COALITION-BUILDING AND THE FIGHT FOR UNIVERSAL CHILD CARE IN ONTARIO, CANADA, 1981 – 2022

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Abstract

This thesis constructed a chronological account of the advocacy work of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) from 1981 until 2022, evaluating how effectively the OCBCC advanced an inclusive vision of child care that served all families and child care workers.

This account of the OCBCC was based on a descriptive analysis of news articles, Hansard transcripts, organizational documents, and interviews with former OCBCC executive, OFL and CUPE staffers, child care researchers, and Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs). I also used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify discourses used by government to justify child care reform and the OCBCC in its campaigning for a public child care system.

I found that although the OCBCC campaigned for reforms that benefitted low-income racialized families, including campaigning for expanding child care subsidies, the OCBCC did not engage in more explicit anti-racist campaigning to demand culturally appropriate and anti-racist child care. Similarly, although the OCBCC campaigned to improve the wages and working conditions of child care workers as a highly feminized and racially diverse profession, the OCBCC initially opposed supporting child care's integration with the education system in the 1980s and more disruptive forms of direct action in support of child care workers.

I discovered that even as neoliberal reform, including austerity, deregulation, and marketization, undermined the actualization of the OCBCC's child care objectives, neoliberalism and its ongoing threat also had a conservatizing effect on the OCBCC and its affiliates. This occasionally undermined the coalition's ability to advance an inclusive child care system. The defunding of women's advocacy groups by the federal government left the OCBCC with fewer

resources to support the equitable inclusion of marginalized workers and parents within the OCBCC's decision-making executive bodies. Austerity and its threat also conditioned the OCBCC's non-profit child care operator affiliates to oppose reform beneficial to child care workers because of concerns over rising labour costs and lost revenue in the absence of sufficient direct operational funding from scarcity-minded governments.

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List of Acronyms

AECEO	The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario
ADCO	The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario
CAP	Canada Assistance Plan
CAW	Canadian Auto Workers Union
CCTC	Child Care Tax Credit
CHST	Canada Health and Social Transfer
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CLC	Canadian Labor Congress
CRRU	Child Care Resource and Research Unit
CUPE	The Canadian Union of Public Employees
ELCC	Early Learning and Child Care Foundations Program
FDELK	Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten
NAC	National Action Committee on the Status of Women
OCBCC	The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
OCBTU	Ontario Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
OFL	The Ontario Federation of Labour
OPSEU	Ontario Public Service Employees Union
RECE	Registered Early Childhood Educator
RCSW	Royal Commission on the Status of Women
SPCCC	Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care
UCCB	The Universal Child Care

Chapter One: Introduction

Despite the important role universal child care has in supporting gender equity in society, child care has historically been an unaffordable and inaccessible service for most Canadian households[1]. Many Canadian households that need child care are often forced to pay jaw-dropping fees for a service of variable quality. For example, in Ontario, where low-income child care subsidies remain in short supply, on average, households paid more than $10,000 annually to enroll their child in child care in 2019, with costs exceeding $20,000 for child care in Toronto and for infant care (MacDonald & Friendly, 2019).

Even when households can afford child care, many still struggle to access it because of a lack of supply. This is partially the consequence of provincial and territorial governments refraining from taking on a more direct role creating child care spaces. Instead, government continues to rely on licensed non-profit and commercial providers and unlicensed home care providers to create the child care spaces needed to meet household demand. Relying on third-party providers to expand child care means that new child care spaces are often not created where they are needed most, including in low-income areas. This is why in 2018, 44 percent of all non-school aged children continued to live in child care deserts, which are defined as postal codes where at least three children are in potential competition for each licensed space (Macdonald, 2018).

[1] An obvious exception to this is Quebec, which established a low-fee and universal child care program in 1997. It should be noted that quality is highly variable across child care centers in Quebec. To deal with the province's undersupply of child care, the provincial government created a tax credit that reimburses families for up to 75% of child care fees at private child care centers and home-based providers in 2003. This facilitated the proliferation of lower-quality commercial providers in the province.

The high cost of child care and the lack of supply meant that one in four parents in Canada, and one in five parents of children under the age of 1, reported difficulties finding child care that was geographically and financially accessible in 2022 (Statistics Canada, 2022a).

High child care fees paid by families have not translated into fair wages and better working conditions for child care workers who are underpaid and overworked like other care workers. Take the 2022 Ontario salary range for the early learning and care profession as an example of this: Registered ECE Classification One (for those with a minimum of a diploma in Early childhood Education): $21-$27 per hour; Classification Two (An Early childhood Assistant with a 1-year college certificate): $19 per hour; Classification Three (child care worker hired at the discretion of the center/program director based on experience): $15-$17 per hour. These low wages, which sit below the living wage in most Ontario cities, are often not accompanied by a pension or benefits, making the child care profession an unviable career path for many (Canadian Child Care Federation, n.d.).

The devaluation of the profession is a primary reason for high workforce attrition in the child care sector and the deficit of qualified early childhood educators with a minimum of a diploma in early childhood education. These qualified workers became a regulated profession in 2007 with the establishment of the College of Early Childhood Educators, but the professionalization of qualified workers did not convince government or employers to improve their wages and working conditions. Instead, qualified RECEs often work alongside unqualified child care staff in licensed child care settings doing the same work for similarly low pay. The result is both RECEs and unqualified staff are forced to seek additional employment (21 percent of RECEs and 19 percent of non-RECEs) while facing housing security concerns (Over 55 percent of RECEs and 57 percent of non-RECEs) (Akbari et al., 2024).

Like other devalued professions, child care workers are a highly feminized and racially diverse profession. An overwhelming 98 percent of child care workers are women[2] and one-third are immigrants or non-permanent residents (compared to one-quarter of workers in all other occupations) (Uppal & Savage, 2021). According to data collected by Toronto Children's Services in 2022, 41 percent of child care workers identify as racialized in Toronto, Ontario. Amongst these child care workers, 12 percent identified as Black, 10 percent identified as South Asian or Indo-Caribbean, nine percent identified as Southeast Asian, and four percent identified as First Nations, Inuit or Metis (Toronto children's Services, 2023, March). Racialization refers to the social, cultural, and individual processes in which groups are labelled as part of a particular race and are subjected to different and unequal treatment as a result (Dalal, 2013).

Low quality care is also a concern in child care, especially amongst commercial child care providers who take a portion of revenue as profit, rather than reinvest this money back into centers. Despite evidence that commercial providers provide lower-quality care compared to non-profit and public child care providers, commercial operators' presence in the child care sector grew from 20 percent in 2004 to 30 percent in 2016. Much of this growth occurred amongst bigger corporate chains interested in generating a profit on a large scale rather than amongst individually owned and operated child care centers (Friendly, 2019a; Prentice, 2006).

Racialized and migrant households face additional financial, language, and cultural barriers to accessing high-quality licensed child care in Canada. Racialized families are more likely to live in poverty than white Canadians, and as a result, they are more likely to choose unlicensed child care because these providers tend to be less expensive than licensed providers.

[2] A woman refers to a person who internally identifies and/or publicly expresses as a woman. This may include cisgender and transgender individuals and is not confined to individuals of a particular genetic or physical makeup (Butler, 2002).

The issue is unlicensed care tends to be of lower quality because these providers are not government regulated and inspected to ensure they meet health and safety standards.

Government documents and administrative support that is only offered in certain languages also creates unnecessary barriers for immigrant households who are unaware of or do not know how to access child care subsidies they are eligible for that could lower their child care costs. As a result, some immigrant households are forced to rely on informal and unlicensed child care options that are not as safe and as of high-quality as licensed subsidized care (Eizadirad & Abawi, 2021). Racialized and new immigrant households are also more likely to live in child care deserts, requiring parents and caregivers to walk long distances or take public transportation to access child care. Moreover, the issue of child care deserts is especially dire for Indigenous people living in remote and northern areas where communities struggle to access federal funding to create and expand Indigenous child care programming[3] (Johnston et al., 2020).

Even when Indigenous, racialized, and migrant households can access child care, early years programming and curriculum is often Eurocentric, reflecting the world according to European and Anglo-Canadian or white values and experiences. As a result, child care does not reflect the cultures and identities of racialized and Indigenous children. children are not taught about cultural differences in a supportive environment and staff are not educated on the importance of inclusion and anti-racism in early learning settings. As a result, racialized children and child care staff are often subjected to racist interactions from other child care workers, children, and families (Berman et al., 2017). The legacy of Eurocentrism in child care settings

[3] E.g., the federal Government of Canada administers three programs for Indigenous children and families including (1) First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative, (2) Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve, and (3) Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities.

has made Indigenous households particularly hesitant to participate in government-run child care after the trauma borne by such communities from residential schooling.

Notwithstanding the long list of shortcomings in Ontario child care, Ontario households are relatively advantaged compared to households in other parts of Canada. As of 2022, Ontario is the only province that provides full-day kindergarten for four and five-year-olds after it was established by former Liberal Premier, Dalton McGuinty, in 2010. The presence of commercial operators in Ontario is also relatively low compared to other regions, comprising 30 percent of all licensed providers in the province. In contrast, commercial providers make up most providers in other provinces and territories, including 67 percent of providers in the Yukon, 66 percent of providers in New Brunswick, 64 percent of providers in Newfoundland and Labrador, and 57 percent of providers in Alberta (Atkinson Center, 2023; Mendleson & Kennedy, 2022, October 2).

With the implementation of Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC), otherwise known as $10-per-day child care, access and quality of child care is planned to improve in Ontario and across the country. In 2021, Liberal Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced his government's decision to create a national child care system. Soon afterwards, his government formed bi-lateral agreements with each province and territory to begin establishing $10-per-day child care across the country. In Ontario, households that were able to secure a child care spot with a licensed child care center or home-based provider participating in $10-per-day child care benefitted from fees dropping by 50 percent in 2023. Fees in participating centers will continue to drop until they reach $10-per-day by 2026.

The activism of child care advocacy organizations and their trade union allies have had considerable influence on the history of progressive policy interventions in the Ontario child care

sector, including $10-per-day child care and full-day kindergarten for four-and-five-year-olds. These coalitions, including Child Care Now, The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, and the Toronto Community for Better Child Care, have worked together at the national, provincial/territorial, and municipal levels for more than fifty years to advance a vision of child care as a public good that all households have a right to access.

Their work was preceded by that of Action Day care, a coalition of parents, teachers, day care workers, community organizations, women's organizations, and trade unions, and was the main organization that lead the child care advocacy movement in Ontario in 1979. In the spring of 1981, this coalition evolved into The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, led by Susan Colley (Action Day care, n.d.), and in 1982 became The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (hereafter OCBCC). This shift in language reflected the child care movement's incorporation of more child-centric pedagogical goals; early childhood care was for the benefit of the child and not just to facilitate women's entrance into the labor force. This shift was influenced, in part, by the Institute of child Study at the University of Toronto and its recommendation that early learning should prioritize developmental objectives for children (Turgeon, 2014, pg. 237).

The OCBCC was initially founded by 17 organizations,[4] including trade unions and non-profit child care operators. Indigenous organizations also participated in the OCBCC from its inception, but it is not clear whether these organizations were ever official affiliates of the coalition or whether they had a purely consultative role (former OCBCC executive, Linda White,

[4] This includes the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, the Ontario Public School Men Teacher's Association, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, the Ontario Teachers Federation, the Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers, the Canadian Union for Public Employees, and the Canadian Auto Workers. Its Steering Committee was made up of representatives from the Ontario Federation of Labor, the Ontario Teachers Federation, Action Daycare, the Ontario Social Development Council, and the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario.

2021). There is also no evidence that organizations whose primary mandate was to combat racism participated in the coalition.

With the support of its affiliates and supporters, including individual early childhood educators, parents, and activists, the OCBCC continues to advocate for universal, affordable, high-quality, not-for-profit child care and decent wages for early childhood educators and child care staff (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, August 31, 2021).

1.1 The Dissertation: Focus & Questions

My primary focus for this project is the OCBCC. In my research, I explored the coalition's objectives, advocacy strategy, and the effectiveness of its actions in changing Ontario child care policy and public opinion from 1981, when the coalition was founded, until 2022. In exploring how the coalition operated, I prioritized investigating the influence of non-profit child care operators and trade unions within the coalition, examining how these affiliates influenced the OCBCC's objectives and strategies over time amidst a changing, if generally neoliberal, political, and economic context.

Amongst its trade union affiliates, I narrowed my focus and analysis to the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the Ontario Federation of Labor (OFL).

I chose to focus on CUPE because it has been the most active union in the OCBCC for the last two decades. As a union that represents public sector workers in education, healthcare, and social services, many of CUPE's members are women who need high-quality and affordable child care (CUPE, n.d.a). Cheryl Davis (2021), Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, confirms that CUPE's history of engaging in political action, including with the OCBCC, is a consequence of the large number of women the union represents:

> CUPE has always been a progressive union. I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that CUPE is a predominantly public sector union with a predominantly female membership. CUPE, certainly through the 80s and 90s, believed very strongly in movements, in supporting movements, and supporting the women's movement. There was much less emphasis in those days on electoral politics, when it came to making political change, and much more emphasis on extra-parliamentary activity and political activity between elections (Davis, 2021).

CUPE also represents 12,000 early childhood educators, cooks, and cleaners working in the child care sector. Hence, progressive political intervention into the child care sector will have direct implications for these workers. In this way, CUPE's participation in the OCBCC is part of a larger strategy to improve their workers' wages and working conditions (CUPE, n.d.d).

I also focused on OFL's participation in the OCBCC because the federation was a founding partner of the OCBCC and was one of the most active unions in the coalition during the 1980s. The OFL is Canada's largest labor federation and was pushed to pay attention to issues women workers cared about, including child care, with the increasing feminization of the labor market in the 1980s. Notably, the OFL supported the OCBCC in creating a set of policy proposals that informed the coalition's campaigning when it was initially formed in the early 1980s.

I had three inter-related research objectives in my study of the OCBCC. First, I explored and evaluated how the OCBCC advanced a transformative vision of child care that served all families and workers. In support of this objective, I also explored how policy change at the federal and provincial level can be understood in relation to the OCBCC's campaigning, considering when campaigns were effective in the short-term to prevent austerity and support

policy reform and how they were used over the longer term to build political and public will for larger progressive policy intervention.

In considering how the OCBCC served all households and workers, I prioritized an intersectional approach when appropriate. In my study, intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of race, class, and gender, producing overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and exploitation for individuals and groups (Davis, 1983). When issues around race and racism became apparent in the operations of the coalition and in the child care sector, I identified these as emergent issues that require further exploration.

My second aim was to explore whether and how and to what degree, the organizational structures of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL reproduced the systemic racism and sexism prevalent in wider Canadian society. Furthermore, did this influence how the OCBCC advanced the child care agenda?

Systemic racism and sexism refer to the policies and practices that exist through an entire society or organization that produces unfair disadvantage and harmful treatment to people based on their race and gender (Feagin, 2004; Ochoa, 2019). This results in the disproportionate accrual of wealth, status, and opportunity to white men at the expense of racialized people and women, especially racialized women. (Acker, 1990; Feagin, 2004; Ray, 2019).

I recognize here and throughout this project that the production of racial and gendered inequities in Canada can be traced to its founding as a colonial state. This model sought to "eliminate the native" (Wolfe, 2006) and the result was the cultural and physical genocide of Indigenous people, including through starvation, the reservation system for Status Indians, the residential schools, the Sixties' Scoop and the ongoing placement of Indigenous children in foster care. Alongside such policies, settler colonialism envisioned bourgeois domesticity for settler

colonial women. This was an impossible standard that most women could not meet; it also resulted in racialized women, immigrant women, and working-class women shouldering the double burden of a (low) paid workday alongside unpaid domestic work (Bristow, 1994; Epp & Swyripa, 2004; Razack, Smith & Thobani, 2010; Wolfe, 2006).

Of further import is how Canada's shift from a settler colonial state encouraging permanent settlement to favoring more temporary forms of migration has had racist and sexist consequences for the way child care is regulated and delivered in Canada. Notably, Canada has had several temporary worker programs designed to facilitate the entry of migrant care workers from the Global South into the country, including The Home Child Care Provider and the Home Support Worker Pilots (2019-2024), the Interim Pathway for Caregivers (March – October 2019), the Caring for Children Pilot (2014 – 2019), and the Live-In Caregiver Program (LCP) (1992-2014) (Bakker, 2003; Joseph & Leach, 2017). All these programs have been marked by exclusions that deny these workers, the overwhelming majority who are racialized women, the right to immediate permanent residency, citizenship, job mobility, and the right to bring their family to Canada. Language and education requirements create additional barriers for workers who are trying to qualify for permanent settlement in Canada despite often having worked in the country for years (Drolet, 2016; Government of Canada, n.d; Hussen, 2019, July 8).

To examine the impact systemic racism and sexism had on the OCBCC's organizational structure and coalition-building, I explored whether child care workers and parents marginalized because of their gender, race and at the intersections of gender and race inequities, could participate in and effectively influence the coalition, CUPE and the OFL. In doing so, I also considered when the marginalization and exclusion of women and racialized people in the OCBCC, CUPE, the OFL, was a consequence of these organization's race-blind and gender-

blind policies and processes that do not readily appear as racist or sexist, even though their consequences are.[5]

My third priority was to analyze the preceding two foci vis-à-vis major political, social, and economic shifts from the 1980s to 2022 to explore how the OCBCC functioned in dialectical relation with such shifts, especially with capitalism more generally and neoliberalism in particular. Capitalism is a socio-economic market-based system based on the private ownership of the means of production, including land and capital. The owning class extracts surplus value from wage laborers who have only their labor power to sell, and whose labor produces commodities that can be sold for a profit on the market. Profit accumulation under capitalism is supported by neoliberalism and neoliberal ideology, which Harvey (2005) defines as "a theory of political economic practices that propose that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade" (p. 2). Harvey's definition points to the way in which neoliberal ideology, if ideology is understood to be a set of ideas and beliefs that are used to justify the power and privilege of the ruling class, is used to further an economic agenda beneficial to capital accumulation under the guise of fairness and efficiency for the supposed benefit of people.

