuity

regarding the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, and how these have influenced the childcare policy choices of differing Federal government administrations from 1988 to 2017.

5.8 Analysis Process

The *textual and microsociological analysis* findings for the data sources of each of the Four Periods are presented in chronological order, which allows me to reveal the orders of discourse – patterns or changes in the discourse – as they correspond to changes in the surrounding political context. In conducting my textual and microsociological analysis of the data sources, I reflected on the following questions and considerations, using a process of reflexivity and a critical children-centred lens:

- 1) Vocabulary: What vocabulary choices were made? What alternative words could have been used? What habitual patterns of co-occurring words (co-locations) were used?
- 2) Grammar: What grammatical tenses were used? What was the grammatical mood (declarative, interrogative, or imperative)? What metaphors were used? What grammatical relations were used to link clauses (paratactic, hypotactic, or embedded)?
- 3) Text structure: What text structures were used (knowledge exchange or activity exchange)? What speech functions were used (questions, statements, demands)? What types of statement were used (fact statements, predictions, hypotheticals, evaluations)?
- 4) Intertextuality: Were there any instances of intertextuality, a technique that incorporates the voices of others into a text, for which they may or may not bear attribution or sourcing? Was there a presence of elements of other texts? Were voices

- other than the author's own voice used? If so, how were they positioned and were they attributed or quoted? Which voices were excluded?
- 5) Nominalization: Were there instances of transforming a verb into a noun, which removes action so cause of verb – or agent – becomes invisible. This is a strategic way to obfuscate agency and responsibility.
 - 6) Irrealis statements: Were there instances of irrealis statements whereby a statement appears factual when it is actually only predictive? This is a strategic tool that embeds a taken-for-granted assumption, a hegemonic tool.
 - 7) Assumptions or presuppositions: Were there instances of embedded cues within text? This is a strategic way to embed taken-for-granted 'common sense' which manipulates the reader/hearer, leading her/him to characterize subjects in a certain way. There are many types of assumptions, including: existential (the assumption of what exists); propositional (the assumption of relationships between two factors); and value (the assumption that something is "good" or "bad").
 - 8) Hegemony: Were there instances of hegemony, a strategic way of imposing a dominant culture by claiming it as universal?
 - 9) Ideology: Were there any instances of ideology, a strategic way of embedding cues that establish and maintain relations of power, domination and exploitation?
 - 10) Legitimation: Were there any instances of legitimation, a strategic way of legitimizing the speaker's words? There are many types of legitimation, including: authorization (reference to authority of tradition, custom, law); rationalization (reference to utility and knowledge); moral evaluation (reference to value systems); and mythopoesis (conveyed through narrative).

- 11) Difference: Are there instances of logic of equivalence (subverts difference and creates equivalence) or logic of difference (creates difference)? Is there a recognition of difference or an exploration of difference; or is there a bracketing of difference or a suppression of difference?
- 12) Social Practices of Discourse: What genres (ways of acting) were represented (e.g., speech giving)?
- 13) Genre chain: Was the text situated within a genre chain, whereby different genres were linked together? Changes in genre chains are important indicators of social change.
- 14) Genre mixing (interdiscursivity): Were different genres (interview, conversation, entertainment) mixed together in the text? Revealing genre mixing allows us to locate texts within processes of social change and to identify the potentially creative and innovative work of social agents in texturing.
- 15) Discourses: How are social actors represented? Are they included or excluded in representation of events? Are they in an activated or passive role? Are they presented personally or impersonally? Are they named or classified?
- 16) Styles: What style does the text represent (formal, conversational)? Is there a mixing of styles? What modality is used in relation to the position of the statements issued by the speaker/writer? There are two types of modality: epistemic (probability of truth) and deontic (obligation and necessity). What markers of modality are used?
- 17) Evaluation: To what values does the speaker/writer commit? How are these values portrayed? Do they use statements with deontic modalities, a technique that implies obligation and necessity?

In conducting my *macrosociological analysis* of the data sources, I integrated my earlier examination of childcare policy, presented in chapter two, as I approached the following questions and considerations through a process of reflexivity and a critical children-centred lens:

- 1) Social relations: What social relations were represented in the discourse? What power dynamics were represented in the relationship between government and families? What power dynamics were represented in the relationship between government and children? What power dynamics were represented in the relationship between parents and children?
- 2) Social identities: What social identities for government, for families, for parents, and for children were represented in the discourse?
- 3) Social structures: How were the structure-agency dynamics for these identities represented in the discourse?
- 4) Childhood lens: What adult-centric assumptions were represented in the discourse? How were these adult-centric assumptions incorporated?

In conducting the descriptive and normative critique of the Political Discourse Analysis component of my study, I reflected on the following questions and considerations, using a journaling process of reflexivity to facilitate my use of a critical children-centred lens. As I've described in chapter four, normative critique through the process of critical questioning is predicated on the analyst's understanding of the social issue under study. Through this process, she evaluates policy arguments, claims, values, and goals against a standard of values she considers to be “good” [sic] (Fairclough & Fairclough 2012, p. 67), as grounded by her theoretical knowledge.

- 1) Is the policy choice a ‘good’ choice in relation to other policy choices that have been enacted in other countries?

- 2) Is the policy choice under study a ‘good’ choice as it pertains to children-centred considerations?
- 3) What children-centred considerations does the policy choice under study achieve?
- 4) What children-centred considerations does the policy choice under study ignore?
- 5) How does the policy choice establish, defend and legitimize adult-centric goals?

5.9 Applying a Children-centred Lens to my Research Methods

My study integrated a childhood theory lens with my critical discourse analysis of childcare policy; thus enhancing the credibility of my study. Such an approach acknowledges the importance of applying a children-centred lens to the examination of policy issues that impact children. Notwithstanding the challenges inherent in an adult researcher adopting a children-centred perspective in her analysis, it was important to ground my children-centred analysis with a strong understanding of childhood theory. As presented in chapter three, childhood theory represents an emerging body of theoretical work which includes many implications for child policy analysis, children’s research, and children’s services. As it relates to my research study, my understanding of childhood theory supported my development of a children-centred understanding of childcare. Grounded in the principles of childhood theory, the children-centred considerations of childcare policy that I adopted represent a broad range of aspects related to childcare. Moreover, my historical examination of the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, and the dialectical relationship between these differing constructions and the change and continuity related to childcare policy provided a foundation upon which to apply a critical children-centred lens to discourse.

Detailed in Excerpts 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3, I provide entries from my analysis journal to illustrate my process of reflexivity while I conducted the textual, microsociological, and

macrosociological analysis processes of Critical Discourse Analysis, and the descriptive and normative critique of Political Discourse Analysis.

Excerpt 5.1 Reflexivity Process, as taken from Researcher's Analysis Journal

Extract from March 23, 2004 Budget Speech by Liberal Administration (1993-2006): Today, I am presenting a focused budget plan with two clear objectives: first to demonstrate unequivocally the principles of financial responsibility and integrity; and second, to begin to give tangible shape to the goals presented in the Speech from the Throne... Let me make clear what this budget will do – and what it will not do. What we will do is make important investments in such key areas as health care, communities and learning, for these are the social foundations upon which Canadians will build better lives... What we will do is keep our debt burden on a steady downward track to relieve the Mortgage that our generation – and previous spending habits – have imposed on the future of our children... Within a period of four years, we expect to identify at least \$3 billion for new investments in the ever-evolving priorities of Canadians – in health care, learning and innovation, communities, Aboriginals, people with disabilities. And let me make one final point: we will not commit to these reinvestments unless and until we have found the money to pay for them.

Extract from Researcher's Journal:

Even when the government takes no action to increase programs and services for children, such as childcare, it proudly profiles this restraint as a decision made in the best interests of children. This is an interesting example of strategic messaging—the government would like to “invest” in childcare (as opposed to honouring children’s rights to early education), but because it is so fiscally responsible to its (adult) citizens, it will only make this investment when it is economically positioned to do so. This ‘restraint’ (not investing in children) is defended because it has children in mind. How clever: frame zero political action toward childcare as a decision grounded by children’s best interests! This inaction and the defense of this inaction is a double affront to children.

Excerpt 5.2 Reflexivity Process, as taken from Researcher's Analysis Journal

Is the 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care a 'good' choice as it pertains to children-centred considerations?

Extract from Researcher's Journal:

Yes and no: the Framework does recognize the children-centred considerations of universal access and equitable provision that promotes inclusion of some children (those with special needs) its main goal is optimal child development which promotes the value of school readiness over all others, including, social pedagogic approaches to quality and democratic participation. A childcare policy choice that purports to enhance "child development" through "investment in the early years" is grounded in the adult-centric value of economic growth for its nation; it is not one that reflects children's needs.

Excerpt 5.3 Reflexivity Process, as taken from Researcher's Analysis Journal

Extract from March 22, 2017 Budget Speech by Liberal Administration (2015-present): We know that fewer women join or stay in the workforce than men... It seems unfathomable. But it's true... It's why we need to do better... We published the Government's first ever Gender Statements, an assessment that ensures all budget measures... help us advance the goals of fairness, stronger workforce participation, and gender equality... Another one of those barriers... is access to quality child care... Canadian parents deserve our support, and they're going to get it.

Extract from Researcher's Journal:

All references to childcare come from the perspective of labour support—a lack of childcare prevents women from participating in the workforce, which is a gender equality issue. The government will not tolerate this inequality issue any longer; it will at long last establish a gender equality lens to all budget spending. This is great, it is long overdue, but where is mention of children's equality? The section of the budget speech related to childcare talks only about the issue of childcare costs and inaccessibility to childcare is only presented as an issue for low to middle-income parents. There is no mention of children and the issue of children's equity as it relates to childcare. There is room for both perspectives—of course access to childcare is a women's equity issue, but it is also a matter of children's equity and children's rights.

5.10 Ethical Considerations

As a critical discourse analysis study, my research did not involve the participation of humans, and, as such, did not require approval by the University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board. Rather, I ensured my research study was accountable to the principles of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis by keeping a reflexive journal throughout my data collection, data analysis, and report writing. Importantly, I integrated childhood theory into my Critical Discourse Analysis study, thus committing to examining childcare policy as it relates to children's interests and their rights. Given my position as an adult, with an inherent adult-centric position, I was reflexive in my analysis work to ensure I honoured my commitment to examining childcare through a children-centred lens.

CHAPTER SIX: POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF PERIOD ONE (Progressive Conservative Administration of 1984-1993)

6.1 Introduction

Period One of my study comprises selections of political discourse surrounding the childcare policy choices of Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government (1984-1993). This majority government was first elected on September 4, 1984 after a long-running Liberal administration under Pierre Elliott Trudeau (1968-1979; 1980-1984), and then re-elected with a second majority government, on November 21, 1988. During the Mulroney administration there were significant international events, including the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. It was also a time of increasing globalization: The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed in 1994, representing a trilateral trade bloc in North America. It was also a time of financial insecurity resulting from a widespread economic recession. At a Canadian-level, the Meech Lake Accord (1987) and the Charlottetown Accord (1992) were proposed, negotiated, and, ultimately, defeated, thus representing a period of national history marked by strained Federal-Provincial-Territorial relations.

According to Koop and Bittner (2013), this political era represents the fourth party system in Canadian Federal-level politics. Defined as a set of patterns of competition, including the number of political parties, the degree of fragmentation and the electoral strength of these parties, the onset of the fourth party system came by Mulroney's record-setting majority victory in the 1984 national election. According to these authors, Canada's Federal-level history is characterized by long periods of majority Liberal rule, interrupted by interregnums consisting of Tory [Conservative] government (Koop & Bittner, 2013, p. 310). The first party system in national politics began with Confederation and ended with the Unionist government (1867-

1917). The second lasted from 1921-1957, concluding when Diefenbaker's Progressive Conservative party took office; the third party system started in 1963 and ended in 1984, following Mulroney's victory. These authors suggest that the first party system in Canada used patronage as a means of state building, with a focus on winning the electorate in the constituencies. Election strategy shifted in the second party system, with its focus on regionalism and its emphasis on the ability of party leaders to reconcile divergent interests among regions. The third party system is defined by increasing dependence upon mass communications vehicles, used to reach and connect with the broader electorate.

Further, an examination of political party ideology, a scoring system using the RILE (a composite index of a number of indicators, such as party platforms) to represent left/right ideological placement, reveals Period One to be a period of time that fostered a right-leaning ideological shift through the rise of the Reform Party. Mulroney's Progressive Conservative party, by contrast, was considered moderate in its ideological position (Koop & Bittner, 2013, p. 319). With this political backdrop, my study of Period One represents a shift in party systems, as Mulroney's majority government—another interregnum in a long period of Liberal rule—heralded Canada's fourth party system. It would prove to be a short-lived interruption in Canadian politics, ending in 1993, a defeat that would mark the demise of the Progressive Conservative party as it dropped from 169 seats to 2, losing the right to be recognized as a party in the House of Commons (Stewart & Carty, 2002; Koop & Bittner, 2013).

The Progressive Conservative Party, and the subsequent Conservative Party (reviewed in Period Three) are described as “catch-all parties”, a model of politics that strives to expand beyond its traditional ideological and regional bases in order to form government; yet is unable to broker consensus (Bittner & Koop, 2013, p. 18). In contrast, the Liberal Party is classified as a “brokerage party”, which I describe in Period Two. The authors conclude this classification of

the Progressive Conservative and the Conservative Parties after a review of 100 years of history whereby these parties did not seek to accommodate the interests of all Canadians. Further, its inability to broker consensus among the electorate has meant that it has not often been able to form government, aside from a history of interrupting long-standing Liberal rule with a dispersal of majority victories (e.g., 1984, 2011).

Period One also represents a significant period for the study of childcare policy. Following the era of World War II, the first time national childcare garnered the wide attention of the Canadian public, childcare was again in the spotlight due to the 1984 Katie Cooke Task Force (Scherer, 2001) commissioned by the then-Liberal Federal government. The resulting recommendations from this task force called for a nationally-coordinated childcare plan for Canada with strong leadership from the Federal government. This recommendation was short-lived, however, when, shortly thereafter, Brian Mulroney defeated Pierre Elliot Trudeau's Liberal government. Mulroney's Progressive Conservative majority government promptly shelved the Katie Cooke Task Force and commissioned its own study of childcare, the all-party Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care (Scherer, 2001).

This special committee's resulting report, *Sharing the Responsibility*, released in 1988, was strongly opposed by its Liberal and NDP members to such a degree that they, in turn, issued their own dissenting reports that were more in line with the earlier work of the Katie Cooke Task Force (Scherer, 2001). Despite this dissent, however, the special committee's report, *Sharing the Responsibility*, endorsed by its Progressive Conservative members, was released, and, in turn, the Federal government's resulting Bill C-144, the proposed Canada Child Care Act, was introduced into the House of Commons. Soon after, Bill C-144 was interrupted by a Federal election, and, following the re-election of the Progressive Conservative party, Canada's proposed

Canada Child Care Act died on the order table in the Senate with no further attempts to revive it under the Progressive Conservative administration (Scherer, 2001).

Following the Progressive Conservative's re-election in 1988, the Federal government subdued its commitment to childcare, shifting its attention, instead, toward other children-related policy choices such as the establishment of parental leave (1989); the establishment of the Community Action Plan for Children (1991) and HeadStart (1991); and the consolidation of Family Allowance, the Refundable Child Tax Credit and a non-refundable child tax credit into the Canada Child Tax Benefit (1993). Within this context of children-related policy choices, the Federal government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and proclaimed to the international community its support to protect and uphold children's rights, thus marking a significant political commitment to children in Canada's history.

6.2 Description, Interpretation and Explanation of the Corpus for Period One

Using a purposive sampling method, I reviewed all Budget Speeches and the Speeches from the Throne released during the Progressive Conservative Federal government's administration. I selected the February 10, 1988 Budget Speech and the April 3, 1989 Speech from the Throne because they most significantly made reference to the childcare policy choices of this government, that of Bill C-144. I selected Bill C-144 because it represented the government in power's childcare policy choice of this era.

After my analysis of these three data sources, I added the previously-described special committee on child care's report, *Sharing the Responsibility* (released May, 1988), as a supplementary data source to my study. I added this data source based on a recognition, which emerged from my analysis, that it would provide further textual background to the Federal government's childcare policy choice of Bill C-144, which had been influenced by this Progressive Conservative endorsed-report. Adding supplementary data to enhance the corpus

under study, as such data emerges throughout the analysis process, is an approach recommended by Fairclough (1992, p. 226).

6.2.1 Budget Speech, February 10, 1988

The February 10, 1988 Budget Speech, delivered in the first term of Mulroney's Progressive Conservative majority government, was read aloud by the Honourable Michael H. Wilson, Minister of Finance. The Federal budget process follows a highly-ritualized tradition of social practice—referred to as an *order of discourse* by Fairclough (1992, p. 71) a discursive facet of and a particular set of conventions associated with a particular social institution, in this case, Parliamentary procedures. In this instance, the Federal budget process is a legislated practice for the purposes of demonstrating the governance, accountability and planning in the spending of public money. This process involves the Federal Finance department, its Cabinet, and Canada's elected members of Parliament. The budget process to determine a budget plan for any given fiscal year (April 1st to March 31st) is initiated far in advance to the start of that year, typically in the summer months preceding. In this timeframe, the government's Cabinet meets to discuss its priorities within the context of expenditure, and these discussions, in turn, provide general direction to key officials in the government's central agencies (e.g., Privy Council Office, Department of Finance, and Treasury Board Secretariat) and government departments to guide their respective budget preparations. Between September and December, the Department of Finance prepares and releases budget consultation papers, which present the economic outlook and prospective fiscal and expenditure targets, for review by the Standing Committee on Finance; and hosts a pre-budget consultation process for the general public and stakeholders. The Minister of Finance then develops the budget strategy, drawing on the recommendations of Standing Committee, the results of the public consultation process, and the recommendations of the government's central agencies (Source: Parliament of Canada website). Following this, the

government's Cabinet reviews and finalizes the Minister of Finance's proposed budget strategy, after which the Department of Finance writes the Budget Speech and the accompanying Budget Plan and related documents (e.g., Expenditure plan, Departmental Performance Reports, Budget in Brief, Budget Highlights). The Budget Speech is delivered by the Finance Minister, typically in February or March, and the budget plan is tabled in the House of Commons and subsequently released to the media for public viewing and political commentary.

Following the highly-ritualized and ceremonial tradition of the reading of the Budget Speech, the House of Commons reviews and debates the government's proposed budget plan through a process called Estimates. As part of this process, Ministers and senior officials are called upon to present and address questions related to their budget area. Following the deliberation process of Estimates, the House of Commons votes on the proposed budget, and, with an expectation that the governing party's elected representatives will vote in favour of the proposed spending plan—and that Opposition members will vote against—the budget is easily passed by majority governments, less so by minority governments. Thus, the Budget Speech represents a social practice that includes the ceremonious presentation of the government in power's proposed budget plan, the political debate of this plan, and, in most cases, the subsequent authorization of a government's spending decisions.

There are many traditions that surround the Budget Speech, including the wearing of new or old shoes to forecast the degree of fiscal austerity reflected within the Budget Speech. The Budget Speech is read aloud, and, as a social practice, represents a one-way, highly-ritualized discursive act. In modern society, the delivery of budget speeches is broadcast and is widely-available for the general public to view in real time or access from archived video/audio/transcript records. Moreover, the accompanying budget plan documents are publicly available from the Government of Canada website, and media coverage of these documents is

widespread, with accompanying political commentary, including interviews with government representatives and Opposition members, and critiques by an array of advocacy groups. All of this coverage lends the belief that the Budget Speech ceremony and the passing of the budget plan is a two-way discursive practice. In actuality, this is not the case. The Budget Speech, as a one-way ritualized discursive practice does not provide opportunity for public consultation and knowledge exchange. While Budget Speeches often reference the extensive public consultations that informed the resulting budget plan, the extent to which the public informs the budget plan is not easily determined. Public consultation records are not typically available for review; when they are made available, the resulting record is often a summary of the public input, not a record of raw data. Moreover, the outcome of the budget plan debate in The House of Commons is typically pre-determined. Aside from situations whereby the government has a minority mandate, majority governments can easily pass their proposed budget due to the expectation that the government's representatives will vote in favour of passing the budget. It could be argued that the ritualized ceremonies, orders of discourse, surrounding Budget Speeches and budget plans create a sense of public input and meaningful debate over public spending decisions; in actuality, the government holds significant power over its expenditure planning.

The ritualized practices connected to the Budget Speech and the yearly budget plan review and approval process are called *genre chains*—social events related to the discourse that are connected to one another. The 1988 Budget Speech represents a *genre of governance* which promotes and defends the government's priorities and policy plans for public spending.

According to Fairclough (2003), governance genres represent activities within an institution or organization directed at managing or regulating social practices. Often, the genre of governance links together issues of different scales. For example, it can link small scale family values to large scale national values, thus connecting the local to the national, and, in some cases, the

national to the global. This can be seen in the February 10, 1988 Budget Speech, with its focus on the family, the nation, and the global economy; small scale family values are, indeed linked to large scale national objectives of economic growth and global competition. The February 10, 1988 Budget Speech also reflects a *business or corporate genre*, as evident by its focus on competition and economic growth and its vocabulary choices that evoke a corporate image of the government. I detail this finding in my textual analysis. Last, a *promotional genre* is also found within this Budget Speech, as evident by the way the text promotes Canada as a unique and special place to an outsider audience, in a manner similar to a promotional tourism brochure. The finding of these three genres within the Budget Speech is an expected finding; it would be unusual to discover only one type of genre within an example of discourse. Nonetheless, a *genre mix*, what Fairclough calls *interdiscursivity*, is an important finding, as the type of genres that are mixed, and the way in which they are mixed, may reveal hidden modes of hegemony that are embedded in discourse (Fairclough, 2003). As well, recognizing the mix of genres found within a corpus of discourse is the first step toward identifying changes in genre that become evident as one begins to unpack trends in discourse over time. Such trends will become revealed as I examine the mix of genres found within the corpus for each of the four Periods of my study.

The twelve-page February 10, 1988 Budget Speech I examined was organized by several main headers and sub-categories, detailed below in Table 6.2.1. After a review of the entire Budget Speech, I selected certain texts for detailed textual analysis based on their reference to social program spending and child care policy. I present these text extracts in Excerpts 6.2.1a and 6.2.1b.

Table 6.2.1 Headers for Budget Speech, February 10, 1988

A Record of Strong Economic Performance
Policies for Growth and Jobs
Revitalizing the Private Sector
Modernizing the Regulatory Environment for Business
Making the tax system fairer and more effective
Securing and improving access to world markets
Reducing the deficit and controlling the growth of the debt
Bringing spending under control
Maintaining fiscal programs
Economic outlook
Implementing priority programs and responding to unexpected developments
Child care
Regional development
Science and technology
National defence
Agriculture
Energy
Canada and the world economy
Conclusion

As illustrated in Table 6.2.1, the main themes of this Budget Speech focus on economic goals, not an unexpected finding considering the nature of the discourse. Of note, the Progressive Conservative Federal government positions “child care” first in its ordering of “priority programs”, emphasizing the government’s commitment to promoting the advancement of childcare in 1988.

Excerpt 6.2.1a Text Extract for Budget Speech, February 10, 1988

1 A strong economic performance is good social policy. By creating more jobs, more
2 opportunities and better incomes our expanding economy provides the means for
3 Canadians to improve their own well-being and economic security. That same
4 economic growth also provides the means for the government to maintain the social
5 services that are an integral part of the Canadian way of life. But strong economic
6 growth coupled with our fiscal progress has enabled us to do more. It has created the
7 financial capacity we need to do things that only government can do – to act in special
8 areas of national priority and to respond in support of regions and sectors hurt by
9 unexpected developments beyond our borders. We have undertaken a number of
10 priority initiatives. [sub-header “child care” immediately follows this statement]

With respect to excerpt 6.2.1a, line 1 includes a *value-based assumption*: “a strong economic performance is good social policy”. Value-based assumptions are a hegemonic tool to present a value as one that is universally-accepted. In this way, the statement that good economic performance is the equivalent to good social policy embeds a taken-for-granted assumption that conveys a neoliberal ideology in line with that of a liberal welfare state regime. The vocabulary choice of “expanding economy” in line 2 co-locates the words “expanding” and “economy”. *Vocabulary co-location* is another technique used to embed taken-for-granted assumptions. The co-location of “expanding” and “economy” can be seen as a value-based assumption that conveys economic expansion as a universally-endorsed goal of society, again, reflective of a market-driven liberal regime. In line 3, the phrase: “Canadians to improve their own well-being and economic security” represents a *moral evaluation* that promotes an individualist ideology, again reflective of the social values of a liberal regime.

The vocabulary choice “Canadian way of life” in line 5 is another value-based assumption that embeds a romantic notion of Canadian life, suggesting it is better than the life experiences of other nations. While creating difference between Canadian life and non-Canadian life, this vocabulary choice simultaneously brackets difference by suggesting all Canadians have similar life experiences because of their, assumed, positive experiences with the government’s social services, thus evoking a *promotional genre*. Lines 5, 6, 7 and 8 convey a value-based assumption that economic goals must first be met before action can be taken in “special areas of national priority”. The vocabulary choice of “things only government can do” in line 7 creates difference between government and non-government capacity, thus promoting an *existential assumption* that the power of government is greater than the power of the public. This assumption may also be interpreted as a moral evaluation in that the power of government is

benevolent, acting and responding, as only it can, to support regions and sectors “hurt” by unexpected developments. The vocabulary choice of “hurt” in line 8 positions the subject of the government in power as a protector. Further to this, the vocabulary choice of “beyond our borders” creates difference between Canada and other nations, again conveying the view of government as protector, thus eliciting a mistrust of other nations.

Excerpt 6.2.1b Text Extract for Budget Speech, February 10, 1988

1 One of these is the National Child Care Strategy which was announced in December.
2 This initiative will benefit children because many more good quality facilities will
3 become available for their care. We expect 200,000 new spaces to be created in all
4 parts of the country in the next 7 years.
5 The initiative is of great importance to Canadian families. It will help to eliminate a
6 barrier facing many women who work, or want to work, outside the home. It also
7 increases tax assistance to many who choose to work in the home.

Excerpt 6.2.1b contains text related to the government’s childcare policy choices. Line 1 shows a vocabulary choice that labels the government’s childcare policy as a “strategy”, a word that can convey broad and comprehensive action. In this line, the speaker references the government’s earlier announcement of a National Child Care Strategy, made in December (of 1987), a wording choice that is meant to convey the government’s historical commitment to childcare, despite the fact that the committed plan for childcare of this government had yet to be actualized. Line 2 indicates “children” as the beneficiary of childcare, an important reference given how infrequent the reference to children is made related to childcare policy (as I will illustrate in my textual analysis of the 1989 Speech from the Throne and Bill C-144). In lines 2 and 3, the vocabulary choice of “will become available” represents the government as having *passivized agency*. This is evident when one thinks of alternative verbs that could have been used to indicate the growth of childcare facilities—for example, “will be created” or “will be funded”. Moreover, this passivized vocabulary choice renders invisible the subject of the verb; in essence,

facilities “become available” as though by magic. Surmising the decision behind this vocabulary choice, it is a strategic way to avoid designating any one level of government (Federal or Provincial/Territorial) as the main agent attached to this verb. Indeed, the reference to childcare policy avoids any reference to Federal-Provincial-Territorial partnership, cost-sharing, or collaboration, which stands in stark contrast to other political discourse within which there is significant recognition of the jurisdictional issues and solutions related to the establishment of a national childcare policy, as I will illustrate in subsequent analyses.

Similarly, the vocabulary choice in line 3: “we expect 200,000 new spaces to be created” again renders invisible the agent tied to the action of creating new spaces. In contrast to this vague nature of agency is the detailed vocabulary choice of “200,000 new spaces” and “in the next 7 years”, which convey the goal of accountability and evokes a business genre in addition to its earlier governance genre.

The vocabulary choice in line 2 implies that “good quality facilities” provide “care” to children. Once again the agent (e.g., child care provider, early educator, pre-school teacher, nanny, or child-minder) who delivers childcare is rendered invisible, which could be interpreted as a strategic decision to obfuscate this singular reference to non-parental caregivers. In line 5, “the initiative is of great importance to Canadian families” is an *irrealis statement*; it conveys an established fact, which is, as yet, only the speaker’s projection. According to Fairclough, irrealis statements are a strategic tool to embed a taken-for-granted assumption within text and present a projected truth-claim as an accepted and established fact. This phrasing choice of “Canadian families” creates difference between Canadian people and Canadian families, suggesting that childcare is only of benefit to families, and not, for example, a social program that benefits society as a whole, including children. This vocabulary choice creates difference between people

who are parents and people who are not parents. More, the vocabulary choice “families” renders invisible the identities of parents and children within the social group of families.

Lines 5 and 6 state that the childcare initiative will “help to eliminate a barrier facing many women” which positions childcare as a women’s issue and represents children and the responsibility for childcare as only a woman’s obligation. This phrasing also constructs the view of children as a barrier to women’s labour participation and positions childcare as a labour support program, solely. Further, the reference to “women who work, or want to work, outside the home” embeds traditional social values that suggest it is only women—not men—who require childcare as a labour support. Moreover, the vocabulary choice “want to work” presents an existential assumption that the decision to work outside the home is based on a woman’s personal preference and not, for example, based on her human right to employment equity or reasons of financial necessity. Another embedded existential assumption within this statement is that women who are mothers are married, which evokes a moral evaluation that two-parent heterosexual families are the universal norm and ideal.

The vocabulary choice in lines 6 and 7: “It also increases tax assistance to many who choose to work in the home” illustrates a strategic decision to replace the subject of “women” with “many who choose”. It is likely that “many” refers to women, given the earlier reference to this social group, but it is odd that after positioning childcare as a woman’s issue in one sentence, it subsequently downplays the distinction between men and women in the next sentence. One can surmise that the decision to do so was strategic, given this sentence’s reference to tax assistance. It could be argued that this vocabulary choice was made to embed the assumption that childcare tax assistance should not flow directly to women to support them in their childcare roles, but, rather, should be rolled into the family budget and accessible to both men and women.

6.2.2 Bill C-144, The Canada Child Care Act

I present below an abridged Critical Discourse Analysis of Bill C-144. My comprehensive overview of this Act is presented in the Political Discourse Analysis component of my review, later in this chapter. Bill C-144 is formatted as a legislative Bill, and it is surrounded by a highly-ritualized process of dissemination, review, and presentation. The Bill is 14 pages long, and includes the side by side juxtaposition of English and French text. Though Bill C-144 was never passed, the following analysis of Bill C-144 represents the Progressive Conservative's childcare policy choice. After review of the Bill, certain texts were extracted for detailed textual analysis. I present these texts in excerpt 6.2.2, found below.

Excerpt 6.2.2 Text Extract for Bill C-144, The Canada Child Care Act

1 A need to improve the availability, affordability, quality and accessibility of child care
2 services is desirous of increasing the number of child care spaces throughout Canada
3 by at least 200,000 over the 7 year period ending March 31, 1995, and of contributing
4 to the maintenance of the expanded child care thereafter.
5 to encourage the development of child care services throughout Canada by assisting
6 the Provinces in meeting the costs to them of those services.
7 child care services mean: a) care provided to children for periods normally of less than
8 24 hours per day in accordance with standards established by the Provincial authority,
9 And b) resource services, referral services, and public information services directly
10 related to such care, but does not include any residential care, health or correctional
11 services or any services relating wholly or substantially to education, recreation or any
12 other matter

The vocabulary choice of “child care services” in lines 1 and 2 departs from the previous vocabulary choice of “strategy”, which was used in the February 10, 1988 Budget Speech. The choice to use “services” represents a softer commitment to the establishment of a nation-wide model for childcare. The detailed vocabulary choice regarding number of spaces to be established over a determined period of time presents a strong sense of accountability to the commitment to increase child care spaces, thus invoking, once again, a *business genre* within this government's political discourse. The subsequent vocabulary choice of “encourage the

development” in line 5 represents passivized agency, which contrasts the earlier commitment to accountability. Lines 5 and 6 refer to “assisting the Provinces” in terms of meeting childcare costs, a passive verb which subjugates the Federal role in ensuring national standards for quality are met. Further to this, the recommended action in line 5 and 6 of “assisting the Provinces” positions the role of the Federal government as one of non-leadership related to the proposed commitment to childcare. The stated intent found in lines 10 and 11 to exclude services of an educational nature from the Child Care Act conveys a taken-for-granted assumption that the provision of childcare is distinct from that of education and that the goals of childcare are, too, distinct from those of education. The vocabulary choice to exclude education services from the proposed Child Care Bill embeds the viewpoint that the goal of childcare is to care for and nurture children versus, for example, providing equitable early learning and educational opportunities for all children.

6.2.3 Sharing the Responsibility Report, March 30, 1987

The special Committee on Child Care, an all-party committee commissioned by the Progressive Conservative government, was chaired by Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament Shirley Martin, and co-chaired by Progressive Conservative Member of Parliament Leo Duguay. Other members of the special committee included a Liberal Member of Parliament, an NDP (New Democratic Party) Member of Parliament, and several non-elected government support staff and consultants. The report was made available for public access through Canada’s Library of Parliament, which I accessed through the University of Manitoba library. The English/French report is 84 pages, with additional pages of Appendices. My analysis of this supplementary data source was undertaken to further corroborate my literature review findings that the Sharing the Responsibility report was the basis upon which Bill C-144 was developed.

After a review of the report, certain texts were extracted for detailed textual analysis. I present these texts in excerpt 6.2.3a and 6.2.3b, found below.

Excerpt 6.2.3a Text Extract for Sharing the Responsibility Report, March 30, 1987

1 The special Committee on Child Care was established by the House of Commons in
2 November 1985 to examine and report on the child care needs of the Canadian
3 family.
4 Parents have the primary responsibility and can decide how best to care for their
5 children. But society as a whole, including governments, shares a portion of that
6 responsibility.
7 As in the past, the family remains the central unit of Canadian society. Its strength is
8 its permanency in the midst of change. Fathers and mothers have a fundamental
9 commitment to the family. It is shown in the way they adjust their personal lives and
10 employment to accommodate the care of their children. It is manifested in the way
11 they confront the multiple pressures of modern society while safeguarding family
12 values. It is demonstrated, above all, by the sacrifices parents make to raise their
13 children.

In excerpt 6.2.3a, the singular use of “the Canadian family” in lines 2 and 3 indicate a hegemonic tool that embeds a cultural ideal of the family unit, which includes a father and a mother, as reinforced again in line 8. This *embedded cue* of the family ideal is in contrast with the document’s main legitimation argument for its child care policy choice: diverse family needs can only be met through a variety of childcare options. Lines 4, 5 and 6 represent the role of family as having primary responsibility for children and that families “can decide how best to care for their children”. This subjugates the roles of government and society in their responsibility to children. Indeed, the government’s role is positioned as a support to the family—not to children—which embeds the cultural value of a *family-government alliance* that oversees the development of children. This view is reflective of the property construction of children and the family-as-alliance discourse I discussed in chapter three.

Line 7 contains a reference to the past history of the family’s position as the central unit in Canadian society, which is a technique called *authorization legitimation*, a way of defending a

position statement by referencing historical precedent without attribution or evidence. Further, line 7 embeds an *existential assumption* that “the family” (again, the singular use evokes a universal ideal) is the central unit of society, assigning a significant sense of agency to families. As mentioned earlier, the reference to “fathers and mothers” promotes the family ideal of the two parent, heterosexual family norm. Interestingly, a textual examination of this wording reveals that “Fathers” is positioned at the start of the sentence, which calls for its capitalization, while “mothers” is presented to follow in lowercase. The references to “confront the multiple pressures of modern society”, “safeguarding family values”, and the “sacrifices parents make” further embeds a traditional cultural value of the two-parent, heterosexual family ideal, conjuring the sentiment that the use of non-parental childcare opposes dominant culture and the societal value bestowed upon parents who arrange work-family responsibilities in such a fashion that non-parental childcare is not used. The embedded assumption is that failure to make such sacrifice puts at risk Canada’s “family values” and threatens the foundation of Canadian society, the “family unit”, which, once again, evokes a family-government alliance discourse.

Excerpt 6.2.3b Text Extract for Sharing the Responsibility Report, March 30, 1987

1	We support the principle of infants and toddlers being cared for by their parents and
2	close relatives. We recognize that infant group care may be necessary for some
3	parents, but there are reasons to be cautious about the extensive subsidization of group
4	care for the very young....specialists in the field of child care agree that infants need a
5	close and stable relationship with a caregiver.

In excerpt 6.2.3b, the text conveys the societal value that non-parental or non-relative childcare for infants and toddlers (i.e., infant and preschool childcare) poses risk to the development of children. This text conveys a Western societal value of *monotropism*, as reviewed earlier, which, as I’ve argued, promotes the societal value of the mother-child attachment over all other attachment relationships for children. In evidence of cross-cultural

examples that demonstrate positive developmental outcomes for children in contexts of non-monotropism attachment relations, the authorization argument for this position—that of *moral evaluation*, whereby society’s value system is cited as the grounds of legitimation for a policy choice—is revealed as a hegemonic tool that embeds this societal value as one that is a universal truth claim based on “specialist” knowledge. Moreover, the reference to “specialists” is meant to provide expert evidence in defense of this position statement, and the textual decision to omit any details on the source of this “specialist” knowledge is a hegemonic tool called *intertextuality*, whereby other voices are heard in the text—such as the voice of specialists—with or without attribution. When other voices are invoked in a text, the decision to forego attribution should warrant suspicion, especially in an 84-page document which includes several appendices of sourced evidence and citations.

Further examination of the report also reveals the policy recommendation that the Federal government establish a “Family and Child Care Act” that would both oversee the development of childcare spaces and ensure the development of family support services to complement non-parental child care. This childcare policy recommendation is a clear promotion of parental or family delivered childcare and the discouragement of non-parental childcare. Moreover, in recommendation 18, the report calls for a concrete, detailed, action-oriented response to the need for school-aged child care: “We recommend that Provincial and Territorial governments encourage educational authorities to provide space and equipment and to promote school-age child care services in co-operation with parents and volunteer groups”. In contrast, recommendation 17, regarding pre-school childcare is vague and passive: “We recommend that the Provinces and Territories develop the highest possible standards to ensure quality child care across Canada”. The difference in policy recommendations between pre-school aged childcare and school-aged childcare reflects the report’s earlier argument that non-parental childcare for

preschool children may threaten children's development (excerpt 6.1.3b) and goes against the safeguarded values of Canadian society (excerpt 6.1.3a).

6.2.4 Speech from the Throne delivered April 3, 1989

The April 1989 Speech from the Throne of the Progressive Conservative Federal government administration (1984-1993) was delivered one year following their second majority government election in 1988. I selected this Throne Speech for analysis because it most significantly references the government's childcare policy choice of Bill C-144, its proposed Canada Child Care Act.

Similar to Budget Speeches, Speeches from the Throne are one-way delivered, highly-ritualized *orders of discourse*. The Throne Speech is a formal speech, delivered with gravitas, ritual and rules, and reflects historical significance and political tradition. In contrast to Budget Speeches, Throne Speeches are delivered by Governor Generals who are non-partisan officials representing the Queen, although their appointments are made based on the government in power's recommendation. In this way, Speeches from the Throne may give the illusion as a non-partisan voice, however, their content is written by the government in power. Thus Speeches from the Throne do, indeed, reflect a partisan perspective of governments in power, delivered by a non-partisan representative of the Queen.

Canada's Westminster system of government is modelled on that of the United Kingdom. Parliament consists of the Senate and the House of Commons. The Executive, or Cabinet, initiates policy decisions and authorizes expenditure decisions related to policy. The Governor General opens Parliament through the reading of the Speech from the Throne, thus the ritual of the speech signals traditional approval for a new Parliamentary session to begin. In modern society, the Throne Speech is broadcast to the Canadian public for their direct viewing;

moreover, archived Throne Speeches are available for public access through the archives of the Parliamentary Library.

The 1989 Speech from the Throne was delivered by Governor General Jeanne Sauvé (1984-1990), Canada's first female Governor General. Governor General Sauvé was appointed by the Queen in 1984, as recommended by then-Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Unlike other Throne Speeches in the other periods of study, the 1989 Throne Speech includes no narrative stories, and no other voices, either from Canadians or experts. It also includes no mention of parents (only families), and its few references to children relate to abused or vulnerable children.

The 1989 Throne Speech reflects a mix of genres, including a governance genre, with its focus on national values and national pursuits; a promotional genre, with its focus on promoting Canada as a special and unique place to be; and a business genre, with a focus on economic competition and growth. The 1989 Throne Speech positions the government's political objectives in following order: economy, environment, caring and compassionate society, cultural and national uniqueness, aboriginal and linguistic rights. Positioning the economy first in its list of priorities indicates the government's position on economic performance as its highest goal and embeds the taken-for-granted assumption that the economy is, too, Canadian society's first goal. The Throne Speech also includes many references to the nation's common values and common identity, thus creating the impression that there is great consensus in cultural attitudes, norms and beliefs among Canadians, another hegemonic tool of control-by-consent.

After review of the Speech from the Throne, certain texts were extracted for detailed textual analysis. I present these texts in excerpts 6.2.4, 6.2.4b, and 6.2.4c, found below.

Excerpt 6.2.4a Text Extract for Speech from the Throne delivered April 3, 1989

1 Canada's social policies touch the lives of all Canadians. These programs and
2 services give shape and substance to the special quality of Canadian life.
3 And they reflect the distinctive values that give to the Canadian people their
4 sense of uniqueness.
5 In responding to future challenges and needs, Canada's social goals and programs
6 will continue to be determined in Canada and by Canadians, in conformity and
7 harmony with values they have historically nurtured.
8 My government believes fundamentally in those social benefits which support the
9 family and the elderly, while recognizing the need to direct more assistance toward
10 those with low incomes.

In Excerpt 6.2.4a, the vocabulary choices such as “touch the lives” in line 1 and “give shape and substance” are passivized verbs that describe the impact of social policies on citizens. The passive and soft nature of these chosen verbs becomes evident when one begins to imagine alternative verb choices, such as “helping”, “supporting”, or “protecting”, which would have presented social policies as having a more significant role in the life of citizens. The vocabulary choices such as “special quality” in line 2, “distinctive values” in line 3, and “sense of uniqueness” in line 4 presents Canadians and Canadian life as different from non-Canadians and other nations. At the same time, while Canadians are presented as different from others, a taken-for-granted assumption is made that within Canada, Canadians are all the same, with universal values and a common life experience; again a hegemonic tool that imposes a dominant culture and presents this culture as universal and good.

The grammatical tone of this excerpt is declarative, and embedded within the text are several assumptions, including the existential assumption in lines 5 and 6 that Canadians have universal values and a unique sense of national identity; and a value-based assumption in lines 1 and 2 that Canadians have positive experiences with the programs and services they come into contact. This is similar to the vocabulary choice reviewed in the February 10, 1988 Budget Speech, which evokes the romantic notion of “Canadian life”. The vocabulary choice of

“conformity and harmony” in lines 6 and 7 suggests the public has granted its government full authority in the past, and extends this authorization into the future, regarding its response to social goals and programs. Yet another hegemonic tool, this phrasing suggests government action is endorsed by universal consensus by the Canadian public. This is further emphasized by the vocabulary choice of “historically nurtured” in lines 6 and 7 which, again, suggests Canadians have exhibited a tradition of agency over social goals. This vocabulary choice represents a legitimation technique of authorization, which references history and tradition as its justification for governmental action.

The use of “fundamentally” in line 8 is an *additive* word choice and reflects a *deontic modality*, which defends the proposed action to be taken in terms of necessity and obligation. The vocabulary choice of “family” in line 9 renders the identities of both parents and children as invisible, and conveys a value-based assumption of the ideal family norm, that of the two-parent heterosexual family. The vocabulary choice of “those with low income” in line 10 depersonalizes this social group by depersonalizing people with low income as “those”. It is also a strategic way to make invisible the identities of parents and children that undoubtedly comprise a significant portion of this social group.

The use of “while” in line 9 is a hypotactic cohesion that promotes the subjects of the first clause (i.e., the family and the elderly) and demotes the subject of the second clause (i.e., those with low income). Lines 8, 9 and 10 represent a moral evaluation as its method of legitimation: the role of government is to only help vulnerable groups such as family, elderly, and those with low income (children are subsumed under the label “family”). Thus, the assumption that governments are only responsible for vulnerable groups represents the ideology of a liberal regime state, that which reflects the residual, needs-based, means-tested approach to welfare state provisions and an individualist approach to social responsibility whereby universal

social rights provided to citizens are modest, with strict entitlement rules accompanied by sanctioned stigma to deter possible state dependency.

Excerpt 6.2.4b Text Extract for Speech from the Throne delivered April 3, 1989

- 1 The government remains committed to a national child care program.
- 2 My government will continue its initiatives to reduce violence in the family and the
- 3 abuse of children. It will renew its fight against AIDS and drug abuse. It will
- 4 encourage research into diseases associated with aging, so destructive of human
- 5 dignity and family life.
- 6 My government will introduce further legislation to reform Canada's legal system and
- 7 sentencing practices. This will require a review of the current Young Offenders Act
- 8 in order to ensure that it better protects the rights of society, while advancing the
- 9 rehabilitation of young offenders.

In excerpt 6.2.4b, the single reference to “The government” represents a significant departure from the many usages of “my government” (e.g., line 2 and line 6), thus implying the speaker is distancing herself from the government in power regarding this statement pertaining to childcare. This may be because of the Liberal and NDP opposition to the proposed Progressive Conservative approach to childcare, and the speaker’s political ties to the Liberal party (her appointment was recommended by the preceding Liberal government).

The vocabulary choice “remains committed” in line 1 is a purposeful strategy to embed a taken-for-granted assumption of a historical commitment regarding the government in power’s political action regarding a national childcare program, despite any political action toward childcare with the exception of its commissioned special committee for childcare. This verb choice regarding childcare policy is purposefully ambiguous, implying both historical action and future action without having to be accountable for either. Further, the soft commitment regarding childcare signals a shift away from Bill C-144 and its pledge to establish a National Child Care

Plan, confirmed by the government's subsequent inaction throughout the remainder of its second term.

Line 3, which includes the first reference to children, implies an existential assumption that the abuse of children is of significant prevalence. This reference to the abuse of children positions the government as protector of abused children, and abused children as a social group for which the government has a role. The implication of this phrasing is that the government does not have a role to protect non-abused children, again a stance reflective of a liberal regime in which government does not have a significant role in the protection of universal social rights. The reference in lines 6 and 7 to introduce further legislation to reform Canada's legal system and sentencing practices represents an existential assumption that such reform is necessary, and it represents a value assumption that Canada's current legal system and sentencing practices are too lenient. The juxtaposition of this value assumption with the following reference to the Young Offenders Act in line 7 extends the implication that the judicial sentencing for young offenders is too lenient. Further, in line 8, the reference to ensure such reform better protects the rights of society positions society as requiring government protection from young offenders and establishes a second identity for children, that of criminal youth. Thus, the two collective identities for children put forward in this Speech from the Throne are that of abused children and criminal youth.

Excerpt 6.2.4c Text Extract for Speech from the Throne delivered April 3, 1989

1	The strength of the Canadian economy can be ensured <u>only</u> if the government's
2	means and its spending are in better balance. In turn, an <u>expanding economy</u> is the
3	<u>only</u> way to maintain the social programs which Canadians cherish. <u>Only</u> by positive
4	measures designed to reduce the burden of the debt can Canadians avoid a repetition
5	of the excessive unemployment and inflation rates of the early 1980s.

Analysis of excerpt 6.2.4c, the concluding text from the Speech from the Throne, offers an exemplary example of a discursive tool called *deontic modality*, whereby legitimation for a proposed position is defended as one of obligation and necessity. For example, in line 1, the vocabulary choice of “only” is a deontic modality used to convey a taken-for-granted existential assumption—that the strength of the Canadian economy can be ensured only if the government’s means and its spending are in better balance; suggesting there are no other options available for the government to consider, hence authorization must be granted. Indeed, one recognizes the ideological nature of this taken-for-granted assumption when considering alternative economic strategies such as corporate taxation, as one example.

The vocabulary choice of “expanding economy” in line 2 represents another example of the co-location of these two words, thus embedding a value-based assumption that economies need to expand and that expansion of economy is a universally-endorsed goal of society. Two more references to “only” in line 3 again demonstrates a deontic modality tool used to convey the government’s taken-for-granted authority to take the “only” action available to it. Further, the second use of “only” in line 3 conveys an ideological taken-for-granted assumption that restraints to public spending (covertly called “positive measures designed to reduce the burden of debt”) are the only option for government, and, hence, sanctioned by the Canadian public.

The vocabulary choice of “only”, used three times—once in each of the three sentences under study—denotes a strong tone of obligation and necessity regarding the government’s proposed policy action (i.e., ensure its spending is in better balance), which, in turn, presents this course of action as, ultimately, endorsed by the Canadian public. Further, the argument for positioning the economy as the government’s first priority over all others, including social programs, is a taken-for-granted assumption that is later tied to the threat of an economic recession, referenced in line 5. Thus the legitimation for the government’s priority focus on the

economy, above all other priorities, including social programs, is based on the use of deontic modality; as well as authorization, which grounds decisions based on history and tradition; and moral evaluation, which elicits a value judgement (e.g., fear, concern) in the hearer through its reference to “excessive unemployment rates and inflation rates”, thus grounding its authorization for its proposed action.

For the most part, the speaker of the Throne Speech takes on the voice of Canadians and the voice of the government, a technique called *intertextuality* whereby voices of others are used to corroborate a position statement, either with or without attribution of the other voice. The many uses of “my government” implies a collaboration and partnership between the speaker, a non-partisan official, and the government in power. The many references to universal values and uniqueness of Canadians implies that the Throne Speech represents a united consensus among the public. There are no other voices included in the Throne Speech. Moreover, references to social programs and social goals have no agent attached to them, thus there is no ownership for how social programs are funded, administered, or delivered. This technique of *nominalization* is a purposeful intent to remove agency from these programs.

6.3 Descriptive and Normative Critique of Bill C-144

As described in chapter five, an important component of Political Discourse Analysis is its use of both descriptive and normative critique, the task of which requires knowledge about the historical and social conditions of the issue under study. In this way, my understanding of the different approaches to childcare policy within other countries and different welfare regimes—as informed by my earlier description of childcare systems in different welfare regimes—provided me with important background knowledge in order to adequately conduct this phase of analysis. Using Fairclough and Fairclough’s (2012) Political Discourse Analysis model, I reviewed Bill C-144 and present my descriptive findings of the Progressive Conservative Federal government’s

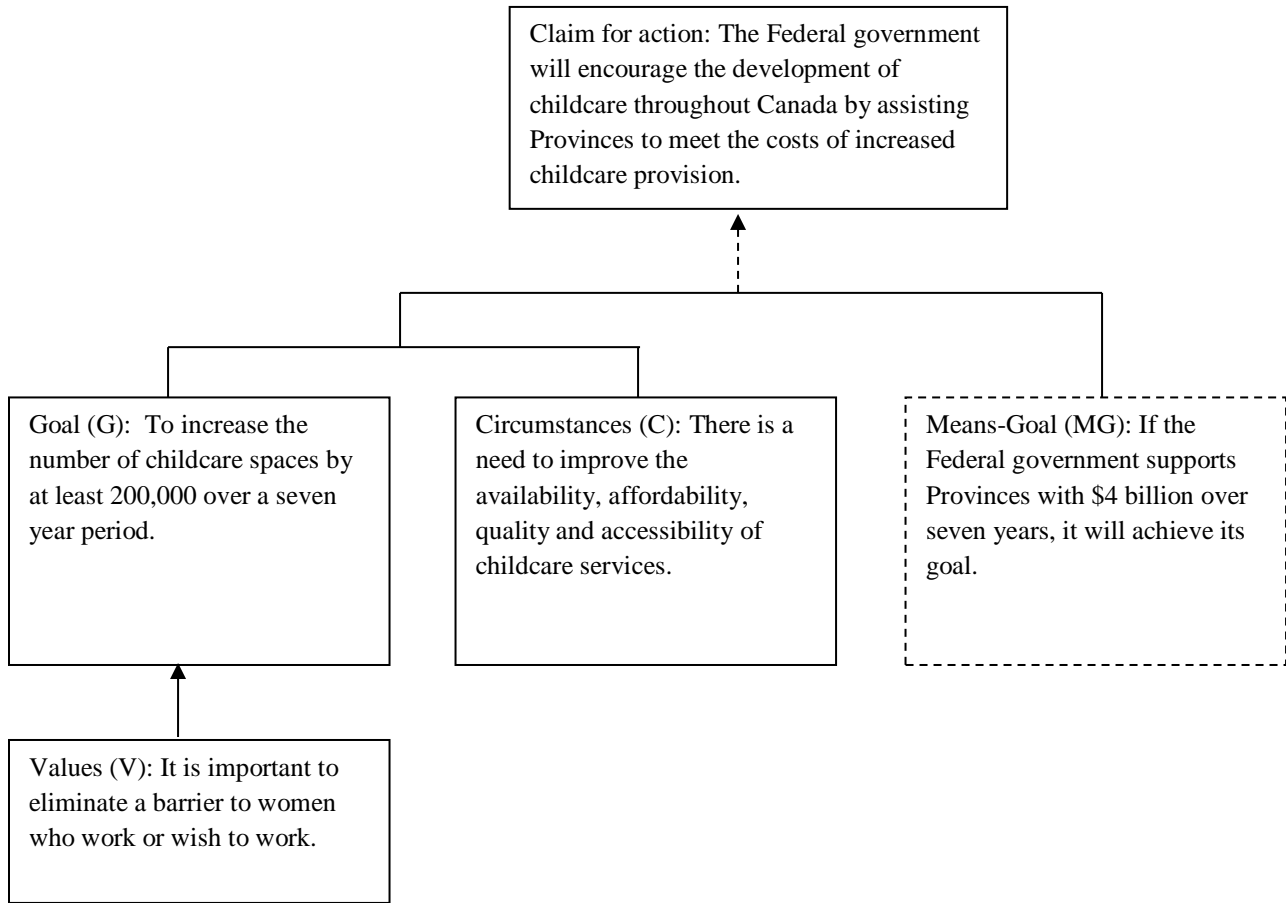
childcare policy choice in Figure 6.4.1. Of note, due to the limited nature of the textual content within the Bill, I needed to draw upon the Budget Speech, which significantly referenced the Bill, to further unpack the government's value position of childcare. Further, using a process of normative questioning, I examined Bill C-144 through a set of critical children-centred questions I developed, thus ensuring a childhood theoretical lens to my analysis. I provide excerpts from my reflexive journaling in section 5.9.

Though it was never passed, Bill C-144, the Canada Child Care Act, represents the Progressive Conservative Federal government's childcare policy choice. There are a number of proposed actions within the Bill, including the promise of up to 4 billion dollars, over seven years, that would go to Provinces and Territories to support the costs related to the growth of childcare spaces. Regarding this contribution, the formula for Federal transfer payments is based on a 50/50 cost-sharing model. Indeed, the discursive level of commitment to expanding access to childcare is strong; the Bill commits to an increase of at least 200,000 childcare spaces over the course of seven years. The end date of the funding agreement between the Federal and Provincial/Territorial governments would put the Progressive Conservatives into its third term, if it were re-elected in a third Federal election (it was not). Interestingly, a child is defined as a person under the age of fifteen, thus extending childcare services to children over the age of twelve, the commonly-recognized age for which children no longer require supervision through parental or non-parental care. As identified earlier, childcare services are defined as "care", and services such as those that relate to wholly or substantially to education are excluded from the Act. Of note, the Act specifies that Provinces and Territories that receive childcare funding are to "accord special priority to meet the needs of children from low to modest income families", thus positioning childcare as a target-focused approach for vulnerable children. Those Provinces and Territories that receive Federal funding through the Act are expected to develop their respective

childcare system in accordance with their Provincial-Territorial regulatory standards. In this way, the Act does not enforce a national-level minimum standard of quality.

As illustrated in Figure 6.1, the goal of Bill C-144 is to increase the number of regulated childcare spaces, delivered by not-for-profit organizations, by at least 200,000 throughout Canada, over a seven-year period. To achieve this, the claim for action proposed through Bill C-144 is for the Federal government to encourage the development of childcare throughout Canada by assisting Provinces and Territories to meet the costs of increased childcare provision. Thus the means-goal for this childcare policy choice is: if the Federal government supports Provinces and Territories with \$4 billion over seven years, it will increase regulated childcare spaces by at least 200,000 across the country. The value underpinning the goal of Bill C-144 is not explicitly articulated within the Bill, but my analysis of the political discourse surrounding the Bill—namely, the 1988 Budget Speech—indicates the value of childcare relates to the importance of eliminating a barrier to women who work or wish to work (see excerpt 1.1b), suggesting, again, that childcare is needed for only certain families.

Figure 6.1 Descriptive Critique of Bill C-144



As described in chapter two, the childcare policy approach that most reflects progressive social welfare considerations is that of social democratic regimes. In countries of this regime, childcare is viewed as an important public good and government responsibility, reflecting the principles of egalitarianism and universalism. In contrast, the proposed approach in Bill C-144 to target childcare to children of families with low income undermines the view of childcare as a universal program. The targeted approach of Bill C-144 is more in line with the childcare policy choices of conservative regimes, wherein childcare is targeted to families living in poverty, either to help facilitate the employment of parents or to mitigate the effects of childhood poverty and its associated social costs; and liberal welfare regimes, wherein governments are reluctant to

support childcare programs, and do so only to facilitate labour market growth or to prepare young children for school success, motivated by the interest in growing a skilled and healthy workforce. Given the previously-cited family-government-alliance discourse within the corpus for Period One, the childcare policy choice of the Progressive Conservatives reflects the social values of a conservative regime. However, its stated value of eliminating a barrier to women who work or wish to work also reflects the economic values of a liberal regime. Thus, Bill C-144 reflects an approach that has qualities of both conservative and liberal regimes, and none of the childcare policy characteristics of a social democratic approach.

It should be noted, however, during the era of Period One, many developed countries began to establish childcare systems with the primary goal of addressing the increasing trend of labour market participation by women (UNICEF, 2008). Indeed, the UNCRC had not been proclaimed, nor ratified by Canada, at the time Bill C-144 was introduced in the House of Commons. With this context in mind, the Progressive Conservative Federal government's childcare policy choice and its financial commitment to support the development of increased childcare spaces through funding transfers provided to Provinces and Territories is an approach not unlike those of other developed countries of that era.

As described in chapter three, children-centred considerations to childcare policy reflect principles of best practice promoted by international childcare policy experts (Hevey & Miller, 2012; Moss, 2012, OECD, 2006). These considerations include rights-based provision, universal access, equitable provision, quality-assurance, and democratic participation. It is important to recognize that Bill C-144 did address a key children-centred consideration of childcare policy, that of equitable provision, to address the issue of children's equity. It is essential that childcare policies recognize and address children's equity in order to redress generational discrimination, as children from poor families are over-represented in poor-quality childcare programs

(Vandenbroeck, 2010) and family poverty is often linked to poor school outcomes for children (Rothman, 2009). Further, the current governance model of regulated childcare within many Canadian jurisdictions requires the self-organization of parents and communities, which has resulted in “geographic inequity” (Prentice, 2006, p. 529), a distribution of childcare spaces that results in less access to childcare in poor communities. Without government regulation to support the equitable growth of regulated childcare spaces in these communities, children living in low income neighbourhoods will continue to be denied access to high-quality childcare.

However, while the Federal government’s stipulation that funding must be directed toward supporting low and modest income families does address equitable provision, it ignores rights-based provision and universal access, the foundation upon which equitable provision must be built, as I describe in chapter three. When childcare policy reflects universal access and rights-based provision, access to childcare is tied to children, not their parents, as a non-stigmatized right that belongs to every child. In contrast, targeted approaches to childcare whereby access is determined by meeting a criterion of vulnerability, such as poverty, stigmatizes those children who are vulnerable. Indeed, some scholars suggest that policy measures designed to address child poverty must be tied to legally bound human rights framework such as the UNCRC (Smith-Carrier & Lawlor, 2017). I will further discuss the limitations of targeted approaches to childcare policy in my examination of Period Four wherein the Liberal Federal government (2015-present) mirrors the Progressive Conservative’s Bill C-144 through its targeted approach to childcare.

It is also important to recognize that Bill C-144 promoted childcare growth in the not-for-profit sector. Research has demonstrated that the quality of not-for-profit-delivered childcare is higher compared to that offered by the for-profit sector (OECD, 2006, p. 212; Prentice, 2007;). However, Bill C-144 leaves the standards of quality up to each of the Provinces and Territories

which receive Federal funding; it does not create a national standard for quality, nor does it emphasize children-centred considerations of quality. Instead, it prioritizes the growth of childcare spaces over all other considerations. And, while important, the growth of a childcare system cannot be made without considerations paid to quality. Indeed, childcare policy analysts argue that it is simply not good enough to have a universally-accessible system, it must be of high-quality with considerations that celebrate children's present capacities, foster their agency (at all ages, even the very young), honour their voices, adhere to standards for physical space, and ensure access to outdoor experiences (Friendly & Prentice, 2009; Vandebroek, 2006). Childcare that focuses exclusively on safe custodial space ignores important children-centred considerations such as a safe place so that children are free to explore their surroundings; materials that allow children to engage their senses; and outdoor activities that allow children to relate to their environments. Moreover, Bill C-144 ignores the children-centred consideration of democratic participation, an approach that empowers children to develop their agency and participate in decision-making opportunities within the context of a shared environment that supports their unique journey of human and social development (Hevey & Miller, 2012; OECD, 2003, p. 18).

6.4 Discussion

The orders of discourse, the highly-ritualized social practices that surround the Federal government's Budget Speech and Canada's Speech from the Throne, serve to convey the false sense that the whole of the Canadian public has endorsed the government's annual spending plans and provided blanket approval for the government's policy agenda-setting. Indeed, governments are elected, so to some degree Canadian voters have endorsed political ideologies and policy preferences through the electoral process. However, aside from voting into power a political party, the degree of agency of Canadians, as implied in the Budget Speech and the

Speech from the Throne, is falsely represented. A further example of this relates to the special committee for childcare, as commissioned by the government. This all-party committee included one Liberal and one NDP member, in contrast to the four Progressive Conservative members. Additionally, the committee was chaired and co-chaired by its Progressive Conservative members. Description of the all-party nature of the special committee conveys the sense of non-partisan debate and collaborative decision-making. As it turned out, the special committee did not put forward recommendations based on consensus; rather the Progressive Conservative-endorsed report was presented to the Federal government, which, in turn, informed the government's proposed Canada Child Care Act. The dissenting views of the Liberal and NDP members of the special committee were noted on public record, but their opposition had no impact on the resulting policy choice of the government in power. A critical lens regarding this history would suggest the all-party committee was struck simply to present an illusion of public consultation and non-partisan decision-making to the government's pre-established childcare policy choice.

The corpus for Period One largely presents a governance genre, mixed with a business genre and a promotional genre. As previously described, governance genres represent activities within an institution or organization directed at managing or regulating social practices. Moreover, the genre of governance interconnects local, national, and global issues. This can be seen in the 1988 Budget Speech and the 1989 Speech from the Throne in that small scale values (e.g., unique Canadian values) are, indeed, linked to large scale national objectives of economic growth and global competition (e.g., to ensure these unique Canadian values we must ensure a strong economy). The corpus also reflects a business genre, as evident by its focus on competition, economic growth and accountability; and reflective of the economic values of a market-driven liberal regime. Further, the corpus features a promotional genre, as evident by the

way it promotes a romantic notion of Canada as a unique and special place to live. Identifying this mix of genres in the corpus of Period One is an important step toward comparing the genre mixes within each corpus across the four Periods of my study. In so doing, I will identify changes in the genre chain, related to the discourse surrounding childcare policy, over a period of 33 years.

The social relations and social identities represented in the corpus are that of a Canadian society united in voice, with shared universal values, collectively benefiting from a long history of benevolent support by its government. There were very few references to the social groups of “children” and “parents”; indeed, these two groups are subsumed by the identity of “family”. Given the power differential between parents and children that continues to exist in today’s contemporary society, the use of the term “family” to represent both adult care providers (parents, grandparents) and children renders invisible the individual identities of both. In this way, the discourse of Period One constructs the collective identity of children as invisible, which I have termed the *invisible children* identity. As described in chapter three, it is important to view children as a social group of their own right, and not subsume their identity in the family unit as a proxy indicator of their status.

Of the few references to the social group of children in the corpus, the context related to stopping the “abuse of children” as a way to justify government intervention in certain families, which evokes the protection construction of childhood and limits the construction of children’s identities to that of *vulnerable children*. This finding reflects the work of Lee (1982) and Davidson (2010) who identified the protection construction of childhood in their review of the history of childhood. According to Lee and Davidson, when childhood is viewed and valued through a protection construction, vulnerable children are considered the object of child-saving intervention, and social welfare programs, including childcare, are stigmatized as a targeted

program for children who fit a criteria based on need. Indeed, as I indicated in section 1.7, when social programs are made available to individuals based on criteria of need, it ‘others’ these individuals and defines them as an undesirable social problem for which intervention was deemed necessary.

The reference to enhancing the Young Offenders Act and the need to protect society from young offenders constructs another identity of children positioned in the corpus, that of *dangerous children*. In this instance the government is portrayed as the protector of society from young criminals.