Some of these economic and political shifts directly impacted child care provisioning and Canadian's need for child care. For example, the decline of good manufacturing jobs and the rise of precarious and low-paying service sector jobs caused by neoliberal policies, including free

[5] I also considered how racialized parents, including Black parents and Indigenous parents, might prioritize other types of activism, including organizing through school boards for Afro-centric education and Indigenous self-determination etc. As such, their lack of participation in the OCBCC and their unions may not necessarily point to systemic racism in the organization, but it may suggest that the work of the OCBCC is not a priority for some racialized parents.

trade agreements like NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), further increased women's need to increase their participation in the labor force, which rose from a 60 percent participation rate in 1980 to over 80 percent by 2016 for women aged 25-64 (Cockburn, 2016, September 16). Many women needed to supplement their household income as good manufacturing jobs that provided a family wage were offshored to countries in the Global South. As a result, such women had a greater need for child care.

In line with these three inter-related objectives, I pursued the following specific questions: Since 1981, did the OCBCC's objectives change and become more or less inclusive over time?; What, if any, conflicts emerged between the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL and what consequences did this have for the OCBCC's advocacy work?; What strategies did the OCBCC rely on in its advocacy work, and did these change over time?; How did the OCBCC's, the OFL's, and CUPE's organizational structures support or hinder the inclusion and participation of child care workers and racialized parents?; And what role did neoliberalism and other significant economic, social, and political shifts, including changing provincial and federal governments and recessions[6], have in shaping the work of the OCBCC and any resulting changes in child care provisioning in Ontario?

To investigate these questions, I used a qualitative research design, which will be more fully explained in chapter three. This design involved conducting a descriptive analysis of qualitative data to construct a chronological account of the OCBCC, accompanied by a and a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to determine major discourses that influenced the OCBCC's campaign strategy. This qualitative data includes twenty-nine interviews with former and current OCBCC executives, union staff from CUPE and the OFL, and Registered Early childhood

[6] Notably in 1984-85, 1990-1993, 1996, 2008-09, and 2018-2019.

Educators. I also conducted an analysis of archived news articles, union publications, and Hansard transcripts that related to the OCBCC's advocacy work, CUPE's and the OFL's involvement in the coalition, and the organizational structures of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL. Some of the insights I garnered from interview participants appear early in my dissertation before my analytical chapters as essential context.

I drew upon two theories in my framing of my project and in my analytic interpretation of data collected. I used Social Reproduction Feminism (SRF) to inform my analysis of paid child care provisioning as essential reproductive labor for the Canadian capitalist economy. SRF allowed me to better theorize the relationship between economic and political change and the provision of child care in Ontario, theorizing the often-unreliable relationship between household demand for child care and government provisioning of child care. I also used feminist and anti-racist organizational theory to theorize how gender and race operate in the coalition or, said differently, to consider how systemic racism at the societal level interacts with racism and sexism at the meso level within organizations to exclude and marginalize racialized and women workers and individuals, especially racialized women.

This dissertation contributes to a larger body of literature that explores the factors and circumstances that support and impede the work of union-community coalitions in liberal market economies characterized by eroding welfare systems in the face of neoliberalism, including Australia, the USA, and the UK. Much of this literature has established that unions can undermine a coalition's success because of their reluctance to forgo hierarchical organizing models, choosing to instead adopt a paternalistic relationship with coalition partners that denies them equal decision-making power. The consequence is unions divert the coalition's efforts away from political objectives to achieve the short-term economic objectives of union members

through the collective bargaining process (Dei, 2008; Nissen 2004; Obach 2004; Rose 2000; Taksa, 2000; Tattersall, 2009; Wills, 1998). This research, however, tends to ignore how unions' tendency to sabotage coalition-building can be facilitated by "colour blind" racist and "gender blind" sexist policies and processes that may appear to be traditional "time-honored" practice or a form of best practice, including practices such as bureaucracy and relying on a centralized leadership. Despite their apparent neutrality, these practices allow unions to ignore or thwart the will of a more diverse membership and community.

In attempting to fill this gap in the literature, I explored whether the organizational processes and policies of the OCBCC, and specifically its CUPE and the OFL affiliates, appeared as gender-blind and race-blind in their operations and consequences, when appropriate. This included when processes and policies prevented women and racialized people from participating in these organizations and when the OCBCC's advocacy work was less inclusive of issues relating to race and gender than it could have been. I also explored gender- and race-blind organizational policy and practice in relation to shifting economic and political conditions under neoliberalism. This meant that I considered if the policies and processes that excluded and silenced racialized parents and workers could in any way be understood in relation to a lack of equity funding due to austerity and the OCBCC's need to be diplomatic with more hostile neoliberal governments. In doing so, I hope that this project's findings can be used to improve the ways in which organizations, including unions and non-profits, operate to better serve a diverse working-class, including racialized workers, women workers, and those at the intersection of race and gender inequities.

I arrived at three major main findings. First, the OCBCC inconsistently advanced a vision of an inclusive public child care system from 1981 to 2022. The OCBCC often ignored the needs

of racialized households, including neglecting to consider the importance of racism and culturally appropriate care in child care settings in its campaigns. The OCBCC also did not consistently advance reform that benefitted child care workers, including temporary migrant child care workers, by occasionally refraining from advancing reform that would have improved the wages and working conditions of this highly feminized and racially diverse workforce. In this way, the OCBCC did not consistently support the social reproduction of racialized households nor reverse the devaluation of child care.

This, I argue, was a consequence of the coalition's dominance by white women who were more likely to be high-ranking union staffers or Executive Directors of non-profit child care centers than rank-and-file child care workers or parents; groups which we know are more likely to be racialized. The OCBCC's early domination by white women reflected the whiteness of feminist organizing in the 1980s. This whiteness became entrenched because of the clawing back of federal funding to advocacy organizations by neoliberal and neoconservative governments.

Such austerity forced the OCBCC to become more reliant on funding from its affiliates while leaving the coalition with less funding to be used towards equity and inclusion. Insufficient operational funding for child care centers and the threat of advancing austerity for the child care sector also encouraged some of the OCBCC's non-profit child care center affiliates to oppose reform that would have benefitted child care workers out of concern that such reform would raise labor costs and result in lost revenue.

Second, I found that the OCBCC typically tried to be the polite face of the child care movement rather than a disruptive and militant force. As federal governments, including those of Prime Ministers Mulroney and Harper, attacked and defunded women's and feminist groups, the OCBCC adapted by avoiding direct references to feminism and gender in its campaigns. The

OCBCC continued to avoid referencing feminism and gender equity throughout the 2000s, adopting child development and economistic discourses that emphasized how child care could be used to support economic growth. In doing so, the OCBCC contributed to weakening child care's relationship with gender equity in the public sphere.

The OCBCC's adoption of neoliberal discourses and its avoidance of a feminist framing when promoting a public child care system suggests that the coalition wanted to present itself as a friendlier partner to government, rather than an antagonistic force. This friendlier positioning reflects how the governments' anti-feminist attacks in the 1980s and use of neoliberal discourses successfully disciplined the OCBCC to adapt to an increasingly hostile political environment.

The OCBCC's orientation towards encouraging, rather than antagonizing, government, also conditioned how the coalition conducted its campaigns. From 1981 to 2022, the coalition typically relied on non-disruptive extra-parliamentary campaigns that educated and mobilized the public without disrupting service provision in the child care sector. The OCBCC may have relied on non-disruptive campaigning to avoid alienating parents inconvenienced by center closures, whose support would have been essential to give the OCBCC sufficient leverage with the government when campaigning against neoliberal reform. In relying on non-disruptive action, however, the OCBCC and CUPE may have lost opportunities to more effectively pressure government to improve the wages and working conditions of child care workers as a racially diverse profession.

The OCBCC's unwillingness to engage in more disruptive action to support child care workers is partially a consequence of the limited opportunities rank-and-file child care workers have had to influence these organizations. The OCBCC's reliance on three directive bodies that prioritize the representation of union staffers and Executive Directors of non-profit child care

centers left limited opportunities for the participation of child care workers. While it would have been sensical for rank-and-file child care workers to push for child care center walkouts through their unions, this may have been difficult because these unions also continued to rely on race-blind and gender-blind organizational policies and practices that disenfranchised women, especially racialized women, in union spaces.

Third and finally, the OCBCC's support for public child care expansion under variegated neoliberalism resulted in the OCBCC sometimes failing to secure progressive reforms in the short-term even as the coalition built public and political will for progressive reform over the long-term. Albeit such progressive reform over the long-term still failed to fully include racialized households or substantively improve the wages and working conditions of child care workers as a highly feminized and racially diverse profession.

When the OCBCC's campaigns were immediately successful, campaigns tended to exert more pressure on government by taking place before an election, taking advantage of a wider atmosphere of militancy facilitated by other union and community groups, or were in response to larger societal upheaval, namely the pandemic.

When the OCBCC's campaigns were not immediately successful, which was common, they were often undermined by hostile provincial and federal governments seeking to defund, deregulate, and marketize child care as part of a larger neoliberal agenda. When rebuffing the OCBCC's demands, such governments drew upon neoconservative discourses to suggest their support for the "traditional" nuclear family justified retreating from funding a public child care system. Some provincial and federal governments also used a "right to choose" discourse to justify replacing direct support for child care centers and households (e.g., subsidies) with tax credits that households could use towards marketized and informal care. Such governments

suggested that families were the best judges of what care was most appropriate for their children, reinforcing the status and centrality of the "traditional" family in society.

Provincial governments' ability to dismantle child care was directly facilitated by federal decentralization when Liberal Prime Minister Chretien replaced the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) in 1996. The CHST removed conditions on diminishing federal funding, giving the provinces more freedom to spend federal funds as they wished. This more decentralized federalism also established a precedent, making it more difficult for future federal governments to enforce conditions on funding intended for child care expansion.

As federal and provincial governments advanced neoliberal reform in opposition to the OCBCC's demands, racialized households and child care workers were disproportionately affected. Diminished funding for child care subsidies, universal benefits that shifted funds towards "traditional" nuclear families, and changes to unlicensed child care leading to lesser quality of care –including raising the child to care provider ratios and lowering the age at which the care providers' own children are counted within the ratio -- disproportionately impacted low-income families more likely to be racialized, especially single-parent racialized households. Hence, these reforms further shifted the burden for child care back onto women, especially racialized women. Government support for commercial child care also expanded the number of lower-quality providers that provide poorer wages and working conditions for child care workers, thereby retrenching the historic devaluation of child care under capitalism.

Yet, despite these setbacks, major and historic government interventions into the child care sector cannot be understood apart from the campaign work of the OCBCC including

The introduction of full-day kindergarten for 4- and 5-year-olds in 2011 under Premier McGuinty; the national child care system Prime Minister Martin began to establish in 2005; and $10-per-day child care across under Prime Minister Trudeau in 2021 cannot be understood apart from the work of the child care movement in Canada, including the work of the OCBCC.

Unfortunately, child care expansion in these cases still resulted in disproportionately poor outcomes for racialized households and child care workers as governments continued to insufficiently support the reproduction of the neediest households and continued to unfairly compensate child care workers. These outcomes demonstrate the limited recognition child care continues to receive under capitalism, even by governments interested in funding significant and history-making forms of child care expansion.

In arriving at these findings, this dissertation is organized into nine chapters. Chapter two reviews how the transition from Keynesianism to neoliberalism impacted welfare provisioning, the labor market, trade union power, and workers, especially women and racialized workers. In this chapter, I discuss how organized labor adapted to neoliberalism and consider the efficacy of various types of unionism, including business unionism, social unionism, and coalition-building unionism. I also discuss trade union involvement in child care coalition-building in Ontario with a focus on the OCBCC. I further consider the obstacles that undermine effective coalition-building, including how trade unions and the influence of their organizational structures have undermined inclusive and effective coalition-building. Finally, I consider how coalition-building literature does not interrogate how organizational structures may be racist and sexist, a gap my dissertation research addresses.

Chapter three reviews the methodology that was adopted for this study. In this chapter, I first establish this project's ontological and epistemological assumptions, and how these

assumptions impacted how the research was conducted. I then review how this project used Social Reproduction Feminism (SRF) to provide a macro-level analysis of child care provisioning under capitalism and feminist and anti-racist organizational theory to provide a meso-level analysis of power within the organization. I then describe the methods, establishing the different textual sources of data used for the analysis and how I used a descriptive analysis to construct a chronological account of the OCBCC and a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify relevant child care discourses used by government and the OCBCC. I also consider the limitations of this research and any ethical issues that arose while conducting the study.

Chapters four to seven explore the OCBCC's advocacy work from 1981, its founding, until 2022, focusing on the objectives of the coalition, the strategies and tactics used in pursuit of these, and any conflict that may have arisen within the coalition throughout this period. When relevant, I explore when and how discourses impacted the coalition's work. I also consider how and to what extent racialized households and child care workers were included in the OCBCC's advocacy work and in government policy throughout these chapters.

Chapter four covers the period from 1981 to 1995, covering the terms of Conservative Premier Bill Davis (1981 – 1985), Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney (1984 – 1993), Liberal Premier, David Peterson (1985 – 1990), Liberal Prime Minister, Jean Chretien (1993 – 1995), and NDP Premier, Bob Rae (1990 – 1995). In this chapter, I begin by exploring the coalition's founding objectives in relation to the preceding forty years of Keynesian welfare expansion in Canada. In considering the OCBCC's objectives, I also explore when and why conflict in the OCBCC occurred between trade unions and non-profit operators around unionization and educational integration and how this conflict oriented the coalition away from advocating for reform that would have benefitted child care workers. I also consider what effect

Prime Minister Mulroney's hostility towards feminism and his government's adoption of neoliberal and neoconservative discourses had on the OCBCC's strategy and the advancement of neoliberal reform in the child care sector. Throughout this chapter, I consider how and whether racialized households and child care workers were sufficiently included in the OCBCC's campaigns and how they were disproportionately impacted by neoliberal reform during this period. I consider these exclusions as a product of race-blind organizational policies and processes and government policy reform.

Chapter five covers the period from 1995 – 2002, covering the terms of Conservative Premier, Mike Harris (1995 – 2002) and Liberal Prime Minister, Jean Chretien (1993-2003). In this chapter, I consider how Prime Minister Chretien's support for federal decentralization by replacing the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) supported neoliberal reform at the provincial level. I further explore how Premier Harris took advantage of federal decentralization to advance neoliberal reform, which he justified using some of the same neoliberal and neoconservative discourses Prime Minister Mulroney used. I consider how this reform disproportionately impacted racialized families and households' social reproduction. I explore why the OCBCC adopted more militant and disruptive tactics in response to Premier Harris' proposed neoliberal reforms, and how this can be understood in relation to a wider atmosphere of militancy fostered by advocacy organizations and labor unions.

Chapter six covers the period from 2003 – 2018, covering the terms of Liberal Prime Minister, Paul Martin (2003 – 2006), Conservative Prime Minister, Stephen Harper (2006-2015), and Liberal Premier, Dalton McGuinty (2003 – 2013). In this chapter, I focus on how the OCBCC campaigned in relation to a shifting "Third Way" politic taken up by Prime Minister Martin and Premier McGuinty, both of whom adopted a new child development discourse that

connected child care to future economic returns. I consider how internal OCBCC conflict around the issue of educational integration was resolved during this period, and what effect this had for child care workers and households. I explore how the OCBCC campaigned against Prime Minister Harper's pursuit of neoliberal reform, which he justified using neoconservative and neoliberal discourses. Throughout this chapter, I focus, too, on how the OCBCC began to incorporate race and equity more explicitly into its campaigning, and what consequences federal and provincial child care policy reform had for racialized households' social reproduction.

Chapter seven covers the period from 2018 – 2022, covering the terms of Liberal Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau (2018 – 2022), and Conservative Premier, Doug Ford (2018 – 2022). In this chapter, I consider the OCBCC's objectives and strategies in response to right-wing populist Premier Ford's pursuit of neoliberal reform, and Prime Minister Trudeau's announcement in 2021 that his government would work with the provinces and territories to establish $10-per-day child care across the country. My interest is in the OCBCC's campaign strategy during this period, exploring when the OCBCC and its union affiliates hesitated to or avoided supporting disruptive action and how the coalition continued to soften or avoid making references to gender equity to work across the political spectrum. I also explore what consequences neoliberal reforms and a national child care system had for child care workers and racialized households.

Chapter eight explores how the organizational structures of the OCBCC, CUPE and the OFL reproduced disadvantage for women and racialized workers through race-blind and gender-blind policies, and how this contributed to the OCBCC and its union affiliates failing to campaign around and race and racism. I further consider how the structure of these organizations can be understood in relation to a broader social, economic, and political context, including Canada's shift to neoliberalism and the decline of feminist organizing.

Chapter nine provides a discussion of this project's findings and how such findings answered the research questions initially set out in the introductory chapter. I focus on discussing the answers to the following questions: 1) were the OCBCC's objectives inclusive?; 2) what was the OCBCC's strategy to advance these objectives?; and 3) how effectively did the OCBCC advance its objectives? I also consider how this project addressed research gaps in the coalition-building literature including 1) how neoliberalism impacts coalitions over time; 2) how the OCBCC's, CUPE's and the OFL's organizational structure can be understood as race-blind racist and gender-blind sexist; and 3) needed reforms to support the inclusion of marginalized people in the coalition and its union affiliates. I conclude by discussing options for future research.

1.2 This Project's Applicability to Coalition-Building Research

The findings from this project helped fill certain gaps in the coalition-building literature. One gap the literature does not fully interrogate is the impact neoliberalism has on coalition-building over the long-term. I discovered that neoliberalism as a practice and a discourse disciplined the OCBCC and its affiliates, which impacted the coalition's objectives, strategy, and organizational structures. This undermined the coalition's ability to advance an inclusive child care system at times, thus demonstrating that as coalitions are formed in response to neoliberalism, neoliberalism undermines coalition-building in turn. This occurred in the following ways for the OCBCC:

First, neoliberal and neoconservative discourses disciplined the coalition to emphasize the economic benefits of child care instead of its importance to gender equity. This adaptation reflects the OCBCC's attempt to align itself with the ideological sensibilities of whatever government was in power, choosing to present itself as a friendly partner of government rather than an antagonistic force. In doing so, the OCBCC inadvertently weakened the relationship

between child care and gender equity in the public sphere as feminist organizing declined and anti-feminist hostilities from government and reactionary groups rose.