Moreover, the multiple use of the singular term “the family” serves to promote a universal norm of the family ideal, that of a father, a mother, and their children. The assumptions embedded within the Sharing the Responsibility report, the Progressive Conservative-endorsed report for childcare, went even further: the universal norm of the family ideal is one in which parents “sacrifice” in order to “safeguard family values”; the implication being that parents should give up or arrange their out-of-home commitments, such as employment in the labour market, to meet their family obligations in the home. While this report did not specify that it should be mothers who make this sacrifice, the positioning of childcare as a way to address a barrier for “woman who work, or want to work” in the 1988 Budget Speech, does indicate an embedded assumption that it is women who are expected to sacrifice their careers for the greater good of protecting Canada’s family values. This representation of families reflects social values consistent with a conservative regime, which reinforces the suggestion of Mahon (2008) and Koop and Bittner (2013) that Canada shifted toward neo-liberalism following the election of the Federal Progressive Conservative government in 1984. Moreover, the representation of family within this period of study promotes a *family-government alliance* with respect to the care and raising of children, which aligns with Foucault’s previously-described “family-as-ally” (Foucault

as cited in Bundy, 2012, p. 597) mechanism in which governments exact control over the resource of children through its control over families.

According to Foucault, following the rise of industrialization, the government shifted its focus from the “politics of health”—the desire to protect the upper classes from the diseases of the poor (Bundy, 2012)—to “the politics of education” (Foucault as cited in Bundy, 2012, p. 597), a mechanism designed to produce the best possible next generation of labour. Thus, the sacred identity of *family-as-institution* was constructed to solidify a family-government alliance that would ensure the government’s economic goal for the development of children. This family-government-alliance mechanism embedded within it certain expectations surrounding motherhood. Women were viewed as having the ultimate responsibility for children’s health and well-being, as opposed to the recognition of systemic supports, such as universally-available childcare. Failure to uphold their family duty was met through harsh societal criticism and government intervention (Bundy, 2012; Vandebroek, 2006; Wall, 2013), such as the rhetoric in the Sharing the Responsibility report which embeds the expectation that a mother’s sacrifice for her children is the way in which Canadian values—and our special and unique Canadian life—are safeguarded. This embedded family-government-alliance discourse is further reinforced within the Sharing the Responsibility report through the embedded Western value of monotropism. A critical realist approach to monotropism reveals the promotion of a single caregiver to care for and form an attachment to a young child as a Western value that may, in fact, serve patriarchal economic goals over those of children-centred considerations. Indeed, through the examination of cross-cultural studies of parenting, socially-accepted non-Western approaches to the care and raising of children are revealed (Boyden, 1997, p. 204).

Last, the family-government-alliance discourse positions childcare in modern society as a “necessary societal evil”, thus reinforcing Vandebroek’s observation (2006, p. 371) that there

exists in society an embedded value-based assumption that childcare is to be used only by certain and unfortunate families—those whose mothers must work. This view evokes a moral judgment that while childcare provides needed labour support for certain and unfortunate families, it comes at a high societal price by removing young children from the ideal situation of stay-at-home mothering and the surveillance and protection afforded through the private and domestic world of the family home.

CHAPTER SEVEN: POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF PERIOD TWO (Liberal Administration of 1993-2006)

7.1 Introduction

During the Liberal administration of Period Two (1993-2006) there were significant international events, including, the growth of the internet, the debut of the euro in 1999, the September 11th attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 and the subsequent USA-led war on terrorism, and Canada's participation in the War in Afghanistan. At a Canadian-level, Jean Chrétien's Liberal party won three majority governments (1993, 1997, 2000), after defeating Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government in 1993. Ten years later, Chrétien stepped down as Liberal party leader in 2003 amid controversy and party pressure, and Paul Martin, the Liberal government's long-acting Finance Minister, took over the party's leadership. In the Federal election of June 28th, 2004 Martin's Liberal party won a minority mandate, a government which would last two years.

According to Bittner and Koop (2013), this political era represents Canada's fourth party system in Federal-level politics, marked by a long period of Liberal rule, and an ideological shift toward right-leaning politics with the rise of the Reform Party/Canadian Alliance and the subsequent formation of the Conservative Party in 2004. Classified as a "multi-interest accommodation party" (Bittner & Koop, 2013, p. 11), the Liberal Party is characterized by its unique mechanism of sociopolitical brokerage in order to build winning coalitions, and a pragmatic approach that accommodates heterogeneous support bases over ideological agendas. Brokerage parties, Bittner and Koop suggest, represent themselves as a natural governing party, versus regional parties that represent the interests of unique identity groups, such as the Reform

Party or the Bloc Quebecois (Bittner & Koop, 2013, p 17). In contrast, Conservatives have not had success as a brokering party, as I described in Period One.

The political era of Period Two is described as a time that heralded a significant shift toward right-leaning ideological placement and regional interest parties. Indeed, a study of right/left ideology using the RILE index shows this period to be a time of widening ideological space between parties, with a universal shift to the right (Bittner & Koop, 2013, p. 319), reflecting a growing trend of neo-liberalism. This right-leaning trend of the Liberal party would shift again in 2011, when the political discourse of its national campaign platform was scored, using the RILE, as more left-leaning than the NDP party (Bittner & Koop, 2013, p. 320), an era I examine in Period Four of my study.

Period Two represents a significant period for the study of childcare policy. After taking over power from the Progressive Conservative's, the Liberal government renewed Canada's efforts to establish a national childcare system following the abandonment of Bill C-144. Under the National Children's Agenda (1999), a cost-sharing agreement channelled \$2.2 billion of Federal funding to Provinces/Territories over five years to support programs for young children and their families. Childcare was one of four areas of investment, along with supporting healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy; parenting and family supports; and community supports. Soon following the launch of the National Children's Agenda, childcare received further Federal interest. The Liberal government established the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, which directed \$1.05 billion in Federal funding for childcare to Provinces/Territories over five years. By 2005, bilateral agreements were in place between all Provinces/Territories and the Federal government through which \$5 billion of Federal funding over five years would go toward developing a national childcare system (Cameron, 2014; Findlay, 2015). This iteration of Federal-level childcare policy, would, again, be pre-empted by another Federal election.

Following the loss of the Liberal party in the 2006 Federal election, Stephen Harper's Conservative government won a minority mandate and immediately terminated the Liberal's childcare policy, replacing it with a new model, the UCCB, which I review in my analysis of Period Three.

Through the Multilateral Framework for Child Care (2003) and the bilateral child care agreements (2005), Period Two saw significant political action toward childcare under the Liberal administration. This period also saw many other policy decisions including the termination of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) in 1995 and the establishment of its replacement, the CHST (Canada Health and Social Transfer); the establishment of the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the National Child Benefit Supplement (1998); the National Children's Agenda (1999), the extension of parental leave (2001), and the subsequent split of CHST into the CHT (Canada Health Transfer) and the CST (Canada Social Transfer) in 2004.

7.2 Description, Interpretation and Explanation of the Corpus for Period Two

As was done for Period One, I again employed a purposive sampling method and reviewed all Budget Speeches and the Speeches from the Throne released during the Liberal's administration. I selected the February 18, 1997 and the March 23, 2004 Budget Speeches, and the September 23, 1997 and the February 2, 2004 Throne Speeches because they most significantly made reference to childcare and children-related policy choices of this government. I selected policy documents surrounding the 1999 National Children's Agenda and the 2003 Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care as they represented the government in power's children-related policy choice and its childcare policy choice of this era, respectively. Further, I included excerpts from the two UNCRC Progress Reports released by the Federal government during Period Two. The UNCRC report released in 1994 reports on Canada's

progress related to implementation of the UNCRC from 1991-1993; and the UNCRC report released in 2001 reports on such progress from 1993-1997.

7.2.1 Budget Speech, February 18, 1997

As I described in chapter six, budget speeches represent a highly-ritualized order of discourse designed to give the illusion of democratic participation and voter consensus. The twenty-nine page February 18, 1997 Budget Speech, delivered in the last year of Chretien's first term of his majority government, was read aloud by the Honourable Paul Martin, Minister of Finance. The Budget Speech was organized by several main headers and sub-categories, detailed below in Table 7.2.1, in which reference to children-related policy is positioned in eighth position of the twelve presenting categories. After a review of the entire Budget Speech, I selected certain texts for detailed textual analysis based on their reference to social program spending and their children-related policy choices, namely the National Child Benefit System and the National Children's Agenda. I present these texts in excerpts 7.2.1a and 7.2.1b.

Table 7.2.1 Headers for Budget Speech, February 18, 1997

Building the Future: Staying the Course on Restoring Canada's Fiscal Health
Building the Future: Investing in Immediate Jobs and Growth
Building the Future: Investing in Long-Term Job Creation and Growth
Investing in Higher Education
Investing in Innovation
Building the Future: Investing in a Stronger Society
Sustaining and Improving Canada's Health Care System
Towards a National Child Benefit System
Helping Canadians with Disabilities
Support for Charitable Giving
Taxation: Our Policy and Our Commitment
Building the Future for Canadians

Excerpt 7.2.1a Text Extract for Budget Speech, February 18, 1997

1 It is a budget that will announce important investments in key priority areas for
2 Canadians – post-secondary education, medicare and children.
3 We will balance the books. We will do so by maintaining our pace – deliberate,
4 measured, and responsible. We will maintain our approach of two-year rolling targets.
5 And we will not alter the course. Moreover, we will meet our objectives, as in the
6 past, by focusing on getting spending right – *not* by raising taxes.
7 At the present time, the Federal government funds two community-based programs
8 directed to improving the health of children. The first is the Community Action
9 Program for Children, which today supports hundreds of community groups – for
10 example, in providing parenting education, child development centres and family
11 resource programs – all directed to addressing needs of children at risk up to the age
12 of six years.
13 One of the best health care investments we can make for tomorrow is to improve the
14 well-being of our children today”.
15 But increasingly, parents with young children are worried that they will not be able to
afford the costs of their education.

In the introductory comments of the 1997 Budget Speech, “children” are defined as a priority area, not a population or a social group. This is the hallmark of the Liberal government’s political discourse throughout Period Two: children are positioned as society’s resource, key to the country’s economic success. The Budget Speech also makes reference to the economic recession of the era, and positions the government as an economic leader tasked with the hard choices of public spending restraint. The grammatical tone of excerpt 7.2.1a is declarative, positioning its economic policies through vocabulary choices that evoke authorization by *rationalization*, in which a policy choice is defended by utility, necessity and obligation grounded by a claimed knowledge. Some of the vocabulary choices, such as “balance the books” in line 3, and “alter the course” in line 5, reflect a genre that Fairclough (2003) refers to as *conversationalization*, a discursive trend in contemporary times that conveys a folksy and friendly relationship between the speaker and the hearer/reader, intentionally used to blur the boundaries between news and entertainment, drama and documentary, fact and fiction

(Fairclough, 2003, p. 35). Indeed, the Liberal government's use of conversationalization stands in comparison with the political discourse of the Progressive Conservative government from Period One, thus indicating the era of Period Two as a point in time of this genre shift.

The reference to the Federal government's Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) in lines 7 and 8 positions this social program as one which supports communities, which, in turn, supports children. Similar to the findings of Period One, the Federal government positions itself as an ally in supporting children (i.e., not having a direct role) but unlike the Progressive Conservative government, the Liberal government positions its alliance with community rather than family. Reference to this *community-government alliance* is made multiple times throughout the Budget Speech. Further to CAPC, lines 10 and 11 reference the program's target population as "at risk children" thus creating difference between not-at-risk children and at-risk children and presenting the embedded moral evaluation that the government's role is one of protector for only certain children.

Under the header: Building the Future: Investing in Long-Term Job Creation and Growth, the Budget Speech positions "Investing in Higher Education" as its first proposed solution. Indeed, post-secondary education is referenced multiple times throughout the Budget Speech, evidence of the Liberal government's favour for this solution to economic growth and global competition. Moreover, the reference to the worry of parents in line 14 and 15 regarding their ability to afford the costs of post-secondary education represents a moral evaluation technique of legitimization for its proposed economic policy decisions, positioning this parental concern as the leading universal fear among all Canadian parents. Embedded within this statement is a value-based assumption that the ideal Canadian family norm is one which produces the next generation of post-secondary education-ready youth, who, in turn, will secure society's economic

future. Thus, in contrast to the value-based assumptions within the political discourse of Period One, which embeds the ideal family norm as one which safeguards Canada's social values, the ideal family norm embedded within the discourse of Period Two is one which safeguards the country's economic future.

Further, in lines 12 and 13, the positioning of children as society's economic solution is extended to health care; using an imperative grammatical tone, the "investment" of children's well-being is tied to the security of Canada's healthcare system, thus positioning a strong social relationship between the construction of *children-as-resource* and the government. This positioning of children-as-resource is once again presented in excerpt 7.3.1b, line 26, in which the future of children is tied to the future of Canada.

Excerpt 7.2.1b presents text taken from the sub-header "Towards a National Child Benefit System". This section of the 1997 Budget Speech represents the most significant references to children and the government's children-related policy decision-making within the context of social program spending. In lines 1 and 2, children are represented as "our most precious resource", thus, again, illustrating the vocabulary choice to represent the identity of children as resource. The vocabulary choice of "our" ("our children" and "our resource" and "our responsibility") is additive, serving to embed the children-as-resource discourse, and promoting a property construction of children, an entire social group that belongs to all the adults of society. This sentence also represents a declarative grammatical mood which legitimizes this position statement as one of obligation and necessity.

Interestingly, lines 2 and 3 present children as a social group unto themselves (not subsumed under the term "family"), and the reference to the "income [children] have to live on" assigns a degree of agency to children that is not grounded by reality (children are not income-earners, typically, and do not have an income to live on, though they do depend on the incomes

of their family/caregivers). This vocabulary choice to assign such a degree of agency to children, versus the family unit, is of interest; it may indicate a strategic intention to limit references to the family, thus presenting the discourse of the Liberal government as one which differs markedly from that of the Progressive Conservatives. Of note, the reference to providing services for children makes no mention of children's rights or to Canada's commitment to the UNCRC.

Excerpt 7.2.1b Text Extract for Budget Speech, February 18, 1997

1 Our children are our most precious resource and ensuring their health is our
2 greatest responsibility. We also know that an important determinant of the health
3 of our children is the income they have to live on, as well as the services at their
4 disposal. The question is, what are we doing about it? The answer, for too many
5 children and their families, has been not nearly enough. We know that. We say
6 that. Child poverty is an issue on which the country is coming together.
7 Canadians believe the challenge must be addressed. The Prime Minister has
8 taken a leadership role and he and the Premiers, at the First Ministers' Meeting
9 last June, agreed to make investing in children a national priority. Social
10 Services ministers from across Canada are making great progress in identifying
11 how we can move forward together.
12 ...It is very clear that the ultimate solution includes a growing economy that
13 creates jobs. That goal underpins the economic course we are on. We also know
14 that we must take the steps necessary to ensure that the services are in place that
15 Canadian children require. Those include, for example, health and dental
16 benefits, remedial help and good nutrition.
17 The challenge is clear. It is to change the system so that the services and supports
18 children need are there for them. Mr. Speaker, meeting this challenge requires a
19 national effort, a cooperative strategy, on the part of both the Provinces and the
20 Federal government. Why? Because it is the Provinces that are best equipped to
21 deliver the services and supports families need.
22 There can be no more worthy effort than a new partnership on behalf of
23 Canada's children. Mr. Speaker, today, we are devoting significant new financial
24 resources to meeting this challenge. Yet this can be but the beginning. We will
25 provide additional resources – as soon as we can afford it. The reason is very
26 clear. Opportunity denied in childhood too often means chances lost as an adult.
The future of Canada's children is the future of the country itself.

Further evidence of the conversationalization genre is found in lines 5 and 6. The use of “We know that. We say that.” presents an image of a friendly government, which acts in a manner that is open and honest with the Canadian public. The reference to “child poverty” presents a singular noun vocabulary choice that reduces the social condition of poverty experienced by many children to that experienced by a singular noun. This vocabulary choice becomes worthy of note when one imagines the term “woman poverty” to represent the incidence of women living in poverty conditions; a term that would surely be considered insensitive and inappropriate. Of course, the usage of the term “child” is not limited to the Liberal government, and I will identify its use throughout the discourse under my study. It should be noted, however, that the Progressive Conservative government did not use the term “child poverty” within the corpus studied in Period One.

The deontic modality used in lines 11 and 12: “it is very clear that the ultimate solution includes a growing economy that creates jobs” embeds a taken-for-granted value-based assumption reflective of liberal regimes. Moreover, the reference to the services that children require, in lines 14 and 15, limits the array of services to those of health-related care. The exclusion of other important services, including that of childcare and education, embeds the notion that the Federal government is only responsible for healthcare standards, and not for those areas of social programming for which Provinces and Territories have a role, thus reinforcing the distinction between Federal-Provincial/Territorial responsibilities and promoting the role of Provinces and Territories as having ultimate responsibility for the services children require. This is further reinforced in the reference to Provinces being “best equipped to deliver the services and supports families need” found in lines 19 and 20.

Another interesting textual method, related to cohesion and text structure, is found in lines 23 and 24: “We will provide additional resources – as soon as we can afford it”. The

hyphen serves to qualify the commitment of additional resources and, once again, represents the government as friendly, open, and honest; a government that wants to help—when the conditions allow it.

7.2.2 September 23, 1997 Speech from the Throne

As I described in chapter six, Throne Speeches are a highly-ritualized order of discourse designed to give the illusion of non-partisanship. Delivered in the second term of Chretien's Liberal government, the 1997 Throne Speech was read by Governor General Roméo leBlanc (1995-1999). The appointment of Governor General leBlanc was recommended in 1995 by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. Governor General leBlanc was a member of the Liberal government, serving under Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau's Cabinet.

In comparison to the 1989 Throne Speech analyzed under Period One, the 1997 Throne Speech reflects a very personalized, folksy tone, similar to the *conversationalization genre* revealed in the 1997 Budget Speech. Thus, it can be said that the Liberal government of Period Two emblemized a shift away from the formal impersonal tone of the discourse of Period One toward a genre that presents a more informal and friendly relationship between the government and the Canadian public. The 1997 Throne Speech also reflects a significant *promotional genre*, which presents a romantic notion of Canada and represents Canadians as special, unique, and especially resilient, as evident in lines 5 and 6, excerpt 7.2.2a: "Canada represents a triumph of the human spirit"

In addition to reflecting the Liberal government's approach to social program spending, the 1997 Throne Speech introduces the government's plans to establish the National Children's Agenda, its most significant children-related policy choice since taking power in 1993. The headers and sub-headers that organize the 1997 Throne Speech are presented in Table 7.2.2. This Table illustrates a pattern in the Speech, as the government celebrates its achievements from its

first term (1993-1997) and underscores its mandate for a second term. Select text taken from the Throne Speech is presented in excerpts 7.2.2a and 7.2.2b.

Table 7.2.2 Headers for September 23, 1997 Speech from the Throne

A New Parliament...
...For a New Century of Canadian Achievement
We Have Already Built a Foundation for Our Success
Our Challenge for the Future
Building a Stronger Canada
Investing in Children
Investing in Quality Care and Good Health
Building Safer Communities
Creating Opportunity for Young Canadians
Investing in Knowledge and Creativity
Expanding Opportunities in Aboriginal Communities
Looking Outward
Celebrating the Millennium
Moving Forward into the 21st Century

Excerpt 7.2.2a Text Extract for September 23, 1997 Speech from the Throne

1 The parliament of Canada is the only institution directly elected by all Canadians
2 with the mandate to protect and express the national interest. Elected by all
3 Canadians and endowed with the legitimacy that this bestows, the Government of
4 Canada will stand up for the shared values of Canadians at home and abroad.
5 Canada represents a triumph of the human spirit, bringing together the best of what
6 people can do.
7 The government has regained the ability to address priorities of Canadians while
8 living within its means. It is now in the position to make strategic investments in our
9 children and our youth, our health, our communities, our knowledge and creativity
10 while continuing to improve the nation's finances
11 The future belongs to societies whose economy is sound; who invest in knowledge,
12 education and innovation; whose population is healthy; whose children are well
13 prepared to learn; and who focus on securing a high quality of life for all citizens.
14 Canadians have already set these priorities for this new Parliament. These are the
15 Government's priorities.

The text displayed in excerpt 7.2.2a is pulled from the introductory section of the speech, thus setting the tone for the articulation of its economic and social priority-setting. Heavy with a declarative grammatical tone, the text contains many usages of deontic modalities that imply obligation and necessity. Much of the text presented illustrates a hegemonic discursive method for positioning the government as “endowed” with its power by the Canadian public. Indeed, lines 2 and 3 embed the false notion that the Government of Canada was “elected by all Canadians”. Notwithstanding those Canadians that did not vote for the government in power, this sentence renders children and their status as non-voting Canadians as invisible. This representation of control-by-consent is also found in lines 14 and 15, which positions Canadians as having significant agency through which they collectively pursue national priorities. Further, the reference to the Federal government’s promise to “stand up” for “shared values” presents the government as benevolent protector and embeds the assumption that Canadians share the same set of values, a hegemonic method that imposes dominant culture upon society.

The sentiment in lines 8 and 9 states that “investments” in children and youth can only be made when the economic conditions are right, thus reinforcing the view of *children-as-resource* introduced in the 1997 Budget Speech. The categorizing of children and youth in the list of other investment areas of health, communities, knowledge and creativity, again demonstrates that children are represented not as a population group but as a resource or investment *area*. And, as was done in the 1997 Budget Speech, the resource of children “prepared to learn” is directly tied to the future of Canada, further depersonalizing the social group of children and assigning their value based on the return of their investment. As was the case in the 1997 Budget Speech, there is no mention of children’s rights or Canada’s commitment to the UNCRC.

Excerpt 7.2.2b Text Extract for September 23, 1997 Speech from the Throne

1 A country that has decided to invest in its children is a country that is confident in its
2 future. A country that invests in its children successfully will have a better future.
3 One of our objectives as a country should be to ensure that all Canadian children
4 have the best possible opportunity to develop their full potential. We must equip our
5 children with the capacities they need to be ready to learn and to participate fully in
6 our society. While families have the greatest responsibility in the nurturing and
7 development of our children, they are not alone. Developing our children requires a
8 concerted effort and partnership by parents, governments, and the private and the
9 voluntary sectors. It requires focussing on what children need to thrive. The
10 experiences of Canada's children, especially in the early years, influence their
11 health, their well-being, and their ability to learn and adapt throughout their entire
12 lives. By investing now in the well-being of today's children, we improve the long-
13 term health of our society. Addressing the needs of low-income families with
14 children is therefore a priority of the Government. Federal, Provincial and Territorial
15 governments have agreed to address in a co-operative way the problems of low-
16 income families with children. Together we are now building the comprehensive and
17 effective National Child Benefit System.
18 We can make a difference in the lives of all our children. Children need a substantial
19 investment of time and attention for healthy development; they need strong families;
20 they need safe, supportive communities. The Federal, Provincial and Territorial
21 governments agreed in January 1997 to work together to develop the National
22 Children's Agenda, a comprehensive strategy to improve the well-being of Canada's
23 children. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments will work together to
24 develop this broader agenda for children, including clear outcome measures by
25 which to gauge success. As part of this national agenda, the Federal government will
26 undertake three new initiatives: it will establish Centres of Excellence to deepen our
27 understanding of children's development and well-being and to improve our ability
28 to respond to their needs; it will expand our Aboriginal Head Start program onto
29 reserves to ensure that all Aboriginal children have the opportunity to get a good
30 start in life; it will measure and report regularly on the readiness of Canadian
31 children to learn, so that we can assess our progress in providing our children with
32 the best possible start.

In excerpt 7.2.2b, lines 1 and 2 position the subject “children” as belonging to the country. The text structure of the first sentence in lines 1 and 2 uses a joining clause “is” that presents equivalence between “a country that has decided to invest in its children” and “a country that is confident in its future”. The following sentence in lines 2 and 3 is additive, serving to further embed the taken-for-granted assumption that children are an important national investment. The declarative grammatical tone of these two sentences, and the deontic modalities used within, represents the position of this statement as grounded in assuredness, obligation and necessity. This is in contrast to the following sentence in lines 3 and 4 which position the support of children as “one” objective and further softens the obligation of this support through the use of “should”.

The co-location of “our children” in line 7 further positions the social group of children as belonging to the country. In this way, the Liberal discourse of Period Two represents a discursive shift regarding the construction of children’s identities, which contrasts with the Progressive Conservative discourse in Period One, which positioned children as belonging to the family. Importantly, however, while the Liberal discourse represents children as belonging to the country it does not represent the country as the protector of children, but rather the benefactor of the country insofar as its role of investor in children.

Further, the reference in line 1: “decides to invest”, reinforces the dominant business genre of the Speech, suggesting countries choose investment opportunities related to children based on the right economic and social conditions, not, for example, out of duty or obligation. The children-as-resource discourse continues from the earlier-examined Throne Speech; the multiple references to investing in children positions children not as a population group but, rather, as a national resource to be mined. The multiple uses of “investment” positions the role of government as a business, its citizens as shareholders, and its children as an investment

opportunity. This business genre is again reinforced through the vocabulary choice of “agenda for children” in line 24, and the reference to “outcome measures by which to gauge success” in lines 24 and 25. Moreover, labeling a social program designed to support children as the “National Children’s Agenda” (lines 21 and 22) clearly illustrates the business genre associated with the Liberal government’s discourse surrounding children and children-related policy choices. Such significant use of this business genre can be seen to position the economic goals of a country in line with the market-driven approach of a liberal regime. Thus, the business genre within this discourse serves to reinforce the ideological assumptions of a liberal regime. And, given the Throne Speech was released in 1997, during the first few years of Canada’s ratification of the UNCRC, the absent reference to the role of the country as a protector of children’s rights is conspicuous.

There are also many references to children’s “development”: “developing our children” in line 7; “healthy development” in line 9; and “children’s development” in line 27. This *developmentalism discourse*, which I described in chapter three, embeds a taken-for-granted Western value of children and reinforces the construction of the universal child. The proposed action “developing our children” further reinforces children-as-resource, again obfuscating the view of children as a population group, and presenting them, rather, as a priority area.

The irrealis statement in lines 12 and 13 “By investing now in the well-being of today’s children, we improve the long-term health of our society” presents a prediction (improvement of the long-term health of society) as a factual statement. The strategic use of irrealis statements is again seen in lines 16 and 17: “Together we are now building the comprehensive and effective National Child Benefit System”; the action of building the future National Child Benefit System, which has proved effective before it has been launched, presents a predictive claim as a factual statement.

The extracted text in excerpt 7.2.2b shows that no other voices are being represented in the Throne Speech (e.g., voice of experts, parents, or children); the only voice is that of the Governor General. In contrast to the discourse of Period One, there is much less use of nominalization, a technique that transforms verbs into nouns, thus removing action and agency. On the contrary, this discourse assigns much action to the government representing it as having a strong role related to children—however, as an investor in children, not as a protector.

7.2.3 1999 National Children’s Agenda

The National Children’s Agenda represented significant financial support from the Federal government (\$2.2 billion over five years) to Provinces and Territories to develop a variety of social programs, at the discretion of each province or territory, including supports for parents and families; enhancing early childhood development; improving economic security for families; providing early learning opportunities for children; fostering strong adolescent development; and creating supportive, safe and violence-free communities. In contrast to the business genre reflected in its name, the National Children’s Agenda, as discussed earlier, this government policy document is formatted in a manner that resembles a children’s book, containing many photos of babies and toddlers, cartoon graphics of children’s toys, and a pull-out text box which features the phrase “our future our children”, presented in a font made to resemble a young child’s handwriting. This phrase is placed on the preface page of the document, promoting its status for the reader. Interestingly, within this phrase, “our future” is again co-located with “our children”, and “our future” is given first ranking in order, over that of children, again, reinforcing the children-as-resource genre as described in the 1997 Budget Speech and 1997 Throne Speech. Within the document are several references to developing a “shared vision” (one of which is positioned as the sub-header in the title page), along with the promise of a public consultation through which to finalize the Agenda’s objectives.

The introduction of the document reflects the voice of experts, a technique of intertextuality, that of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council on Social Policy Renewal. Of note, this introductory section of the Agenda states that “this paper is not intended to begin a process of priority-setting for new government spending. We believe we can make progress by developing a shared vision and by building on the important work that is already occurring across the country”, thus presenting a claim of action that brings with it no new funding support. The preface of the document states: “This document proposes a common vision for children”, an odd vocabulary choice when one considers alternate phrasings, such as “This document proposes a common vision to support children”. Indeed, if one applied this phrasing to a different social group, women, for example (“This document proposes a common vision for women”), the vocabulary choice would likely be considered offensive in the way it positions women as a resource and a target of government planning rather than as a rights-bearing social group.

Importantly, the National Children’s Agenda does contain a reference to the UNCRC: “The UNCRC sets international standards for children’s human rights...all children have the right to safeguards and assistance in the preservation of these rights and freedoms”. While this mention of the UNCRC demonstrates the Federal government’s public recognition of the UNCRC, it does not include a reference to the Federal government’s role in protecting the rights of children. Quite the opposite, rather. This reference to the UNCRC conspicuously excludes any reference to how children’s rights will be protected.

Excerpt 7.2.3a Text Excerpt for 1999 National Children's Agenda

1 Every day, a thousand children are born in Canada. Making sure they grow up
2 healthy, happy, successful and safe is a key responsibility for parents, communities
3 and society as a whole.
4 We have new knowledge about how early childhood shapes a lifetime.
5 We need to reach children before problems occur.
6 As society changes, we need to change how we respond to children.
7 As we learn more about factors that make children vulnerable, we must apply that
8 knowledge to improving children's chances of success in life.
9 Vision: What do we want for our children? Canadians want their country to be one
10 where all children thrive in an atmosphere of love, care and understanding, valued as
11 individuals in childhood and given opportunities to reach their full potential as
12 adults. Respected and protected from harm, children will grow up to respect and
13 protect the rights of others. Valued and nurtured and loved, they will grow up able to
14 contribute to a society that appreciates diversity, supports the less able and shares its
15 resources. Given the opportunity to develop their physical, intellectual, emotional,
16 social and spiritual capacities to their fullest, children will become tomorrow's
17 successful and enthusiastic parents, caregivers, workers and citizens.

In excerpt 7.2.3a, line 4 reinforces the children-as-resource discourse by defending the country's role in supporting children as one grounded by the need to reach children "before problems occur". An alternate vocabulary choice, such as "We need to reach children before they experience problems" would deliver the same message, though it would represent children as a population group, rather than a potential problem area.

In contrast to this positioning of children-as-a-resource, lines 9 to 17 in excerpt 7.2.3a represent the Agenda's vision for children. This vision statement contains many children-centred considerations and it represents children as a social group, not a resource. The text surrounding the vision statement also contains many references to "new knowledge" thus reflecting the *new science of early childhood development discourse*, which I previously described in chapter three. Similarly, the four goals of the Agenda, itemized in excerpt 7.2.3b, are also children-centred,

thus reinforcing the positioning of children as a social group whose needs are considered and protected by a benevolent society.

Excerpt 7.2.3b Text Excerpt for 1999 National Children’s Agenda

As a nation, we aspire to have children who are:

1. Healthy physically and emotionally
2. Safe and secure
3. Successful at learning
4. Socially engaged and responsible

A key finding of my review of the National Children’s Agenda is the *genre mixing* of the business genre and the new science for early childhood development genre, a hegemonic technique for embedding taken-for-granted assumptions. In this way, one can surmise that the addition of the new science for early childhood development genre is a strategic way to defend the government’s position statements that had previously been defended by the business genre. Thus, the goal of “investing” in children for the purpose of ensuring the country’s economic success is reinforced by the added legitimation technique of rationalization, which uses truth claims of new knowledge about children’s development to ground its childcare policy choice. Excerpt 7.2.3c illustrates the document’s return to the business genre, toward the end of the textual content, by recommending a method for “tracking our children’s progress”. This excerpt illustrates that children are once again represented through the business genre, positioned as a resource rather than a population or social group. Indeed, line 6 suggests we must “use them to their fullest”.

Excerpt 7.2.3c Text Excerpt for 1999 National Children’s Agenda

1 How will we know if we’re making a difference? By tracking our children’s
2 progress. Businesses, organizations and governments regularly report on our
3 country’s economic well-being. The progress of Canada’s children is just as
4 important.
5 We need to know if we’re finding the best windows of opportunity to help children
6 and whether we are using them to their fullest.

After the release of the National Children’s Agenda in 1999, the Federal government launched a public consultation process in order to “develop a shared vision for Canada’s children”. The results of the public consultation, called the Public Dialogue on the National Children’s Agenda Developing a Shared Vision, were released in 2000. While this document does represent children as a social group, the goals put forward in this document are very similar to those articulated in the National Children’s Agenda.

7.2.4 2003 Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care

The 2003 Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care was the Liberal government’s first dedicated childcare policy (the National Children’s Benefit included financial support for Provinces and Territories to support the development of a number of types of social programming to support children’s development, which could include childcare, at the discretion of each province or territory). As illustrated in excerpt 7.2.4a, the four-page Framework policy document references the 2000 First Ministers’ Communique on Early Childhood Development (ECD), thus positioning the document and the childcare policy itself as grounded by the new science of ECD, a technique of rationalization legitimation which defends a policy choice by referencing new knowledge. Of note, lines 2 and 3 present the government’s interest in the “early years”, which removes reference to children (an alternative vocabulary choice might have been the “early years of children”, or “children’s early years”) thus rendering the social group of

children invisible. Further, the use of the singular form “child” in line 3 embeds the taken-for-assumption that there is a universal ideal of children based on Western values.

Excerpt 7.2.4a 2003 Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care

1 In September 2000, First Ministers released a communique on Early Childhood
2 Development (ECD) that recognized the critical importance of the early years of life
3 in the development and future well-being of the child. Recognizing that families
4 play the primary role in supporting and nurturing children, they committed to
5 improve and expand ECD programs, building on existing investments.
6 Objective: The objective of this initiative is to further promote ECD and support the
7 participating of parents in employment or training by improving access to
8 affordable, quality early learning and child care programs and services.

Lines 3 and 4 reinforces the value-based assumption that families play the primary role in supporting children, and positions the government as a support role to parents, those who wish to participate in employment or training. The first mention of “children” (plural form) is in reference to the role of parents; they play the primary role in “supporting and nurturing children”. Further evidence of subjugating the identities of children is found in lines 6 and 7: “to further promote ECD”. As was cited in my earlier analysis of the 1997 Budget Speech and 1997 Throne Speech, the trend continues whereby the Liberal government defends children-related policy investments as an important way to address a priority *area*, such as ECD, not a population or the social group of children.

Excerpt 7.2.4b 2003 Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care

1 Early learning and child care programs and services funded through this initiative
2 will primarily provide direct care and early learning for children in settings such as
3 child care centres, family child care homes, preschools, and nursery schools. Types
4 of investments could include capital and operating funding, fee subsidies, wage
5 enhancements, training, professional development and support, quality assurance,
6 and parent information and referral. Programs and services that are part of the formal
7 school system will not be included in this initiative.
8 Flexible and responsive Early learning and child care options should be broadly
9 available to promote early childhood development and to support parents to
10 participate in employment or training.
11 Early learning and child care should be of high quality to support optimal child
12 development.
13 Early learning and child care services should provide the flexibility to respond to the
14 varying needs and preferences of parents and children.

The definition of childcare in lines 1 to 3 constructs the view of childcare as an education-based activity (“early learning”), which reflects a formal administration model over that of kinship care or babysitting. Defined further, lines 6 and 7 create difference between the childcare system and the school system, thus defending a distinction based on historical legitimation. As stated in the policy document, the childcare system proposed under the Framework is to be built on the following principles: available and accessible; affordable; quality; inclusive; and parental choice. The definition of available and accessible, illustrated in lines 8 and 9, embeds the assumption that childcare is a labour support program specific to supporting parents who require childcare because of employment or training obligations. This is the first guiding principle, which positions it higher on the list than the principle of inclusion (fourth on the list), which relates to the needs of children. The principle of available and accessible also positions its goal as one that promotes early childhood development—not children—again reinforcing the children-as-resource discourse of the Liberal administration.

The Framework document proposes a childcare system for children under age 6. The policy preference to target resources of childcare to children under six is grounded by the new science of ECD discourse, which positions the “early years” as the key window through which to make investments that yield the highest rate of return on the dollar. Thus, this discourse creates difference between children: those who represent an ideal investment, the under six; and those who are not worth such an investment, the over six. Again, this is a technique called rationalization legitimation, the use of citing new knowledge as the reason that obligates the policy choice.

The term “optimal child development”, found in lines 11 and 12, bears critical analysis. The singular use of “child”, as illustrated earlier, defends a value-based assumption that there is a universal ideal of childhood which follows universal patterns of development. Even in reference to the principle of quality, the value underscoring this policy choice relates to the knowledge-based product yielded through investment.

The principle of parental choice addresses another adult-centric value of childcare, the varying needs of parents. This principle, stated in lines 13 and 14, creates difference among parents and children with respect to their varying needs and preferences related to childcare. This line is one of the few that includes a reference to children as a population or social group. Of interest, “children” is positioned after “parents”, thus representing a vocabulary choice that positions the needs of parents above those of children. Moreover, the principle itself is called “parental choice” which implies an understanding that the varying needs and preferences of children are interpreted by parents through the lens of “children’s best interests”, a mechanism which allows parents to act on behalf of their children without having to recognize children’s evolving capacities to represent their own interests in decision-making. Thus, this adult-centric

view of the parental choice principle belies the inclusion of children's needs. I will further analyze the Framework in my normative critique of the Liberal's childcare policy choice.

7.2.5 February 2, 2004 Speech from the Throne

Governor General Adrienne Clarkson (1999-2005), appointed on the recommendation of Prime Minister Chretien, read the 2004 Throne Speech, which opened the first session of the thirty-eighth Parliament of Canada. This session of Parliament ushered in Paul Martin, the new Prime Minister of Canada, when he took office on December 12, 2003, after out-going Prime Minister Chretien stepped down. The Throne Speech was read four months prior to the upcoming Federal election, held in June 2004, which saw Paul Martin's Liberal party win with a minority government. Thus the political climate surrounding the 2004 Throne Speech was one of renewed Liberal power, since first taking office in 1993, albeit under new leadership amidst controversy and Liberal party pressure that demanded the resignation of Jean Chretien.

I chose the 2004 Throne Speech as one of my data sources for the corpus of Period Two because it was the first Throne Speech to follow the 2003 release of the Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care. My overall assessment of this Throne Speech is that it continues to reinforce the business genre related to children's collective identities and the view of childcare. The Throne Speech delivered by Governor General Clarkson continues the trend of the Throne Speech delivered by Governor General leBlanc (1995-1999) in its use of conversationalization. Unlike the styles of the previously-studied Throne Speeches from Period One, the Throne Speech delivered by Governor General Clarkson includes a personal narrative through which she describes her national and international travel as Canada's representative.

Table 7.2.5 illustrates the prominence of importance paid to the economy in the positioning of the header and sub-header categories that organize the Throne Speech.

Table 7.2.5 Headers for February 2, 2004 Speech from the Throne

A Strong Economy
The Health of Canadians
Children, Caregivers and Seniors
Canada's Cities and Communities
Our Environment
A Role of Pride and Influence in the World
Governing in Common Purpose

My review of the whole Throne Speech reveals the multiple vocabulary choices of business genre terms including, “fiscal discipline”, “economic achievement”, “globally competitive”, “venture capital”, and “invest”. Excerpt 7.2.5a presents extracts of textual content that represents the government’s policy priorities and approach to social spending.

Excerpt 7.2.5a Text Extract for February 2, 2004 Speech from the Throne

1 Our quality of life, job opportunities and capacity to support our social goals rely on a
2 globally competitive economy.
3 The government will pursue a five-point strategy to build an even more globally
4 competitive and sustainable economy.
5 The first element is to invest in people, Canada’s greatest source of creativity and
6 economic strength.
7 Providing “smart government” – the third element of our economic strategy aims to
8 make it easier for businesses to do business in Canada.
9 The plan [Ten Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care] holds all governments to account
10 by establishing a requirement for evidence-based benchmarks, comparable indicators,
11 clear target and transparent reporting to the public on access to health care.

The taken-for-granted assumption embedded within lines 1 and 2 is that a globally competitive economy is the cornerstone of Canadian society. This business genre and investment discourse is seen again in lines 5 and 6, although now the resource of children has expanded to the resource of people. The reference to an “evidence-based” approach to policy in line 10 is the first use of this term found in the corpus, representing another important genre shift in the analysis of my 33-year period of study.

Excerpt 7.2.5b represents an extraction of textual content from the section “Children, Caregivers, and Seniors”. As illustrated in lines 1 and 2, the investment discourse remains a trend in the political discourse surrounding children-related policy. The comparison of the National Child Benefit to Medicare is a legitimation technique of authorization that links Canada’s existing universal healthcare system to the new child benefit established by the Liberal government.

Excerpt 7.2.5b Text Extract for February 2, 2004 Speech from the Throne

1 For a decade, all governments have understood that the most important investment that
2 can be made is in our children. That is why, even when it was fighting the deficit, the
3 government established the National Child Benefit – the most significant national
4 social program since Medicare. There is more that must be done to help
5 families help their children. Parents must have real choices; children
6 must have real opportunities to learn. The time has come for a truly national system of
7 early learning and child care, a system based on the four key principles that parents
8 and child care experts say matter – quality, universality, accessibility and
9 development. The government will put the foundations in place with its Provincial and
10 Territorial partners, charting a national course that focuses on results, builds on best
11 practices and reports on progress to Canadians. Within this national framework, the
12 Provinces and Territories will have the flexibility to address their own particular needs
13 and circumstances.
14 As our society ages, Canadian families are caring not only for young children but
15 increasingly for elderly spouses and grandparents as well.

Lines 4 and 5 position families and parents as having the primary responsibility for children, and reinforces the view of government as an adult-centric support in social policy areas. And, again, the *parental choice discourse*, first seen in the 2013 Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care is emphasized in reference to childcare policy, as illustrated in lines 5 and 6. As per the Framework, the positioning of children’s needs for opportunities to learn is secondary to the needs of parents to have “real choices”. The vocabulary choice “the time has come for a truly national system” is folksy, reflective of the conversationalization tone

of the Throne Speech, a technique to present the government as friendly and ready to respond to the needs of the common public. Of note, lines 7 and 8 demonstrate the use of intertextuality, the use of incorporating other voices into a text. This is the first reference within the corpus for Period Two that recognizes the voices of parents and child care experts with regard to childcare policy. This is a strategic way to embed the notion that the position statement is a universal truth claim, despite not including evidence for the attribution. The phrase “charting a national course” is another example of a vocabulary choice that evokes a colloquial tone. This is in contrast to the subsequent business genre terms that follow (e.g., “focuses on results”, “builds on best practices”, and “reports on progress”). The mixing of genres is an important trend to note, and the repeated pattern of mixing a conversationalization genre with a business genre will be important when I conduct my analysis of genre trends across the four Periods of my study, in chapter ten.

Last, the decision to position the needs of seniors in a category dedicated to children and caregivers, with its references to childcare within, is a vocabulary decision worth critical examination. Co-locating the caregiving of children with the caregiving for seniors positions childcare as care-based, as opposed to education-based. As with the earlier co-location of the National Child Benefit and Medicare, this vocabulary decision may serve to reinforce the connection between childcare investment and healthcare investment, thus defending children-related policy by referencing Canada’s historic commitment to Medicare, an authorization legitimation technique.

7.2.6 March 23, 2004 Budget Speech

One month following the 2004 Throne Speech, Martin’s Liberal majority government issued its Budget Speech and presented its Budget Plan, delivered by Finance Minister Ralph Goodale. Before the 2004 Budget Plan was passed, Parliament was dissolved for the June 2004

Federal election. After it won a minority mandate, the 2004 budget legislation was appended to the 2005 budget, under Martin's Liberal Federal government.

The 2004 Budget Speech further embeds a conversationalization genre, with multiple vocabulary choices used to evoke a friendly view of government. The Budget Speech references the significant public consultation process, from "coast to coast", used to inform the government's proposed budget plan. For example, in excerpt 7.2.6a, lines 1 to 3 reference the values of the Canadian people ("common sense", "sense of common good", "hard work", "straight talk") that underpin the Budget Plan, thus using a technique called moral evaluation upon which to legitimize the government's budget plan. Within the introductory part of the Speech, it includes several references to "what we will do" or "we will", stated at the beginning of ten paragraphs. This vocabulary choice represents a rationalization legitimation through which the government's budget plan is defended by reference to utility, necessity and obligation.

Excerpt 7.2.6a Text Extract for March 23, 2004 Budget Speech

1 During all my consultations, I was struck once again by the good common sense of
2 Canadians – and by their sense of the common good. From Whitehorse to St. John's,
3 I was reminded of values like hard work, straight talk and paying your bills...
4 Today, I am presenting a focused budget plan with two clear objectives: first to
5 demonstrate unequivocally the principles of financial responsibility and integrity;
6 and second, to begin to give tangible shape to the goals presented in the Speech from
7 the Throne.
8 Let me make clear what this budget will do – and what it will not do.
9 What we will do is make important investments in such key areas as health care,
10 communities and learning, for these are the social foundations upon which
11 Canadians will build better lives.

Lines 9 to 11 of excerpt 7.2.6a reinforce the investment discourse and the business genre that has heavily influenced the Liberal government's political discourse thus far. The reference to "financial responsibility and integrity" co-locates these two words, a vocabulary choice meant to embed the value-assumption of integrity with the economic goal of financial responsibility. The

theme of financial responsibility continues throughout the Budget Speech, as shown in excerpt 7.2.6b, which extracts further textual content to illustrate the government’s economic goals. Following a statement that proposed significant investments (\$3 billion) for health and social programming, Minister Goodale followed this promise by stating that these investments will not be committed to “unless and until” the money is “found” to pay for them. The vocabulary choices within this statement serve to position the government as a tough-minded business person who must make hard decisions about budget spending. Moreover, the vocabulary choice of “found” regarding the government’s resources to pay for health and social spending evokes the sense that the sufficient resources required for the qualified promise of health and social spending is dependent on circumstances outside of the government’s control. In comparison to the Liberal’s 1997 Budget Speech previously analyzed for Period Two, the tone of the 2004 Budget Speech is significantly more populated with vocabulary choices that position the government as having to make tough decisions for the sake of the country’s economic security and, indeed, its future.

Excerpt 7.2.6b Text Extract for March 23, 2004 Budget Speech

1 What we will do is keep our debt burden on a steady downward track to relieve the
2 Mortgage that our generation – and previous spending habits – have imposed on the
3 future of our children.
4 Within a period of four years, we expect to identify at least \$3 billion for new
5 investments in the ever-evolving priorities of Canadians – in health care, learning
6 and innovation, communities, Aboriginals, people with disabilities. And let me
7 make one final point: we will not commit to these reinvestments unless and until we
8 have found the money to pay for them.

Excerpt 7.2.6c Text Extract for March 23, 2004 Budget Speech

1 And today we go further. I am announcing a broad package of measures aimed at
2 promoting learning at every stage of life. We will advance these measures in
3 consultation and cooperation with our Provincial partners. We begin in early
4 childhood, because it is here that the foundation for future achievement is set. This
5 budget will commit additional resources to the Multilateral Framework on Early
6 Learning and Child Care so more children will be better prepared to learn at school
and succeed in life.
7 All in all, the annual Federal investment in Canadian children and youth through the
8 Canada Child Tax Benefit is on its way to \$10 billion, making it one of the nation's
9 most important social programs after Medicare.
10 But we also know that Canadians do not live in markets nor raise their children in
11 economies; they do so in neighbourhoods, in communities. It is here that public policy
12 meets private lives. It is here that the decisions we make affect the lives Canadians
13 lead. Communities are the front lines for social issues and the engines for economic
14 growth, attracting talent from around the world and forming the foundation for
15 dynamic high tech clusters.
16 ...we have a responsibility to make sure our children and our grandchildren lead even
17 better lives in an even better land; that Canada is not simply a legacy to be inherited, it
18 is an opportunity to be enlarged.

Textual content found in excerpt 7.2.6c relate to the government's proposed children-related policies and reflect its constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children. For example, lines 3 and 4 position the childcare policy choice of the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care as one grounded in utility, necessity and obligation—a legitimization technique of rationalization—whereby resources are focused on the priority area of “early childhood” (not in a population or the social group of children). As found in the 2004 Speech from the Throne, the Framework is again compared to Medicare, thus connecting the Framework with the history and the values that surround Canada's universal healthcare system. The reference to the role of communities in lines 10 to 15 represents an interesting shift in trend. As was evident in the corpus of Period One, the Progressive Conservative government positioned “the family” as having the most significant role in preserving Canada's values and Canadian life. The corpus of Period Two illustrates a shift away from “the family” toward the role of

“community” as having significant influence, serving as the “front lines” in protecting Canada’s social and economic values and goals. This positioning of communities, first revealed in the 1997 Budget Speech, may be considered a hegemonic tool that portrays the Canadian public as holding the power over the Federal government’s policy decision-making. Further, the theme of fiscal restraint referenced early in the Budget Speech is reinforced in the conclusion of the Speech, as seen in lines 16 to 18. The Liberal government’s commitment to financial responsibility over that of health and social spending is defended through the legitimization of moral evaluation, thus positioning its statement through taken-for-granted arguments that cite society’s values.

7.2.7 Canada’s Progress Reporting to the United Nation’s Monitoring Committee for the UNCRC

Within Period Two (1994-2006), Canada released two progress reports regarding its commitment to upholding children’s rights, specified through the UNCRC, as required by the UNCRC Monitoring Committee. The structure of the Monitoring Reports follows a specific template; thus it is not a narrative of discourse, but, rather, a policy document template for accountability reporting. The report released in 1994 reflects Canada’s progress, at the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial levels, from 1991 to 1993; three years of which would have taken place under the Progressive Conservative government of Mulroney (1984-1993). The report released in 2001 reflects the progress of 1993-1997, a five-year period under the Liberal government, within Period Two. The discourse of these two progress reports reflects a business genre similar to that found in the Liberal government’s political discourse of Period Two. Excerpt 7.2.7a includes extracted text related to childcare from the 1994-released progress report, and excerpt 7.2.7b includes extracted text related to childcare from the 2001-released progress report.

**Excerpt 7.2.7a Text Extract Canada's Progress Reporting to the United Nation's
Monitoring Committee for the UNCRC**

1 The Government of Canada has a range of measures available to support
2 working parents and all Canadian families in meeting their child-care needs.
3 In the 1992 budget, the Government of Canada increased the deduction under the
4 Income Tax Act for child care by \$1,000 to \$5,000 for each eligible child under 7
5 years old, and to \$3,000 for eligible children between 7 and 14 years old.
6 Dependent care allowances are provided for trainees in training programmes
7 sponsored by Employment and Immigration Canada who have dependents
8 requiring care. Under the Canada Assistance Plan, the Government of Canada
9 shares in the day-care expenditures made by Provinces and Territories for low-
10 income families. Fiscal restraints facing all levels of government as well as
11 changing priorities have precluded the introduction of a new major child-care
12 strategy that would imply the creation of new facilities. Rather, available funds
13 have been committed to the support of new comprehensive programming aimed at
14 children at risk of poor health, poverty, abuse and neglect.

**Excerpt 7.2.7b Canada's Progress Reporting to the United Nation's Monitoring Committee
for the UNCRC**

1 In Canada, the provision of child care services is the responsibility of Provincial
2 governments. The Federal government provides a range of measures to support the
3 child care needs of working parents and all Canadian families.
4 The Government of Canada, in partnership with the Provinces and Territories, has
5 taken an important step to support Canada's children with the introduction of the
6 National Child Benefit, which will directly assist lower-income parents.
7 Provincial and Territorial governments will reinvest the money saved through this
8 system into complementary benefits and services for children.

The progress cited under the childcare section of the 1994-released progress report includes reference to the child care tax deduction, which commits a tax deduction of \$1,000 to \$5,000 for each eligible child under seven years, and \$3,000 for each eligible child between seven and fourteen years; the Child Care Initiatives Fund, which supported childcare research through \$16.4 million in funding support as well as childcare services for Indigenous families; and the childcare funding support for low income families transferred to Provinces and

Territories through the Canada Assistance Plan. As illustrated in lines 10 to 12, the report states that “fiscal restraints have precluded the development of a major child-care strategy”. This is a telling statement, given that the Federal government, under the Progressive Conservative leadership of Prime Minister Mulroney, committed Canada to the principle of first call for children at the 1990 World Summit for Children. This principle holds signatory states to the UNCRC, including Canada, to prioritizing the needs of children in favourable economic times, as well as in periods of “fiscal restraint”. In contrast to the first call for children principle, the Federal government used the country’s economic conditions to defend its decision to defer the establishment of a national childcare system for Canada. Moreover, the earlier discourse that promoted goals of economic security over that of social programming, including childcare for children, found in the 2004 Budget Speech, further ignored the country’s commitment to children’s needs as the first priority. Despite the expectation that Canada uphold the first call for children principle, the Federal government openly cites the country’s economic climate to defend its decision to delay commitment to a national childcare system for Canada.

The initiatives cited in the 2001-released report under the section for childcare include the Child Care Expense Deduction, which was expanded to \$5,000 to \$7,000 for each eligible child under age seven, and \$3,000 to \$4,000 for each eligible child between the ages of seven and sixteen; the National Child Benefit, which provides direct support to low income families; the Child Care Initiatives Fund to enhance staff training and develop innovative pilot sites; the Child Care Visions program dedicated to research; and the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, launched in 1995, that supported the creation of 4,300 child care spaces in First Nations and Inuit communities. There is also reference to the joint Federal-Provincial-Territorial working group on the Status of Women and Labour that examined options for “improving the integration of work and family responsibilities”. Lines 1 and 2 in excerpt 7.2.7a illustrate the caveat of responsibility

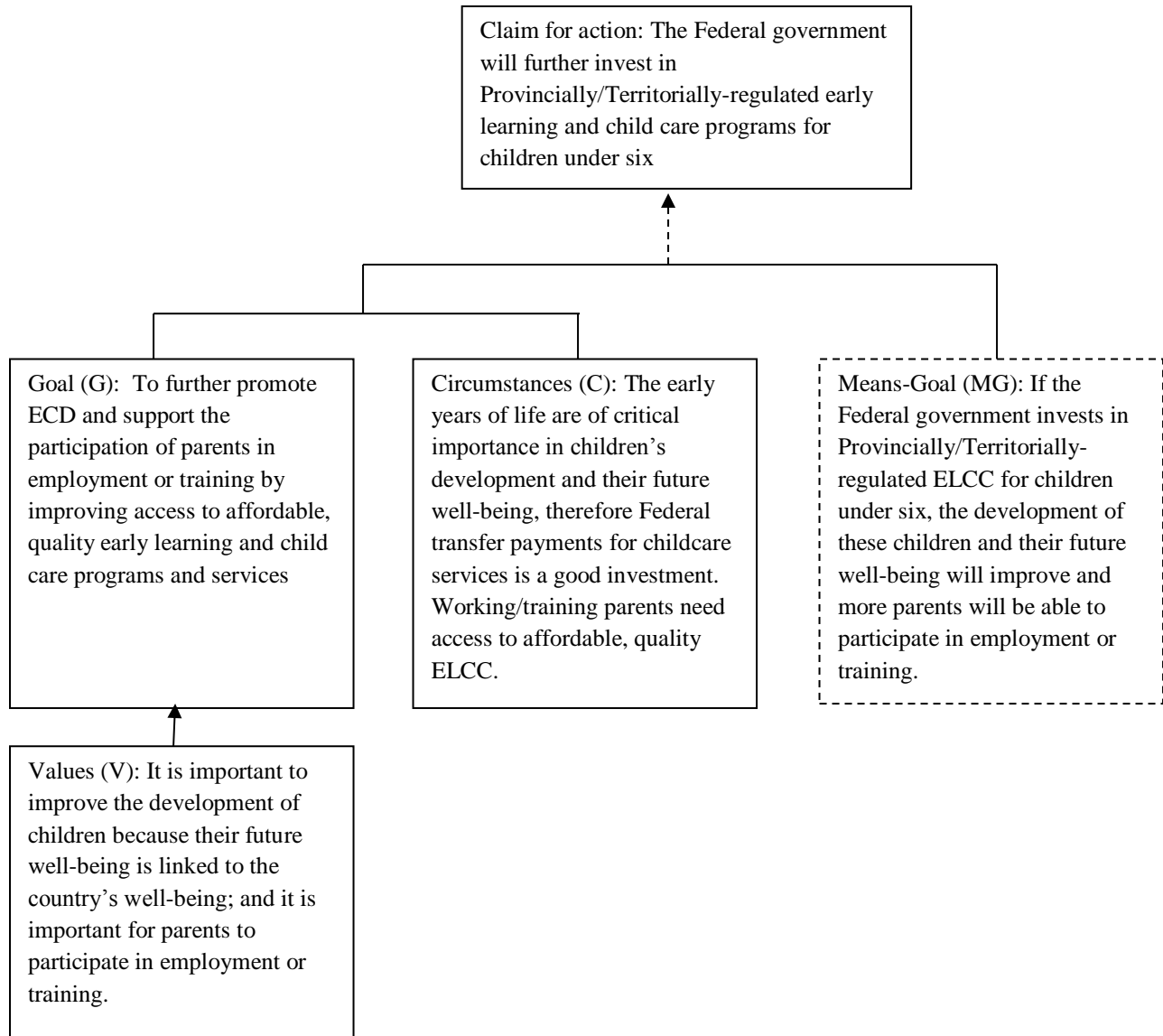
positioned in the first sentence of the childcare section. Unlike the 1994-released report, the 2001-released report begins the childcare section by softening the Federal government's responsibility to uphold the UNCRC's commitment to childcare. Rather, the second statement, as shown in lines 2 and 3, stipulates that the Federal government is responsible to parents and families, thus creating a difference between the roles of the Provinces and Territories and the role of the Federal government related to childcare. As described in chapter four, Canada's federated model of governance is not a valid excuse for the Federal government to dismiss its role in coordinating, funding, and ensuring high-quality childcare for children. The initiative that the 2001-released report promotes within the childcare section is that of the National Child Benefit, the new benefit established by the Liberal government during this era. While the goal of the National Child Benefit is, indeed, noble, it is not a childcare service or benefit.

Taken together, Canada's two progress reports to the Monitoring Committee for the UNCRC confirms political inaction related to childcare between 1991 and 1997, six years following the ratification of the UNCRC, and demonstrates further evidence of the governance and business genres promoted by the Liberal Federal government of Period Two.

7.3 Descriptive and Normative Critique of the Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care

As was done for Period One, I present a descriptive and normative critique of the Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care (2003), which I took to represent the Liberal government's childcare policy choice. I present my description of the Framework in Figure 7.5.1, as follows.

Figure 7.5.1 Descriptive Critique for 2003 Framework



As illustrated in Figure 7.5.1, the dual goal of the Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care is to, first, further promote early childhood development and, second, support the participation of parents in employment or training by improving access to affordable, quality early learning and child care programs and services. The ordering of the goal statements is important, as the Liberal Federal government positions its first priority as that of promoting early child development in order to improve children’s future well-being. The claim for action,

proposed through the Framework, is for the Liberal Federal government to “further invest in Provincially/Territorially regulated early learning and child care programs for children under six”. Under the 2003 Framework, the Federal government committed \$1.05 billion over five years, in contrast to the \$4 billion over seven years, committed to through the Progressive Conservative’s Bill C-144. This funding was then increased through the 2005 bilateral agreements, which provided \$5 billion over five years.

The main value embedded within the Framework is that it is important to improve the development of children because their future well-being is linked to the country’s well-being. Indeed, much of the discourse surrounding the Framework emphasizes the return-on-investment argument of childcare: the “early years” (a wording choice that renders children invisible, as was also done in Period One by the Progressive Conservative government) is the best “window” through which to invest to secure the country’s future well-being. In this way, children and the children-centred considerations of childcare I have presented in chapter three are absent from the political discourse surrounding the Liberal government’s childcare policy choice. The second value: “it is important for parents to participate in employment or training” contrasts with the principle that underpinned Bill C-144, the Progressive Conservative’s childcare policy choice, with its focus on “women”. Indeed, the Liberal government’s discourse surrounding its childcare policy choice never implies that the circumstances related to childcare are the result of more women working or choosing to work in the labour market in addition to their parenting role. In this way, the Liberal government’s discourse can be interpreted as promoting and responding to gender equity in the workforce.

During the era of Period Two (1993-2006), many developed countries began to establish childcare systems that recognized the new science of ECD and the investment opportunity inherent in this discourse (OECD,2006; OECD, 2012). With this context in mind, the Liberal

government's financial commitment to support the development of increased childcare spaces through funding transfers provided to Provinces and Territories is an approach not unlike those of other developed countries.

As I identified in my analysis of Period One, the childcare models of social democratic regimes are the most progressive approaches, in comparison to those of liberal and conservative regimes. In social democratic regimes, childcare is viewed as an important public good and government responsibility, reflecting the principles of egalitarianism and universalism. Further, the social values that underpin the childcare systems of social democratic regimes tie universal, high-quality childcare to children's rights. In contrast, the proposed approach in the 2003 Framework to target childcare to children of families whose parents work or train outside the home departs from the social democratic view of childcare. Thus, the narrowed approach to provision for the Framework is more in line with the childcare policy choices of liberal regimes, wherein childcare systems are established in order to facilitate labour market growth and to prepare young children for school success, motivated by the interest in growing a skilled and healthy workforce.

Given the previously-cited children-as-resource discourse of the corpus for Period Two, the childcare policy choice of the Liberal government reflects this liberal regime social value. In contrast, however, many liberal regimes often employ demand-side funding by providing cash benefits and targeted subsidies directly to parents, the consumer (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004). This is not the case with the 2003 Framework; rather, it commits to significant financial support that would provide Provinces and Territories with resources through which to develop their respective childcare systems. Based on this analysis, the Framework reflects an approach that has qualities of an inclusive liberal regime, as per Mahon's (2008) definition described in chapter two.

Similar to the Progressive Conservative government's Bill C-144 of Period One, the 2003 Framework does recognize the children-centred consideration of equitable provision that promotes inclusion of children with special needs, cultural and linguistic needs, and those children living in rural and remote communities. However, without a connection to rights-based provision and universal access, equitable provision is at risk of stigmatizing those who are targeted.

As stipulated in the 2003 Framework monies used by Provinces and Territories are to adhere to the following principles: available and accessible; affordable; quality; inclusive; and parental choice. From the description of these principles, considerations of quality are linked to the goals of custodial safety and preparing children for school. Thus the key goal of the 2003 Framework is optimal child development to be addressed through quality considerations that promote the value of school readiness for children. With the goal of economic growth tied to childcare and children's preparedness for school, children-centred considerations related to quality, including social pedagogic approaches and democratic participation, are most certainly overlooked.

Further, the view of children-as-resource and the investment discourse surrounding the childcare policy choice of the Liberal government renders children invisible and ignores their human rights, including the right to childcare as proclaimed in the UNCRC. Thus, a childcare policy choice that purports to enhance "child development" through "investment in the early years" promotes childcare as a strategy for economic growth; it is not a view that reflects children's needs or children's rights.

In line with the goal of liberal regimes, the 2003 Framework establishes, defends and legitimizes the economic goal of growth in an ever-increasing global economy. Further, the Framework constructs a depersonalized collective identity of children as "resource", not as a

population or social group. This view of children is similar to the investable child construction identified by Prentice (2007). Further, the discourse of the new science of ECD embedded within the corpus of Period Two further reinforces the investment construction of children and affirms the adult-centric economic goal of “childcare as investment strategy”. The new science of ECD has led to a rejuvenated government interest in children’s potential to advance the societal goals of prosperity and growth (Cleghorn & Prochner, 2012), which values childhood and views young children with respect to the goal of maximizing children’s potential for their contribution to national economies (Prentice, 2009; Wells, 2011). While the discourse of the new science of ECD may have been used to establish, defend and legitimize the 2003 Framework of Period Two, it did not lead to a childcare policy choice that recognized children-centred considerations of childcare.

7.4 Discussion

An interesting trend in the corpus of Period Two relates to the adoption of conversationalization, a discursive technique used to convey a friendly relationship between the speaker and the hearer/reader—or in this context, a benevolent relationship between the Federal government and the public. Indeed, Period Two signals the Federal government’s adoption of this technique, which, as I will show in my next two chapters would be emphasized in the decades to come.

As was the case in Period One analysis, the dominant genre for the data sources of Period Two is a governance genre, which represents activities within an institution or organization directed at managing or regulating social practices. Also found in my analysis of the corpus for Period One, a business genre is heavily featured, with its focus on competition, economic growth and accountability. Similar to findings by Prentice (2009) and Whiteford (2014), who identified an investable child discourse and a future worker discourse, respectively, my analysis has

revealed a dominant new science of ECD discourse which, in turn, promoted the view and value of childcare as an investment strategy, thus constructing a children-as-resource identity for children.

As explained by Whiteford (2014), a developmentalism discourse that seemingly centres on children—their potential as future-workers and their connection to the economic future of the country—does not necessarily lead to a children’s rights discourse nor the recommendation for children-centred childcare policy responses. My findings from the analysis of Period Two corroborate Whiteford’s finding: the children-focused discourse of Period Two, in fact, disguises an exclusively adult-centric view of childcare and constructs a dehumanizing identity for children. Moreover, the view of children-as-resource and the investment discourse surrounding the childcare policy choice of the Liberal government renders children invisible, ignores their human rights, and constructs a depersonalized collective identity of children as “resource” or priority area, not as a population or social group. Further, while the new science of ECD discourse may have bolstered government interest to invest in children, such discourse did not lead to a childcare policy choice that recognized children-centred considerations of childcare.