As neoliberal discourse justified and shaped government policy, the realities of austerity further undermined the OCBCC's ability to advance progressive and inclusive reform. Austerity produced a conservatizing effect on some of the OCBCC's affiliates who focused on their immediate self-preservation over advancing progressive reform. As austerity produced conservativism amongst coalition affiliates, it also undermined the ability of these organizations to reform themselves to be more inclusive. Defunding meant fewer resources could be redistributed towards equity and made the coalition more reliant on funding from its affiliates who also struggled with inclusion.

Another gap in coalition-building literature is a lack of analysis of coalition organizational structure in relation to racism and sexism. This project confirmed that the OCBCC and its union affiliates failed to fully represent the demands of racialized households and child care workers because of race-blind racist and gender-blind sexist organizational policies and practices. These policies and practices prevented rank-and-file child care workers from accessing executive bodies within the OCBCC, and racialized women from accessing executive bodies within their unions, preventing them from influencing the mandates and objectives of these organizations.

These organizational practices and policies were not explicitly coded as racist or sexist. Rather, they were racist and sexist because they resulted in advantage accruing to white middle-class women who control the coalition because they occupy most executive positions as high-ranking staffers or Executive Directors of their respective organizations. Other organizational policies adopted by unions were based on the standard white male worker who is expected to be

unburdened from domestic obligations and assumed to possess certain white and male coded forms of cultural and social capital. This would have prevented women, especially racialized women, from influencing their unions, which may explain why more conservative union executives were occasionally hesitant to support disruptive strike action in support of child care workers.

Importantly, I also discovered that we should not assume that non-union coalition affiliates are using more inclusive organizational practices than unions despite the literature focusing on unions as problematic partners within coalitions. Within the OCBCC, non-profit operators were historically more conservative affiliates than trade unions. Because unions and non-profit organizations dominated executive committees within the OCBCC, unions became the progressive opposition to non-profits, despite unions' own struggle to elevate racialized women to positions of power.

Chapter Two: An Intersectional Exploration of the Evolution of Trade Union Strategy

In this chapter, I review trade union evolution in relation to larger economic and political shifts in society, including the transition to Keynesianism and neoliberalism. I consider how the workers, especially women and racialized workers, were impacted during these transitions, and how effectively trade unions included and represented marginalized workers as they adapted to new economic and political conditions.

The chapter then transitions to considering coalition-building unionism in more depth as an adaptive strategy to neoliberalism, focusing on the obstacles that undermine effective and inclusive coalition-building, including the organizational structure of coalition affiliates.

2.1 1880s – 1940: Industrialization and the Rise of Unions for White Male Workers

In North America, modern trade unions arose in the 1880s as industrialization produced a need for an organizational form that would struggle on behalf of the largely skilled, white, and male workforce employed in the hellishly run mills of the time. The industrial union movement, initially represented by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the One Big Union (OBU), played seminal roles in union development during this period. Notably, these unions diversified union membership by organizing unskilled labor rather than just skilled crafts workers, as was typical until this point. The increasing presence of unions in Canada eventually lead former Prime Minister, John. A. Macdonald, to introduce the Trade Unions Act in 1872, which mandated that unions should not be regarded as illegal conspiracies (Safarian, 2009).

In addition to excluding racialized workers, including Japanese and Chinese workers, unions also excluded women workers during this period to protect the jobs and wages of white male workers (Baker & Robeson, 1981). This strategy was evident in unions' demand for a

family wage, which was premised on the belief that women did not belong in the workforce and did not deserve to be paid the same as men. This demand was supported by the cult of domesticity ideology that demanded that married women and women with children remain in the home and rely on a male breadwinner for economic support (Frager & Patrias, 2005).

This idealized family formation was not financially practicable for many households though. Even as some women were forced to seek paid work outside the home out of financial necessity, employers continued to pay women less on the grounds that they were temporary workers merely earning "pin money". By the early twentieth century, women were still being blocked from entering craft unions, allowing employers to divide and conquer the labor movement along gender, racial, and ethnic lines (idib.).

As a result of employer discrimination, union exclusion, and societal expectation, women were effectively barred from pursuing wage labor in significant numbers during this early period. It was only in WWI that women make substantial gains into the labor market where they worked outside the home in munitions factories and offices to compensate for the shortage of male workers who were fighting in the war (Frager & Patrias, 2005).

As women joined the labor market to power wartime industry, labor also revolted against conscription and the lack of workers' rights during this period. Labor militancy increased after the war in response to employers' greed, who attempted to withdraw their recognition of the trade union movement to avoid being forced to concede some of the windfall profits accrued during the recent rapid industrialization of the Canadian economy to workers (Green, 2008). The most notable example of this militancy is the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike that began when metal trades and building workers walked off the job in May, demanding the right to collective bargaining and wage increases. This expanded into a general strike two weeks later, and on May

15, 1919, approximately 30,000 workers walked off their jobs in the city, causing Winnipeg to shut down. General strikes also occurred in Amherst, Nova Scotia, and Toronto, Ontario that year (Green, 2008).

As labor revolted, the wartime economic boom also came to an end. This economic slowdown was a consequence of public debt soaring to over $2 billion because of wartime spending; lower exports as Canadian agricultural commodities were exposed to increased global competition; and higher expenses for manufacturers who were shifting from providing war-time goods, including shells and explosives, to consumer goods. This eventually laid the conditions for the Great Depression that broke out in 1929 (Safarian, 2009).

The economic slowdown that turned into a full-fledged depression dramatically impacted the working-class. Wages fell, unemployment rose to 30 percent by 1933, and one-fifth of the population was dependent on government assistance. Women also lost the labor market gains they had made during the war-time years. Preceding the Great Depression, in the 1920s, new "female" professions had opened for women beyond domestic service, including library work, social work, and physiotherapy. The onset of the severe economic downturn from 1929-1933, reversed this trend, and many women were forced back into domestic service. Women were also more likely to be laid off than men, including in the garment industry where women often lost their jobs first (Campbell, 2009).

The dire living and working conditions of the working class elicited massive resistance from workers, many of whom had recently risked their lives fighting for the country.

2.2 1940 – 1971: Keynesianism and Business Unionism

The protracted economic crisis and resulting social upheaval demonstrated the fallacy of conventional economic wisdom which suggested that cyclical swings in employment and output were self-correcting, and that economic slowdowns would eventually rectify themselves.

The economic crisis, which had become a global phenomenon, eventually prompted Maynard Keynes to write the book *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936). In this book, Keynes argued that interventionist public sector policies, including expanding welfare provisioning and managing the economy to produce full employment, were needed to raise consumer demand and pull economic output out of a slump (Bakker & Scott, 1997; Harvey, 2005; Owram, 1985; McBride, 2001; Porter, 2003).

During this period, the paradigm shift to Keynesianism in Canada, including the dissemination of Keynesian ideas and the implementation of Keynesian policies, were supported by Canadian economists, including Mabel Timlin, who wrote about Keynesianism for the Canadian context in the book *Keynesian Economics* (1942); the expansion of the university system; the rise of organized labor; the growth of large-scale business firms; and the centralization of social welfare provisioning (McBride, 2001; Krywulak, 2005).

In this context, the Canadian government began to take a more interventionist role in the economy and in social welfare, officially adopting Keynesianism from 1940 – 1971 (McBride, 2001). Some welfare expansion had already begun in the decades preceding 1940, including the creation of old-age pensions and securities (1927), to provide income security for the growing number of seniors living in cities where jobs for seniors were disappearing. Notable forms of welfare expansion introduced shortly after the transition to Keynesianism include public housing (1935), Unemployment Insurance (1940), day nurseries (1942), Family Allowances (1944), and universal Medicare in Saskatchewan (1947).

These early programs reflect how the state began to assume greater responsibility for the social reproduction of the population. Notably, the universal Family Allowance was a benefit given to families regardless of income, and thus recognized the social contribution made by parents who raised future Canadian citizens and workers. The Family Allowance was a payment issued directly to the individual who qualified for them, typically the mother of the children. Family Allowances also supported the redistribution of wealth so that the disposable incomes of families with children were more equalized to those families without children (McKeen & Porter, 2003).

As the welfare state expanded, unions and their membership continued to grow during this period to include a larger share of the white male working-class. This was facilitated by the passing of new legislation in 1944, known as the Order-in-Council PC 1003 or the Wartime Labor Relations Regulations, which permitted union certification and forced employers to accept collective bargaining with employee representatives. By the end of WWII, a wave of strikes had also swept across the country, with these workers making major gains in wages and hours. Many contracts also incorporated grievance procedures and other innovations, including vacation pay (Green, 2008).

Union growth was further facilitated in 1945 when Justice Ivan C. Rand granted a compulsory check-off of union dues. This was known as the Rand decision and occurred after a lengthy and acrimonious dispute between the UAW (United Auto Workers Union) and Ford Motors that resulted in 17,000 workers walking off the job in Windsor in 1945.The Rand decision gave unions financial security and gave unions the power to cover the cost of bargaining, hire union staffers to enforce collective agreements, and pool money to support

workers when they were on strike or in a lock out position (Green, 2008; Lynk, 2002; Parkes, 2010).

As unions gained legitimacy and power, women and racialized workers continued to be excluded. Long-standing sexism and racism kept unions as "Old Boys Clubs" hostile towards women and racialized workers. Unions also perceived unionizing white men employed full-time in the industrial sector as a better investment of limited union resources because they were easier to unionize, and such large worksites gave unions more leverage during collective bargaining. In contrast, unions continued to encounter practical difficulties organizing women and racialized workers because these workers were concentrated in the more difficult to unionize service sector where high turnover at small worksites made it more difficult to create solidarity amongst workers to unionize (Sangster, 2010).

Even when women and racialized workers joined unions, unions were often loath to include or elevate women and racialized workers to positions of power within the union. When women were unionized, their needs were often ignored. Some of this had to do with unions' preoccupation with purging Communists and other radical leaders during the 1940s and 1950s, but much of this hostility was due to entrenched sexism and racism that cast women and racialized workers as outsiders within the labor movement. Women did not remain passive though and women union members leveraged union procedure and process, including the grievance process, to resist sexism from unions and their employer, such as being fired for marriage and pregnancy (Sangster, 2010).

As women were excluded from the labor movement, they were also excluded by the welfare state, even as it expanded. Although the Family Allowance modestly subsidized the costs of families' private social reproduction in the home, the government refused to expand welfare

provisioning to include public child care to reassert the male breadwinner model after WWII. This represented a reversal in policy after the government provided child care for women who worked in industry during the war (Finkel, 2004). Only in 1946 did Ontario begin providing funding for child care, and only for the neediest households, when it passed the Ontario Day Nursery Act in 1946. The Act created a new provincial-municipal cost sharing agreement for non-parental child care that could be used to fund child care for those who were deemed eligible based on an income means test (McKenzie, 2014).

Provincial governments also shirked any responsibility for supporting the social reproduction of mothers who were no longer part of a nuclear family. Such mothers, who often required social assistance, had to first prove they were deserving of welfare support. In this case, deservingness meant being "abandoned and not responsible for the separation, to be morally impeccable as a mother, and to have made every effort to locate her absconding spouse prior to seeking help from the courts" (Gavigan & Chunn, 2007, p. 749). After proving eligibility on these grounds, the meagre social assistance benefits provided did not appreciably improve single mothers' experience of economic hardship, effectively punishing single women and their children for diverging from the nuclear family norm. The strict eligibility criteria combined with the meagerness of the benefit also signaled that single mothers were not considered to be "real" heads of household who had a right to social provisions as men were but were only temporary caretakers during men's absence (Abramovitz, 2017; Gordon, 1995; McKenzie, 2014).

By limiting expansion of public child care and so perpetuating single mothers' poverty, the Canadian government demonstrated it was centering welfare expansion around a male breadwinner model. This model assumed that men would be the primary wage earners and that women would continue to manage most of the unpaid reproductive demands in the home. In this

way, the Canadian Keynesian welfare state centered a state-family-market nexus that excluded large numbers of women (Esping-Andersen, 1996; McKeen & Porter, 2003).

Upholding the male breadwinner model was especially important immediately after the end of WWII when the government sought to ensure returning soldiers were gainfully employed. The federal government engineered this by deploying a Maternalist discourse that sought to naturalize women's place in the home. This objective was supported by government managed gender-targeted screening, testing, and training to channel women back into the home and into low-wage feminine and feminized occupations, like low-level clerical work, to facilitate men's entry back into industry. In doing so, it seems that the federal government decided that ensuring men's employment required women's unemployment (Stephen, 2007; Ursel, 1992).

As a result, despite women's unprecedented entrance into the workforce during the wartime period, especially in heavy industry and other male-dominated occupations, women comprised only 22.3 percent of the workforce by 1951. This represented an increase of only two and a half percent from a decade earlier. Over 60 percent of these employed women were still concentrated in feminized clerical, personal service, and professional work occupations (Cluett, 1984, p. 137). Racialized women were further disadvantaged during this period. They were segregated into lower paid feminized forms of work, including domestic service, especially because of racial stereotyping that constructed racialized women as nurturing mammies and happy servants to white families (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1995).

During this period, racialized workers were also excluded from welfare provisioning alongside women because systemic barriers, including discrimination, often prevented these workers from accessing the full-time, formal paid employment needed to make these workers eligible for certain benefits, including Unemployment Insurance. As a result, the Canadian

welfare state sustained and reinforced structural inequalities as it expanded under Keynesianism (Bernhardt, 2015; Garton & McCallum, 1996; Porter, 2003).

Then, the economy seemed to enter what some call a golden age in the 1950s and 1960s due to a growth in overseas trade and government investment in infrastructure and other measures designed to support the growth of consumer demand. With steady and healthy economic growth, unions were able to secure collective bargaining gains that were increasingly tied to productivity improvements. As a result, workers and unions established a more collegial relationship with employers in exchange for productivity-tied wage increases. For example, in 1950, the Canadian UAW, which primarily employed white men in assembly line work, signed a three-year contract with Ford Motors in return for major productivity-based wage increases (Wells, 1995). The consequence of working with employers as partners in the pursuit of shared productivity gains is unions were turned into "bodyguards of capital", working with management to secure productivity increases while limiting job action during designated collective bargaining periods. This allowed capital to expand without disruption during this period (Green, 2008).

This style of unionism that focuses on collegially securing productivity gains for improved compensation with employer is called business unionism in reference to its narrow pursuit of an economistic agenda through collective bargaining. It is often described as traditional, bureaucratic, and hierarchical because such unions tend to prioritize the role of full-time, elected, or appointed leaders who act on behalf of members to pursue compensation increases for full-time standard workers (Schenk, 2003; Moody, 1988; Ross & Jenson, 1986). As a result, business unionism disproportionately benefits the dominant members of the organization, including full-time white male workers, and not necessarily more precariously employed rank-and-file members, including women, racialized members, and immigrants, or the

community in general. Because these unions were and are primarily used as bargaining institutions, they are not used to using civil disobedience or direct action as an industrial relations strategy, unlike the unions of the past (Ross, 2007; Heron, 1996; Moody & Molona, 2009, 1997; Robinson, 2000; Taft, 1963).

As the Canadian economy entered an economic golden age, there was another major expansion of welfare programs at the federal level in the 1960s and early 1970s, including the introduction of universal health insurance; two new pension plans, including the Canada Pension Plan and the Guaranteed Income Supplement; the Canada Assistance Plan (1966) which provided federal-provincial cost-sharing for social assistance and social services; the Established Programs Financing Act that extended cost-sharing in health and education; and a further expansion of Unemployment Insurance. Provincial governments also expanded education and health care systems significantly (Porter, 2003).

Yet, women and racialized people continued to be excluded. Women and racialized workers, who were and are more likely to have more limited or precarious employment histories than white men, were less likely to qualify for a full pension under the Canada Pension Plan and for Unemployment Insurance.

Racialized immigrants continued to be excluded from all welfare provisioning by default since Canada continued to bar these populations from the country writ large using restrictive immigration policy. Until 1962, Canada was still relying on an explicitly racist immigration system to prohibit Asian immigration into the country while prioritizing immigrants from the "white" commonwealth countries and U.S. citizens (Garton & McCallum, 1996). Even when filling labor shortages, the Canadian federal government created higher education requirements for racialized immigrants to deter their migration. For example, from 1950-1962, Caribbean

nurses had to have better nursing qualifications than white women immigrants to enter Canada (Calliste, 1993).

When the government sought to include racialized people in welfare provisioning, government motivation was often based on the colonial notion that non-white populations needed to be culturally assimilated to adopt white European values. As a result, welfare inclusion for racialized populations was often a violent and disciplinary, especially for Indigenous peoples.

Consider that when child welfare schemes were extended into First Nations reserves in the late 1950s, the government removed large numbers of children from their families and communities to place children with Euro-Canadian families or in residential schools[7] to forcibly assimilate children into Euro-Canadian culture. The removal of Indigenous children from their families accelerated in the 1960s, eventually becoming known as the 60s Scoop, which left a generation of children with longstanding psychological and emotional problems rooted in identity suppression and the effects of abuse experienced in care. Indigenous overrepresentation in the child welfare system was and continues to be a form of cultural genocide as Indigenous children raised in foster care were and are denied access to their cultures and language (Kline, 1992, p. 375).

Despite women's and racialized workers' exclusions within the labor market, unions, and the welfare state, general conditions for these workers improved as the state intervened in the market to better regulate the relationship between workers and employers. These changes disproportionately benefitted people working in non-standard low-wage work, including women and racialized people (Moscovitch, Jennissen, & Findlay, 1983). Major changes included employment standards legislation that established statutory entitlements and floors for workers,

[7] Government-sponsored residential schools have existed since 1880.

including minimum wages (1918), the 40-hour work week (1960s), overtime rates, maternity leave (1971), mass termination notice, and statutory holidays. Albeit minimum wage was still too low to lift workers out of poverty and many women did not qualify for maternity leave because of insufficient hours worked or because they worked in the informal economy (Fudge, 1991).

2.3 Late 1970s: Neoliberalism and the Adoption of a more Inclusive Unionism

Keynesianism was not to last though as global capitalism entered a series of economic crises in the 1970s that produced low economic growth, high unemployment, and high inflation (Albo, 2002; Clark, 2002; Harvey, 2007). Neoliberalism emerged in response to these crises, acting as the new commonsense expression of political power and economic practice to re-establish conditions of profitability (Albo, 2002; Cahill & Konings, 2017; Centeno & Cohen, 2012; Connell, 2010; Davies, 2014; Harvey, 2007; Steger & Roy, 2010; Springer, Birch & MacLeavy, 2016). Neoliberal policies typically include economic liberalization, including privatization and deregulation; free trade policies that provide capital with new opportunities to extract profit; and austerity measures imposed on the public sector that allow government to reduce capital's tax burden (Harvey, 2007, p. 35-38).

These policies are supported by neoliberal ideology which presents an imaginary relationship between individuals and the real conditions of their existence (Althusser, 2020). Neoliberal ideology promotes the worldview that individual wellbeing can be best supported by a reduction in government intervention in the economy via the deregulation of labor and financial markets while reducing social expenditures. This will supposedly liberate capital's enormous potential to create well-being for people, even though neoliberal policy typically accomplishes the opposite. Instead, it facilitates the transfer of wealth from the majority to the few (Brown, 2003; Harvey, 2005; Navarro, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 2017).

Neoliberal ideology is acquired, used, and spread through neoliberal discourses as forms of social practice. Fairclough (2002) suggests that neoliberal discourse is a constituent element of the new neoliberal capitalist formation, where the value of a neoliberal worldview is accrued through signification and branding practices. These practices allow neoliberal commonsense to be disseminated through the media, political debates, and government communications (Phelan, 2014).

In Canada, the transition to neoliberalism can be traced to the late 1970s, marked by the introduction of the federal government's wage control program and the state's confrontation with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUP-W) in 1978 (Camfield, 2011, p. 99). Canada's transition to neoliberalism was similarly marked by the need for a new solution to declining economic prosperity that began in the early 1960s when GDP began to dip slightly, and unemployment began to rise. The oil shocks of the 1970s and 1980s indisputably signaled the beginning of the end of economic expansion and the need for a new economic ideology to make Canada competitive in a globalized economy as reflected in the following excerpt:

> The new consensus is that Canada has to change the rules of the economic union in order to survive in the new global order. These rules would ideally give priority to market forces in the determination and location of economic activity, promote regional specialization and competitiveness, and enable states to compete for highly fluid international capital. In more tangible terms, this means reducing fiscal and regulatory burdens on industry and lowering expectations about the role of the state, particularly in social welfare, employment standards, and regional development (Brodie in Carroll & Little, 2001, p. 38).

This ideological shift was supported by business organizations, think tanks including the Fraser Institute and the Economic Council of Canada (McKeen & Porter, 2003).

Neoliberal reform has fluctuated in intensity in Canada and Ontario, moving through years of "restraint" (1982-1990), "retrenchment" (1990-1997), and "post-retrenchment" (1998 onwards) (Rose in Camfield, 2011, p. 99). Each new wave of neoliberal reform has allowed more opportunities for capital expansion and profit reclamation, including the deregulation of the energy industry in 1985, finance in 1986-1987, transportation in 1987, and telecommunications in the late 1980s. Another key reform in Canada's transition to neoliberalism was the 1989 Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that removed protective tariffs to allow for the easier flow of goods across borders (Carroll & Little, 2001).

Canada's free trade agreements with the U.S. and Mexico, including the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the U.S- Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), resulted in good industrial jobs being moved offshore to countries in the Global South, including to Mexico, where the cost of labor was cheaper. This transformation facilitated the deindustrialization of the Canadian economy, reducing the number of workers employed in manufacturing, which stood at one in five workers in 1981, to 1 in 10 were in 2019 (Morissette, 2020).

The removal of tariffs on imported goods between countries further pressured employers to lower the cost of labor to compete in an increasingly globalized economy. The result is that private sector employers began to rely on lower-paid part-time and contract workers to cut costs to remain competitive in a global market. Public sector employers have also increasingly relied on precarious workers to meet new budgetary constraints imposed by government which had less revenue for public expenditures after cutting corporate tax rates (Herod & Lambert, 2016).

As white male workers were disproportionately impacted by the effects of deindustrialization and the rise of precarious work, women, racialized workers and migrants were still disproportionately more likely to work these precarious, low-paid, and contractual jobs. As of 2018, 30 percent of women, compared to 24 percent of men, held a precarious job and 31 percent of women made low wages compared to 23 percent of men. 37 percent of new immigrants (arriving in the last 10 years) were precariously employed compared to 26 percent of the general population. New immigrants were also more likely to work jobs that are non-unionized, in small firms, for low wages, and are more likely to have a job tenure of less than one year. Further, gender and migration intersect so that 44 percent of migrant women make low wages compared to 30 percent of migrant men (Vosko, 2020, p. 21-22).

Precarious work is a primary reason why more than 1.5 million women in Canada live below the poverty line. The racialization and feminization of precarious work also contributes to the high rates of poverty experienced by Indigenous women living off reserve (36 percent), racialized women (28.6 percent), women with disabilities (33.7 percent), and single mothers (21.9 percent) (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2017; Kazemipur & Halli, 2001, p. 1147).

The worst of these precarious jobs took and take the form of temporary migrant worker programs. While such programs pre-date neoliberalism, the federal government expanded such programs under neoliberalism. In doing so, the federal government facilitates the entry of migrants into Canada on a temporary basis where they can be used as a low-cost form of labor in agriculture, in-home care work, and other forms of low-wage work. care workers are overwhelmingly racialized migrant women, often coming from the Philippines, to provide child care in the homes of middle and upper-middle-class families. The concentration of women and racialized people in this work reflects how capital continues to take advantage of historical

patterns of marginalization that justify the hyper-exploitation of certain workers over others (Bannerji, 2005; Ferguson, 2016; Ferguson, 2008).

As governments try to provide a market solution to the problem of the rising demand for child care by dual-income households, such workers are typically exploited above and beyond what is legally permissible for Canadian citizens in conditions that can be abusive. Temporary migrant workers have limited ability to protest their working conditions because of the precarity built into the temporary migrant program. Such workers risk being deported if they attempt to leave an abusive employer because their work visa is tied to a specific employer, and they are not immediately granted permanent residency upon arrival in Canada. They may also be denied permanent residency after meeting work and education requirements after the 2-year eligibility period if they cannot obtain a good reference from a vengeful or spiteful employer (Arat-Koc, 1999; Bakan & Stasiulis, 2003; Joseph & Leach, 2017; Man, 2004, Okeke-Ihejirika, Salami & Karimi, 2019).

Labor unions were not fully prepared to effectively counter and adapt to the increasing precarity of the labor market under neoliberalism because they had grown accustomed to representing more easily unionized industrial workers in a collegial relationship with employers under Keynesianism. Notably, unions' strategy of using speedy weekend campaigns to sign up factory workers employed at one large worksite has not been effective for organizing precarious workers under neoliberalism. To organize precarious workers, unions need to adopt new organizing strategies to build solidarity amongst workers who lack a secure and pre-established work network and who may be employed across multiple work sites as has become more common under neoliberalism (Das Gupta, 2007).

As unions struggled to adapt to the rise in precarious work, capital and the state also became more hostile towards organized labor. Employers demonstrated they were increasingly willing to undermine workers' efforts to unionize by closing recently unionized worksites while lobbying the government for anti-union legislation, even if this meant paying fines for unfair labor practices and receiving critical coverage from the media (MacDonald, 2014, p. 731). Amazon and Starbucks regularly fire union organizers and pro-union workers to create a "chilling effect" amongst workers despite the illegality of these actions, and despite rising negative public opinion towards these companies (Brooks, 2022, May 31).

As capital sought to stifle trade unions' power, provincial and federal governments increasingly disciplined unions against using job action by relying on anti-union court injunctions and back-to-work legislation with the latter being used 115 times from 1975 to 2002 to end a strike, in contrast to the 32 times it was used between 1950 and 1975 (Panitch & Swartz, 2003). As the use of the strike declined, so too have workers' wages, with inflation outpacing public sector wages in Canada every year between 1980-2002. As free trade produced significant job losses in manufacturing in Canada, unions curtailed their wage demands in exchange for job preservation and job security (Lewis, 2019 p. 283).

In Ontario, the provincial government also legislated wage retrenchment for the public sector to prevent unions from collectively bargaining and striking over wages. Notable cases include 1993 when former NDP Premier, Bob Rae, forced public sector workers to take unpaid days off (known as "Rae Days") (Panitch & Swartz, 2003). In 2019, Conservative Premier, Doug Ford, forced public sector workers to accept a 1 percent maximum annual wage increase under

Bill 124 as part of the Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019 (Lewis, 2019).[8]

As a result of the increasing precarity of the labor market and unions' inability to adapt, union density declined in Canada after peaking at 38 percent coverage in 1983, declining to 26 percent of all workers in 2018 (MacDonald, 2014, p. 727; Vosko, 2020, p. 19). This trend is not consistent across sectors though and unionization rates differ sharply between the public and private sectors, which had gendered effects on unions' memberships.

The share of unionized private sector workers has decreased from 19 percent in 1998 to 15 percent in 2018 (Vosko, 2020, p. 19). Since men were more likely to work in private sector industries offshored to developing countries, men's unionization rate declined, peaking at 38 percent in 1996, declining to 36 percent in 1992, and continuing to erode hereafter. In contrast, public sector unionization was 70 percent in 2018, rising slightly from 69 percent coverage in 1998. As women's labor market participation increased, rising from 24 percent in 1953 to 76 percent in 1990, with many of these women joining the public sector, women's union membership rose from 17 percent in 1966 to 42 percent in 1992. (Akyeampong, 1998; Ferrao, 2010). As of 2021, women accounted for 53 percent of all union members and men accounted for 47 percent due to women's greater presence in the more highly unionized public sector (Statistics Canada, 2022).

From 1976 to 2015, women with children became a growing share of union membership. During this period, the employment rate of women whose youngest child was under the age of six grew by 37.4 percent, rising from 32.1 percent to 69.5 percent, and the employment rate of

[8] Bill 124 was ruled as unconstitutional after 70 unions launched a Charter challenge against the Bill. Currently, the Ford government is appealing this decision (Cook, 2022, November 29).

women with children aged six to 11 grew by 33.1 percent, rising from 45.0 percent to 78.1 percent (Statistics Canada, 2015). As a result, child care has become an increasingly important focus for trade unions who represent a growing female membership.

According to interview participants, Susan Brown, who is a current union staffer and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 2000s, Wendy Peterson, who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 1990's, Karen Harris, OFL staffer, and Kathy Jackson[9], who is retired union staffer and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 2010s, the feminization of union membership encouraged unions to take more of an interest in gender equity. Linda Smith (2021), who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, noted that, "unions had to kind of "wake up and pay attention" to the unique concerns of their women members".

Some of the women who entered trade unions were also feminists who used their union membership to more directly influence the labor movement. Many of these women would meet with one another outside of their trade unions through the group, Ontario Working Women (OWW), which was established in 1978, to develop consistent messaging and policies that could be brought into all unions. The OWW eventually pushed the OFL to adopt a statement calling for free and universal child care and work with Action Day care, the predecessor of the OCBCC (Turgeon, 2014, p. 300).

In the early 1980s some unions also began to make child care a collective bargaining priority. The CAW negotiated the first private sector child care fund in Canada in 1983 in Stratford, negotiating employer contributions of two cents per worker hour. Then, in 1987, the CAW negotiated with the Big Three auto manufacturers, General Motors (GM), Fiat Chrysler

[9] Pseudonyms were used for research participants.

and Ford Motor Company, for a half cent per worked hour, creating the largest fund ever negotiated for child care in the private sector (CAW/TCA Canada, 1995). The union then secured additional funding from Ford and GM in 1991 to open a Labor Community child care Center in Windsor (CAW/TCA Canada,1995). Around the same time, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUP-W) negotiated a child care fund in 1991 that supported eight child care projects and two national projects for members who have adult children with disabilities (CUP-W, n.d.).

These wins for child care secured around the bargaining table also supported the larger political objective of establishing a public child care system. This is because as employers were forced to provide funding for child care, they were more likely to support the lobby for a public child care system to avoid paying for employees' child care directly. Considering the CAW's and CUP-W's successes, the OFL began to officially encourage its affiliates to incorporate child care into their bargaining proposals. At the annual convention in 1989, *Families in the 1990s: Whose Vision?,* the OFL encouraged affiliates to "recogniz[e] family issues as a negotiating priority" (Bertrand, 1993). In support of this, the OCBCC developed an informational book, *Employers, Unions, and Child Care,* designed to educate unions and employers about how worksite-specific child care provisions and wider policy change benefitted workers and employers (Bertrand, 1993).

Unfortunately, neoliberalism has and continues to undercut unions' ability to collectively bargain around child care. Deindustrialization and the constant threat of industrial offshoring forced the big industrial unions to temper their expectations, focusing on job security at the expense of "supplementary" demands, including child care. For example, the CAW was unable to prevent the Windsor child care center from closing in 2012 after industrial downsizing forced

the union to prioritize job security. Public sector unions were disciplined in a manner similar to their private sector counterparts. Back-to-work legislation and wage suppression legislation sent a clear message to workers that the government was not willing to concede on wages, much less provide for supplementary demands such as child care.

As unions were forced to prioritize job security over supplementary demands, federal and provincial governments began to significantly restructure the welfare state to provide fewer and poorer quality services to an increasingly smaller group of "deserving" citizens, namely white middle-class households. The most substantial welfare restructuring took place in the 1990s, which disproportionately impacted women and racialized people, including the reform of Unemployment Insurance that began in 1975. At this time, the federal government increased the penalty for workers who voluntarily left their employment, increased the number of weeks needed to qualify, and introduced a tiered eligibility system that applied more stringent entrance requirements for "repeat users" (people who made a second claim within fifty-two weeks), "new entrants", "re-entrants", and part-time workers.

More egregious changes were still to come in 1997, when eligibility changed from weeks of work to hours of work, which was more difficult to qualify for, especially those engaged in precarious work, including women. As a result, the percentage of unemployed workers eligible for Unemployment Insurance dropped from 83 percent in 1989 to 42 percent by 1997 (McKeen & Porter, 2003). Women were disproportionately likely to be deemed ineligible under these new requirements because of the greater difficulty they had meeting the new hours of work requirements, and the number of regular claims by women fell by 25 percent over the decade, compared to a fall of 22 percent for men (Townson & Hayes, 2007).

As an increasing number of workers become ineligible for Unemployment Insurance under neoliberalism, governments continue to suppress the value of social assistance to better discipline workers into joining the labor market. Governments have also made ongoing eligibility for social assistance contingent on recipients being subject to high levels of surveillance, regulation, and control. Recipients may be required to undergo audits and drug testing and they can be reported on by members of the public through welfare fraud hotlines. These processes stigmatize and dehumanize aid recipients – often drawing on racialized imagery that criminalizes welfare recipients – demonstrating that the single mother continues to be a stigmatized figure under neoliberalism much as they were during Keynesianism (Gazso, 2012; Gazso et al., 2020; Maki, 2011, p. 48; McKeen & Porter, 2003, p. 111).

2.3.1 Social Unionism

As neoliberalism tightened the screws on the working-class, workers and their unions began to seek alternative and more effective forms of unionism. This began in earnest in the 1970s amongst public sector workers who began to view their interests in more than economic terms because of governments escalating their attacks on public sector workers' wages and collective bargaining rights.

Social unionism was one strategy unions began experimenting with under neoliberalism. Social unionism involves unions engaging with social justice issues beyond the workplace, using strategies that extend beyond collective bargaining (Ross, 2007). In contrast to business unionism, with its narrow focus on wages and working conditions, social unionism is more ambitious. Its goal is "to change the entire society and to advance the interests of many who are not union members on the basis of a moral critique of the existing order" (Ross, 2007, p.18). In the pursuit of larger political change, social unionism counters attacks from government and

employers by working with community groups[10] to increase the power of union campaigning around a broader set of demands that include welfare provisioning, democratic reform, and issues related to human rights (Ross, 2007, p. 21).

These demands are formulated with the support of and consultation with groups that represent non-unionized workers, especially those groups that represent women, racialized workers, and migrant workers. Unions may also partner with organizations not obviously related to labor including churches, politicians, activists, and other groups. These groups may include anti-poverty organizations (e.g., Ontario Coalition Against Poverty) and anti-racist organizations (e.g., 1492 Land Back Lane, Justice4Palestine) (Wills, 2001). The demands formulated through this collaborative and consultative process are often especially meaningful to marginalized workers and people whose needs have always surpassed what is typically included in collective agreements (e.g., public child care, affordable housing).

While overcoming some of the sexism and racism inherent to business unionism, social unionism can result in a charitable approach towards community groups that denies such groups equal decision-making power (Shantz, 2009, p. 114). The result is that the more radical imperatives of community groups may be forfeited at the behest of trade unions (Ross, 2007, p. 26). Trade unions may prefer this more paternalistic relationship with community groups because it allows unions to draw on a larger backing of support from the wider community while still retaining control over objectives to ensure that the sectoral interests of relatively privileged workers is prioritized. An example of this was the CAW worked with the United Way in

[10] The term 'community' can have ambiguous connotations. For the purposes of this research, "community" involves people who form and maintain relationships to meet a set of common needs. Members of a community possess a sense of trust, safety, belonging and care for one another based on shared experiences (Chavis & Lee, 2015; Chavis & Wandersman, 1990; Kitchen, Williams & Chowhan, 2012). As such, community groups, for instance, "the disabled community" act as one type of organization form that expresses relationships and their collective interests, despite the diversity amongst people with disabilities.

Windsor to rally public support against the closing of Ford Motor's engine assembly plant. The union campaigned with messaging that emphasized there would be serious repercussions for community services in the area if the plant closed, allowing the union to mobilize the community to preserve plant workers' jobs as part of a targeted campaign that primarily benefitted Ford workers (Ross, 2007, p. 26).

2.3.2 Coalition-Building Unionism

Coalition-building unionism is another strategy trade unions have revived under neoliberalism, which involves trade unions establishing participatory, rather than paternalistic, relationships between unions and community groups to achieve mutual objectives (Banks, 1991; Frege et al., 2004; Wills, 2001; Tattersall, 2008).