Another interesting finding, one similar to that from Period One, concerns the way the Federal government positions itself as an ally in supporting children (i.e., not having a direct role). However, unlike the Progressive Conservative government, the Liberal government positions its alliance with community rather than family, as the social group to which it aligns itself. Reference to a *community-government alliance* is made multiple times throughout the Budget Speech. This finding builds upon Foucault’s *family-government alliance*, which I identified in the Progressive Conservative corpus of Period One, described in chapter six. Foucault’s previously-described *family-as-institution* construction solidified a family-government alliance to ensure the government’s economic goal related to the development of

children. In contrast, the community-government alliance, as found in the corpus of Period Two, favours the role of community-as-ally over that of family-as-ally. This is evidenced by the abandonment of discourse related to conservative social values and a disregard for the previous emphasis on motherhood and monotropism, which had been dominant constructions in Period One. This marks an important shift in discourse between Period One and Period Two, and indicates significant differences in the views and values of the Progressive Conservative and the Liberal Federal-governments, related to the roles of family, government and community.

CHAPTER EIGHT: POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF PERIOD THREE (Conservative Administration of 2006-2015)

8.1 Introduction

Period Three of my study comprises selections of political discourse surrounding the childcare policy choices of the Conservative Federal government (2006-2015). In defeating Paul Martin's minority Federal Liberal government, Stephen Harper's Conservative party secured a minority mandate in 2006. The Conservatives would go on to win a second minority mandate in 2008 and, in 2011, a majority government—an election brought on by a vote of non-confidence by the then-Liberal Opposition. During the Conservative administration there were significant international events including the housing market crash in the USA and the resulting worldwide economic downturn, and a revolutionary wave of protests and civil wars in North Africa and the Middle East.

The rise of the Conservative Party, defined by its 2011 majority victory, represents Canada's fourth party system, as classified by Bittner and Koop (2013). The rise of the Conservative Party represented an ideological shift toward the right, embracing the social conservative values of the Reform Party / Canadian Alliance over that of the former Progressive Conservative Party (Bittner and Koop, 2013). As introduced in Period One, the Conservative Party is classified as a "catch-all party", an approach to politics that emphasizes regional interests and ideological positions over the pursuit of consensus building, such as the approach of the Liberal Party. This is evident by the Conservative Party's history of majority victories over the course of long-standing Liberal rule, such as its 2011 majority win.

At a Canadian-level, Period Three represents a significant period for the study of childcare policy. When the new Conservative Federal government came to power in 2006, its first act of power was to terminate the bilateral agreements among the Provinces/Territories and the Federal government (McKenzie, 2014). The new Conservative government replaced the Liberal's 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, and the subsequent bilateral funding agreements with all Provinces and Territories, with its *Choice in Child Care Allowance*, later renamed the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB); and its short-lived Child Care Spaces Initiative (CCSI) (Beach, Friendly, Ferns, Prabhu & Forer, 2009). The UCCB would represent the Canadian Federal government's policy response to childcare for the next ten years. The CCSI, a fund of \$250 million per year for five years, intended to provide financial incentives to businesses and non-profits in order to create 25,000 new childcare spaces, saw no uptake of this fund and was subsequently rolled into the Canada Social Transfer (CST) (Findlay, 2015).

When the UCCB was first established in 2006, parents were provided direct financial support of \$100 a month or \$1,200 a year for each child under the age of six, for purposes of offsetting childcare and/or child-rearing costs. The UCCB was provided to all parents, regardless of their childcare needs. In 2015, the UCCB increased by \$60 a month (\$160 per month for every child under age six) and expanded to include older children by providing \$60 per month for every child up to the age of seventeen, despite the fact that children over the age of twelve do not require childcare/adult supervision. Of note, the UCCB was taxable in the hands of the lower-income parent in the case of coupled families, and the sole parent in the case of single-parent families. Several economic analysts argue that this funding formula was unfair, as single-earner coupled families ended up with more in-pocket benefit compared to one-earner single parent families (Battle, 2008; Battle, Torjman & Mendelson, 2006). I will provide my normative critique of the UCCB, using a children-centred lens, later in this chapter.

8.2 Description, Interpretation and Explanation of the Corpus for Period Three

The following chapter presents my findings from Period Three, including a description, interpretation, explanation of the political discourse surrounding the Federal government's childcare policy choices of the UCCB and the CCSI, as well as a normative critique of the UCCB. Because the Conservative government terminated its Child Care Spaces Initiative soon after it was introduced, I omitted it from my normative critique, concentrating, instead, on its more significant childcare policy choice of the UCCB.

As done for Period One and Two, using a purposive sampling method, I reviewed all Budget Speeches and Speeches from the Throne released during the Conservative administration. I selected the April 4, 2006 Throne Speech; May 2, 2006 Budget Speech; and April 21, 2015 Budget Speech because they most significantly made reference to the childcare and children-related policy choices of this government. The policy document I selected to analyze the Conservative's childcare policy choice was Bill C-57, the legislation for the UCCB. Further, I included excerpts from Canada's 2009-released report to the UNCRC Monitoring Committee, which reflected the Federal government's reported progress toward the UNCRC from 1998-2007.

8.2.1 April 4, 2006 Speech from the Throne

As I described in chapter six, Throne Speeches are a highly-ritualized order of discourse designed to give the illusion of non-partisanship. Delivered in the first term of Stephen Harper's Federal Conservative government, the six-page April 4, 2006 Speech from the Throne was read by Governor General Michaëlle Jean (2005-2010). The appointment of Governor General Jean was recommended in 2005 by Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin. As first revealed in the 1997 Liberal's Budget Speech, the conversationalization genre continues to influence the tone of Canada's Speeches from the Throne, as evident by this Throne Speech. Moreover, the genre

mixing of the governance genre and the promotional genre is a continuing trend of the political discourse in the corpus of Period Three.

In addition to reflecting the Conservative's government's approach to social program spending, the 2006 Speech from the Throne introduces the government's plans to establish the UCCB and the CCSI, its approach to national childcare policy, as promised by Stephen Harper during his Federal election campaign (2006). The headers that organize the 2006 Speech from the Throne are presented in Table 8.2.1, which illustrate the brevity of this Throne Speech, an interesting finding considering this Speech marks the first Throne Speech of this new government. Table 8.2.1 also illustrates the positioning of childcare as an important policy priority for the new Conservative government.

Select text extracts taken from the Throne Speech related to the government's approach to social programming and the UCCB are presented in excerpts 8.2.1a and 8.2.1b. Overall, the tone of the 2006 Speech from the Throne is one of change, accountability, and new direction, not an uncommon approach by a new government administration. After thirteen years under the Liberal party's power, the new Federal Conservative government positioned itself as the change Canadians had chosen and as a government Canadians could trust.

Table 8.2.1 Headers for April 4, 2006 Speech from the Throne

Building a Stronger Canada
Turning a New Leaf
Bringing Accountability Back to Government
Helping Ordinary Working Canadians and Their Families
Tackling Crime
Providing Child Care Choice and Support
Ensuring Canadians Get the Health Care They Have Paid For
A Canada That Works for All of Us
Canada - Strong, United, Independent and Free
Conclusion

As evident in excerpt 8.2.1a, the Speech from the Throne emphasizes a strong focus on economic value, including the importance of reducing the “tax burden” and “putting money back in people’s pockets”. The grammatical mood of excerpt 8.2.1a is declarative, evidenced by its many uses of deontic modalities (e.g., “must”, “will”) and sentence structures. Moreover, this excerpt demonstrates the way the Federal Conservative government positions itself as friendly and benevolent in its claim to put “ordinary working people and their families first”. In turn, Canadians are represented as suffering under the burden of heavy taxes, thus linking their suffering to the previous Liberal administration and reinforcing the new Conservative government as representing a new way forward.

The existential assumption in lines 10 and 11 asserts that cutting the GST (goods and services tax) “will help all Canadians” and that such a tax cut is the best way to lower taxes for all Canadians, including “low-income Canadians”. This declarative statement, enforced with deontic modalities, embeds a particular economic value and claims it as a universal and accepted truth.

Excerpt 8.2.1a Text Extract for April 4, 2006 Speech from the Throne

1 Canadians have chosen change. They want a government that treats their tax dollars
2 with respect. A government that puts ordinary working people and their families
3 first. A government that is accountable.
4 It is time to turn a new leaf.
5 Effective checks and balances are important, but they are not enough. The trust of
6 citizens must be earned every day. The Government will work to earn that trust.
7 This Government believes that Canadians pay too much in tax. The Government's
8 tax plan will, over time, reduce the tax burden on all Canadians. To this end, the
9 Government will reduce the Goods and Services Tax by one percent. Cutting the
10 GST will help all Canadians deal with the rising cost of living, put money back in
11 people's pockets and help stimulate the economy. Cutting the GST is the best way to
12 lower taxes for all Canadians, including low-income Canadians who need it most.
13 Canadians have always taken pride in our low crime rates. Safe streets have long
14 characterized Canada's communities -- from villages to towns to cities. Safe
15 communities allow families and businesses to prosper. Unfortunately, our safe
16 streets and healthy communities are increasingly under threat of gun, gang and drug
17 violence. This Government will tackle crime.
18 Canada is stronger when we speak with one voice, but that voice must belong to all
19 of us.
20 By harnessing the diversity of experience and expertise found within our federation,
21 we can present a strong, united and confident voice to the world

Lines 12 to 17 of excerpt 8.2.1a represent an interesting reference to Canada's crime rates and evoke fear that Canada's streets and communities, once safe, are "increasingly under threat of gun, gang and drug violence". The first part of this section begins with a promotional genre: "Canadians have always taken pride in our low crimes" and "safe streets have long characterized Canada's communities". As described previously, a promotional genre serves to promote the specialness and the uniqueness of a country or a people. Juxtaposed with the promotional genre, the mood swiftly changes to one of fear—again suggestive that the previous Liberal government is responsible for this decline—and ends the textual section with a declarative sentence that positions the new Federal government as a protector. The vocabulary choice "tackle crime" in line 17, for example, represents a highly activated verb choice, emphasizing the construction of government as protector.

Finally, excerpt 8.2.1a demonstrates a legitimization technique in lines 18 to 21 whereby the moral evaluation of “one voice” and a “united voice” is presented as a societal ideal. Interestingly, diversity is recognized as a valuable asset in line 20, but is subsequently diminished, within the same sentence, in favour of a “united” singular voice.

Excerpt 8.2.1b Text Extract for April 4, 2006 Speech from the Throne

1 Strong families ensure a bright future for Canada. The most important
2 investments we can make as a country is to help families raise their
3 children.
4 This government understands that no two Canadian families are
5 exactly alike. Each has its own circumstances and needs. Parents must
6 be able to choose the child care that is best for them. The government
7 will help Canadian parents, as they seek to balance work and family
8 life, by supporting their child care choices through direct financial
9 support.
10 In collaboration with the Provinces and Territories, employers and
11 community non-profit organizations, it will also encourage the
12 creation of new child care spaces.

Excerpt 8.2.1b presents textual extracts related to the Federal Conservative government’s childcare policy choice of the UCCB and the CCSI. As seen in lines 2 and 3 of this excerpt, the family-government alliance concept returns to the Federal Conservative government’s discourse, after being displaced by the previous Liberal government of Period Two through its promotion of community over family, evident by its community-government alliance discourse. The Federal Conservative government’s frequent references to the family is similar to the political discourse of the Federal Progressive Conservative government of Period One. Instead of tying children to the future of Canada and the communities of Canada, as was the hallmark of the Liberal government through its children-as-resource discourse in Period Two, the Federal Conservative government connects strong families to the bright future of Canada, as seen in line 1.

The existential assumption stated in lines 2 and 3 (“the most important investments we can make as a country is to help families raise their children”) is an interesting statement, given that the section related to this investment is positioned as the government’s third priority issue within its Speech from the Throne. The use of “their children” assigns ownership of children to families, as opposed to the many usages of the term “our children” used by the Liberal government in Period Two. In this way, the vocabulary choice of “their children” reinforces the family-government alliance discourse which, as per Foucault’s concept of the politics of education, affords families government-sanctioned control over “their” children and reinforces a property construction of children.

Moreover, the reference to “no two Canadian families are exactly alike” in lines 4 and 5 further reinforces this family-government alliance discourse whereby families are granted full authority to make decisions on behalf of children and in their best interests. As described earlier, a critical children-centred examination of a best interests principle reveals it to be a mechanism which allows parents to act on behalf of their children without having to recognize children’s evolving capacities to represent their own interests in decision-making (James & James, 2004; Woodhead, 1997).

Lines 6 and 7 further position the government as an ally to parents by supporting them (not children) to make childcare “choices” through direct financial support. The government positions this policy approach as one whereby it oversteps Provincial and Territorial governments in order to support parents directly, thus reinforcing the family-government alliance discourse and promoting the Federal government as ally over that of Provincial/Territorial governments. Interestingly, however, the subsequent statement in lines 10 to 12 positions the role of Provincial and Territorial governments as having the responsibility for childcare spaces. In this way, the Federal government’s role as a direct support to parents by helping them to make

important childcare “choices” is positioned first, while its role in collaborating with Provincial and Territorial governments is positioned second. Moreover, its wording choices regarding its intention to collaborate with Provinces and Territories reflects a passivized verb of “encourage”, thus diminishing its agency in this action claim.

8.2.2 May 2, 2006 Budget Speech

As I described in chapter six, budget speeches represent a highly-ritualized order of discourse designed to give the illusion of democratic participation and voter consensus. Read by the Honourable Jim Flaherty, Canada’s then-Finance Minister, the twenty-three-page May 2, 2006 Budget Speech is entitled “Turning a New Leaf”. Indeed, the tone of the Budget Speech continued the theme of the previously-examined 2006 Speech from the Throne with its focus on new direction, accountability, and tax relief. Table 8.2.2 shows the organization of the speech, which is substantial in detail and comprehensive in scope. Many of the headers are labels of social groups (e.g., New Canadians, Students, Seniors). However, while there does appear to be a near-exhaustive list of social groups of individuals, the social group of children and of parents are not represented, thus, conspicuously rendered invisible in this discourse. Rather, children and parents are subsumed by the category of “families”, and only those children who have disabilities are specified as their own social group (i.e., “Children with Disabilities”).

Excerpt 8.2.2a displays extracted text from the introductory and conclusion sections of the Budget Speech, highlighting the Federal Conservative government’s approach to social spending and economic pursuits. As with the 2006 Speech from the Throne previously examined, the return to the heavy-use of the term “families” to capture the identities of both parents and children is reminiscent of the Federal Progressive Conservative government’s discourse from Period One.

Table 8.2.2 Headers for May 2, 2006 Budget Speech

Focusing on Priorities
The GST and Personal Income Taxes
Small Business Taxes
Corporate Taxes
Real Results
Apprentices and Tradespeople
Students
New Canadians
Fishing and Forestry Workers
Older Workers
Families and Communities
Child Care
Children with Disabilities
Fitness
Seniors
Aboriginal Canadians
Affordable Housing
Arts, Culture and Charities
Infrastructure
Transit and the Environment
Agriculture
Security
Canadian Forces
Borders
Crime
Economic and Fiscal Update
Accountability
Federal Accountability Act
Expenditure Management
Fiscal Balance
Health Care
Equalization and Territorial Formula Financing
Discussion Paper on Restoring Fiscal Balance
Productivity and Competitiveness
Turning a New Leaf

Excerpt 8.2.2a Text Extract for May 2, 2006 Budget Speech

1 Mr. Speaker, this government is focused. And nowhere are we more focused than in
2 the area of tax relief. For years, Ottawa has been overtaxing Canadians. In this budget,
3 we deliver real tax relief for Canadians. Tax relief people can see. Tax relief that
4 makes a difference. Tax relief they can count on.
5 For many Canadian families, right now the bottom line is that they still have to
6 struggle to make ends meet. Canadians pay too much in tax. Its holding families back.
7 It makes it harder for small businesses to create jobs and opportunities. It discourages
8 innovation and investment. It is limiting our productivity.

In the introductory comments of the 2006 Budget Speech, shown in excerpt 8.2.2a, the Conservative Federal government uses the term “tax relief” multiple times to reinforce the taken-for-granted assumption that Canadians are burdened by taxation. Indeed, the first several pages of the Budget Speech centre on the Federal Conservative government’s plans to address the assumed problem of the tax burden for Canadians, small businesses, and corporations. The use of the metaphor “struggle to make ends meet” invokes a conversationalization genre, which presents the government as one that speaks the language of “ordinary” Canadians. The many references to “families” conveys the notion that they are struggling due to the tax burden of the previous Liberal government. Thus, the Federal Conservative government’s discourse positions them as ally to the family, similar to the finding from the 2006 Speech from the Throne.

The extracted text depicted in excerpt 8.2.2b shows the content of the Budget Speech regarding the Conservative government’s commitment to families and childcare. Line 1 reiterates the government’s usage of the term “families”, but also demonstrates its inclusion of the term “communities”, evoking the community-government alliance discourse that was the hallmark of the Liberal administration of Period Two. However, the first order ranking of “families” elevates them as the dominant construction over that of communities. Further, its construction of families as the “building block of society” further emphasizes the status of families over that of

communities, in contrast to the Liberal government's dominant positioning of community in Period Two.

Excerpt 8.2.2b Text Extract for May 2, 2006 Budget Speech

1 Families are the building block of society. Communities are what bind us together.
2 But parents are finding it harder to balance work and family commitments. And some
3 individuals and groups in our society need greater support. For this government,
4 supporting families means providing choice in child care for all Canadian families.
5 The benefit to Canadians will be that parents will have more choice in meeting their
6 children's needs.
7 Our government recognizes that no two families are exactly alike. But all Canadian
8 parents struggle to balance work and family commitments, and to meet their
9 children's individual needs.
10 Whether the answer is regulated child care, a parent at home, a grandparent or a
11 trusted neighbour, we are committed to supporting all Canadian parents in their
12 choices.
13 In this budget we are investing \$3.7 billion over two years for the Universal Child
14 Care Benefit, which will provide all families with \$1,2000 per year for each child
15 under 6.
16 While the Universal Child Care Benefit will support child care choices by families,
17 we also intend to invest in creating new child care spaces. This budget allocates \$250
18 million beginning in 2007 to create real child care spaces as part of Canada's
19 universal child care plan. We will work with governments, businesses and community
20 organizations to develop a plan that works, a plan that actually creates spaces.
21 For so many Canadians, loading up the minivan for hockey practice or carpooling to
22 the soccer field is a familiar routine. For many children, it is a crucial part of their
23 development. But it often means an added expense – sometimes a significant one – in
24 the family budget.

Similar to the findings from Period One, the Conservative government follows the approach of the Progressive Conservative government by subsuming the identities of parents and children in its dominant use of the term “families” in its discourse surrounding childcare. Indeed, the rare mention of children, as a separate identity, relates to children with special needs, thus reinforcing the collective identity of children as a vulnerable social group and emphasizing the government's role for children as relegated to protecting only certain children. This, again,

upholds the taken-for-granted assumption of the family-government alliance and the role of government as protector for vulnerable populations.

Excerpt 8.2.2b illustrates the significant collocation of “child care” and “choice”. Co-location is a discursive technique that reinforces taken-for-granted values associated between two terms. Thus, the co-location of choice and childcare reinforces the value of choice embedded within childcare. This becomes clear when one considers other possible co-locations that could be reinforced such as “quality childcare”, “accessible childcare” or “affordable childcare”. The discursive technique of co-locating “choice” and “child care” is deliberate and strategic, serving to embed the value of consumer choice in the discourse surrounding childcare. As discussed earlier in chapter two, discourse analysts have argued that the embedded value of *choice in childcare* reflects a market-based discourse connected to the neo-liberalism movement of the 1970s, meant to create an illusion of power for the citizen-as-consumer. Moreover, the discourse of choice reinforces individual responsibility, thus overshadowing the role of government in providing real choices from which to choose (Nordgren, 2010).

Further, the multiple references to families being different (“no two families are exactly alike”) serves to create difference among families to defend the position statement that families need choice in childcare because they have such differing needs. In this way, the Conservative government discourse differs from that of the Progressive Conservative government with its universal and singular family norm, per the findings of my Period One analysis. This is an interesting trend in that the two governments, while similar in their promotion of family/families as the dominant social group of society, do differ in the way they construct the identity of family/families. The Progressive Conservative government’s discourse served to bracket difference, while the Conservative government’s discourse creates difference.

Lines 10 to 13 reference the kinds of choices families wish to make regarding childcare, though the structure of this sentence and the vocabulary choices within it serve to render invisible the act of childcare (i.e., the caring and early education of children) and the beneficiary of childcare (i.e., children). In this way, “choice” is the sole defining characteristic of childcare and therefore, the only consideration, an adult-centric consideration, to which the Federal Conservative government holds itself accountable. Thus, the government’s alliance to families—not children—is further embedded through the co-location of choice and childcare, the promotion of difference among families, and the promotion of the singular goal of choice in childcare. Moreover, by rendering the act of childcare invisible, it reinforces the construction of regulated childcare as a necessary societal evil, that which must not even be described or defined. First described in my findings of Period One, the construction of childcare as a necessary societal evil embeds the value-based assumption that regulated “institutionalized” childcare is used only as a last resort, and only by certain families. This view evokes a moral judgment that the stay-at-home situations through which parents, grandparents or even “trusted” neighbours (per line 11) relegate children to the private and domestic world of the family home are presented as three of the four possible childcare choices available to parents. In contrast, regulated childcare as a choice is diminished by being presented as just one of these four options.

The description of the childcare policy choice of the Conservative government, presented in lines 13 to 15 of excerpt 8.3.2b states that the demand-side funding support provided directly to families from government is only for the childcare of children under six years of age. This is a similar approach to that found within Period One and Period Two whereby childcare policy choices relate to very young children. This age-targeted approach to childcare provision is unexplained, and any proposed solutions for before-and-after childcare for school-aged children are conspicuously absent. Thus, difference is created within the social group of children: those

under six are positioned as worthy of a financial benefit, while those older than six are rendered invisible and not worthy of a childcare investment. It is important to note that this policy nuance changed in the 2015 version of the UCCB, as I will illustrate later in this chapter.

Last, lines 21 to 24 of excerpt 8.2.2b represent the first significant instance of a discursive technique called *mythopoesis*, a legitimization technique that defends a policy position through narrative discourse or storytelling (e.g., references to “minivan for hockey practice” and “carpooling to the soccer field”). The trend of mythopoesis, as I will demonstrate in my analysis of Period Four, has increased in use in more recent history, though the 2006 Budget Speech marks a point in time wherein this discursive strategy first became pronounced within the Federal Conservative government’s political discourse.

8.2.3 April 21, 2015 Budget Speech

The April 21, 2015 Budget Speech, entitled Strong Leadership: Balanced Budget, Low-Tax Plan for Jobs, Growth and Security, was delivered by the Honourable Joe Oliver, Minister of Finance. As shown in excerpt 8.2.3a, the introductory section of the Budget Speech reinforces the themes and the tone from the previous 2006 Budget Speech, that of fiscal restraint and economic growth. As seen in lines 1 to 3, the vocabulary choice “opportunity” is used multiple times to convey a romantic notion of Canada as a unique land of promise, thus reflective of the promotional genre used in previous government discourse. Lines 8 to 10 continue to reinforce the tone of fiscal restraint that was dominant in the 2006 Budget Speech. The 2015 Budget Speech reflects a promotional tone that equates fiscal “prudence” with common sense budgeting decisions, thus embedding a value-based assumption that social spending restraint is necessary for future stability, reflective of a neo-liberal ideology. Conversely, “reckless” spending, referenced in line 8, defends the Federal Conservative government’s decisions regarding social

programming and constructs any opposition to this economic stance as anti-Canadian, that which goes against the country's values of prudence and practicality.

Excerpt 8.2.3a Text Extract for April 21, 2015 Budget Speech

- 1 The story of Canada is – has always been – the story of opportunity.
- 2 Opportunity is what has drawn people here from around the world, generation after
- 3 generation. It is what draws them still. Opportunity for themselves and for their families, the opportunity to work hard, dream big, and achieve those dreams.
- 4 Still, the news for Canada is, by and large, good. Amid the tumult, our country remains
- 5 a beacon of economic stability and security built on a foundation of sound financial
- 6 management.
- 7 We have cut taxes to their lowest level in more than half a century.
- 8 Don't compromise tomorrow by spending recklessly today. Don't pile on debt you can't

Excerpt 8.2.3b represents textual content describing the UCCB, as extracted from the Budget Speech. As was shown in my analysis of the 2006 Budget Speech and the 2006 Speech from the Throne, the social group of the family is again promoted as the “bedrock” of the country, as referenced in line 2. The folksy reference to “mom and dad” in line 4 represents a conversationalization genre used to blur the lines of bureaucratic language and friendly conversation. This usage of conversationalization is again seen in the reference to more money in their “pockets” in line 9.

The sentiment in lines 3 to 4 (“raising a family is hard work, and unlike our opponents, we prefer to leave it to the experts: mom and dad”) reinforces the value of the family-government alliance that I have previously discussed, whereby the family is given government-sanctioned control over its parenting decisions. This finding of the family-government alliance echoes the earlier findings in the 2006 discourse, which is similar to the discourse of the Progressive Conservative government's discourse of Period One as well.

The sentence in lines 3 and 4 further emphasizes the intention of conversationalization by positioning the government as an ally to parents in contrast to the “opponents”, referenced in line 3, which, one can assume, refers to the then-Opposition party of the New Democratic Party. This reference to “opponents” may be an indication that the 2015 Budget Speech, and its promise to voting parents to increase the UCCB, was motivated by the months-away November 2015 Federal election.

Lines 7 to 9 reference the “measure” that will make life more affordable for “all” Canadian families with children, however the example that follows relates to a “typical” two-earner family of four, thus reinforcing the implied heteronormative assumption that two parent-families are the norm and the preferred ideal over those of single parent families.

Excerpt 8.2.3b Text Extract for April 21, 2015 Budget Speech

1 Our approach has been clear, and consistent: Take as little as possible, and give back
2 as much as we can. It all starts right at the bedrock of our country: the family.
3 Raising a family is hard work, and unlike our opponents, we prefer to leave it to the
4 experts: Mom and Dad. It also costs a lot of money, which is why in recent months
5 we expanded the Universal Child Care Benefit, introduced the Family Tax Cut,
6 increased the Child Care Expense Deduction limits and doubled the Children’s
7 Fitness Tax Credit. These measures will make life more affordable for all Canadian
8 families with children. For a typical two-earner family of four, it means up to an
9 extra \$6,600 in their pockets in 2015.

8.2.4 Bill C-57, The Universal Child Care Benefit

After its first iteration, proclaimed in legislation in 2006, the Conservative Federal government announced plans to enhance the UCCB through an amendment to the UCCB Act in 2015. My Critical Discourse Analysis centres around the enhanced UCCB discourse of 2015 taken from Bill C-57 (shown in excerpt 8.2.4a) and a one-page document taken from Canada’s Economic Action Plan as posted to the Federal government’s ActionPlan.gc.ca website (excerpt 8.2.3b). As evident from excerpt 8.2.4a and 8.2.4b, the textual content of Bill C-57 and the

Action Plan offer little descriptive textual content surrounding the Conservative's childcare policy choice of the UCCB aside from statements of fact, called *realis statements*, that inform the reader/hearer of informative details related to the financial support that parents will receive through the direct benefit. Thus, the discourse surrounding the UCCB found within the 2006 Budget Speech and 2006 Speech from the Throne serve best as discursive data sources for the Federal government's childcare policy choice, while Bill C-57 provides the basis for my normative critique of the UCCB, as part of my Political Discourse Analysis. I provide a Critical Discourse Analysis of Bill C-57 here, and provide a more detailed analysis of the Bill in the subsequent section of my Political Discourse Analysis.

Excerpt 8.2.4a Text Extract for Bill C-57, The Universal Child Care Benefit

Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to assist families by supporting their child care choices through direct financial support to a maximum of

- (a) \$1,920 per year in respect of each of their children who is under six years of age; and
- (b) \$720 per year in respect of each of their children who is six years of age or older but who is under 18 years of age.

Benefit

In respect of every month before January 1, 2015, the Minister shall pay to an eligible individual, for each month at the beginning of which he or she is an eligible individual, for each child who, at the beginning of that month, is under six years of age and is a qualified dependant of the eligible individual,

- (a) a benefit of \$50, if the eligible individual is a shared-custody parent of the qualified dependant; and
- (b) a benefit of \$100 in any other case.

In respect of every month as of January 1, 2015 but before July 1, 2016, the Minister shall pay to an eligible individual, for each month at the beginning of which he or she is an eligible individual, for each child who, at the beginning of that month, is under the age of six years and is a qualified dependant of the eligible individual,

- (a) a benefit of \$80, if the eligible individual is a shared-custody parent of the qualified dependant; and
- (b) a benefit of \$160 in any other case.

Excerpt 8.2.4b Text Extract for Bill C-57, The Universal Child Care Benefit

In 2006, our Government introduced the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), which provides all families with up to \$1,200 per year for each child under the age of 6. The UCCB currently provides direct Federal support to approximately 1.7 million families with young children. Now, the Government is proposing to enhance the UCCB by providing up to \$1,920 per year for each child under the age of 6, and introducing a new benefit of up to \$720 per year for children aged 6 through 17.

About 4 million families are expected to benefit from these enhancements. These enhancements to the UCCB would replace the Child Tax Credit, starting in the 2015 tax year.

As evident in the purpose statement of the Act, found in excerpt 8.2.4a, the government's declared action is to "assist families". This vocabulary choice is telling, as alternative vocabulary choices such as "parent", "caregiver" or "guardian" could have been used instead. The choice of vocabulary serves to reinforce the government-family alliance discourse that has been previously revealed in the Federal Conservative government's political discourse surrounding its childcare policy choice of the UCCB. Further, the wording choice, and, indeed, the financial protocol tied to it, of "the Minister shall pay to an eligible individual" implies a personal transaction between the Minister of Finance and each UCCB recipient. This conveys an impression that the Conservative Minister of Finance is personally transferring such monies, despite the fact that these resources come from public dollars through tax revenue. Excerpt 8.2.3b illustrates the Conservative government's vocabulary choice of "families", again demonstrating this government's emphasis of the family-government alliance discourse. Of note, nowhere in the Bill or the Action Plan is the goal of the UCCB described as one that supports children's development, as was the case with the discourse of the Federal Liberal government in Period Two.

8.2.5 Canada's Progress Reporting to the United Nation's Monitoring Committee for the UNCRC

Within Period Three (2006-2015), Canada released another progress report regarding its commitment to upholding children's rights, specified through the UNCRC, as required by the United Nation's Monitoring Committee. The structure of the Monitoring Report follows a specific template, thus it is not a narrative of discourse, but, rather, a policy document that reflects a format of accountability reporting. The report released in 2009 reflects Canada's progress, at the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial levels, from 1998-2007, of which the majority of these years were under the oversight of the then-Liberal government (1993-2006).

The childcare section of the report begins with a caveat that states "Provinces and Territories have jurisdiction over the majority of programs and services for families with young children, including child care". Further, the introduction to the childcare section states that "the Government of Canada plays a supporting role by providing a range of child and family benefits and transferring funds to other governments in Canada based on shared goals and objectives". However, following the introductory qualifier statement, the report goes on to explain the "joint priority" of improving and expanding programs and services for young children. For example, the 2003 Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care is offered as an example of a Federal-Provincial-Territorial childcare policy, though it is not described in any detail. In contrast, research reports for childcare are held up as examples of work in this area, including the 2006 Child Care in Canada report by the Library of Parliament, and the 2007 Child Care Spaces Recommendations report. As was the case in the previous progress reports to the UNCRC Monitoring Committee, much of the progress under the childcare section are, in fact, policy initiatives that focus on reducing child poverty.

References to the UCCB are shown in excerpt 8.2.5a and 8.2.5b. As illustrated in lines 3 to 5, the report references the “Universal Child Care Plan” which is comprised of the UCCB and the promise to create child care spaces. Interestingly, the Federal government would not continue its use of the term Universal Child Care Plan after it terminated its CCSI policy and the UCCB became the single prong of its former two-pronged approach to childcare.

Excerpt 8.2.5a Text Extract for Canada’s Progress Reporting to the United Nation’s

Monitoring Committee for the UNCRC

1 The Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) introduced in 2006, provides direct
2 financial support (\$100 per month for each child under the age of six) to help
3 parents with the costs associated with raising their children. The UCCB is part of
4 the Universal Child Care Plan, which also supports the creation of child care
5 spaces. In 2007, the Government of Canada introduced a 25 percent investment tax
6 credit (to a maximum of \$10,000 per space created) for businesses that create new
7 licensed child care spaces for children of employees [positions them as first
8 priority] and, potentially, for children in the surrounding community.