A key difference between social unionism and coalition-building unionism is that coalition-building unionism relies on *participatory* relationships with other organizations and groups. This means that multiple actors are involved in determining the objectives, tactics, and overall strategy of the coalition, rather than a trade union merely responding to the objectives of another organization. When unions craft a solidarity statement, contribute funds to a community group, or participate in a protest, they are not necessarily engaging in coalition-building unionism, especially if these actions were not an outcome of unions participating in joint decision-making bodies or action teams with community groups. This project is interested in coalition-building unionism.

Ideally, coalition-building will foster strong social ties between organizations who have similar structures; complementary organizational ideologies, cultures, and identities; and sufficient resources (e.g., virtual and physical) (Van Dyke & Amos, 2017, p. 10). Further, such coalitions will ideally establish relationships of respect, reciprocity, and equality between

partners to ensure decision-making is fair and not dominated by any one actor, especially those with more financial and political power. Mutuality and respect ensure that the coalition's goals and strategies represent the common interest, rather than the interests of one privileged actor. Successful coalitions will also recognize the strengths and weaknesses of respective coalition partners to ensure that partners are able to contribute in a way that does not strain or burden individual organizational capacities (e.g., a small non-profit being required to provide as much funding as a large union) (Black, 2018, p. 121).

When coalition-building unionism is successful, it can be mutually beneficial for unions and community groups, mobilizing complementary resources and capacities to wage more impactful campaigns (Black, 2018, p. 121). The presence of community groups in coalitions benefits trade unions by bolstering the ranks of workers and people involved in a campaign and improving the public profile of unions whose public standing has diminished under neoliberalism. Community groups also contribute to the internal renewal of unions by infusing the labor movement with new activists (Black, 2018, p. 121; Heery et al., 2012, p. 146-147). Likewise, community groups benefit from trade union participation in coalitions. Unions provide funding and other resources that can be in short supply for non-profits, they act as a link to the political process, and they can provide labor and workplace-related expertise to community groups (Heery et al. 2012, p. 152).

Coalition-building unionism is not a new strategy because organized labor has always been a composition of multiple actors, including political parties, institutions, trade unions, research institutes, and community and welfare organizations. Trade unions also have a long history of partnering with the community to fight for a common cause preceding neoliberalism, including labor-community coalitions that fought against fascism during the 1930s and as part of

the civil rights movement and the antiwar movements of the 1960s (Frege et al. 2004, p. 1). Under neoliberalism, coalitions have also formed around living wage campaigns, education reform, the establishment of labor-based political parties, global justice, the defense of public services, the prevention of plant closures, and employment equity. For example, unions partnered with anti-racist organizations in pursuit of employment equity in Ontario during the 1990s (Das Gupta, 2006).

Trade unions have also actively collaborated with community groups around child care at the national, provincial, and regional levels for over fifty years[11] with early labor involvement in child care coalitions dating back even earlier, during the post-war period in the 1920s (Black, 2018, p. 120; Ross, 2007, p. 16). During this early period, women's and welfare organizations successfully partnered with Communists to prevent the Ontario provincial government from shutting down wartime day cares to funnel women back into the home after the war (Prentice, 2006). Then, in the 1970s, unions began collaborating with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) around child care after NAC was created in 1971 to advocate for the implementation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women's (RCSW) recommendations, including the establishment of a national child care system[12] (Mahon, 1997).

In Ontario, since 1981, much of child care coalition work between unions and community groups takes place within The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC). As of 2022[13],

[11] Some of these groups include Child Care Now at the national level; various provincial coalitions including The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, the Child Care Coalition of Manitoba, the Child Welfare Advocacy Coalition in Nova Scotia amongst others; and the Toronto Community for Better Child Care operating at the regional level in Ontario where child care is uniquely managed in comparison to other provinces and territories.

[12] Before NAC ended operations in 2007 when federal funding to advocacy non-profits was terminated, NAC also campaigned with unions around pay equity, human rights protections, and pensions (Sangster et al., 2022).

[13] See Appendix B and Appendix C for an overview of OCBCC affiliates in 1981 and 2022.

CUPE, the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, the OFL, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), and UNIFOR were participating in the coalition. CUPE currently sits on the OCBCC's 5-member executive committee which manages the day-to-day operations of the coalition. The OFL and the OSSTF are board members on the 10-member board. The other unions occupy positions on the provincial council as organizational representatives.

The majority of the OCBCC's trade union partners are public sector unions, excepting UNIFOR. Such unions represent a disproportionately large number of women members compared to private sector unions given women's concentration in the public sector. This suggests that union involvement in the coalition may be motivated by women members' need for child care. A number of these unions, including CUPE, the ETFO, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, and OPSEU, directly represent child care workers in some capacity, either as workers in child care centers (CUPE), in the public schoolboard (ETFO, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association), or as professors in community colleges (OPSEU), suggesting that the involvement of some unions is also facilitated by a desire to improve members' wages and working conditions.

All these unions have explicitly stated their commitment to fighting for issues of social justice as they extend beyond wages and working conditions with other organizations. Most of these unions claim on their websites that they act on behalf of their communities and not just out of sectoral interest, and that they partner with other organizations to accomplish this. The most oblique reference to coalition-building came from UNIFOR which simply stated that the union has adopted a 'modern approach to trade unionism.

Community groups[14] are also part of the coalition. This includes child care, children's and women's advocacy organizations including the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO) (Board Member), Early Years Professionals Rise Up T.O. (Board Member), the Canadian Federation of University of Women (Organizational Representative on Council), Ontario Campaign 2000 (Organizational Representative on Council), the Toronto Community for Better Child Care (Organizational Representative on Council), Child Care Now (Regional Representative on Council), Thunder Bay ECE Unite! (Regional Representative on Council), and L'association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario (Board Member). Notably, none of these organizations sit on the OCBCC's executive council that manages the day-to-day operations of the OCBCC.

Non-profit child care centers are also members of the coalition. The question of whether non-profit child care centers qualify as a community group depends on how we understand their relationship to the community of workers they employ and the families they serve and their ability and willingness to represent their interests. What I will eventually demonstrate is that while the small parent-run non-profit child care centers from the 1980s qualified as community groups, neoliberalism has changed the operations of some centers and their relationship with parents and workers. Non-profit centers currently involved with the OCBCC include Compass Early Learning and care (Executive), Creative Beginnings (Executive), Service à l'enfance Aladin child care services (Executive), the YWCA (Board Member), Superior children's center (Board Member and Regional Representative on Council), Discovery Early Learning and care (Board Member), RisingOaks Early Learning Ontario (Regional Representative on Council), and

[14] See Appendix A and B for a list of community organizations part of the OCBCC in 1981 and 2022.

First Adventure child Development Centers (Regional Representative on Council). Notably, of the five executive positions, three are held by non-profit child care centers.

2.4 Barriers to Building an Inclusive Coalition

Unfortunately, while labor-community coalition-building can revitalize the labor movement and fight for larger political goals, including public child care, issues can and do arise that prevent coalitions from succeeding and acting in the interests of its most marginalized partners.

Some causes of this include the outcome of conflict between coalition partners that have diverging and non-overlapping interests; the replication of sexist and racist inequities within the coalition that make mutuality and respect between organizations difficult; and the subordination of less financially secure groups within the coalition to those groups that have more money and power (Heery, Williams & Abbott, 2012).

A root cause of these issues is often a consequence of the differences between the organizational structures between coalition affiliates, especially those of trade unions and community group affiliates (Heery, Williams & Abbott, 2012). As such, this dissertation seeks to uncover how marginalized people, including child care workers as a feminized and racially diverse profession and racialized people, have been excluded within the OCBCC because of the organizational structure and practices of the coalition and its affiliates, CUPE and the OFL. This project recognizes that such practices and policies reflect the political, economic, and social conditions organizations are situated in.

2.4.1 The Organizational Structure of Union Partners

The literature suggests unions that rely on more hierarchical and bureaucratic forms of organizing may marginalize women and racialized people in coalitions. This can create tension with community partners who tend to use more decentralized and grassroots organizing techniques to represent marginalized populations. These more hierarchical unions tend to be controlled by a centralized executive that focuses on "pragmatic" issues, using collective bargaining to improve workers' compensation and working conditions. But this narrow focus comes at the expense of community partners who represent more diverse demands pertaining to the environment, social welfare, and human rights. These issues also tend to matter to more disadvantaged people, including women and racialized workers who are more likely to be marginalized in union spaces (Black & Ashby, 2018; Fine, 2007; Frege, Heery & Turner, 2004; Heery et al., 2012; Kirton, 2015; Rose, 2000; Tattersall, 2008; Tattersall, 2009; Turner, 2006; Van Dyke & Amos, 2017).

A notable case in Ontario of coalition-building being undermined by hierarchical unionism was during the "Days of Action". The "Days of Action" references the large political strikes, demonstrations, and protests that arose across Ontario from 1995 – 1998. These actions occurred in reaction to former Conservative Premier, Mike Harris' rash of cuts to the public sector, including to child care. The first of these actions was initiated by NAC activists who created the 1995 *Embarrass Harris* campaign to publicly shame Harris for making cuts to child care (Nesbitt, 2018b). As the groundswell of public outrage began to gain momentum, rank-and-file members of the OFL called on the executive of the union federation to act. But the executive hesitated, deciding to defy members' call for a general strike. Instead, executive used the momentum of the movement to orient members towards supporting collective bargaining,

funneling foment away from direct action and the fight for larger political goals (Delaney, Jarley & Fioritio 1996; Levesque & Murray, 2002; Tattersall, 2009).

By failing to be a good coalition partner during "the Days of Action", the OFL demonstrated how the fair representation of members and the community cannot be achieved if relying on an undemocratic process. Clearly, a certain amount of decentralization and democratic control is necessary to ensure that the community and more marginalized workers are represented within campaigns. That stated, coalitions do not need to become completely decentralized, with Cranford et al. (2006) noting that informal, consensus-based, and grassroots organizing can produce an ephemeral organizing model that lacks longevity and sustainability. Instead of completely dismantling traditional organizational structures, unions should ensure that they are not disenfranchising community partners and rank-and-file workers within the coalition.

Unions may resist doing this out of self-interest, especially if they perceive some of the community groups' objectives as being antagonistic to those of their members. Trade unions may be hostile towards fair representation or affirmative action policies for special populations because they are perceived to be in direct conflict with collectively bargained seniority systems. For example, American unions attempted to undermine the work of disability rights groups who advocated for affirmative action for people with disabilities for this very reason (Cobble, 2004).

If unions perceive there is a risk of losing members, member support, political clout, funding, or resources to a community group, they may withdraw their support from the coalition or even undermine community partners. This was the case when British unions became hostile towards the community group, London Citizens, which was organizing workers through a Workers' Association rather than referring workers to these same British unions (Heery et al., 2012, p. 148).

While coalition-building literature recognizes how trade unions' organizational structure undermines effective and inclusive coalition-building, these scholars do not necessarily analyze unions' organizational structure from an intersectional perspective. Centralization, hierarchy, and bureaucracy produces racist and sexist outcomes within organizations even as these practices appear race and gender blind.

Entrenched racism and sexism in unions is a consequence of unions' historical exclusion of women and racialized workers who have been perceived as threats to white male workers' wages and job security (Briskin & McDermott, 1993, p. 7; Das Gupta, 2006). Unions do not always reproduce whiteness and androcentrism through overtly sexist and racist policies and practices, but by institutionally centering whiteness and androcentrism as the normative standard. The result is such organizations may still expect or depend on workers to not be burdened with domestic obligations or possess a specific (aka. white) set of cultural values. In this way, they can more easily be incorporated into the rational-technical and informal systems that organize work, such as participating in union meetings that are scheduled to take place in the evenings or over drinks in a bar (Acker, 1990, p. 151; Briskin & McDermott, 1993; Ray, 2019, p. 41; Yates, 2011).

While appearing neutral, this archetypal worker is and has always been male since women have never been able to escape the realities of certain types of physical embodiment, including gestation and lactation, and social and cultural expectations dictating who does domestic and reproductive labor (Acker, 1990, p. 150). This worker tends to be white because racialized workers are often shut out by homophilic white networks that prioritize access and opportunities to others who look like themselves. This puts racialized workers at a disadvantage when trying to access new opportunities and positions of power (Bacharach, Bamberger &

Vashdi, 2005). Even when racialized workers are aware of the expected norms and behaviors needed to navigate white-centric organizational systems, they may not possess the correct social capital to leverage this knowledge, such as knowing how to access executive but not having a personal connection with a gatekeeper to make access possible (Iannello, 2013; Rodriguez, 1988).

Attempts at eradicating racism within trade unions have been mixed. One example of progress is that many trade unions now have diversity departments and equality officers to better support racialized workers and women workers (Munro, 2001, p. 455; Ouali & Jefferys, 2015, p. 111). Unions have also instituted affirmative action policies to prioritize hiring racialized and women workers. For example, CUPE, CAW-Canada, and OPSEU have all developed their own internal affirmative action programs that prioritize the hiring of racialized workers for positions within the union (Leah, 1993, p.160). The OFL also began reserving five of its twenty-five vice presidential positions for women in 1982 (Cuneo, 1993, p. 127).

Unfortunately, encoding proportionality and fair representation in trade unions' constitutions does not always work to ensure marginalized workers have more power or voice within the organization. An exclusionary masculine and white-centric culture can prevent women and racialized workers from running for leadership positions (Ledwith, 2012). Rampant sexism, sexual harassment, and sexist double standards can make it difficult for women executives to win the confidence and trust of other executive members and rank-and-file members (Munro, 2001).

Even when women and racialized workers do rise to positions of power within trade unions, these individuals are often handpicked because of their amenability to the status quo (Cuneo, 1993, p. 128). Professional middle-class white women often ascend to such positions for this reason. Not surprisingly, these women can and do ignore the specific needs of Black and

working-class women because of their occupational and personal distance from them (Munro, 2001). Marginalized executive members may also have limited authority due to discriminatory double standards that force these workers to adopt more conciliatory behavior to align with in-group norms (Colgan & Ledwith, 2000; Leah, 1993).

Educational programs designed to foster intra-union solidarity and help marginalized workers advance to leadership positions have produced mixed results. This means the introduction of programs like the CAW's 1987 Human Rights Training Program negotiated with General Motors for management and unionized workers (Cuneo, 1993, p. 124) and the CAW's 1992 course designed to attract racialized women to apply for leadership positions (Leah, 1993, p. 162) are not necessarily efficacious. The issue is that such programming is based on the traditional male model of education "where people get lectured to; they don't get a chance to really talk about their feelings", as noted by Peggy Nash of the CAW (Leah, 1993, p. 163). This can make it difficult for marginalized members to express the real harm they have experienced within the union, slowing progress towards eradicating these harms and the conditions that lead to them. Such training also does not necessarily change workers' likelihood of discriminating against a co-worker and changes are often cosmetic and remain at the level of rhetoric (p. 163).

Moves to rectify racism and sexism within unions have been further stymied when national union policies fail to be implemented at the local level. Local implementation remained such a significant barrier to progress for marginalized workers that delegates at a 1992 CAW human rights conference stated that secondary local union leadership was the number one obstacle to resolving racism within the union (Leah, 1993, p. 163). Local executive, which may be less likely to enact affirmative action policies within the executive, may resist progressive change to protect their and other white male members' privileged position in the union.

As a result of ongoing issues around racism and sexism in their unions, some women and racialized workers have organized outside of traditional trade union structures through autonomous organizing committees and organizations. Examples of this include committees and caucuses for women and racialized workers who are formally associated with a union, but who have significant autonomy from the executive. In Ontario, Black workers formed the Ontario Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (OCBTU) which was an organization not formally associated with any union. These autonomous bodies will often use more democratic organizational practices to "identify and uproot the systemic causes of inequality deriving from the 'deep structures' within organizations and institutions that perpetuate gender [and racial] difference" (Kainer, 2009, p. 5).

2.4.2 The Organizational Structure of Community Partners

In contrast to unions, community groups tend to organize around identity and geography, rather than by sector or trade, focusing on issues that extend beyond workplace, including housing, health, education, and immigration reform. Although community groups are more likely to practice experimental organizing styles and be more sensitive to issues of gender, race/ethnicity, and language, many practice the same hierarchical and bureaucratic practices that trade unions model (Black & Ashby, 2018; Fine, 2007; Frege, Heery & Turner, 2004; Heery et al., 2012; Kirton, 2015; Rose, 2000; Tattersall, 2008; Tattersall, 2009; Turner, 2006; Van Dyke & Amos, 2017).

Such practices can reflect the group's ideological leanings. For example, groups that adopt a liberal feminist political ideology are less likely to problematize existing social and political structures and are more likely to rely on hierarchical and bureaucratic organizing structures (Adamson, Briskin & McPhail, 1988, p. 18). This includes NAC which tried to modify

some of its organizational processes to be more democratic, rather than transform them completely. For example, to better facilitate member participation, NAC maintained a hierarchical structure with an elected executive while also educating members on the rules of participation and the activities of the executive to ensure all members knew how to participate (Adamson, Briskin & McPhail, 1988, p. 233).

These modest organizational adaptations did not effectively remedy racism within the organization though. This came to a head with the election of Sunera Thobani, NAC's first racialized President. According to former NAC Executive Director, Beverely Bain, the racial tensions produced within the organization because of Thobani's election were exacerbated due to the centralized nature of the organization that did not allow for the will of an increasingly diverse rank-and-file to assert itself (Adamson, Briskin & McPhail, 1988).

Alternatively, community groups may be forced to adopt more hierarchical and bureaucratic measures to adjust to pressure from government seeking to neutralize the group's radical tendencies. Neutralization also lends itself well to transforming these groups into cheap and flexible forms of social provision to compensate for a shrinking welfare state (Shragge, 2013, p.129). For example, the YWCA is often criticized by child care advocates for being bureaucratic and hierarchical, creating a highly unequal organization where child care workers and other frontline staff are paid poorly in contrast to the YWCA's handsomely paid CEOs. As the YWCA suppresses worker wages, they also provide child care at a lower cost than more democratically run small non-profit centers concerned about quality. The YWCA's amenability to operating under austere budgeting conditions reduces pressure on government to increase operational funding to all centers frustrated with insufficient operational funding.

Some community groups do successfully reject hierarchy and formal leadership (Adamson, Briskin & McPhail, 1988, p. 234). For example, in the heyday of feminist organizing in the 1960s and 1970s, some feminist groups rotated administrative tasks to provide each woman with the opportunity to learn by doing instead of relying on a collection of specialists and an executive to oversee day-to-day operations. Such groups also relied on consensus, rather than majority voting, to better ensure each woman had a sense of contribution to the decision (p. 237).

Similar democratic practices were evidenced amongst anti-racist organizing groups during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. Some of these groups used a non-hierarchical network of activists and community leaders to organize sit-ins across The United States. What appeared to be spontaneously organized sit-ins were organized by individuals who had close ties to the internal organization of the emerging Civil Rights movement. The central movement provided local movements with strategies for dealing with opposition, workshops and training procedures, and community mobilization techniques, but did not dictate how local movements should operate (Morris, 1999).

Within the child care movement, the Association of Early Childhood Educators (AECEO) is seen as a model for grassroots organizing because of its close connection with child care workers through its regional organizing chapters. The AECEO supports such chapters without dictating how they are to operate, and local organizing focuses on skill and leadership training amongst rank-and-file early childhood educators.

2.5 Addressing Research Gaps

The literature demonstrates that coalition-building can be an effective vehicle for resisting neoliberal reform, even as coalitions can fail to be both effective and inclusive because of the racism and sexism that remains imbricated within the organizational structures of unions

and community groups. Yet the literature on coalition-building and the literature on the gender and racial inequities within trade unions remains relatively siloed.

To account for this gap, I used two analytical strategies to better understand the coalition-building practice of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL from an intersectional perspective. First, I prioritized exploring how gender and race animate coalition-building and influence the objectives and strategy of the OCBCC to the benefit or detriment of child care workers and families, especially those who are racialized. I then explored these findings in relation to the structure and function of the OCBCC, and CUPE and the OFL as two affiliates, by focusing on how gender and race structure their operations.

Another gap in the coalition-building literature is a tendency to examine how the initiation of a coalition can be understood in relation to macroeconomic and political shifts without necessarily continuing to analyze how these same conditions impact the function of such coalitions over time. Hence, the second focus for this project involved exploring the operations and organizational structures of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL in relation to changing political and economic conditions over time to better understand how these conditions continued to impact coalition-building even as coalition-building may have arisen in response to these conditions.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed how the transition to Keynesianism and neoliberalism impacted the working-class, especially women workers and racialized workers disproportionately employed in precarious low wage jobs and excluded from welfare provisioning. With the transition to neoliberalism, trade unions, historically hostile to women and racialized workers, struggled to adapt to a more hostile political and economic environment.

In response to neoliberal reform and the demands of a diversifying membership, unions began to consider alternative forms of unionism, including coalition-building unionism that expanded unions' scope of interest to include issues like child care. Yet, coalitions can fail because trade unions and community group partners rely on racist and sexist organizational policies and practices that undermine effective and inclusive coalition-building.

In the next chapter, I turn to explaining how this project researched and explore how such organizational practices impacted the OCBCC and the participation of CUPE and the OFL in the coalition and what effect this had for women and racialized workers.

Chapter Three: Researching Child Care Coalition-Building

In this chapter, I review and justify the methodology I adopted for this study. I begin by establishing the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this project, and how these assumptions impacted how I designed and conducted my research. I discuss how I used Social Reproduction Feminism (SRF) to provide a macro-level analysis of child care provisioning under capitalism and feminist and anti-racist organizational theory to provide a meso-level analysis of power within the organization. I then turn to a description of my methods, establishing why qualitative methods were most appropriate to this project and the different textual sources of data I used for my analysis. I review how a descriptive analysis was used to construct a chronological account of the OCBCC, accompanied by a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore the child care discourses used by government and the OCBCC. Finally, I consider the limitations of this research and any ethical issues that arose while conducting the study.

3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

3.1.1 A Feminist Materialist Ontology

This project assumes that the objectives, strategy, and structure of the OCBCC, as they are shaped through ideas and discourses, are underscored by the material conditions under capitalism. This includes how life is produced and reproduced through paid and unpaid labor. This materiality is not static, rather its organization is dependent on changing human activity as dialectically counterposed to and produced by the conditions of nature and other human beings. Practically, this suggests that an object of analysis, like discourse, reflects the material conditions existing under capitalism, but discourse also shapes, (re)produces, and alters those same material conditions through a dialectical process (Marx, 1915, p. 25). For example,

neoliberal discourses promote the free market as the most logical strategy to distribute goods and services in society, further promulgating neoliberal reform as it re-orders society via free trade agreements, deregulation, and privatization.

For Marx, materiality comes before discourse, rather than vice versa. This means that neoliberal discourse does not beget neoliberalism even as neoliberal discourse reproduces neoliberalism. Marx explains the material basis of reality and discourse when describing the creation of technology. He draws attention to the ways that changing material conditions bring forth new ideas (and new technologies), rather than vice versa:

> Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with Nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them... Every history of religion even, that fails to take account of this material basis, is uncritical. It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the misty creations of religion, than, conversely, it is, to develop from the actual relations of life the corresponding celestial forms of those relations. The latter method is the only materialistic, and therefore, the only scientific one (Marx, 1915, p. 406-407).

Here, Marx suggests that technology, which can be taken to stand in for any material form that human beings have acted upon for the purpose of achieving an objective (e.g., tools, machinery, organizational structure), reflects the way in which life is produced and reproduced under a given mode of production. For Marx, life is produced in such a way because it is reflective of a particular set of social relations, rather than because it is a ‘thing’ born from an idea.

Marx's ontology, however, was unfinished and woefully one-sided, because his conception of materiality encompassed the totality of only one form of work: paid labor for capital. He ignored reproductive labor's role in capitalist circuits of production and reproduction. He mistakenly thought that social reproduction was a natural outcome of a worker's drive for self-preservation and propagation. As a result, he ignored the essentially social nature of reproductive labor and its contingent status on profit production (Baker, 2007; Bakker & Gill, 2003; Ferguson, p. 2016, 51).

To counter this androcentric bias within classical materialist ontology, this project draws upon social reproduction feminism to develop an ontology that accounts for all forms of value production, especially as they involve women, migrants, and racialized people whose unpaid and informal labor is ignored in classical materialist theorizations. These classical theorizations tend to give primacy to the productive value of the white male breadwinner while ignoring that child care, for example, benefits capitalism by producing future workers and reproducing current workers so that they can be added as inputs into the productive process.

Within this more comprehensive ontology, capitalism is not given ultimate primacy in the determination of life, including the final forms that exploitation and oppression take. Rather, all social relations, including racial and gender orders, co-constitute the social totality, which, while generally organized in accordance with capital's drive for profit, is not absolutely organized as such by capital (Aguilar, 2015; Bohrer, 2018; Ferguson, 2016; Foley, 2018; Mojab & Carpenter, 2019; Salem, 2018). Indeed, Cedric Robinson was well known for positing that capitalism was not racial simply as a consequence of capital's desire to divide workers, but because race and racism had already permeated Western feudal society. As such, race cannot be reduced to capitalism because it predates capitalism (Robinson, Quan, Gilmore & Robinson, 2019).

The implications of such a revelation for this project is that I did not analyze racialized and gendered organizing practices as mere consequences of the underlying logic of capitalism. Rather, I analyzed gender and race based on how they are asserted through capitalism and beyond capitalism to produce an economic order that is structured by race and gender and whose form is specific to a particular place and time.

For example, although the rise of the dual-income family model demonstrates how gender norms can change in response to shifting economic conditions, the cause of the prevalence of dual-income households cannot be reduced to economic shifts. Rather, women's increasing labor force participation also reflects the work of feminists who fought to abolish sexist employment practices and policies that pushed women out of the labor force (e.g., lack of maternity leave policies, discriminatory hiring practices). This demonstrates that the gendered order is co-constitutive with economic conditions, but whose form and function is not simply a function of the economy.

Yet even as capital, race, and gender determine life, these relations are not static or autonomous in their mode of action, acting as a kind of unilateral motor of history. Rather, they are fluid and ever-changing because they are also products of real dialectically determined and historical human activity. Drawing on this socialist feminist ontological approach, this research contextualizes ideas within a wider, historic socio-political-economic milieu, including those conditions that determine how life is (re)produced under capitalism. Labor market trends, the rate of profit accumulation, public sector austerity, the changing management of the household and the way in which these shifts are negotiated, contested, and acquiesced to by real people informed how I analyzed the discourses that reflected and re(produced) the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL.

3.1.2 A Dialectical Feminist Epistemology

In using a feminist reproductive theory to establish what exists, I still need to consider what is possible to know. The way we perceive reality does not necessarily reflect the world as it actually exists. This is because although consciousness is materially determined, there is not an automatic transfer from the economic structure to what we know about the world. As knowers, we do not stand outside the world, but are situated in those same relations that constitute it (Haraway, 2016; Smith, 2004).

For example, a feudal philosopher may struggle to conceptualize exploitation via wage labor because those economic relations did not exist at that time. In a similar manner, the child care activists I interviewed for this project had difficulty conceptualizing utopian child care arrangements that exceeded the limitations of capitalism. Most outlined an arrangement that could easily be provided by a generous welfare state in a market-based economy even though a more utopian arrangement may better serve women and children. One example of a more utopian arrangement might involve collaborative caregiving households where multiple families pool resources and caring capacities to collectively raise children in a community. This would overcome the isolation of the current heteronormative domestic model while dispersing care responsibilities across multiple carers. This kind of collaborative care model would ideally be accompanied by a drastically shortened working day/week with universal basic income supports to prioritize life over work in a post-capitalist economy.

Another barrier to knowing truth is that knowledge is mediated and distorted by ideology. Recall that ideological ideas reflect the interests of the ruling economic class and not the working-class. For example, the motto that one only needs to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" to succeed obscures that success under capitalism largely depends on access to

money and the means to make more of it (e.g., land, tools etc.). This means that despite the felt truth of peoples' experiences, they may possess a distorted view of reality because of the pervasive nature of ideological ideas that uphold the status quo (Jaggar, 2004, p. 57).

Much of ideology is androcentric because it devalues and subordinates women and anything associated with the feminine, including child care. For example, Maternalist ideologies that position women as natural caregivers, and neoliberal ideologies that position the individual as self-reliant, work to undermine public support for a universal child care system. In the absence of spaces and places where alternative ideas can be developed, many working people believe that they are personally responsible for their children even as they struggle to balance paid work and caring responsibilities.

To counter the influence of androcentrism on knowledge production, I used a feminist epistemology that positions women as having a closer relationship with truth due to the nature of their experiences. For example, a woman who provides most of the child care in her family while working for low wages may experience financial, physical, and emotional suffering not experienced by her male partner also engaged in paid labor. Her experiences undermine the validity and the supposed viability of the nuclear family model and the neoliberal welfare state.

These women possess an epistemological advantage since their social location within a patriarchal capitalist political economy enables them to see the limits of ideological claims. Yet such insights by women have historically been ignored and misrepresented which was partially ensured by excluding women from various domains of activity (e.g., work, politics, power) and, until relatively recently, by excluding them from knowledge production in universities (Jaggar, 2004, p. 56; Narayan, 2004, p. 213).

By contrasting and comparing the histories, accounts, and experiences of many women, including those of feminist scholars, women activists, trade unionists, and child care workers associated with the OCBCC, I hope to reveal a "harder" truth. This "harder" truth points to a common undercurrent based in the lived experiences of women that runs through divergent accounts, separating out ideology like wheat is from the chaff (Jaggar, 2004, p. 56; Narayan, 2004, p. 213).

3.2 Theoretical Lenses

I drew upon Social Reproduction Feminism (SRF) to provide a macro-level analysis of the conditions which undergird the operations of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL and the provision of child care in Ontario. Drawing heavily on Marxism and materialism, SRF theorizes social reproduction as it manifests across space and time. SRF explains the particular expressions of social reproduction as they appear in the everyday, including in the home, the workplace, and in trade unions as the consequence of the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism.

I also drew upon feminist and anti-racist organizational theory to explore how the economy, gender, and race operate and intersect at the meso level of the organization, including the OCBCC, the OFL, and CUPE. Analyzing how gender and race are taken up, negotiated, and contested by organizations and individuals in organizations helped me connect how race and gender as macro-level structures are contested or reified within individual organizations.

3.2.1 Social Reproduction Feminism (SRF)

I used SRF to guide my analysis of the exploitation of social reproduction under capitalism, including child care in Ontario. SRF centers the role of social reproduction, emphasizing that capital's exploitation of the working-class is not limited to the productive sphere, but it also includes the domestic sphere where women labor in the home. Unpaid

domestic labor, including the social act of caring for children and the emotional labor women do for their husbands, is not directly remunerated by capitalists. As a result, women's unpaid work in the home benefits and becomes necessary for capital as it reduces the cost of labor power and increases the rate of surplus value (Bakker, 2020; Benston, 1969; Dalla Costa, 2019; Federici, 2012; Laslett, & Brenner, 1989; Mezzadri, 2021; Mitchell, 1966; Morton, 1972; Secombe, 1974; Vogel, 2013).

For SRF, biology is not fatalistic, naturally producing women's oppression and exploitation. Rather, biology is a characteristic that has been transmuted under capitalism, working to cage some women in the home for the benefit of capital, while other women, especially racialized women, must work outside of the home for wages. This is not to dismiss reproductive capacity, since this has always existed outside of capitalist relations. Rather, it is to underscore that reproductive processes are historically and spatially determined (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1983).

Women's biology is weaponized against them through misogynistic anti-abortion and anti-contraception policies that force women to reproduce a direly needed labor force. When governments deny women access to maternity and child care supports, women have limited options to escape the domestic sphere. Other women, especially those who are racialized, have often been forced to work for pay outside the home, funneled into the homes of white families because of labor market discrimination that leaves few options outside of domestic service for racialized women or because of these women's enslaved status.

Maternalist ideology supports both outcomes, constructing middle-class white women as naturally suited for a life of unidyllic domestic bliss, even though many of these women still need to work for pay to support themselves and their family. This same ideology also constructs

racialized women as mamies or natural caregivers to others, even though this denies such women the capacity and time to care for their own families (Collins, 1990; Dalla Costa & Cleaver, 2019; Federici, 2004).

The tension women experience trying to combine paid and unpaid domestic work points to the contradictory relationship between capital and social reproduction. Even as capitalism relies on social reproduction to produce the current and future labor power, capitalism also undermines the ability of labor power to reproduce itself by refusing to support social reproduction through a strong welfare state and a family wage. Hence, the labors involved in producing and reproducing workers are situated "in a necessary *but contradictory relation* to the capitalist drive to produce and accumulate surplus value" (Ferguson, n.d.).

I found SRF useful for this project because it can theorize *why* women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making roles within trade union and other activist spaces and *why* child care continues to be an underrepresented issue, rather than simply analyzing *how* gender oppression and exploitation occur.

Any configuration of social reproduction is also historically and spatially specific. Analyzing a particular configuration requires exploring the historical specificities of capitalism and the gendered order as they exist and change across time (Benston, 1969; Dalla Costa, 2019; Federici, 2012; Laslett & Brenner, 1989; Mitchell, 1966; Morton, 1972; Secombe, 1974; Vogel, 2013). For example, Keynesian and neoliberal economic restructuring have each imposed different conditions that determine how the family is expected to reproduce itself under capitalism. These conditions interact with changes to the gendered and racial orders as they are transformed by economic conditions and other factors, including the influence of activists, intelligentsia, and political actors. A historical analysis in this way may theorize why and how

the form and function of the family may change across time, even as a primary function of the family, which is to lower the costs of labor power for capital, remains the same. In some notable exceptions, the family may be radically dismantled if it is considered a threat to the white heteropatriarchal capitalist order. An example of this is when the Canadian state forcibly removed Indigenous children from their families via the residential school system.

Unfortunately, earlier forms of SRF tended to invisibilize the unique experiences of racialized women under capitalism, universalizing the experiences of white heterosexual women (Bannerji, 2005; Bhavnani & Coulson, 1986; Davis, 1983). These early theorizations neglected to recognize that racial regimes of inequality interact with the gendered order to produce uniquely exploitative social reproduction configurations that racialized women become entrapped in within capitalism. For example, racialized women have tended to work outside the home for wages when this was less common for white women, and racialized women tend to make lower wages than their white female colleagues (Davis, 1983).

To remedy this absence, racialized women scholars demanded that SRF engage in a material analysis of racialized women's experiences under capitalism while accounting for race, colonialism, sexuality and other oppressions that produce distinct experiences for marginalized women (Hill Collins, 1990; Minh-Ha, 2009; Davis, 1983). Such theorists emphasized the integrative ontology that should inform social reproduction theory. The nature of this integrative ontology overcomes some of the limitations associated with intersectionality theory, including the supposed autonomy of differentiated systems of exploitation and oppression. These critiques eventually resulted in new formulations of SRF that explicitly account for the role racial systems play in determining the form social reproduction takes for racialized women, pushing social

reproduction paradigm beyond its original preoccupation with gender and class relations (Bhattacharya, 2017; Ferguson, 2016).

I adopted SRF after being inspired by the connection between SRF and grassroots activism, including the *Wages for Housework* Campaign in the 1970s (Federici, 1975) and the Global Women's Strike (Fraser, Arruzza & Bhattacharya, 2019). That stated, the work of feminist political economists (FPE) also played an invaluable role in this project. Closely related to SRF, feminist political economy (FPE) also situates and theorizes social reproduction in relation to macroeconomic shifts, including those caused by markets, states, and transnational women's activism (Luxton & Bezanson, 2006; Vosko, 2002). In acknowledging these similarities, this project does not create a distinction between SRF and FPE since their objectives, assumptions, and methods are similar. Many FPE theorists are also Canadian and have written on the conditions of social reproduction in Canada, producing work that informed this project and its focus on child care provisioning in Ontario over the past forty years (Bezanson, 2010; Fox, 2006; Langford et al., 2017; Luxton & Bezanson, 2006; Vosko, 2002, 2006, 2019).