The reference to the child care spaces initiative positions the role of government as one that supports childcare through the provision of tax credits to businesses, a liberal regime approach to childcare, as seen in my earlier analysis of childcare in chapter two. Moreover, the child care spaces initiative positions childcare for children of employees in first order, thus favouring those children whose parents work for the business-based childcare program over other children within the community. Such a positioning constructs childcare as a labour support program and promotes the view of childcare as a custodial service over that of an early education program.

**Excerpt 8.2.5b Canada's Progress Reporting to the United Nation's Monitoring Committee
for the UNCRC**

1 Federal government measures to support children, families, and communities respect
2 the diversity of their circumstances and needs. They also reflect the government's
3 belief that whenever possible, parents should have the primary responsibility for
4 nurturing and caring for their children. Strong families are the foundation for a
5 bright future for children and for Canada. While there is still important work to be
6 done to improve the lives of children, government action has led to positive results
7 and some recent successes in improving the situation of children and their families.
8 The Government of Canada remains committed to the well-being of children and to
9 meeting Canada's international human rights obligations under the Convention. As
10 the Standing Senate Committee acknowledged in their Report, numerous issues
11 relating to children fall within the jurisdiction of the Provinces and Territories and
12 children in most Provinces have recourse to independent Children's Commissioners,
13 advocates or ombudspersons. The Government of Canada recognizes and values the
14 important work performed by the Children's Advocates and Ombudspersons in the
15 Provinces and Territories on children's issues. Canada agrees with the Standing
16 Senate Committee that cooperation among jurisdictions is essential to ensure that
17 children remain a priority. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments continue
18 to consult on issues relating to children through various forums. The Government
19 coordinates actions and addresses areas of greatest need through working groups and
20 committees, both longstanding, such as the Continuing Committee of Officials on
21 Human Rights, and newly created such as the Federal interdepartmental working
22 group on children's rights. Through mechanisms such as these, as well as Canada's
23 on-going reporting obligations to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the
24 Child, the Government of Canada facilitates awareness of and respect for its
25 international human rights obligations with respect to children.

As seen in excerpt 8.2.5b, the report includes, as an appendix, a letter to the Honourable Senator Andreychuk, the chair to the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights, from the Honourable Robert Nicholson, Minister of Finance. As previously described in chapter three, this Standing Senate Committee made several recommendations to the Federal government (2004, 2005, 2007), calling for its leadership in coordinating and funding a national childcare program. The letter by Minister Nicholson responds to this call and defends the government's childcare policy choices.

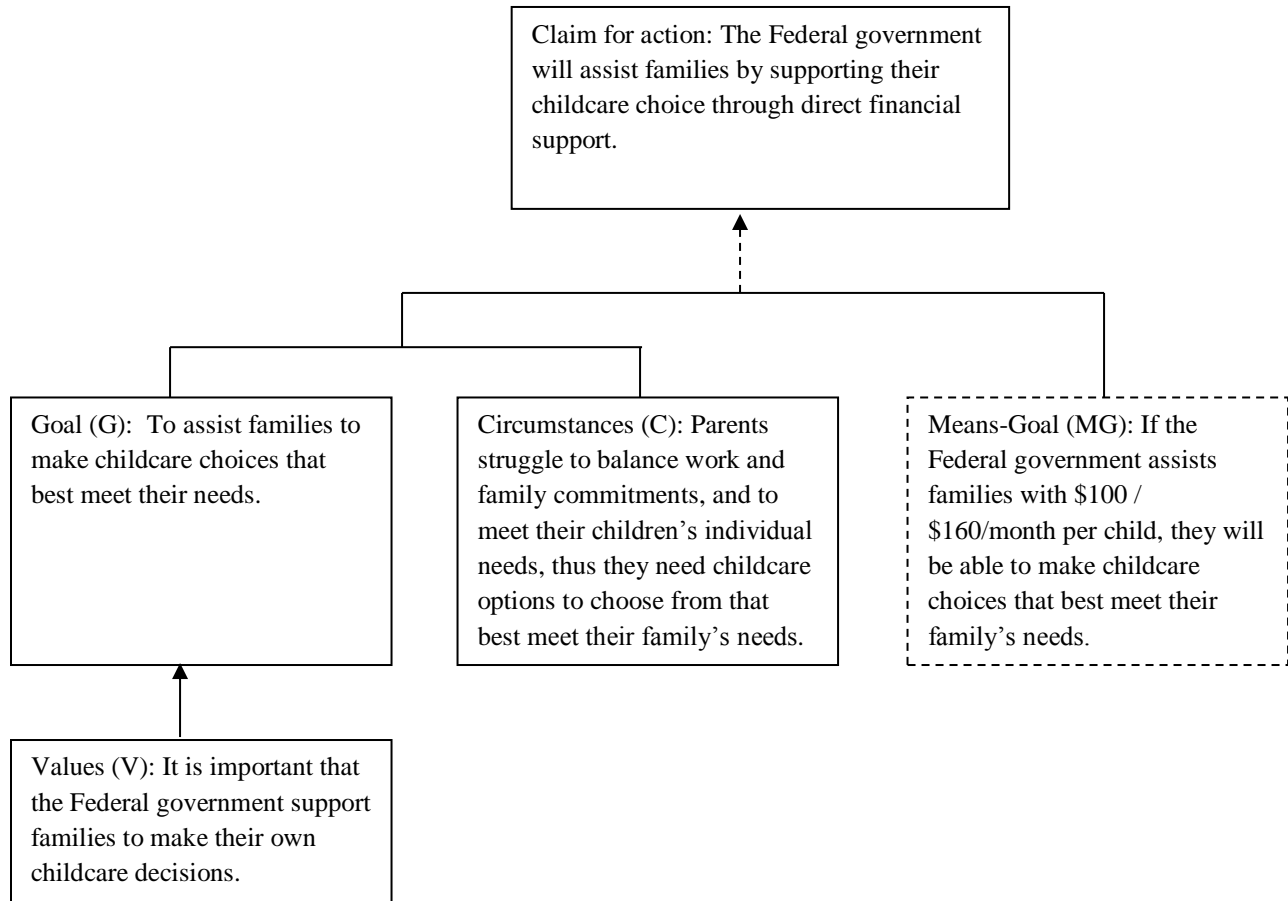
Importantly, the letter emphasizes its position that “parents should have the primary responsibility for nurturing and caring for their children” and constructs families as “the foundation for a bright future for children and for Canada”. Moreover, Minister Nicholson’s response positions the Provinces and Territories as having primary responsibility for upholding those “issues” that fall within their jurisdiction, reflective of the Federal Conservative government’s self-described “open federalism” interpretation of Canada’s constitution, as detailed in chapter two.

8.3 Descriptive and Normative Critique of the Universal Child Care Benefit

As was done for Period One and Two, I present a descriptive and normative critique of the UCCB, which I took to represent the Conservative Federal government’s childcare policy choice. I present my description of the Framework in Figure 8.3.1. As illustrated, the single goal of the UCCB is to assist families by supporting their childcare choices through direct financial support of \$100/month per child (the 2006 rate) or \$160/month per child (the enhanced 2015 rate). The main value embedded within the UCCB is that it is important to support all families in their childcare choices by not favouring any one type of childcare (e.g., regulated childcare, child-minding, babysitting). The circumstances that surround the UCCB are that parents struggle to balance work and family commitments and to meet their children’s individual needs (as per excerpt 8.2.2c), thus they need childcare options to choose from that best meet their family’s needs. The means-goal for the UCCB is that if the Federal government provides direct financial support to families, parents will be supported to choose the childcare option that works best for them. Given the stated goal is to assist families to make childcare choices that best meet their needs, one can deduce that the direct financial benefit of \$100/\$160/month per child falls short of this fiscal goal. As has been suggested by critics of the UCCB, the amount of financial support provided to families to support childcare choices suggests it was designed to promote the uptake

of unregulated childcare options that emphasize low-cost parental fees over considerations of quality (Findlay, 2013). Indeed, the discourse found in excerpt 8.3.2c, which promotes the employ of grandparents or trusted neighbours as acceptable childcare options corroborates this interpretation.

Figure 8.3.1 Descriptive Critique of UCCB



Scholarly analysis of the UCCB suggests its demand-side funding model (i.e., funding is provided to the service-user in order to support the purchase of said service) is an inferior approach compared to supply-side funding (i.e., funding is provided to the service provider to support the growth and enhancement of said service) (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2009; Friendly & Prentice, 2012). In support of its approach to childcare, the Federal government argued that it

is a cost-effective model that supports different types of childcare-related costs; that it empowers parents to choose the most appropriate form of childcare for their children, and does not, unfairly, promote one type of childcare over others; and that it adheres to open federalism by ensuring Provinces/Territories their constitutional responsibility for childcare (Collier & Mahon, 2008). In liberal welfare regimes, governments are reluctant to support childcare programs, and do so only to facilitate labour market growth or to prepare young children for school success, motivated by the interest in growing a skilled and healthy workforce. Typical of liberal regimes, public dollars for childcare are commonly provided to for-profit providers as a way to promote competition, lower costs and greater consumer choice in service (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004). Given its commitment to the short-lived CCSI (which would provide tax incentives to businesses wishing to develop childcare for their employees), this component of the Federal Conservative government's childcare policy choice is reflective of a liberal regime.

Further, a market-driven approach to childcare of liberal regimes often employs demand-side funding by providing cash benefits and targeted subsidies directly to parents, the consumer. While this approach provides parents with some resources to support the purchase of childcare it does not ensure that childcare options exist for parents. Again, the Federal Conservative government's childcare policy choice of the UCCB is reflective of this liberal regime principle.

Some childcare analysts suggest that the issue of demand-side funding versus supply-side models reflects an ideological debate between those who believe in markets as the solution to social welfare, and those who are suspicious of markets as a way of ensuring public services (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004). Economic theory suggests that public spending on a social service is only necessary if there is some kind of "market failure" (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004, p. 31) inherent in a policy area, such as does exist in areas of health care, old age pensions, and education. Economic analysts have demonstrated how market failure exists in childcare

(Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004, p. 33). For example, research suggests that parents, the consumer, are often not well-informed to assess the level of quality offered by a childcare provider, the service for purchase (Cleveland & Krashinsky, 2004). Moreover, it has been shown that for-profit childcare providers are less likely to establish services in low income communities because of profit-based decision-making (Prentice, 2006), thus families of low income are less able to access childcare within their communities compared to those of higher income (Prentice, 2007a). Further, for-profit providers are less likely to ensure equitable access for children who have additional support needs because of the increased costs associated with their care (Prentice, 2007a). Such examples demonstrate the susceptibility of childcare to market failure and argue against for-profit provision. In this way, childcare is similar to other social policy areas, such as healthcare, and education that require government-level oversight to ensure fairness and equitable access for all.

If the stated goal of the UCCB is to assist parents through direct financial funding to support their childcare choices, the low amount of this financial support (even the enhanced amount introduced in 2015 of \$160/month per child) is far from meeting the true costs of regulated childcare. More so, if families are to have true childcare options from which to choose, there must be some committed action to create such options, including that of regulated childcare spaces. As described earlier, the creation of regulated childcare spaces had been a goal of the Federal Conservative government through their CCSI fund of \$250 million that would have been used to incentivize the creation of spaces by businesses and employers of parents who require childcare. The failed uptake of the fund by businesses and employers demonstrates that an approach that provides funding to the private sector for purposes of creating regulated childcare spaces is not an effective model. Moreover, the UCCB does not meet any of the children-centred

considerations of childcare, described in chapter three, indicating it is not a childcare model that addresses children's needs, children's equity, or children's rights.

8.4 Discussion

The political discourse surrounding the UCCB in Period Three resurrects the family-government alliance that was featured significantly by the Progressive Conservatives in Period One. This dominant discourse endows families with government-sanctioned control over "their" children, thus positioning children as the property of families and the means through which governments control families. The family-government-alliance discourse positions childcare in modern society as a necessary societal evil, thus reinforcing Vandebroek's observation (2006, p. 371) that there exists in society an embedded value-based assumption that out-of-home non-parental childcare is to be used only as a last resort. This view evokes a moral judgment that while childcare provides needed labour support for certain families, it comes at a high societal price by removing young children from the ideal situation of the family home and the surveillance and protection afforded through it. As previously-cited, the low financial support of the UCCB appears to discourage the uptake of non-parental care and promotes, instead, parental-care, kinship care, and neighbour-care over that of regulated childcare.

As illustrated earlier, the Federal Conservative government promoted a choice in care discourse related to the UCCB. Discourse analysts argue that a frame of choice reflects a market-based discourse that is connected to the neo-liberalism movement of the 1970s (Nordgren, 2010, p. 109). A Foucauldian lens to the discourse of choice within the healthcare sector suggests that it is a purposeful strategy meant to create an illusion of power for the citizen-as-consumer. Alongside the discourse of choice is the implication of individual responsibility and an emphasis on the dutiful consumer to make his or her choice, thereby overshadowing the role of government in providing real choices from which to choose (Nordgren, 2010). The taken-for-

granted assumption regarding this discourse is that real choice exists for consumers, though this is not the case for childcare given its propensity to market failure, as illustrated earlier.

Research on Canada's choice in childcare discourse illustrates its dominance in childcare policy debates (Richardson, Langford, Friendly & Rauhala, 2013). One study examined the media discourse surrounding childcare in the 2005 Federal election, including the then-Federal Liberal government's policy choice for childcare (i.e., the 2005 bilateral agreements) and the opposing Conservative party's choice in care discourse (Theriault, 2006). The analysis of this study revealed how one Canadian newspaper, the National Post, strongly favoured the opposing Conservative party's childcare policy approach and promoted it as a positive way to address differing family needs and empower parents with choice. In contrast, this newspaper outlet presented the then-Liberal government's policy choice as nanny state government interference (Thériault, 2006).

Next, as was the case with the political discourse of the Federal Progressive Conservative government in Period One, the multiple use of the term "families" serves to embed the previously-described family-government-alliance mechanism in which governments exact control over the resource of children through its control over families. According to Foucault, following the rise of industrialization, the government shifted its focus from the "politics of health" (the desire to protect the upper classes from the diseases of the poor) to "the politics of education" (Foucault as cited in Bundy, 2012, p. 597) a mechanism designed to produce the healthiest next generation of labour as possible. Thus, the sacred identify of "family-as-institution" was constructed to solidify a government-family alliance that would ensure the government's economic goal for the development of children.

Moreover, this family-government-alliance embedded within it certain expectations surrounding motherhood. Women were viewed as having the ultimate responsible for children's

health and well-being, as opposed to the recognition of systemic supports, such as universally-available childcare. Failure to uphold their motherly duty was met through harsh societal criticism and government intervention (Bundy, 2012; Vandebroek, 2006; Wall, 2013). Similar to my analysis of Period One, the embedded family-government-alliance discourse of Period Three has been reinforced through the Western value of monotropism. The difference in the application of monotropism from Period One to Period Three relates to the promotion of a singular caregiver substitute (or mother substitute) for the working parent, that of a grandparent or a “trusted” neighbour. Ostensibly, such an arrangement would promote the staying-at-home of young children, thus ensuring their place in the private and domestic world of the family home. Thus, it could be interpreted that persistent opposition to regulated childcare delivered in the public world, as found in both Period One and Period Three, reflects the vestiges of monotropism, rooted in the politics of health and the politics of education.

CHAPTER NINE: POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF PERIOD FOUR (Liberal Administration of 2015-2017)

9.1 Introduction

Period Four represents yet another return to Liberal rule. According to Bittner and Koop (2013), the fall of the Liberal party in the 2011 Federal election ushered in Canada's fifth party system, one which saw the rise of the NDP to official Opposition Party status, and the near-collapse of the Liberal party. The Liberal Party of this party system is more left-leaning in its discourse than ever before, according to a study using the RILE index to quantify the right/left ideological placement of political parties (Bittner & Koop, 2013). In contrast, the NDP party has scored more right-leaning in this political era than ever before, moving 30 points to the right. Classified as a multi-interest accommodation party, the Liberal government represents brokerage politics: an emphasis on pragmatic efforts of consensus building among a large heterogeneous base over that of ideological positions. Indeed, my analysis of its discourse finds this to be true, as evident by the Liberal's abandonment of the investable child discourse of Period Two in favour of an "ally to the middle class" that is the hallmark of this period of study.

As described in chapter eight, when the Conservative Federal government came to power in 2006, its first act of power was to terminate the then-Liberal Federal government's bilateral agreements among the Provinces/Territories (McKenzie, 2014). Stephen Harper's new Conservative government replaced the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, and the subsequent bi-lateral funding agreements, with the UCCB and its short-lived CCSI (Beach, Friendly, Ferns, Prabhu & Forer, 2009). When the unsuccessful CCSI was rolled into the Canada Social Transfer (CST), the UCCB represented Canada's Federal government's policy response to childcare between 2006-2105 (Findlay, 2015). The new Liberal Federal government

(2015-present) represents yet another shift in direction in Canada's childcare history. Much like Stephen Harper before him, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, upon his first days in power, terminated the UCCB and replaced it with the Canada Child Benefit and the promise to re-establish a national childcare program for Canada. In essence, the current Liberal administration committed to resurrecting its previous administration's Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (2003) with the new Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework announced in 2017.

9.2 Description, Interpretation and Explanation of the Corpus for Period Four

The following chapter presents my findings from Period Four, including a description, interpretation, explanation of the political discourse surrounding the Federal Liberal government's childcare policy choice of the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (2017). I include a normative critique of this childcare policy through a children-centred lens, using Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) Political Discourse Analysis method. As done for Period One, Two and Three, using a purposive sampling method, I reviewed all Budget Speeches and Speeches from the Throne released during the Liberal's administration (2015-2017), using the release of its Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework (June 10, 2017) as the end of my timeline. I selected the December 3, 2015 Throne Speech; March 22, 2016 Budget Speech; and March 22, 2017 Budget Speech because they most significantly made reference to the childcare and children-related policy choices of this sitting government. The policy document I selected to analyze the Liberal's childcare policy choice was the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework. Canada's next report to the UNCRC Monitoring Committee, reflecting progress since 2007, was not yet released so it is not included in the corpus for Period Four.

9.2.1 December 3, 2015 Speech from the Throne

As I described in chapter six, Throne Speeches are a highly-ritualized order of discourse designed to give the illusion of non-partisanship. The five-page December 3, 2015 Speech from the Throne, delivered by Governor General Johnston, opened the forty-second Parliament of Canada. David Johnston (2010-2017) was appointed Governor General upon the recommendation of then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2010. Table 9.2.1 represents the headings found within the Speech, the first Speech from the Throne delivered during the administration of Canada's newly-elected Liberal Federal government.

Table 9.2.1 Headers for December 3, 2015 Speech from the Throne

Growth for the Middle Class
Open and Transparent Government
A Clean Environment and a Strong Economy
Diversity is Canada's Strength
Security and Opportunity
Conclusion

This Speech from the Throne was chosen because of its position in the chronology of the Liberal party's governance and its reference to the new government's plans to establish its CCB. While the CCB cannot be described as a childcare program, I include the discourse surrounding its establishment because it reflects a significant children-related policy choice of Canada's Federal government for Period Four (2015-2017).

Overall findings from my examination of the December 3, 2015 Speech from the Throne show that the genre of conversationalization continues into Period Four; it was first revealed in the Liberal government's discourse of Period Two, and carried through to the Conservative discourse of Period Three. The governance genre and promotional genres are also represented within the Speech, as is the discursive practice of mythopoesis, a legitimation technique that defends a position through narrative discourse or storytelling. The trend of mythopoesis, first

revealed in the political discourse of the Federal Conservative government in Period Three, increased significantly in the Federal Liberal government's discourse of Period Four. Indeed, mythopoesis is the discursive hallmark of the currently-sitting Federal government.

As shown in excerpt 9.2.1, the Speech from the Throne emphasizes the Liberal government's commitment to the middle class. Indeed, the overall theme of the Throne Speech reflects one of a friendly benevolent government that is acting in defence of a long-forgotten populace. Co-located vocabulary choices such as "strong middle class", "strengthening the middle class", and "growing our middle class" demonstrate a discursive technique that connects the social group of the middle class with adjectives that convey resurgence and rejuvenation. Additionally, the dominant vocabulary choices of "fair", "trust", "smart", "open" and "transparent" are designed to connect characteristics to the Federal Liberal government with traits of integrity and accountability.

This theme is reminiscent of the political discourse of the Federal Conservative government from Period Three, as revealed in chapter eight. Moreover, it stands in contrast to the previous Liberal government's political discourse of Period Two, which reflected strong themes of investment and economic pursuit. This finding marks a shift in discursive strategy for the Liberal party: a move away from its dominant discourse of economic growth toward one that reflects a construction of the new Liberal government identity, that of protector for the middle class. This shifting trend in discourse extends to the construction of children, moving away from a construction of a children-as-resource toward a construction of a *vulnerable children*, as I will demonstrate throughout this chapter.

Excerpt 9.2.1 Text Extract for December 3, 2015 Speech from the Throne

1 First and foremost, the Government believes that All Canadians should have a real and
2 fair chance to succeed. Central to that success is a strong and growing middle class.
3 The Government will, as an immediate priority, deliver a tax cut for the middle class.
4 This is the fair thing to do, and the smart thing to do for Canada's economy. The
5 Government has also committed to provide more direct help to those who need it by
6 giving less to those who do not. The new Canada Child Benefit will do just that.
7 To create more opportunities for young Canadians, especially those from low- and
8 middle-income families, the Government will work with the Provinces and Territories
9 to make post-secondary education more affordable.

Excerpt 9.2.1 also illustrates the scant political discourse from the 2015 Speech from the Throne that surrounds the Federal Liberal government's commitment to children-related policy and to children. In contrast to the Liberal government of Period Two, there are few references to children-related policy and to children in the 2015 Throne Speech. Moreover, references to children relate to the Federal Liberal government's decision to establish the CCB (Canada Child Benefit), previously described in chapter two, to replace the previous Conservative government's UCCB. While it is an important financial benefit that reflects the equitable funding model of progressive targeting, the CCB is not a childcare benefit or a childcare program. Indeed, the 2015 Speech from the Throne, which marked the opening of the Federal Liberal government's first Parliament under its new administration, makes no mention of its plans to establish a childcare system for Canada, suggesting its political interest in childcare policy was replaced with that of child poverty reduction.

9.2.2 March 22, 2016 Budget Speech

As I described in chapter six, budget speeches represent a highly-ritualized order of discourse designed to give the illusion of democratic participation and voter consensus. The thirteen-page Budget Speech, delivered by Finance Minister, the Honourable Bill Morneau, represents the Liberal government's first Budget Speech after winning its majority mandate in

the October 19, 2015 Federal election. Table 9.2.2 shows the major headings of the Budget Speech, the tone of which reflects a promise of change, accountability and transparency under the new government, not unlike the tone of the discourse by the Federal Conservative government when it took power in 2006. As was revealed in my analysis of the December 3, 2015 Speech from the Throne, the trend of mythopoesis continues in this Budget Speech. Lines 1 to 3 in excerpt 9.2.2a provide an example of how this Budget Speech contains many instances of story-telling, including narratives of families representing the middle class struggling to afford post-secondary education for their children; a father making it to his daughter's soccer game on time; and a small business owner getting her website "up and going". Here, mythopoesis is used to validate this position statement. Moreover, it invokes the conversationalization genre, blurring the lines between the formal social practices surrounding the Budget Speech and its related genre chains and the informal and friendly conventions of personal conversation. Such a practice positions the government as friendly and benevolent, obscuring its position as an authoritative decision-making body. The Budget Speech also reflects a promotional genre by evoking a romantic tone that references the resilient spirit of Canadians when they rebuilt their lives after the Great Depression and World War II.

Table 9.2.2 Headers for March 22, 2016 Budget Speech

Check against delivery
Help for the Middle Class
Long-Term Growth for the Middle Class
 An Innovative and Clean Economy
Post-Secondary Education
Investments in World-Class Institutions and Research
Clean Growth and a Low-Carbon Economy
Believing in the Creativity of Canadians
Evidence-Based Policies
An Inclusive and Fair Canada
Health Care
Seniors
Veterans
Status of Women
Helping the Less Fortunate
A New Relationship with Indigenous Peoples
Our Commitment to the World
Defence

What is interesting about the March 22, 2016 Budget Speech is that, like the December 3, 2015 Speech from the Throne, it, too, ignores the issue of childcare policy, focusing instead on its decision to terminate the UCCB, the Federal Conservative government's childcare policy choice of Period Three, in favour of the Canada Child Benefit. Described earlier. As a child benefit, the CCB certainly provides greater equity through its progressive targeting funding model than the UCCB. However, it misses the mark as a replacement for a childcare benefit. This is an interesting finding: the CCB children-related policy of the new Liberal government replaces the Conservative government's childcare policy choice (which was, in reality, a child benefit itself, rather than a childcare-dedicated financial support) with no mention of a plan to address Canada's absentee childcare program, suggesting, again, that the Liberal Federal government has demoted childcare as a policy priority in favour of child poverty reduction.

This finding has further implications on how the Federal Liberal government constructs its role regarding children; prioritizing its focus on child poverty reduction positions the Federal

Liberal government as the protector of *vulnerable children* and maintains the family-government alliance, as had also been done by the Federal Progressive Conservative government in Period One. Importantly, as introduced in my analysis of Period One, child poverty reduction policy measures must be grounded by a discourse of children's rights. In absence of connecting child poverty reduction measures to a human rights framework, such as the UNCRC, the policy choice reflects a protection construction of childhood. When childhood is viewed and valued through a protection construction; children, particularly the needy and poor, are considered the object of child-saving intervention (Davidson, 2010), and targeted programs are delivered in a manner that stigmatizes these children, as they must fit a criterion to validate their need.

Excerpt 9.2.2a Text Extract for March 22, 2016 Budget Speech

1 I want you to imagine an ordinary middle class Canadian family. Two parents with
2 two kids in university. The parents have been working for 25 years, the bills are
3 growing, and it's been hard to get ahead. There's nothing left at the end of the month.
4 And they don't know if they'll ever be able to afford a decent retirement.
5 But to shape the future, we must invest in the future. We must do for our children and
6 grandchildren what our parents and grandparents did for us. Fortunately,
7 circumstances for investment are ideal.
8 Mr. Speaker, we know balancing kids, careers and personal goals is not easy. People
9 work hard. They expect their government and their economy to work hard for them in
10 return.
11 The fate of the middle class and the fate of the country as a whole are one. Canada will
12 not prosper if the middle class doesn't prosper.
13 But the government must do more for families than merely help them through
14 challenging times. That is why, earlier this year, the government cut taxes for middle
15 class Canadians everywhere.

As shown in excerpt 9.2.2a, the Budget Speech contains a declarative grammatical tone with several instances of deontic modalities (e.g., "must") that convey their government priorities as obligatory and necessary. In line 8 the Liberal Federal government of Period Four introduces the first reference to "kids" a vocabulary choice reflective of the conversationalization genre that reduces that formality of the government's social practice of the Budget Speech.

Moreover, the dominant theme of supporting the middle class continues in a similar fashion to the Federal Conservative government’s discourse of Period Three, though its discourse referred to the middle class as “ordinary families”. Further, line 11 illustrates how the Federal Liberal government connects the “middle class” with the “fate of the country”, positioning this social group in the highest possible regard.

Last, the few references to “investment” in children in this Budget Speech stand in stark contrast to the Federal Liberal government’s discourse of Period Two, wherein the dominant discourse related to children-as-resource. This is an important shift in trend: The Federal Liberal government of Period Four elevates the prosperity of the middle class—not the investment in children—as the predictor of Canada’s future prosperity. This shift in discourse impacts on the construction of children, childhood and childcare, as I will describe throughout this chapter.

Excerpt 9.2.2b Text Extract for March 22, 2016 Budget Speech

1 Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce the introduction of the new Canada Child
2 Benefit – a plan to help families more than any other social program since universal
3 health care. Families with children under 18 will receive the benefit starting in July.
4 The size of each cheque will depend on your family, but 9 out of 10 families will get
5 more help than they do under existing programs.
6 That is money in the pockets of mom and dad. Money that can go directly to eating
7 healthier food, paying the rent and buying new clothes for back to school.
8 The Canada Child Benefit is the most significant social policy innovation in a
9 generation. It will lift hundreds of thousands of kids up from poverty.
10 Our country has a long and proud history of big, bold, transformative public policies –
11 programs like universal health care, Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan.
12 Now we proudly add the Canada Child Benefit to that honourable list.

Excerpt 9.2.2b represents textual content related to the CCB. As evident in the references to “mom and dad” and “kids”, the genre of conversationalization continues in the vocabulary choices surrounding the benefit. A promotional genre is also found, positioning Canada as a having a “long and proud” history of transformative public policies, of which the CCB is part of

an “honourable” list. These vocabulary choices represent a strategy to connect the Federal Liberal government with the historical accomplishments of prior Liberal governments. The comparison of the CCB to universal healthcare is a legitimation technique called authorization whereby a position is grounded by tradition and history. The CCB is also defended through moral evaluation whereby the value-based assumptions of pride and honour surround policies such as universal healthcare, Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan. This is a new trend for the Federal Liberal government, though the technique of moral evaluation was a hallmark of the Progressive Conservative and Conservative Federal governments in Periods One and Three, respectively. The Federal Liberal government of Period Two, as described in chapter seven, used rationalization rather than moral evaluation as its main legitimation technique. Thus, the findings from the 2015 Speech from the Throne and the 2016 Budget Speech indicate two important discursive shifts by Canada’s current Federal Liberal government: the dominance of the conversationalization genre, the significant use of mythopoesis, and the shift from rationalization to moral evaluation through which to ground its policy position statements.

9.2.3 March 22, 2017 Budget Speech

The eleven-page Budget Speech, delivered by Finance Minister, the Honourable Bill Morneau, represents the Federal Liberal government’s second Budget Speech after winning its majority mandate in the October 19, 2015 Federal election. The major headings of the Budget Speech, featured in Table 9.2.2, show that childcare, as a priority area for the Federal government, has finally found a place in its political discourse since it first took office.

Table 9.2.2 Headers for March 22, 2017 Budget Speech

Infrastructure
Innovation and Skills
A Real and Fair Chance at Success
Health
Housing
Empowering Women at the Heart of Our Economy
Child Care
Indigenous Peoples
Fairness for the Middle Class
Canada's Role in the World
Conclusion

The March 22, 2017 Budget Speech reflects the most significant use of mythopoesis by any Federal government across the four Periods of my analysis. As shown in excerpt 9.3.3a, the introductory part of the March 22, 2017 Budget Speech contains many stories by the Minister of Finance that demonstrate his personal connections with the Canadian people, including Mian the taxi driver, Dave the plumber, and Nebis, an Indigenous mother. These stories are also part of the conversationalization genre, and they construct the government and its elected officials as being personally connected to the middle class of Canadian society. Further, the use of these stories lend legitimation to the government's proposed policies, grounding its decisions based on the common experiences of Canada's people. Mian, Dave, and Nebis are referenced multiple times throughout the Budget Speech, continuously used to legitimize the government's policy choices, including that of the CCB. This use of story-telling narrative is also a technique of intertextuality, the inclusion of other voices that lend corroboration to a government's policy positions and the Finance Minister's spending decisions. Moreover, using a sampling of "everyday people" to represent these other voices, rather than, for example, the voices of policy experts, reveals the strategy behind these vocabulary choices: this technique is used to construct

the government as a friendly and benevolent protector of the middle class, in tune with the common experiences of regular Canadian people.

The March 22, 2017 Budget Speech also contains many folksy vocabulary choices, such as “swept under the rug” and “kids”, representing further evidence of a conversationalization genre. The references to middle class are frequent, as is the overall tone that positions the government as ally to the middle class, and constructs the middle class as the underdog in need of protection from “loopholes” and “unfair tax advantages for some at the expense of others”. Indeed, the identity of “the wealthy”, found in line 11, is constructed as the social group from whom the middle class require protection by the Federal government. Thus, the 2017 Budget Speech clearly aligns itself with the identities of Mian, Dave and Nebis, a collection of individuals meant to represent the middle class and who require protection from the Federal Liberal government. In contrast, threat of “the wealthy” is an abstract perpetrator disembodied from the employ of a noun, such as “individuals”, “people”, or “population”. Thus, the construction of the vulnerable middle class is fleshed out through the use of story-telling and narrative; the construction of the Federal government as protector is shaped by the many references to the Minister’s personal connection to these stories; but the construction of the threat to the middle class (“the wealthy”) is a nebulous and unnamed, though ever-present, abstraction.

Excerpt 9.2.3b, containing textual content extracted from the childcare heading, shows the continuation of the government-as-ally theme. Gone is the construction of childcare as an investment in children; and gone, too, is the construction of children-as-resource, as had been so dominant in the Federal Liberal government’s discourse of Period Two. Indeed, the shift to a government-as-ally discourse reflects the family-government-alliance discourse that was first revealed in the political discourse of the Federal Progressive Conservative Federal government in Period One, and then, again, in the Federal Conservative government discourse of Period Three.

Excerpt 9.2.3a Text Extract for March 22, 2017 Budget Speech

1 On my way home one night, my taxi driver, Mian, recognized me, and we started
2 chatting. Then he did something that surprised me. He called his wife and put her on
3 speakerphone. They wanted to talk to me about the difference the Canada Child Benefit
4 had made in their lives.
5 And Nebis, a mother of three from a remote Algonquin community in Quebec. The
6 Canada Child Benefit has helped keep her three kids enrolled in hockey this season.
7 Mian, Dave, and Nebis, like millions of middle class Canadians, want to see progress for
8 themselves and their families.
9 Going forward, we will close the loopholes that result in unfair tax advantages for some at
10 the expense of others. We will eliminate inefficient tax measures, especially those that
11 disproportionately benefit the wealthy.
12 Because, Mr. Speaker, let me be clear: All Canadians must pay their fair share of taxes.

Excerpt 9.2.3b Text Extract for March 22, 2017 Budget Speech

1 Another one of those barriers [prior reference to gender inequality for women in the
2 workforce], Mr. Speaker, is access to quality child care. Too often we hear stories of
3 single parents living in poverty because the cost of child care is so high, they can't
4 afford to go back to work. And that's not right. To help low- and middle-income
5 families with the costs of child care, we are committing \$7 billion over the next decade
6 to increase the number of high-quality child care spaces available across the country.
7 In order to provide immediate relief to Canadian families, we could create up to
8 40,000 new subsidized child care spaces over the next three years by working with the
9 Provinces and Territories. Canadian parents deserve our support, and they're going to
10 get it.

Last, the reference to the Federal Liberal government's childcare policy choice promotes the most significant beneficiary of childcare program as single parents living in poverty; low- and middle class families; followed by Canadian families and Canadian parents. Conspicuously absent is any reference to children as the beneficiary of childcare. This is especially noteworthy given the goal of the Federal Liberal government's 2003 Framework in Period Two, whereby children's ideal development was positioned as a key goal of childcare. My analysis of the 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework will further unpack the Federal Liberal

government's views and values related to children and childcare and provide a comparison between its Period Two and Period Four discourse.

9.2.4 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework

An obvious finding in my examination of the Federal Liberal government's Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework, released June 10, 2017, is its similarity in title to the Liberal Federal government's childcare policy choice of Period Two, the Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care. This could be interpreted as a strategic decision to evoke comparisons between the two childcare policies, however, the Federal Liberal government of Period Four has done little to discursively connect its current childcare policy choice to that of its previous administration. Excerpts 9.2.4a and 9.2.4b show the textual content extracted from the 2017 Framework that I have focused on, as part of my Critical Discourse Analysis. In the subsequent section I provide my findings from the Political Discourse Analysis of this childcare policy choice.

In the introductory section, as shown by the extracts in excerpt 9.2.4a, the Federal Liberal government articulates its reason for the 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework and sets out its long-term vision. Lines 2 and 3 show interesting vocabulary choices: in contrast to the use of "our children", as was the dominant vocabulary choice of the Federal Liberal government in Period Two, the Federal Liberal government of Period Four assigns ownership of children to parents, families and communities through the use of the vocabulary choice of "their children". This represents a note-worthy shift in the Federal Liberal government's discourse and the construction of children's identities; in Period Two the Federal Liberal government constructed children as belonging to all of society through its repeated usage of "our children". More so, it demonstrates that the Federal Liberal government positions its role in supporting children as indirect; its primary role is to support parents, families and

communities—the adults within Canadian society. This can be interpreted as the Federal government’s commitment to the family-government-alliance discourse that embeds the political discourse of Period One and Period Three.

Excerpt 9.2.4a Text Extract for 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework

1 Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Most Responsible for Early Learning and
2 Child Care agree on the importance of supporting parents, families and communities
3 in their efforts to ensure the best possible future for their children. Ministers also
4 recognize that quality Early Learning and Child Care systems play an important role in
5 promoting the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of young
6 children and can support positive lifelong benefits. The early years of life are critical
7 in the development and future well-being of the child and continuum of learning
8 The evidence is clear that there are positive relationships between quality Early
9 Learning and Child Care, especially for less advantaged children, parental labour
10 market participation, especially for women, and child developmental outcomes.
11 A long-term vision: This Framework sets the foundation for governments to work
12 toward a shared long term vision where all children can experience the enriching
13 environment of quality Early Learning and Child Care that supports children’s
14 development to reach their full potential.
15 Ministers Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care agree that the further
16 development of Early Learning and Child Care systems is one of the best investments
17 that governments can make to strengthen the social and economic fabric of our
18 country. Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments have important roles to play
19 and provide investments to support the early learning and child care needs of families.
20 They recognize the importance of collaborating with stakeholders and may consider
21 advice of subject matter experts in achieving the long term vision. This framework
22 sets the foundation for collaboration and additional Federal investments in Provincial
23 and Territorial early learning and child care systems. Governments recognize that each
24 jurisdiction has the responsibility to develop systems that best responds to the needs
25 and priorities of their communities.
26 Guided by the following principles, this framework supports a commitment by
27 Governments to work towards investments to increase quality, accessibility,
28 affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity in early learning and child care, with
29 consideration for those more in need.

In contrast to the reference to childcare in the March 22, 2017 Budget Speech, the 2017 Framework does resurrect the children-as-resource discourse that was dominant in the Federal Liberal government's discourse of Period Two. The vocabulary choice of "investment", as shown in lines 16, 19, and 27, demonstrates the continued use of the investment analogy, however, in comparison to Period Two, which connected the investment of children and childcare to the future of the country, the use of investment in this context is far more subdued. Indeed, references to "investment", as shown in lines 22 and 27, connect investment with high-quality childcare and the needs of children, as opposed to the fate of the country. This important distinction indicates an intentional shift from the dominant discourse of children-as-resource in the Federal Liberal government's discourse of Period Four.

The vocabulary choice "child care systems" in line 4 represents a significant shift as well. In most of the Federal-level government discourse surrounding childcare under Periods One, Two and Three, the scope of childcare has been limited by the vocabulary choices of "child care plan", "child care program", or "child care benefit". The plural tense of "systems" also signifies that the Federal government is allowing for the creation of multiple childcare systems that may vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

The deontic modality in line 8 ("the evidence is clear") grounds the Federal Liberal government's childcare policy choice as one based on rationalization, a legitimation technique that references knowledge, the technique it used most frequently in Period Two. Moreover, the reference to "subject matter experts" in line 21 further evokes rationalization, grounding the Federal Liberal government's childcare policy choices in expert knowledge. This is in contrast to the heavy use of moral evaluation that was used as its main legitimation technique by the Federal Progressive Conservative and Conservative governments in Period One and Period Three, and

the use of moral evaluation that the Liberal Federal government used in its 2015 Speech from the Throne and its 2016 Budget Speech.

As shown in excerpt 9.2.4a, the Federal Liberal government grounds its rationale for childcare on the basis that childcare is important for all children (line 12). However, in subsequent text, the Federal Liberal government limits its commitment to childcare provision to “those” more in need. This is an interesting finding. On the one hand, the Federal Liberal government clearly commits to a vision whereby all children may benefit from childcare, though, subsequently, it limits its childcare policy choice to a targeted approach. While equitable provision is, indeed, a children-centred consideration of childcare, without universal access and rights-based provision, a targeted approach may stigmatize individuals. Further, such an approach reflects a welfare state of a liberal regime or conservative regime whereby government responsibility is limited to protecting only those individuals who are most vulnerable. As described in chapter two, a targeted approach falls far short of upholding universal social rights of citizenship such as those approaches in social democratic regimes.

The reference to “communities” in lines 23 to 25 emphasizes my earlier observation in Period Two: the Federal Liberal administration promotes a community-government-alliance discourse in addition to the family-government alliance, in comparison to the family-government alliance discourse that was solely promoted by the Progressive Conservative and Conservative Federal governments of Period One and Period Three. The goals of the 2017 Framework, as outlined in lines 1 to 18 in excerpt 9.2.4b, reflect the children-centred considerations of quality and equitable provision, which I discuss in more detail in my children-centred analysis using the Political Discourse Analysis method of Fairclough and Fairclough (2012). Indeed, the articulation of the 2017 Framework goals for childcare promote the needs of children over those of parents, reflecting a construction of childcare as a service that supports children’s needs over

those of working parents. Thus, childcare is constructed as a children's program rather than a labour support program. This marks an important shift in trend; it is the first time any Federal government in Canada has promoted childcare through a children-centred lens. Importantly, however, while the goals of quality, accessibility, affordability, flexibility and inclusivity are, indeed, positioned through a children-centred lens, the Federal Liberal government stops short of promoting universal access and rights-based provision. This suggests a continuing pattern for the Federal Liberal governments of Period Two and Period Four whereby children-related policies, including child poverty reduction and childcare, are legitimized through a protection construction of childhood. That is to say, such policies are not grounded by a human rights framework or a construction of childhood based on children's rights. In promoting a protection construction of childhood, the Federal Liberal government of Period Four continues to construct itself as benevolent protector and the construction of childhood continues to portray children as dependent and vulnerable and in need of protection. This is further illustrated through the reference to "citizens" in line 30. In this usage, the term citizens is purposefully vague, suggesting it could be that children are the citizens to whom governments have responsibilities, but it does not explicitly make a connection between children and their rights of citizenship. This was a missed opportunity to strengthen the connection between its childcare policy choice and the rights of all citizens, including children.

Excerpt 9.2.4b Text Extract for 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care

Framework

1 High-quality early learning and child care:
2 Provides rich early learning experiences and environments and views children as
3 capable, competent learners who are full of potential.
4 Values the importance of building strong, responsive and respectful relationships in
5 which purposeful interactions support optimal learning for children.
6 Recognizes the importance of qualifications and training for the early childhood work
7 force.
8 Accessible, affordable and flexible:
9 High-quality early learning and child care should be flexible and broadly available to
10 respond to the varying needs of children and families to promote early childhood
11 development. Accessible, affordable and flexible early learning and child care also
12 supports families participating in employment, education or training, and harder-to-
13 serve populations.
14 Inclusive:
15 Inclusive early learning and child care systems respect and value diversity, which
16 could include but is not limited to:
17 children and families who are experiencing vulnerability
18 children with varying abilities
19 Objectives:
20 Early learning and child care needs across the country are vast and diverse.
21 Investments in early learning and child care benefit all children, particularly those who
22 are vulnerable.
23 In keeping with the guiding principles of this Framework, Provinces and Territories
24 will use investments allocated by the Government of Canada to further build early
25 learning and child care systems by addressing local, regional and system priorities that
26 have an impact on families more in need, such as lower-income families; Indigenous
27 families; lone-parent families; families in underserved communities; those working
28 non-standard hours; and/or families with children with varying abilities.
29 Governments will work together in full respect of their responsibilities to their
30 citizens, recognizing that Provinces/Territories have the primary responsibility for the
31 design and delivery of early learning and child care systems.

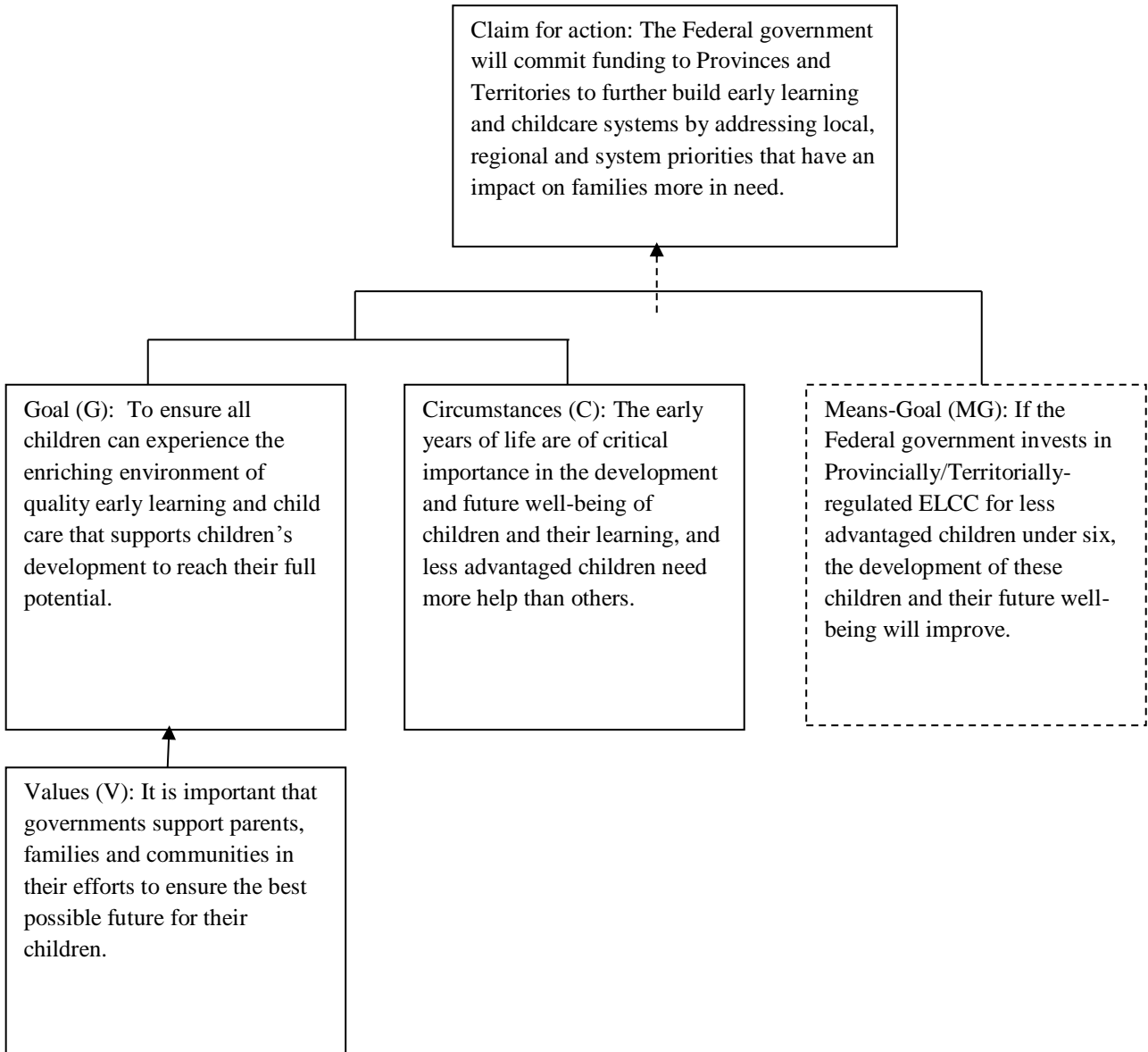
9.3 Descriptive and Normative Critique of the 2017 Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework

As was done for Period One, Two, and Three, I present a descriptive and normative critique of the 2017 Framework, which I took to represent the Federal Liberal government's childcare policy choice. Illustrated in Figure 9.3.1, the goal of the 2017 Framework is that all children can experience the enriching environment of quality early learning and child care that supports children's development to reach their full potential. This goal, in contrast to the goal of the 2003 Framework reflects a more children-centred approach that takes into account children's needs and their quality of life. Thus, the 2017 Framework, in contrast to the 2003 Framework, constructs children as "beings" rather than "future-beings". The 2003 Framework constructed children as a resource, thus dehumanizing them and creating a view and value of childcare as an investment strategy through which the future potential of children could be mined.

The claim for action, proposed through the 2017 Framework, is for the Federal Liberal government to commit annual funding to Provinces and Territories to further build early learning and child care systems that "address their local, regional and system priorities that have an impact on families more in need, such as lower-income families; Indigenous families; lone-parent families; families in underserved communities; those working non-standard hours; and/or families with children with varying abilities". As detailed in their Budget Plan, the Federal Liberal government plans to commit \$7.5 billion over 11 years, beginning with \$500 million in the first year (2018/19 fiscal year), and increasing its support to \$870 million annually by 2026. It is estimated that this Federal funding could potentially create 40,000 subsidized and regulated childcare spaces over the next three years. In contrast, the 2003 Framework committed \$5 billion over five years, which translates to \$1 billion per year in comparison to the 2017 commitment of \$500-870 million per year. It should be noted that the financial contribution of the Federal

Liberal government in Period Two was greater than the current Liberal government's funding commitment.

Figure 9.3.1 Descriptive Critique for 2017 Framework



The main value embedded within the 2017 Framework is that it is important for government to support parents, families and communities in their efforts to ensure the best possible future for their children. This value is similar to the other discourse examined in Periods One, Two, and Three: the government's role regarding children is indirect; government provides

direct supports to the adults within society, who, in turn, provide care to “their” children. In this way, the 2017 Framework emphasizes the government-as-ally discourse that was promoted by the Progressive Conservative and Conservative Federal governments in Periods One and Three. Importantly, the Federal Liberal governments of Periods Two and Four also embed the family-government alliance within their discourse, however the Liberal government of Period Two favoured a community-government alliance, while the Liberal government of Period Four favours a family-government alliance. This is another important shift in the Liberal party’s discourse that may be strategically motivated in order to connect itself to the strong family-government alliance discourse of the Federal Conservative government of Period Three. Indeed, as I have shown in my earlier analysis, the Federal Liberal government of Period Four has also embraced the ally-to-the-middle-class discourse that had been so heavily featured by the Federal Conservative government of Period Three. In contrast, the Federal Liberal government of Period Two did not include such discourse, rather, it emphasized the role of government as an investor in the knowledge sector over a discourse that featured “ordinary people”.

The 2017 Framework grounds its argument for childcare in the new science of early childhood development, an authorization technique of legitimation. However, unlike the 2003 Framework, the 2017 Framework of the Liberal government bases its argument for “investment” in childcare as one that offers both economic and social returns. Once again, the Liberal government’s 2017 Framework reflects goals and values that are both children-centred and adult-centric, in comparison to the 2003 Framework that was solely adult-centric in its pursuit of economic goals.

The 2017 Framework, much like the approach of the Federal Progressive Conservative government’s Canada Child Care Act and the Federal Liberal government’s 2003 Framework, represents a model for childcare that is reflective of approaches found in liberal regimes. As I

identified in my analysis of Period One, in countries of social democratic regimes, childcare is viewed as an important public good and government responsibility, reflecting the principles of egalitarianism and universalism. However, the values that underpin the childcare systems of social democratic regimes tie universal, high-quality childcare to children's rights. As described earlier, while the Federal Liberal government's 2017 Framework does offer more children-centred considerations to its childcare policy choice, it still does not ground its childcare policy to a children's rights framework. Indeed, the proposed approach in the Framework to target childcare to children of families of low income connects childcare to the status of children's families, not to children themselves. As described in chapter six, this is a similar approach to the childcare policy choice of the Federal Progressive Conservative government, Bill C-144. While laudable in their efforts to ensure equitable provision, the targeted approaches of the Federal Progressive Conservative Government and the current Liberal Federal government tie access to vulnerability, thus stigmatizing those children who are vulnerable. Similar to my analysis of Period One, equitable provision without the foundation of universal access and rights-based provision creates a protection construction of childhood, thus obfuscating children's rights to childcare. Moreover, policy measures that are designed to address issues of poverty must be legally bound to a human rights framework such as the UNCRC (Smith-Carrier & Lawlor, 2017). In the absence of an accountability mechanism built on rights-based provision, access to childcare is ensured at the whim of the government, which, as I've shown, can differ drastically from one administration to the next.

Like Bill C-144, the 2017 Framework also promotes childcare growth in the not-for-profit sector. Given the demonstration that the quality of not-for-profit-delivered childcare is of higher quality compared to that of the for-profit sector, this approach to childcare policy reflects a children-centred consideration of quality, especially in light of the commitment to social

pedagogical and democratic participation approaches that are referenced in the Framework. In light of these considerations as well as its commitment to equitable provision, the 2017 Framework represents Canada's most children-centred approach to childcare thus far in its history. Unfortunately, however, the 2017 Framework and the Federal Liberal government of Period Four continues Canada's history of ignoring the UNCRC in its political discourse and in grounding its children-related policy choices through the protection construction of childhood.

9.4 Discussion

My analysis of the Federal Liberal government of Period Four has revealed some significant shifts in the Liberal administration's discourse, including its adoption of mythopoesis. This can be interpreted as a move by the sitting Federal Liberal government to position itself as ally-to-the-middle-class, in contrast to its discourse of Period Two wherein the Federal Liberal government positioned itself as an investor in the knowledge economy through its focus to increase access to post-secondary education for young Canadians. Indeed, it could be said that the discourse of Period Two stands in contrast to the discourse of Period One, Three and Four, wherein I found a common family-government alliance discourse.

Further, while the 2017 Framework does represent Canada's most progressive childcare policy to date, assessed on its commitment to children-centred considerations of childcare, the financial commitment of the Federal Liberal government of Period Two was greater than the funding promised by the current Federal Liberal government, indicating a decrease in its commitment to childcare. Indeed, economic analysis released by the International Monetary Fund suggests that funding by Canada's Federal government for childcare could be as high as \$8 billion per year, based on cost/benefit calculations that demonstrate a return on investment rate that covers investment costs (Petersson, Mariscal, & Ishi, 2017).

As discussed earlier, the Federal Liberal government's discourse surrounding childcare views childhood through a protection construction, thus constructing a *vulnerable children* identity for those children for whom childcare is needed based on vulnerability criteria, as defined by the Federal Liberal government. Children who do not meet these criteria are viewed through a property construction whereby the primary responsibility for childcare arrangements belong to parents. This delineation creates difference between children: those for whom the government may support directly, *vulnerable children*; and those who belong to families, for whom the government will not intervene. Further, both the 2003 and 2017 Frameworks create difference in children based on age. The growth of regulated childcare spaces is limited to children under six years of age, thus children over the age of six (who still require childcare or adult supervision) are rendered invisible in the discourse. In contrast, the childcare policy choice of the Federal Progressive Conservative government extended provision of childcare to children up to age fifteen. And, the Federal Conservative government's childcare policy choice of the UCCB, while not a childcare service, per se, included children up to age seventeen. In this way, both the Progressive Conservative and the Conservative Federal governments constructed a view of children that did not create difference among children based on age, in comparison to the Federal Liberal government discourse of Periods Two and Four, wherein the age limit of six corresponds to the ideal "window of investment" between birth and five years.

In comparison to the Federal Liberal government discourse of Period Two, the discourse of Period Four also reveals another key difference compared to the construction of children. In Period Two, children were dehumanized and viewed as a policy issue or a priority area, never a social group or a population. This *children-as-resource* construction of Period Two has been completely abandoned in Period Four in favour of a more children-centred construction of childhood, though not yet a rights-based construction. Valuing childcare as a way to provide

children with high-quality early learning opportunities that reflect children's interests and their capacity for learning is a view of childcare that has corresponded with rights-based provision in social democratic countries. While the Federal Liberal government has included some children-centred considerations, including equitable provision; children-centred quality; and democratic participation, it fails on two significant points, that of rights-based provision and universal access. The absence of these children-centred considerations mirrors the absence of a children's rights construction of childhood in the political discourse surrounding the 2017 Framework and the CCB, the current Federal Liberal government's most significant children-related policy priorities of Period Four.

CHAPTER TEN: DISCUSSION

10.1 Introduction

My research study is rooted in the assertion that the state of childcare in Canada is an issue of social justice and a matter of children's rights that warrants critical examination. Through my use of a children-centred lens, informed by the theoretical framework of the new sociology of childhood, I employed Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992, 2001, 2003) and Political Discourse Analysis (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012) to answer the following research question for each of the four key periods under study: *How have the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, embedded within political discourse, established, defended and legitimized Federal-level childcare policy choices in Canada?* In so doing, I have revealed the ways in which systems of power in Canada, through discourse, exert their influence over policy issues related to children. As such, my research study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between discourse and power, specifically the ways in which those in positions of power have manufactured control-by-consent upon the Canadian public and how this impacts children. As detailed in chapters six, seven, eight and nine, I have exposed the differing ways that three governing Federal political parties have constructed childhood and the collective identities of children in order to enact, reproduce and legitimize their childcare policy choices. The following section provides a discussion of my analysis findings.

10.2 Discussion of Findings

Period One: The political discourse of the corpus for Period One, representative of the Progressive Conservative administration (1984-1993), largely presents a governance genre,

mixed with a business genre and a promotional genre. A governance genre represents activities within an institution or organization directed at managing or regulating social practices, and it interconnects local, national, and global issues. A business genre focuses on competition, economic growth and accountability and is reflective of the economic values of a market-driven liberal regime. A promotional genre promotes a romantic notion of Canada as a unique and special place.

The social relations and social identities represented in the corpus of Period One are of a Canadian society united in voice, with shared universal values, collectively benefiting from a long history of benevolent support by its government. With very few references to the social group of children, the discourse of Period One constructs the collective identity of children as invisible, which I have termed the *invisible children* identity. Of the few references to the social group of children, the constructions of children's identities are of *vulnerable children* and *dangerous children*. With respect to these two identities, the government is portrayed as protector: the protector of vulnerable children who are abused, and the protector of society from dangerous young criminals.

Within the corpus of Period One, the multiple use of the singular term "the family" serves to promote a universal heteronormative family ideal: that of a father, a mother, and their children. This representation of families reflects the social values of a conservative regime, according to Esping-Andersen's (1990) regime theory, and promotes a *family-government alliance* with respect to the care and raising of children, in line with Foucault's concept of "family-as-ally" in which governments exact control over the resource of children through its control over families (Foucault as cited in Bundy, 2012, p. 597). This family-government alliance discourse positions childcare in Period One as a "necessary societal evil", thus reinforcing Vandenbroeck's observation (2006, p. 371) that there exists in society an embedded

value-based assumption that childcare is to be used only by certain and unfortunate families—those whose mothers must work. This monotropism-based view evokes a moral judgment of childcare as a needed labour support for certain unfortunate families, which comes at a high societal price by removing young children from the ideal situation of stay-at-home mothering and the surveillance and protection afforded through the private and domestic world of the family home.

Period Two: The political discourse of the corpus for Period Two, representative of the Liberal administration (1993-2006), also reflects a governance genre and a business genre, with a focus on competition, economic growth and accountability. Further, my analysis revealed a dominant new science of ECD discourse which, in turn, was used to promote the view and value of childcare as an investment strategy, constructing a *children-as-resource* identity for children. As suggested by Whiteford (2014), a discourse that seemingly centres on children, such as their potential as future-workers and their direct connection to the economic future of the country, does not necessarily lead to a children's rights discourse nor the recommendation for children-centred childcare policy responses. Indeed, my findings corroborate this suggestion: with its exclusive focus on children-as-resource, the children-focused discourse of Period Two disguises an exclusively adult-centric view of childcare and constructs a *dehumanizing identity* for children, rendering them invisible and ignoring their human rights.

Another finding from Period Two concerns the way the Federal government positions itself as an ally in supporting children. However, unlike the Progressive Conservative government, the Liberal government of Period Two positions its alliance with community rather than family. Thus, while Foucault's previously-described concept of *family-government-alliance* positions the family and the government as allies in maintaining control over children, the community-government alliance, found in the corpus of Period Two, favours the role of

community-as-ally in the government's objective to "invest" in "our" children. This is evidenced by the abandonment of discourse related to traditional social values and a disregard for the previous emphasis on motherhood and monotropism, which had been dominant constructions in Period One. These significant differences between the discourse of Period One and Period Two indicates important contrasts in the views and values of the Progressive Conservative and the Liberal Federal-governments related to the roles of family, government and community, and the relationship between these roles and children.

Period Three: The political discourse of the corpus for Period Three, representative of the Conservative administration (2006-2015), resurrects the family-government alliance from Period One and promotes traditional social values related to the roles of family and government. As was the case with the political discourse of the Federal Progressive Conservative government in Period One, the multiple use of the term "families" serves to embed the previously-described family-government alliance mechanism in which governments exact control-by-consent over the resource of children through its influence over families. For example, the low financial support of the UCCB appears to discourage the uptake of non-parental care and promotes, instead, parental-care, kinship care, and neighbour-care over that of government-regulated and publicly-funded systems of childcare.

Further, the Federal Conservative government promoted a *choice in care discourse* related to its childcare policy choice of the UCCB. Some critical discourse analysts argue that a frame of choice reflects a market-based discourse that is connected to the neo-liberalism movement of the 1970s (Nordgren, 2010, p. 109). A Foucauldian lens to the discourse of choice within the healthcare sector suggests it is a purposeful strategy meant to create an illusion of power for the citizen-as-consumer. Alongside the discourse of choice is the implication of individual responsibility and an emphasis on the dutiful consumer to make his or her choice,

thereby overshadowing the role of government in providing real choices from which to choose (Nordgren, 2010). The taken-for-granted assumption regarding this discourse is that real choices exist for consumers, though, as I have illustrated in chapter two and four, this is not the case for childcare given its propensity to market failure.

Period Four: The political discourse of Period Four, representative of the Liberal administration (2015-present), represents a significant shift toward the adoption of mythopoesis, a narrative story-telling technique of legitimation. This can be interpreted as a move by the current Federal Liberal government to position itself as *ally-to-the-middle-class*, in contrast to its discourse of Period Two wherein the Federal Liberal government positioned itself as an investor in the knowledge economy evident by its focus to increase access to post-secondary education for young Canadians. Moreover, its role as ally-to-the-middle class emphasizes a family-government alliance similar to that of the Progressive Conservative and Conservative Federal governments, and in contrast to the community-government alliance of the Liberal Federal government of Period Two. This finding suggests that the discourse of the Liberal Federal government of Period Four is more similar to that of the Progressive Conservative and Conservative Federal governments of Period One and Three than it is to the Liberal Federal government of Period Two. Indeed, the Liberal Federal government of Period Four appears to have abandoned the constructions of children-as-resource, childcare as investment, and its promotion of a community-government alliance, which had been the hallmarks of its discourse in Period Two. This finding corroborates the suggestion that Canada's Liberal party is one of "brokerage politics" (Bittner & Koop, 2013), approaching policy-setting with pragmatism rather than ideological stance, as evident by this significant shift in discourse.

Further, the political discourse of Period Four views childhood through a protection construction, thus constructing the collective identity of those children—for whom childcare is

needed, based on vulnerability criteria—as *vulnerable children*. Other children, who do not meet this criteria, are viewed through a property construction whereby the primary responsibility for childcare arrangements belong to parents. This delineation creates a stigmatizing difference between children: those whom the government must support directly, *vulnerable children*; and those who belong to families, for whom the government will not intervene or interfere. This finding of Period Four is similar to that of Period One, whereby the Progressive Conservatives emphasized a vulnerable children construction in its childcare discourse, suggesting yet another commonality between the discourse of the Liberal Federal government of Period Four and the Progressive Conservative Federal government of Period One.

Further, while the 2017 Framework does represent Canada’s most progressive childcare policy to date, assessed on its partial commitment to some children-centred considerations of childcare, the financial commitment of the Federal Liberal government of Period Two (\$5 billion over five years=\$1,000,000,000/year) was greater than the funding promised by the current Liberal government (\$7.5 billion over 11 years=680,000,000/year), indicating a decrease in the current Federal government’s financial commitment to childcare. In fact, the financial commitment of \$4 billion dollars over seven years (\$570,000,000/year), put forward by the Progressive Conservative Federal government in 1984, converts into a more significant investment than the current Liberal Federal government once inflation is considered. After converting its proposed investment of \$570,000,000/year into constant dollars, the Progressive Conservative commitment to childcare would be \$1, 214,267,100/year in today’s dollars, considerably more than the current Liberal promise of \$680,000,000/year. Based on this economic analysis, the investment in childcare by Canada’s current Federal government is regressing rather than progressing. Thus, in the thirty years that have lapsed since the Progressive

Conservative’s proposed childcare Act in 1984, Canada has made very little progress in childcare.

Next, in comparison to the Federal Liberal government discourse of Period Two, the discourse of Period Four reveals a key difference compared to the construction of children. In Period Two, children were dehumanized and viewed as a policy issue or a priority area, not a social group or a population. This Liberal party *children-as-resource* construction of Period Two has been abandoned in Period Four, in favour of a more children-centred construction of childhood, though not yet a rights-based construction. Valuing childcare as a way to provide children with high-quality early learning opportunities that reflect children’s interests and their capacity for learning is a view of childcare that corresponds with rights-based provision in social democratic countries. However, while the current Federal Liberal government has included some children-centred considerations in its childcare policy choice, including equitable provision, children-centred quality and democratic participation, it fails on two significant points: rights-based provision and universal access. Table 10.1 provides an overview of my Critical Discourse Analysis findings by each of the Periods under study.