3.2.2 Feminist and Anti-Racist Organizational Theory

While Social Reproduction Feminism (SRF) theorizes gender as a reflection of larger structural forces, it is outside the scope of this theory to understand how such power operates at the level of the organization. To attend to this gap, I analyzed macro-level power in relation to and alongside a meso-level analysis of power within the organization by drawing on organizational theory linked to feminist scholars, including Acker (1990), Bell, Meriläinen, Taylor & Tienari (2020), Cunliffe (2022), Moss Kanter (1977), Feldberg and Glenn (1979),

MacKinnon (1979), and Ferguson (1984), and anti-racist scholars, including Acker (2011), Proudford & Nkomo (2006); Ray (2019), Ray, Herd & Moynihan (2023), and Wooten (2019).

Organizational theory is useful because it can be used to explore the behavior of "individuals and groups in the context of a complex organization[15] interacting with and being shaped by external exigencies and special interest groups", including trade unions and The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, while still cohering with the SRF's ontological assumptions (Kuh, 2003, p. 270). In this way, a meso-level analysis of the ways that gendered and racialized inequities operate in organizations is situated in relation to macroeconomic shifts, including conditions under neoliberalism.

Feminist and anti-racist organizational theory accounts for how pluralistic forms of institutionalized power operate to structure women's and racialized workers' experiences. Women's and racialized workers experiences in organizations are structured by gendered and raced processes, policies, and norms. Yet, gender nor race is not a natural outcome of biology but is a socially constructed set of expectations which shift across space and time. Gender and race are imposed on certain bodies to signify relationships of power within the organization, reflecting and reifying the ways in which gender and race is reproduced in larger society. Such power is articulated through gender and race, rather than gender existing as a naturalized binary opposition between male and female, or white and racialized (Scott, 1986). The significance of this is that those workers who navigate organizational spaces are both objects and agents of practice within gendered and raced systems, with social practice and symbolic meaning constituted through certain bodies constructed as natural conveyors of gender and embodied meanings (Acker, 2011; Reskin, 2000; Ray 2019; Ray, Herd & Moynihan, 2023).

[15] Organizational theory may not be as applicable for grassroots coalitions that lack a formalized structure, relying instead on ephemeral organizing models.

Such policies and processes create an organization where "advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of distinctions between male and female, masculine and feminine" and whiteness and the racialized other to produce benefits for white men (Acker, 1990; Frankenberg, 1993; Garner, 2007; Ray, 2019; Roediger, 1991). Such policies and processes are often considered to be a gender and race-neutral form of "best practice" even as they privilege whiteness and masculinity within the organization at the expense of more marginalized workers (Acker, 1990; McKittrick, 2015; Mills, 2014; Connell, 2005; Kimmel, Hearn & Connell, 2004). For example, employment seniority systems that result in "last hired, first fired" disproportionately disadvantage racialized women who have more trouble accessing the labor market due to discrimination and care burdens. As a result, they will have less seniority than white men and women and will be terminated first during mass layoffs (Anderson, 1982).

These policies and processes maintain internal divisions along lines of gender and race (division of labor, locations in physical space, and power); construct symbols and images that explain, express, and sometimes oppose those divisions (e.g., the authoritative white male union executive); enact dominance and submission between gendered and raced bodies; produce gendered and raced subjectivities in relation to the organization; and produce a gendered and raced organizational logic (e.g., bureaucracy) (Acker, 1990, p. 146-147; Briskin, 1998; Briskin & McDermott, 1993; Nangwaya, 2011).

The racial and gender inequities that impacts organizational structure ultimately limits choice and opportunity for racialized and female workers who are often funneled into poorly renumerated worked construed as requiring less skill, such as child care, textile work, and customer service work (Reskin, 2000). This division is supported by racist and sexist ideologies

and stereotypes that construct who is most suited for doing certain types of work. Such stereotypes neither reflect the nature of the task itself nor the character of real people. These predefined roles constrain the people who fill them, limiting the range of possible options for movement within the organization. For example, women, racialized women, and other marginalized people will often encounter "glass ceilings" that limit their progression upwards within an organization.

Even when women and racialized workers, especially racialized women, do manage to act outside of stereotypical roles or jobs, their position as "token" in that role often means they are forced to acclimate into a normative model of behavior that can reify the status quo (Moss Kanter, 1977). The result is that:

> Life does not consist of infinite possibilities because situations do not make all responses equally plausible or equally available. But the limits are not as much internal, rooted in the person, as they are structural and situational. In the view advanced here, people are capable of more than their organization positions ever give them the tools or the time or the opportunity to demonstrate (Moss Kanter, 1977, p. 10).

These normative roles are not made explicit within organizations as whiteness and masculinity often remain unmarked. Instead, the most desired and valorized qualities exist within dualisms that are implicitly racialized and gendered: public-private, individualism-collectivism, reason-emotion, mind-body, and competition-cooperation. While not obvious, the former aspect of each pairing has historically been associated with whiteness and masculinity, while the latter terms with femininity and the racialized Other (Acker, 1990; McKittrick, 2015; Mills, 2014).

These gender and race coded normative roles determine workers' experiences, reproducing power hierarchies amongst workers. This results in the inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities, disadvantaging marginalized workers, including women and racialized workers (Ray, 2019). For example, women and racialized people (especially racialized women) tend to be underrepresented in managerial positions within corporations (Klarsfeld, Ng & Tatli, 2012) and in politics (Paxton, Hughes & Barnes, 2020). Women have made significant leadership gains in public sector trade unions. This began in 1975 when CUPE elected Grace Hartman as its national president, who was the first woman to lead a national union in North America. But movement into leadership positions has been much slower for racialized women and within private sector unions. Only in 2019 did a Black woman lead a national union in Canada, when CUP-W elected Jan Simpson (Ross & Savage, 2020).

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Textual Documents

I used textual documents, including news articles; house documents from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, including Hansard transcripts, which is the official record of house debates, Orders and Notices, which is the official agenda of the House, and Votes and Proceedings, which includes an official record of the proceedings of the House; and documents produced by the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL, including press releases, reports of proceedings, action reports, and briefs and submissions to government to establish the objectives, strategies, and organizational structure of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL, and changes to government policy and provisioning around child care from 1981 to 2022.

House documents from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario were especially useful for establishing the objectives of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL since verbal submissions from

these groups to sitting government were typically made in response to anticipated or implemented changes to child care policy, namely planned cuts to child care funding. These documents were available online[16]. Newspaper articles were also useful for ascertaining the size, engagement, and impact of the coalition's campaigns, including direct actions such as rallies, protests, and strikes.

I accessed these documents in digital form because physical archives were not available during public lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, I was able to access many of these documents through trade unions' websites, the Rise Up! Digital Archive of Feminist Activism[17], and I secured others directly from my interview subjects. There were documents from the OFL's archives available through the Ontario Archives that would have been invaluable to this project but which I did not have access to given how I was undertaking research at a time when lockdown restrictions were imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3.2 Interviews

I interviewed 29 people, including seven current and past union executives from the OFL and CUPE, seven executive members of the OCBCC, twelve RECEs, one non-profit supervisor, one child care researcher, and one member of another child care advocacy organization. The full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix D.

I initially recruited union and OCBCC executives by contacting the OFL, CUPE, and the OCBCC. I was given contact information for interview subjects who would then often provide me with contact information for other relevant participants. Initially, I recruited RECEs by advertising the study on Facebook in professional early learning and child care groups, including

[16] https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/house-documents.
[17] http://riseupfeministarchive.ca/?s=child care .

"Early Childhood Educators of Ontario", "RECE (Only) Educating in Ontario", and "ECE Teachers Ontario", and on Instagram. Participants recruited in this way would also often provide me with contact information for other child care workers, demonstrating the importance of the snowballing technique for the recruitment of relevant interview participants for this study.

Only two participants were racialized: a first-generation immigrant woman from the Middle East and a woman of Latin American descent. Other notable diversity included one francophone participant and two male participants. This means that most interview participants were white women. The skewed demographics of the interview participants reflects the concentration of white women professionally involved in child care activism in Ontario and the smaller percentage of racialized women working in the child sector as qualified RECEs. The absence of racialized interview subjects may also reflect a certain amount of discomfort racialized child care workers had in speaking with me as a white woman. I also may have made errors in the way I advertised my study to potential research participants by failing to advertise in spaces frequented by racialized women and/or failed to frame the study in a way that encouraged racialized women's participation.

All participants were interviewed over Zoom, made necessary by institutional and personal restrictions on face-to-face research during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes and were conducted between May 2021 and March 2022. I recorded interviews with participants' consent, confirmed using a consent form that was sent to participants over email approximately a week before the scheduled interview. The conditions of the consent form included: 1) full confidentiality, 2) the right to decline identification with or without a pseudonym, 3) the right to review the final drafts of the project, 4) and the right that all

interview data be kept in a secured location. Ethics approval was sought and received from York University's Office of Research Ethics.

I typically transcribed five to ten interviews at a time and then completed an initial cursory analysis of the text to identify themes and patterns that could be used to reform the line of questioning for future interviews. I conducted a further analysis later after all interviews that had been completed. This second round of analysis involved using a grounded an open coding approach identify key discourses and themes within and across texts, including non-interview textual sources (e.g., newspaper articles, Hansard transcripts). I then reflected on what those themes meant for the questions I set out to answer (Saldaña, 2021).

I used these interviews to discover information pertaining to coalition objectives, strategies, and organizational structure that was either not available or accessible by other means and/or to reveal tensions between the information provided by interview subjects and that available in other textual documents. Despite the lack of racial diversity amongst my interview participants, interviews were useful for exploring how racialized people and child care workers as a feminized and racially diverse workforce were marginalized within the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL as evidenced by unpublicized tensions within the coalition between affiliate; tensions between the coalition's objectives and strategies and the needs and ideas of child care workers; and the ways in which organizational practices and policies were resisted and/or taken up in novel and unexpected ways by marginalized people.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Descriptive Analysis

I wrote this dissertation as a chronological narrative. In constructing most of this narrative, I conducted a descriptive analysis of news publications, Hansard transcripts, publications produced by the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL, and interviews. I sourced these materials from York University's library database, Queen's Park archives, the Rise Up! Feminist Digital Archives, and my research participants. My aim was to identify major child care policy reforms, establish the OCBCC's objectives and strategies, and to track the organizational structures of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL over time and in relation to changing political and economic conditions.

3.4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

When appropriate, I also used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), inspired by the work of Norman Fairclough (2015), to identify discourses used by government to justify child care reform and the OCBCC in its campaigning for a public child care system. For the purposes of this project, discourse refers to "groupings of utterances or sentences, statements which are enacted within a social context, which are determined by that social context, and which contribute to the way that social context continues its existence" (Mills in Bischoping & Gazso, 2015, p. 155).

CDA analyzes discourse as a conceptually mediated phenomenon, which allowed me to interrogate how social events and practices, namely the provisioning of child care in Ontario, exist in reflexive relation with the representations, construals, conceptualizations and theories of these events and practices as they are propagated by government and the OCBCC, rather than unilaterally being determined by or determining them (Fairclough, 2003, p. 9; Janks, 1997, p. 329).

In applying a CDA to the documents and interview data collected, I first sought to describe the object of analysis (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Meyers, 2015), which involved identifying the major discourses used by government to justify child care expansion and retraction, those used by the OCBCC when campaigning for a universal child care system, how the use of discourse changed over time, and how discourses reproduced racism and sexism in child care provisioning.

Then, I explored the processes by which the discourses are produced and received, including how discourse production and proliferation is determined by the nature of meso-level relations between organizations and institutions, including relations between government and the OCBCC. I also explored how micro-level relations between individuals, including between affiliates of the OCBCC impacted the OCBCC's discursive strategy (Wodak, 1996). (Van Dijk, 2008). (Mattheis, 2018). (Bischoping & Gazso, 2015).

I then contextualized these discourses within a wider political economic milieu to create connections between language and the material conditions of production and reproduction (Fairclough, 2015, p.126). This involved exploring the economic, social, and political context the discourse is embedded in to integrate what knowledge is available about the economic, political, and social shifts in Ontario from 1981 – 2022. Because discourse is always connected to other events that are happening at the same time or have happened before, including union decline, austerity policies, and shifting trends in the labor market, historic contextualization is essential to understand the genesis and function of a discourse, including how discourse serves a particular set of interests (Janks, 1997; Wodak, 2001).

By using CDA in this way, I was able to interrogate the power relations and ideological processes that are reproduced through child care -related discourse, and their consequences for

child care workers and racialized households. CDA's critique of the ways discourse reproduces ideology reflects the influence of Antonio Gramsci (1971), specifically his theory on the role ideology plays in upholding the domination of the ruling class (Wodak, 1996). (Bishoping & Gazso, 2016; Fairclough, 1992, Wodak, 1996; Giddens, 1984; van Dijk, 2008). Hence, CDA differs from other types of discourse analysis because of its focus on power, inequality, exploitation, and structural inequities with the objective of supporting social change, which was important for this project (Fairclough, 1992, 2002, 2013, 2015; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak, 1996).

3.5 Limitations

A major limitation of this study was the lack of diversity amongst my interview subjects that resulted in the exclusion of racialized people. The child care movement is definitively white and female. Many of my subjects were aware of how white the movement was and did point to the lack of racial diversity as being a significant and ongoing problem. This study did not find an adequate way to fully compensate for not hearing from racialized people. In some respects, this project has raised more questions than it has answered knowing that some of my conclusions about racial inequities and racial exclusion in the child care movement is based on what white activists knew rather than the lived experience of racialized workers.

Most of the interviews that I conducted were with participants who lived and worked in Toronto. This outcome was partially an inevitability knowing that Toronto is the economic and political hub of Ontario. For example, trade union and community group offices tend to be in the city, including those of the OFL, CUPE, and the OCBCC. This presented a quandary for this project because I was aware that people living and working in rural areas and in Northern Ontario had unique child care needs, but I did not collect significant data from those living and

working in rural and northern areas, especially because my snowballing technique tended to limit my subject pool to the Greater Toronto Area.

The COVID-19 pandemic also seriously curtailed my ability to seek out materials that did not exist in a digital format. I was unable to access trade unions' physical archives due to provincial public health measures that were in place during this time. As a result, most of what I have been able to access exists online in CUPE's and the OFL's databases or on the hard drives of my interview subjects. The consequence for my research is I was unable to analyze other useful documents that would not have been digitalized.

In noting the constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, it should also be noted that several of the unions and community groups involved in this study did not routinely and methodically archive documents for posterity. This was noted by several of my interview participants who reflected that much material had been lost when executive members and other staffers left the organization, often taking much of this important material with them. The consequence of this loss is that my analysis favored the present and recent past due to what types of documents were available on public websites or from interview participants who were more likely to still have documents that pertained to recent campaigns and internal union shifts.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The small and somewhat intimate nature of the child care movement presented a unique set of ethical hurdles for this project. Since most activists in the child care movement have a long and dedicated history within the movement, they are well-acquainted with each other's histories. A dissenting voice who refers to a particular set of circumstances could easily be traced back to a particular individual by other child care activists. This is a situation I had to contend with when an executive member critiqued a specific instance of union involvement in the OCBCC. After

providing details of this fractious collaboration, she immediately countered that such details could not be released because “everyone would know it was me”.

This occurrence resulted in an ethical quandary over how to handle and present such data. I wanted to provide a nuanced account of participation in the OCBCC while also protecting the anonymity of my interview participants. Ultimately, I decided to try and bridge these two concerns by outlining the broad strokes of the union’s behaviour, but in such an abstract way that it would be difficult to identify the set of circumstances my interview participant was referring to. This concessionary measure to anonymity is not perfect knowing that, depending upon the ideological coherence amongst my research participants, to dissent at all, irrespective of accompanying details, is to make oneself knowable.

Finally, I had to contend with the dilemma of wanting to explore how racialized families and child care workers tend to be marginalized within the OCBCC and trade unions, despite only interviewing two racialized people. To compensate for this, I informed my analysis by using what is currently known about how racialized people and immigrants tend to be excluded from and within the child care sector. I took note of how poverty, geographic location, and discriminatory early learning settings have produced inaccessible and inhospitable conditions for racialized children and child care workers. Given the sample of interview participants yielded by my snowball sampling, this project can only provide an incomplete understanding of the ways in which racialized families and child care workers have been marginalized within the OCBCC, trade unions, and the child care sector more generally.

3.7 Summary

In this chapter I reviewed how the individual components of my methodology work together to “get at” a shared understanding of reality grounded in a materialist ontology that

recognizes capitalism as a driver of history. While sharing important ontological assumptions, each aspect of my methodology also serves a unique purpose within this study. Social Reproductive Feminism (SRF) supports a macro-level analysis of the economic and politics conditions that undergird the operations of the coalition while feminist and anti-racist organizational theory supports a meso level analysis of the organization itself, including the OCBCC, the OFL, and CUPE. Alongside a descriptive analysis to construct a chronological account of the OCBCC, this project also used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore child care -related discourses used by government and the OCBCC to interrogate the reproduction of power and ideology in the child care sector. Despite the strength of my methodology, my project is limited by a lack of diversity amongst my interview subjects that impacted to what extent I could explore issues around race and racism.

Chapter Four: The OCBCC Confronts Neoliberalism (1981-1995)

The next four chapters (Chapters four – seven) explore the OCBCC's advocacy work from 1981, its founding, until 2022. This chapter covers the period from 1981 to 1995, including the terms of Conservative Premier Bill Davis (1981 – 1985), Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney (1984 – 1993), Liberal Premier, David Peterson (1985 – 1990), Liberal Prime Minister, Jean Chretien (1993 – 1995). and NDP Premier, Bob Rae (1990 – 1995). This chapter begins by exploring the coalition's founding objectives in relation to the preceding forty years of Keynesian welfare expansion in Canada. In considering the OCBCC's objectives, I also explore when and why conflict in the OCBCC occurred between trade unions and non-profit operators around unionization and educational integration and how this conflict oriented the coalition away from advocating for reform that would benefit child care workers. I also consider what effect Prime Minister Mulroney's hostility towards feminism and his government's adoption of neoliberal discourses had on the OCBCC's strategy and the advancement of neoliberal reform in the child care sector. Throughout this chapter, I consider how and whether racialized households and child care workers were sufficiently included in the OCBCC's campaigns and how they were disproportionately impacted by neoliberal reform during this period. I consider these exclusions as a product of race-blind organizational policies and practices and the ongoing devaluation of social reproduction under neoliberalism.