Table 10.1 Summary of Findings for each Period

	Progressive Conservatives (1984-1993)	Liberals (1993-2006)	Conservatives (2006-2015)	Liberals (2015-2017)
Genre	Governance; promotional	Governance; promotional; conversational-ization	Governance; promotional; conversational-ization	Governance; promotional, conversational-ization
Discourse	Monotropism; family-government alliance	Investment, children as resource; community-government	Choice, family-government alliance; monotropism	Vulnerable, children; community-government alliance; new science of ECD

		alliance; new science of ECD		
Constructions of Children	Children are a parental responsibility and parenting requires burden/sacrifice; parenting is key to social values; children are a labour barrier for those families whose mothers must work	Children are a resource for economic development; they are the key to Canada's economic future	Children are an obstacle to work-family balance; they are a family responsibility	Children are a parental responsibility, except for vulnerable children for which government has direct responsibility
Views and values of Childcare	Stigmatized labour support for parents, primarily working mothers	Universal labour support for parents	Individualist consumer-based service for parents	Targeted social support for vulnerable children
Legitimation techniques	Moral evaluation, authorization	Rationalization	Moral evaluation	Rationalization, mythopoesis

Next, Table 10.2 provides a summary of my Political Discourse Analysis findings by each of the Periods under study.

Table 10.2 Summary of Findings from Political Discourse Analysis

Childcare policy choice	Action claim	Value	Goal	Means-goal
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Period One's Canada Child Care Act (Bill C-144)	The Federal government will encourage the development of childcare throughout Canada by assisting provinces to meet the costs of increased childcare provision.	It is important to eliminate a barrier to women who must work or wish to work.	To increase the number of child care spaces by at least 200,000 over a seven year period.	If the Federal government supports provinces / territories with \$4billion over seven years, it will achieve its goal.
Period Two's 2003 Framework	The Federal government will further invest in provincially-territorially-regulated early learning and child care programs for children under six.	It is important to improve the development of children because their future well-being is linked to the country's economic forecast and well-being; and it is important for parents to participate in employment or training.	To further promote early childhood development and support the participation of parents in employment or training by improving access to affordable quality early learning and childcare programs and services.	If the Federal government invests in provincially-territorially-regulated ELCC for children under six, the development of these children and their future well-being will improve, as will the country's.
Period Three's Universal Child Care Benefit	The Federal government will assist families by supporting their childcare choice through direct financial support.	It is important that the Federal government support families to make their own childcare decisions.	To assist families to make childcare choices that best meet their needs.	If the Federal government assists families with \$100 / \$160 per month per child, parents will be able to make childcare choices that best meet their family's needs.
Period Four's 2017 Framework	The Federal government will commit funding to provinces and	It is important that governments support parents,	To ensure all children can experience the enriching	If the Federal government invests in provincially-

	territories to further build early learning and childcare systems by addressing local, regional and system priorities that have an impact on those families most in need.	families and communities in their efforts to ensure the best possible future for their children.	environment of quality early learning and childcare that supports children's development to reach their full potential	territorially-regulated childcare for less advantaged children under six, the development of these children and their future well-being will improve.
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My main finding from this research study is that the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, and the views and values related childcare, have changed significantly throughout the past three decades. What remains constant, however, is that these constructions and values are largely influenced by the economic, social, and political interests of particular eras. Given children-related policy decisions vary significantly from one government administration to the next, such policy choices put forward by varying political actors warrant critical scrutiny and demand a level of accountability through a children's rights framework. While Canada is a signatory to such a children's rights framework, that of the UNCRC, it plays a limited role in public accountability because it has not been incorporated into domestic law. Furthering its commitment to the UNCRC by finally incorporating it into domestic law would, at last, hold Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments accountable to children's rights, including children-centred considerations of childcare and other children-related policy areas, in a meaningful way.

10.3 Research Contributions

The following section presents the contributions my research study makes to the methodologies of Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis; the new

sociology of childhood, children-centred discourse analysis and children-centred approaches to research; the study of childcare policy; and the profession of social work.

10.3.1 Contribution to Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Discourse Analysis

My research study demonstrates the benefits of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1992, 2001, 2003) as a way to unpack discourse and reveal *how* discourse and discursive practices can be used to exert power and influence. The application of a rigorous textual analysis method demonstrates the techniques of discourse as a tool of power, revealing taken-for-granted assumptions and making visible the invisible. In this way, I have demonstrated how the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis can serve as an emancipatory tool, fostering a critical culture of questioners. Further, my integration of Fairclough's well-established Critical Discourse Analysis with Fairclough and Fairclough's lesser-established Political Discourse Analysis contributes to the knowledge base of the emerging methodology. Employing these two complementary methodologies strengthened the rigour of my research and extended my analysis beyond the examination of the political discourse surrounding childcare policy to include an examination of the policy choice itself. Moreover, my research study provides an example of how integrating an additional theoretical perspective, such as childhood theory, within a Critical Discourse Analysis study deepens the explanatory power of discourse. Last, integrating a critical realist lens to my research strikes a balanced approach to interpreting discourse, revealing its influence on the social world while recognizing that discourse alone cannot provide a full and generalizable explanation. As such, my discourse study complements the findings of childcare studies that have employed historical institutionalist approaches to reveal the structural aspects of the material world, as reviewed in chapter two.

10.3.2 Contribution to the Study of Childcare Policy

My overview of the current body of childcare policy literature demonstrates the value of historical institutionalist approaches of path dependency theories when examining Canada's childcare history. Indeed, my examination of the impact and policy legacy of social structures on childcare policy informed the macrosociological component of my three-way Critical Discourse Analysis and the descriptive and normative critique of my Political Discourse Analysis. For example, incorporating the international research findings of regime theory-based studies of childcare policy allowed me to conclude that social democratic regime approaches to childcare policy are most reflective of children-centred considerations of childcare, including equitable provision, children-centred quality, democratic participation, rights-based provision and universal access. Regime theory-based studies also recognize change related to social policy, such as the global influence of liberalism on national approaches to childcare, including the way liberalism has recently influenced the childcare policies of social democratic regimes in Sweden and Finland (Ellingsaeter, 2012; Karila, 2002; Viitanen, 2011). This literature allowed me to position Canada's history of Federal-level childcare policy choices within the global context of change and continuity, thus corroborating my discovery of a growing discursive trend toward neoliberalism, evident by the dominance of a business genre within the political discourse surrounding childcare. Indeed, the description of Canada's changing approaches to social welfare throughout its post-World War II history, as offered by regime theory-based (Mahon, 2008; Findlay, 2015) and human capital theory-based studies (Campbell-Barr and Nygard, 2014), and federalism-focused studies (Brennan and Mahon, 2011; Tremblay, Aubrey, Jette and Vaillancourt, 2002; Tremblay and Vaillancourt, 2002) provided an important backdrop to my macrosociological analysis of the four key periods of my study. For example, a human capital theory-based study (Campbell-Barr & Nygard, 2014) suggests the economic challenges related to

globalization and the increasing trend of neo-liberalism has led to a modernization of welfare states whereby policies are given priority if they strengthen a state's knowledge economy. Such an understanding may explain why the children-as-resource discourse was so significantly favoured by the Liberal administration of Period Two. It doesn't, however, explain why the sitting Liberal government abandoned its human capital-focused discourse in Period Four. My study, with its focus on discursive trends, offers some insight into the Liberal's recent shift in discourse, suggesting Canada's current Federal-level administration may have carried forward some of the seemingly successful discursive techniques of the previous Conservative government—thus, representing a discourse choice of pragmatism over ideology.

My review of the literature revealed the way feminist studies have examined childcare through different theoretical frameworks, including citizenship regime theory (Daune-Richard & Mahon, 2001; Jenson & Sineau, 2001), theory of family (Skrypnek & Fast, 1996), feminist political economy theory (Bezanson & Luxton, 2006) and feminist-focused discourse studies (Dobrowolsky & Saint-Martin, 2005; Osgood, 2005; Prentice, 2009). Importantly, these studies, have exposed gender-based power relations that influence state approaches to childcare. My study, with its children-centred lens, complements such research. Adding a generational lens to the exploration of the intersections of power imbalance reveals an important finding of oppression against children that would otherwise be overlooked by a gender lens. Moreover, my findings reveal how the constructions of childhood, the collective identities of children, and the views and values related to childcare are often entwined with the constructions of women and motherhood and the views and values related to child-rearing. For example, my exposure of monotropism in the discourse of Period One and Period Three corroborates the findings of the feminist studies I reviewed in chapter two. The path to this finding, however, was illuminated by a children-centred analysis, over that of a feminist analysis. Given the complementary findings

of a gender-lens and a generational-lens to the study of childcare, it could be argued that change and continuity related to childcare is better explained through critical approaches that reveal the intersections of both *gender* and *generation* in the study of oppression. Thus, my study provides an important component to the childcare knowledge base and highlights the importance of intersectionality.

One of the most important findings of the media-focused discourse studies I reviewed in chapter two relates to the discourse of choice, as favoured by the Conservative government in Period Two. Critical discourse analysts suggest a choice discourse reflects the societal value of consumerism, which may explain why this discourse was favoured by many Canadian media outlets (Richardson, 2011; Thériault, 2006). My study builds upon this finding by revealing the current Liberal government's abandonment of a consumer choice discourse in favour of one that promotes regulated childcare for middle class families. While my examination of Period Four (2015-2017) is limited in that it offers only two years of political discourse to examine, this finding of another shift in discourse may be attributed to the new Federal government's desire to distance itself from the Conservative government (2006-2015) and the legacy of its UCCB childcare policy choice.

Further, the children-centred discourse studies I examined in chapter two offer examples of precedent in applying the new sociology of childhood to critical discourse analysis studies. My study builds upon the ground-breaking work of Kiersey and Hayes (2010) and Kiersey (2011), by offering a Canadian example to this emerging area of study. The conclusions of my study are similar to the findings of these Ireland-based studies, suggesting that the lack of a children's rights discourse in both Canadian and Irish political discourse may explain the political inaction related to childcare policy of these two countries.

In conclusion, the most-cited limitation of path dependency-based studies is that a wholly-structural explanation does not fully explain change and continuity related to social welfare policies. While I do not claim that my research study fully explains change and continuity related to childcare policy, I believe it contributes to an explanation by providing a detailed examination of *how* the many discursive techniques used by those in power to establish, defend and legitimize different childcare policy choices. As such, my study complements historical institutionalist approaches to the study of childcare, an approach I've demonstrated in the macrosociological analysis of each of the four Periods under study. Further, I argue that the objectives of path-dependency studies, such as those grounded by citizenship regime theory, the theory of family, and feminist political economy theory are not dissimilar to the objectives of the new sociology of childhood; all serve to reveal the histories of systemic discrimination related to particular social groups. However, I believe the children-centred lens of my study is well-suited to a study of childcare insofar as it extends policy analysis to include the history, social conditions, and social structures that impact the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children. Moreover, a children-centred lens serves to reveal the relationship between discourse and power, specifically the ways in which these power relations impact children, a key area of focus in the new studies of childhood.

10.3.3 Contribution to Childhood Theory and Children-Centred Research

My examination of the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children illustrates that the cultural beliefs, values and norms related to the treatment of children have changed significantly throughout history. What remains constant is that these constructions have been largely influenced by the economic, political and social interests of the time. Cultural beliefs, values and norms related to children are not always altruistic and policy decisions made in the best interests of children are not beyond reproach, rather, they require critical examination.

Moreover, my historical review of childhood demonstrates the influence of history on contemporary society, revealing that some injustices toward children, dating back to the Middle Ages, continue in today's time as evident by the way children's rights, committed to through the UNCRC, are often ignored—generally, without penalty—by developed countries, including Canada. Further, as stated in section 10.3.2, the use of childhood theory in my study provides an important contribution to social research, revealing the generational order within society and exposing the ways in which children are over-looked and disempowered in the social world.

Of course, there is an inherent limitation in my children-centred research in that my study was conducted by an adult researcher who sees the world through her adult-centric perspectives, values, and biases. To this end, incorporating practices of reflexivity and ethical reflection was integral to conducting my children-centred research. As outlined in my methodology chapter, I reflected on the following questions and considerations, informed by the critical questioning approach of Fairclough and Fairclough (2012, p. 67), using a journaling process of reflexivity to facilitate my use of a critical children-centred lens:

- 1) Is the policy choice a 'good' choice in relation to other policy choices that have been enacted in other countries?
- 2) Is the policy choice under study a 'good' choice as it pertains to children-centred considerations?
- 3) What children-centred considerations does the policy choice under study achieve?
- 4) What children-centred considerations does the policy choice under study ignore?
- 5) How does the policy choice establish, defend and legitimize adult-centric goals?

Applying a children-centred lens to discourse analysis research is an emerging field, and my research study, grounded by my historical analysis of the constructions of childhood and the

collective identities of children, contributes an important example to this emerging area of scholarly research.

10.3.4 Contribution to the Profession of Social Work

A history of the profession of social work illustrates a long-standing debate between three views of social work, described by Payne (2006) as: the therapeutic view which focuses on facilitating an individual's growth, change, and self-fulfilment; the social order view which seeks to improve social supports within the existing political and economic environment; and the transformational view which challenges the economic and political structures of oppression through social justice efforts and calls for reform. While those of the transformational view are explicit in their pursuit of social revolution, social workers who practice within the therapeutic and social order realms of social work may often share the ultimate transformational goals of social justice. As Payne describes, these views of the profession of social work are not an either-or debate, but, rather, a reconciliation of all three approaches (Payne, p. 10).

Beginning with the era of rapid industrialization (1865-1914), the emergence of settlement houses ushered in social work's contribution to the transformational model of practice, while other social workers focused their efforts on individual casework and the administration of charity relief, representative of the therapeutic and social order views, respectively (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). In the years between 1914-1929, some historians argue that social work became immersed in the therapeutic model, with its focus on the individual and the psychoanalysis trend of practice, ignoring the conditions of environment (Bailey & Brake, 1975; Garvin & Cox, 2001). The years between 1929-1954 saw the Great Depression and World War II, two significant events that impacted social work. The Depression, with its unprecedented unemployment and wide-spread poverty, was the catalyst for an ideological shift from an individualistic to a collective approach, as evidenced by Roosevelt's New Deal, Mackenzie

King's emergent social welfare state, and the resurgence of the labour movement. During this time, the Canadian Association of Social Work (CASW) publicly recognized the role of social work in reforming environments to meet people's needs, however, it demonstrated a cautious approach with modest critiques of government and the economic and political systems (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). During this period, some social workers first promoted publicly-funded and administered programs of childcare. For example, at the 1942 National Social Work conference, the Toronto Welfare Council advocated for "daycare" as a way to assist single mothers to pull themselves out of poverty and to reform youth engaged in "juvenile delinquency" (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011, p. 114). In contrast, other social workers opposed childcare, suggesting it would allow women to abdicate their motherhood responsibilities and bring about the demise of the nuclear family. Childcare was not largely taken up as a social issue priority until the late 1960s (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011).

The years between 1955-1969 saw yet another shift in social work ideology, in response to the civil rights movement and the peace movement surrounding the Vietnam War (Garvin & Cox, 2001). While in Canada many social workers were active members of these movements, the CASW distanced itself from the peace movement and the radical left (Jennissen & Lundy, 2011). Many progressive and radical social workers found it difficult to work inside their profession; some abandoned social work organizations for advocacy organizations where they could have a stronger voice, often with the labour movement. By the late 1970s, the CASW agreed to address social concerns, albeit their calls for reform reflected a modest approach to identifying structural failings and strategies for solutions (Jennison & Lundy, 2011). Recent history demonstrates a more transformational approach of social work, grounded by the emerging theories such of critical theory, systems theory, structural theory, and feminist theory.

Dovetailing with this shift toward a transformational approach of social work, many scholars believe there exists an important role for social work in the area of childcare (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2012; Kahn, 2014), particularly with respect to championing childcare as an issue of children's needs, children's equity, and children's rights. Given, too, that social justice is the philosophical underpinning of transformational social work, a children's rights perspective to the issue of childcare aligns with the goals of social work.

There is much social workers can learn from those who work in the area of children's rights. Children's rights workers reflect a variety of professional backgrounds, including Law, Sociology, Psychology, Nursing, and Education. A study of children's rights workers' roles compared to that of social workers' roles reveals important differences: while social workers work in the best interests of young people, children's rights workers voice children's wishes and feelings, rather than act upon what they believe to be in a young person's best interests (Barnes, 2012). Some speculate that the difference between children's rights workers and social workers may be due to the fact that social work is grounded in theories of child development, an approach, as I've previously described, that is grounded by the Western value of the ideal child and a pathology-based approach of child psychology. Moreover, social workers who work in child welfare may be constrained by the therapeutic or social order views of social work. In contrast, children's rights work is grounded by human rights theory and childhood theory, theories that reflect a transformational view of social work.

Some suggest that social work practice should "incorporate a children's rights lens, as appropriate by age/capacity, to empower children and treat them as rights-bearing citizens, while at the same time ensuring ethics of social work and protection" (Barnes, 2012, p. 1288). Many suggest there is room for social workers to incorporate a children's rights perspective into their work with children in such a way that a balance is struck between ethics of care and children's

autonomy (Barnes, 2012; Rasmussen, Hyvonen, Nygren, and Khoo, 2010). For example, researchers of one study (Rasmussen et al., 2010) examined the effects of children-directed social work practice in Australia, Canada, and Sweden. They found positive results of such an approach, though they suggest specialized training is imperative to support social workers in making the paradigm shift toward rights-based approaches in their practice.

Applying a children's rights perspective to social work is, however, complicated: it is not always possible for social workers to accommodate children's autonomy. For example, there may be legitimate safety concerns and workplace policies (e.g., government procedures concerning risk assessment) that preclude a social worker from supporting a child's decision or wish. Moreover, social work has a historical protectionist view of children (Barnes, 2012; Merrit & Klein, 2015), similar to that of Lee's (1982) protection construction of childhood. As such, social work may be implicated in reinforcing a targeted approach to childcare policy, such as the approach currently promoted by the Liberal Federal government, in recognizing childcare as a way to mitigate the negative impacts of child maltreatment. This is a complex issue, because there is sufficient evidence to suggest that high-quality childcare can increase the cognitive development of neglected children and buffer negative outcomes for such children (Merrit & Klein, 2015, p. 193). Because of this potential, social workers must be able to recognize and secure high-quality childcare settings for the children under their care. But, of course, in addition to their protectionist-based work with vulnerable children, social workers must also contribute to macro-level advocacy efforts and transformational approaches to ensure equitable access to childcare is possible for all children at risk.

10.4 Implications for Childcare Advocacy

As I have recognized in chapter five, my study is limited by its focus on the political discourse of governments in power. While I've explained my rationale for this focus, I do

acknowledge a recommendation to examine counter-hegemonic efforts by political parties and advocacy groups that are not in positions of governance, such as the discourse of the NDP party and childcare advocacy groups. For example, under the leadership of Tom Mulcair, childcare was a key plank in the NDP's 2015 campaign platform, with its focus on affordability (a \$15/day/child fee cap) and universality. This childcare policy position, while arguably the most progressive and ambitious childcare policy choice of the three major political parties, might offer further evidence of a continued adult-centric discourse, or it may provide counter-hegemonic evidence of a discursive shift toward a rights-based construction of childhood—though my preliminary findings suggest it places emphasis on the adult-centric financial reprieve affordable childcare can offer parents, over the child-centred benefits it can offer children.

Importantly, recent Canadian focus group research examining public opinion of childcare suggests the general public has little awareness of universal childcare programs that are available to children and their parents, as a valued right, in countries such as Sweden and Finland (Hennessy & Leebosh, 2011). Once focus group participants were made aware of these entitlement-based childcare programs, their support for a universal childcare program significantly increased (Hennessy & Leebosh, 2011), suggesting that the *member resources* of individuals—the taken-for-granted assumptions that individuals hold based on their exposure to certain aspects of the social world—can be influenced through the presentation of new knowledge and counter-hegemonic efforts. This is an important finding, as it suggests that the taken-for-granted assumptions, ideologies, and values of individuals can be influenced through educational efforts. Extending from this, population-level education efforts may be effective in facilitating critical reflection and understanding of social policy issues, such as childcare.

Further, the media coverage of childcare in four Canadian newspapers (The National Post, The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, and The Ottawa Citizen) during Canada's 2006

Federal election shows it did little to help Canadian voters understand the varying childcare policy platforms of different political parties (Rauhala, Albanese, Ferns, Law, Haniff, & MacDonald, 2012). Some scholars suggest that while elections present media opportunities through which to profile childcare policy, advocates must undertake careful planning to ensure their messages are effective. For example, some scholars argue that the childcare advocacy movement's promotion of a social investment discourse may have reinforced a neo-liberal ideology and a market-driven cultural value towards childcare (Langford, Prentice, Albanese, Summers, Messina-Goertzen & Richardson, 2013). In contrast, counter-hegemonic efforts that promote a children's rights discourse, related to childcare and other children-related policy areas, could prove more successful at garnering public support for publicly-funded childcare and bringing attention to children's needs, children's equity, and children's rights.

Importantly, a children's rights discourse could also promote the many children-centred considerations of childcare policy, including rights-based provision, universal access, equitable provision, quality-assurance, and democratic participation. This view of childcare has significant implications for how it is delivered and made available to children: it constructs children as citizens; it values children as learners; it values children as social agents capable of co-directing their development and learning experiences; and it recognizes that children have inequitable opportunities for maximizing their potential (e.g., poverty-related barriers), which must be addressed through progressive social policy.

As described in chapter three, the principle of democratic participation, a guiding philosophy of children-centred childcare, must also be extended to the ways in which governments position their approaches to children-related policies. An agonistic approach to democracy promotes the view and value that there are always different needs and interests related to policy choices, and governments must allow for an exchange of diverse ideas when

forming policy. When applied to childcare policy, the principle of agonistic democracy promotes the importance of establishing childcare policies within nations that respond to differing needs and interests of both adults and children. In Canada, this could include enhanced policies of maternity and parental leave (including fathers' leave, such as the current Liberal government's policy choice) and family allowances that work together with children-centred approaches to childcare. In practice, this could also mean parents and families choose from a variety of forms of childcare, including regulated childcare reflective of children-centred conditions, as well as informal care such as: child minding, kinship care, respite care, and drop-in centre arrangements. By extending the philosophy of agonistic democracy to childcare, parents would be able to make decisions on childcare in balance with what works best for their needs and the needs of their children.

An interesting position put forward by Durrant (2006), suggests that the UNCRC is key to driving significant change when it comes to honouring children's rights. She suggests that the UNCRC can support decision-making in issues of children-related policy by serving to overcome the inherent adult-centricity of politics. She cites Sweden as case in point: its implementation of the UNCRC has heralded an approach to family and children-related policy that is predicated on the value of societal responsibility (2006). Further, she recognizes that the most challenging aspect of developing policies that respect children's rights relates to democratic participation of children in decision-making, acknowledging that it is difficult for adults to conceive of how to provide such participation opportunities. To address the adult-centric tendencies of the social world, Sweden has ensured a Children's Ombudsman (established in 1993) and the implementation of child impact assessments that guide policy-setting. The main duty of Sweden's Children's Ombudsman is to "promote the rights and interests of children and young people, as set forth in the UNCRC...[and] monitor and promote the implementation of the

Convention by all levels of government (Durrant, 2006, p. 11). Importantly, Sweden's Children's Ombudsman is advised by several children's councils and a youth council in order to ensure the democratic participation of children and youth.

Moreover, the establishment of child impact assessments ensures that policy decisions are considered in light of the UNCRC. Thus, all proposed policy decisions are analyzed in relation to the articles of the UNCRC; researched with children to determine their needs and provide opportunity for them to articulate their interests; and assessed by the potential impact upon children's rights. The key goal of this process is to ensure that children's interests are weighted against all other interests, including the economic objectives of adult-society (Durrant, 2006, p. 12). As an accountability measure, if it is determined that other interests (e.g., economic goals) carry more weight than children's interests, the decision-makers must show that children's rights have been taken into account, explain why they were deferred, and put forward measures that will compensate for the policy's impact on children. These policy measures of Sweden are similar to the proposed policy measures of Canada's Standing Committee's call for a Children's Commissioner, a recommendation that has been ignored by the governing Federal political parties of Canada reviewed in my study, including today's current Liberal government of Canada.

10.5 Study Limitations

There are different analytical lenses through which to analyze childcare. I chose to examine childcare through a childhood theoretical lens because I believe it positions the study of childcare as an important children's rights issue. Within this children-centred focus, however, my analysis was limited in its capacity to reveal other power relations (e.g., gender-based, race-based, class-based) that may be embedded within childcare discourse. Future scholarly work that integrates Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis with gender-based, race-based, and class-

based analytical lenses would build upon my Critical Discourse Analysis study of childcare to more fully reveal the intersections of power imbalances within the political discourse surrounding childcare and the power struggles related to the children-related policy choices of Canada's Federal government.

Second, my use of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis limited the ways in which my findings can be considered objective. My methodology reflects Fairclough's epistemic stance that there can be no such thing as objective analysis (2003). As the critical discourse analyst must draw upon her own subjective knowledge and political standpoint in order to conduct her analysis, her findings will always reflect her knowledge and political standpoint. As such, I fully acknowledge my support for a nationally-coordinated, publicly-funded childcare system that reflects children-centred considerations. To mitigate my bias, I was reflexive of my taken-for-granted assumptions, continually thinking and re-thinking my analysis through a critical lens, drawing upon my comprehensive historical analysis of childhood (as detailed in chapter three), and using a journal to note my thoughts, values and assumptions. I fully recognize, however, that this process of reflexivity can never truly eliminate researcher bias and subjection.

As previously identified, another limitation of my research study was the inherent adult perspective that I bring to my discourse analysis. While I undertook a comprehensive historical analysis of the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children to deepen my ability to interpret childcare policy through a children-centred lens, as well as a reflexive journaling process to help me identify my adult-centric bias over the course of my analysis, it must be acknowledged that there exists an inherent bias in adult-led research, mine included.

A fourth limitation of my study relates to Fairclough's use of a critical realist paradigm within Critical Discourse Analysis. This paradigm accepts that the social world is an open system, and, as such, social researchers will never be able to completely or fully analyze it

(Farrelly, 2010). The findings of my research reflect this tenet of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. I offer a glimpse of understanding to my research question, but I do not claim to offer a complete and generalizable hypothesis as my conclusion.

Last, in purposefully selecting data sources that reflect the childcare discourse of a variety of governing political parties, I chose to ignore the political discourse of opposing political parties, those who were not in power, as well as the counter-hegemonic discourse of non-governing political parties, advocacy groups, and parents. While I recognize the value of analyzing this broader variety of discourse for the purposes of revealing a greater body of differing constructions related to childhood and children, I chose to select discourse that reflects the views and values put forward by those in governing positions of power. This decision was made based on the aim of my research study: to reveal the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children that are embedded within the political discourse surrounding childcare policy in an effort to reveal the ways in which *systems of power* in Canada—as represented by the Federal government—exert their control over policy issues related to children. The study of counter-hegemonic discourse, including that of Opposition parties and advocacy groups, as well as media discourse studies that examine the arena of media and public discourse, would deepen my examination of childcare policy in Canada over the last three decades. Discourse from these additional sources, contrasted with the findings from my study, may reveal the strengths and limitations of the counter-hegemonic efforts of those who have opposed the policy choices of governments in power.

10.6 Future Research

Future research motivated by my findings include the examination of childcare policy choices at the Provincial/Territorial level. Given the responsibility of Provinces/Territories for childcare, and the numerous ways these jurisdictions vary in their approaches to childcare, as

identified in chapter two, a Critical Discourse Study that examines the differing constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children embedded in Provincial/Territorial political discourse could reveal important findings on how these constructions have influenced the respective childcare policy choices of these governments.

Further, an examination of the political discourse surrounding childcare policy, through both a children-centred lens and a feminist lens, could reveal the intersections of generational oppression and gender-based oppression. As I've noted earlier, the views and values of childcare are entwined with the constructions of childhood, children, motherhood, and women. Moreover, future research that applies an intersectionality perspective could reveal other intersections of oppression, including class-based and race-based oppression and the influence of these on childcare policy. Additionally, my integration of Critical Discourse Analysis with Political Discourse Analysis provides a rigorous example for future research in a variety of child policy areas, including poverty reduction. Given the current Federal Liberal government's policy choice related to poverty reduction, namely, the Canada Child Benefit, described in section 2.3.3, future research in this area could further reveal how systems of power in Canada exert their control, manufactured through discourse, over policy issues related to children.

10.7 Conclusion

Per Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1992, 2001, 2003) and Fairclough and Fairclough's Political Discourse Analysis (2012), the claim of objectivity is never made by the analyst. Rather, the analyst, steeped in the theoretical body of work she has chosen to integrate into her analysis, claims a political objective, that of social justice for the social group or social issue they study—children, in the case of my research study. With this in mind, my application of childhood theory focused on the children-centred considerations of childcare policy, those aspects of childcare policy that affect children, rather than parents, families, communities, and

economies. By integrating childhood theory with Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis and Fairclough and Fairclough's Political Discourse Analysis in my research study, I have demonstrated the ways in which Canada's adult-centric childcare policies have placed little consideration on children's needs, children's equity, and children's rights. Through rigorous and systematic techniques, I have illustrated the discursive practices, embedded within political discourse, that create the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children that, then, establish, defend and legitimize Federal-level childcare policy choices. Indeed, Canada's Federal-level childcare policy choices to date have perpetuated a history of power imbalance evidenced in the way its legislations and policies fail to recognize and uphold children's rights, such as the right to childcare as committed to by Canada as signatory to the UNCRC. And, while Canada's current Liberal government has endorsed some children-centred considerations in its present day Framework for childcare, it, too, fails to construct childhood and the collective identities of children through a rights perspective; thus rendering invisible the view and value of children as rights-bearers.

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Appendix A: Critical Discourse Analysis Method (sourced from Fairclough, 2003)

Social Events:

What social event, and what chain of social events, is the text a part of?

What social practice or network of social practices can the events be referred to, be seen as framed within?

Is the text part of a chain or network of texts?

Genre:

Is the text situated within a genre chain?

Is the text characterized by a mix of genres?

What genres does the text draw upon, and what are their characteristics in terms of activity, social relations, communication technology?

Difference:

Which (combination) of the following scenarios characterize the orientation to difference in the text?

a) an openness to, acceptance of, recognition of difference; an exploration of difference, as in 'dialogue' in the richest sense of the term

c) an attempt to resolve or overcome difference

d) a bracketing of difference, a focus on commonality, solidarity

e) a consensus, a normalization and acceptance of differences of power which brackets or suppresses differences of meaning

Intertextuality:

Of relevant other texts/voices, which are included, which are significantly excluded?

Where are other voices included? Are they attributed, and if so, specifically or non-specifically?

Are attributed voices directly reported (quoted) or indirectly reported?

How are other voices textured in relation to the authorial voice, and in relation to each other?

Assumptions:

What existential, propositional, or value assumptions are made?

Is there a case for seeing any assumptions as ideological?

Semantic / Grammatical Relations between Sentences and Clauses:

What are the predominant semantic relations between sentences and clauses (causal - reason, consequence, purpose; conditional; temporal; additive; elaborative; contrastive / concessive)?

Are there higher-level semantic relations over larger stretches of the text (e.g., problem - solution)?

Are grammatical relations between clauses predominantly paratactic, hypotactic, or embedded?

Are particularly significant relations of equivalence and difference set up in the text?

Exchanges, Speech Functions and Grammatical Mood:

What are the predominant types of exchange (activity exchange, or knowledge exchange) and speech functions (statement, question, demand, offer)?

What types of statement are there (statements of fact, predictions, hypotheticals, evaluations)?

Are there 'metaphorical' relations between exchanges, speech functions, or types of statement (e.g., demands which appear as statements, evaluations which appear as factual statements)?

What is the predominant grammatical mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative)?

Discourses:

What discourses are drawn upon in the text, and how are they textured together? Is there a significant mixing of discourses?

What are the features that characterize the discourses which are drawn upon (semantic relations between words, collocations, metaphors, assumptions, grammatical features)?

Representation of Social Events:

What elements of represented social events are included or excluded, and which included elements are most salient?

How abstractly or concretely are social events represented?

How are the processes represented? What are the predominant process types (material, mental, verbal, relational, existential)?

Are there instances of grammatical metaphor in the representation of processes?

How are social actors represented (activated/passivated, personal/impersonal, named/classified, specific/generic)?

How are time, space and the relation between 'space-times' represented?

Styles:

What styles are drawn upon in the text, and how are they textured together?

Is there a significant mixing of styles?

What are the features that characterize the styles that are drawn upon ('body language, pronunciation, vocabulary, metaphor, modality)?

Modality:

What do authors commit themselves to in terms of truth (epistemic modalities)? Or in terms of obligation and necessity (deontic modalities)?

To what extent are modalities categorical (assertion, denial), to what extent are they modalized?

What are the markers of modalization (modal verbs, modal adverbs)

Evaluation:

To what values do authors commit themselves?

How are values realized - as evaluative statements, statements with deontic modalities, statements with affective mental processes, or assumed values?)