4.1 1945-1981: The Importance of Post-War Welfare Expansion

As the welfare state expanded throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the federal government refrained from developing national large-scale early childhood intervention programs, preferring to fund very modest tax-free family allowances. Beginning in 1945, the Family Allowance was initially issued to all women with children under the age of 16 and was Canada's first universal

welfare program. Because the benefit was universal, and not granted based on income status, the Family Allowance reflected the government's recognition of the value of women's social reproduction labor in the home (White, 2002).

Twenty year later, in 1966, the federal government began to support child care provisioning through the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). CAP was not created to meet the child care needs of the increasing number of women joining the labor force throughout the 1960s and 1970s though. Policymakers were mostly unaware of the increasingly large number of working mothers who needed child care because second wave feminists had not successfully influenced national politics yet. Rather, the provinces and territories used funding provided via CAP to reduce the dependency of low-income male breadwinners with families too large in relation to their wages on social assistance (Mahon & Phillips, 2013).

In this way, child care was intended to be one type of "rehabilitative service" to enable the individual to regain self-support and independence. CAP's main innovation was the introduction of a needs test to enable government officials to account for the size and age of a man's family to determine how much assistance to provide. Hence, federal contributions to day care subsidies provided through CAP were not part of a larger strategy to get single mothers off social assistance, but to make it possible for mothers in low-income families with a low-income male breadwinner to work for pay (Mahon & Phillips, 2013).

Gradually, the federal government began to use CAP to fund the operations of child care centers and provide support for households across a wider range of income levels. In 1965, the federal government agreed to share the costs of staff salaries and the delivery of new child care programs with the provinces. In 1972, the federal government decided to provide subsidies to a wider income group and provide direct operating grants to non-profit child care centers (Mahon

& Phillips, 2013; White, 1997). As the federal government used CAP to expand child care, advocates, including the National Council of Welfare, began to view CAP as an effective policy vehicle to deliver public non-commodified child care across the country (National Council of Welfare, 1991).

The Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) created additional momentum for universal child care programming in 1971 when the commission publicly called for a national child care system. In doing so, the RCSW expressed what had previously only been articulated by local grassroots movements, including the Toronto Day care Organizing Committee. After holding hearings across the country, the RCSW recommended the federal government create a national Day care Act to legislate public funding for daycares to create more and more affordable spaces, and an allowance for mothers to use for daycare or to subsidize the costs of staying at home with their child(ren) (Pasolli, 2022).

In the wake of this announcement, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's minority Liberal government floated the possibility that CAP and other federal social policy legislation be replaced by a comprehensive act that would cover income security, employment and community care services, including child care. Programming would be at no cost or accessed via a sliding fee scale based on income (Pasolli, 2022).

4.2 1981: The Influence of Keynesianism on the OCBCC

The RCSW's recommendation for a national Day care Act was dashed when Prime Minister Trudeau's federal government implemented the Social Service Financing act in 1977 that favored the expansion of block funding and greater autonomy for the provinces and territories to spend federal funds as they wished (Mahon & Phillips, 2013). Yet, the past forty years of welfare expansion in Canada under Keynesianism and the recent call for a national child

care system by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women had a profound influence on the OCBCC. Keynesianism ideas and discourses that promoted welfare expansion based on need while promoting a strong interventionist government as commonsensical policy, influenced the OCBCC's early objectives.

The influence of Keynesianism was obvious from the OCBCC's inception in 1981 when the coalition called for the establishment of child care as a universal, affordable, and high-quality public good rather than as a service that could be provided as a commodity for sale on the market (Olan McClean, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, March 22, 2013). For child care advocates, just as healthcare was transformed from a charitable and market-based service during Keynesian expansion, why could the same not be done for child care?

From the beginning, trade unions played an important role campaigning for this vision of a national child care system. Susan Brown, who is a union staffer and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 2000s, reflected that "a lot of people would say the coalition could punch above its weight because of the trade union movement" (2021). Perhaps recognizing that Keynesian expansion occurs in response to public need, the OFL, an affiliate and co-founder of the OCBCC, held a series of public hearings on day care throughout the province in 1981. These hearings confirmed public support for a national child care system, reflecting Canadian households' increasing need for child care as women's labor force participation continued to rise from 25 percent in 1953 to 60 percent in 1980 (Statistics Canada, 2018).

The OFL expressed the need for this advocacy work and the formation of the OCBCC in a communiqué written as a brief to the government of Ontario:

> A concern about the inadequacy of day care services in the province of Ontario brought us together in the spring of 1981. Through this coming together, two

> things happened: under the auspices of the Ontario Federation of Labor, a series of public hearings on day care were held throughout the province; and the Ontario Coalition for Better Day care was formed... at its founding meeting, it was agreed that the objectives of the Ontario Coalition for Better Day care were to promote more and better day care; to work toward continued and increased public awareness of the need for day care in Ontario; to prepare a brief reflecting the findings of the public hearings and present it to the Premier of Ontario and Cabinet Ministers; to organize a lobby of members to provincial parliament at Queen's Park; and to coordinate the activities of local coalitions initiated in respective communities as a result of the public hearings (The Ontario Federation of Labour, 1990).

In support of establishing child care as a public good in the same way education and healthcare mostly were in Ontario, the OCBCC also advocated for the exclusion of commercial child care providers and private unlicensed home care providers. These providers tend to provide lower-quality child care and created stratified outcomes between children enrolled in child care based on what households can afford to pay, disproportionately impacting low-income and racialized households.

Linda Smith, who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, emphasized the OCBCC's focus on transforming child care from a marketized commodity into a public good, stating, "we were very focused on any expansion taking place in the non-profit sector. We were really concerned about the influence of commercial child care because they operated on a profit motive. They didn't operate [with the directive] of actually

being a community service" (Smith, 2021; see also 'Ontario's unlicensed operations offer day care at half the cost', 1986, May 26).

By excluding commercial and unlicensed home day care operators from accessing direct operational grants and parent fee subsidies, expansion could take place through non-profit and public child care centers. These centers could use government financing to reduce and eventually eliminate parent fees. In this way, the OCBCC's objective was to shift child care to a fully funded public system where grants covered all operational costs, thereby transforming child care into a public good that was universally accessible to all families regardless of income status (Wendy Peterson, child care researcher and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 1990's, 2021). The OCBCC, therefore, sought a shift in the administration of centers, from day cares being run as small, independent businesses (even when non-profit) where fees were collected from households to cover costs, to a system funded like the public education and healthcare systems where all costs were covered by the government.

When fees are charged to parents, they should be collected by the municipality and reinvested back into the centers. Linda Smith, who is a child care researcher served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, expands on this:

> So what we wanted was for child care programs to receive their entire funding [from the government] and any charges to parents would go to the municipality. The municipality would just put that in the pot, which would fund child care programs. We wanted parents to have the same sort of relationship as with their schools. You're not being chased down by your kids' kindergarten teacher because you haven't paid your fees, right? And it would take a lot of administrative burden off the centers too. We saw it as being a means of moving

> child care to a more publicly managed system, rather than these little independent businesses because whether they were profit or non-profit, they still had to operate like independent little business, and we wanted that to change (Linda Smith, child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, 2021).

In drawing a clear parallel between the public education system and a child care system, Smith demonstrates how welfare expansion in the public education system created a model for child care. For example, like the school system, child care centers would be staffed with specialized personnel who would oversee human resources, facility management, staff training, and work with special needs children and refugees. In this way, child care workers could better focus on the job of providing care to children, according to former OBCC executive, Linda Smith, who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's (2021).

This vision also reflected the OCBCC's objective of increasing the value of public child care for both children and child care workers. Historically, there was little attention paid to quality in child care beyond basic health and safety requirements. As the coalition sought to transform child care into a public good, it also sought to establish child care as a form of early childhood education complete with properly trained and compensated staff, instead of merely being a venue where parents dropped off their children while they are at work. The OCBCC's vision countered how government and society have historically devalued social reproduction labor, including child care, by envisioning it as a high-quality service for children and a well-respected profession for workers.

This comprehensive vision partially informed the OCBCC's proposal, *Day care Deadline 1990* which "provided the backbone for organizing and lobbying on the child care issue between 1981 and 1987". In this proposal, the OBCC demanded that the provincial government: a) provide child care as a public good by immediately creating 10,000 subsidized daycare spaces, b) provide universally accessible day care by 1990 and c) create a government task force on day care needs (The Ontario Federation of Labour, 1990). The OCBCC's decision to advocate for increased subsidies alongside a national child care system demonstrates the coalition's awareness that low-income families, many of whom are racialized, would require immediate subsidy support to access child care during the transition to a public child care system.

In 1982, the Canadian Council of Social Development and Health and Welfare Canada organized the *Second Canadian Conference on Day Care* in Winnipeg to build support for this vision of a universal child care system (The Canadian Council of Social Development & The Health and Welfare Canada, 1982). The conference brought child care activists together from across the country so that common position statements could be developed demonstrating the need for a coherent vision to better shape policy at the federal and provincial levels.

But as the consensus around the Keynesian welfare state waned and the neoliberal politics of austerity and privatization gained ground domestically and internationally, there was less political will to further welfare expansion. Premier Davis' Conservative provincial government refrained from adopting the demands outlined in *Daycare Deadline 1990*, choosing to modestly increase child care funding between 1980-1984 (Collier, 2004;'Day-care groups gets sympathy', 1981, November 10; The Ontario Federation of Labour, 1987). Premier Davis' decision to fund some moderate reform while refusing to meet the OCBCC's demands may reflect how his government tried to balance the competing demands of meeting the child care

needs of an increasing number of dual-income households while also reducing the size and scope of the welfare state during a recession. The interest rate shock of the early 1980s, which was used to reduce inflation and preserve the value of financial wealth, sent the economy into a recession from 1981-1982. Premier Davis' government may have perceived welfare expansion as no longer affordable for this reason (Stanford, 2014, April 8).

4.3 Early 1980s: Non-Profit Centers Oppose Unionization

Even as coalition affiliates agreed in principle on advocating for a universal and high-quality child care system, non-profit centers and unions did not agree on the need to unionize the sector as a means of supporting this vision during the early 1980s. By unionizing the sector, child care workers' wages and working conditions could be improved, supporting the quality-of-care workers provide in child care centers. Quality is an important marker in a public child care system recognizing that universal provisioning should provide similar high-quality outcomes to everyone, irrespective of one's ability to pay. Take for example the healthcare and education systems where access is based on need, and we expect a similar quality of care irrespective of our income status and what we can afford to pay for such services.

Kathy Jackson, who is a retired union staffer and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 2010s, affirms this: "Part of the vision of a high-quality system are good working conditions for the child care staff. You weren't going to have a high-quality program if you didn't pay people well enough to respect their skills and their contribution. You wouldn't retain them, and you don't want high turnover because that's a quality indicator" (2021).

Unsurprisingly, trade unions were in favor of unionization. Unions had been organizing child care co-ops since the late 1970s and were organizing centers in Ottawa and Toronto in the 1980s (Kathy Jackson, a retired union staffer and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 2010s,

2021). child care workers were also actively seeking to unionize, not waiting for a union representative to approach them. For example, 130 home care providers who received all their clients from the agency, Cradleship Creche, and one hundred workers from the Andrew Fleck child Center in Ottawa, approached OPSEU (The Ontario Public Service Employees Union) in 1985 seeking to unionize (Sweet, 1985, September 11).

But many non-profit centers were not in favor of unionizing the sector, and both, Kathy Jackson, who is a retired union staffer and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 2010s, and Gary Williams, a CUPE Executive member, remember fighting with the YMCA over unionization. Jackson notes that "the YMCA, you know, it's anti-union. They're committed to child care, and they provide a big network of child care programs, but they don't like unions" (2021).

Non-profit centers opposed unionization because it threatened centers' ability to reduce labor costs to avoid raising child care fees. In the absence of direct operating grants, which were not introduced until 1987 under Peterson's Provincial Liberal government, centers primarily relied upon parent fees and low-income subsidies to cover their operational costs. This forced centers to adopt a business managerial style of operations that emphasized efficiency, rather than quality service provision (Collier, 2004; Ready, 2012). Non-profits continue to adopt a business managerialism to reduce costs under neoliberalism with Lauren Mitchell (2021), an RECE and CUPE Executive member of a child care local in the 2010s, noting that "the YMCA pays their supervisors like $16 an hour. I get $30 an hour [working in a municipally run child care center] so it's a huge gap and I'm not even a supervisor."

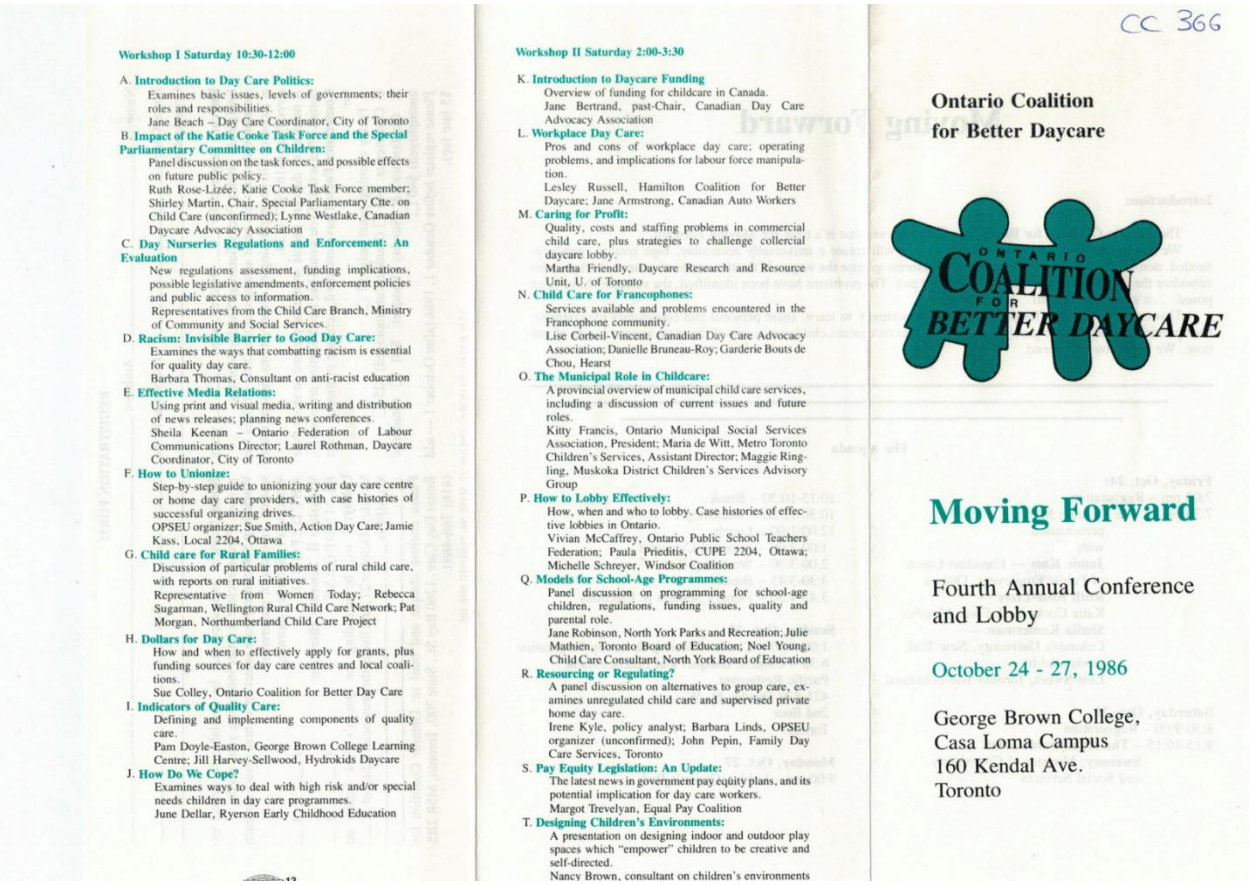
This tension between unions and non-profit centers reflects a tension between Keynesian ideals and ideas and the increasing power of neoliberalism during this period. Unionization

would support the OCBCC's vision of a high-quality public child care system, but unionization also threatened non-profit centers' ability to adapt to austere funding conditions under neoliberalism. Premier Davis' decision to only modestly increase child care funding suggested that neoliberal governments were not interested in expansive welfare reform supported by generous funding. In this way, the increasing power of neoliberal ideas, policy reform, and discourse may have signaled to non-profits that any child care reform would not involve larger funding investments from government. To survive, non-profits would need to adapt to austerity rather than resist it.

Although non-profit centers, like the YMCA, were and remain hostile towards unionization, the OCBCC adopted a clear position in favor of unionizing child care workers. From an equity perspective, this was an important stance to take recognizing that most child care workers were and are women, with an increasing number of workers being racialized women. As such, unions are needed to help remedy these workers' low pay and poor working conditions, recognizing the devaluation of child care is symptomatic of the feminization and racialization of the child care sector and the historical devaluation of child care under capitalism.

The OCBCC's decision to promote unionization may have had several causes including the strength of unions in the OCBCC during this time in comparison to non-profit operators and the clear relationship between working conditions and quality of care. As a result, the OCBCC began to publicly support the unionization of individual child care centers during the 1980s. For example, at the *1986 Fourth Annual Conference and Lobby* at George Brown College, the OCBCC hosted a "How to Unionize" workshop run by OPSEU. The workshop provided "a step-by-step guide to unionizing your day care center or home day care providers, with case histories of successful organizing drives" (The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1986b).

Figure 4.1 Fourth Annual Conference and Lobby, the Coalition for Better Day care, 1986



Workshop I Saturday 10:30-12:00

A. **Introduction to Day Care Politics:**
Examines basic issues, levels of governments; their roles and responsibilities.
Jane Beach – Day Care Coordinator, City of Toronto

B. **Impact of the Katie Cooke Task Force and the Special Parliamentary Committee on Children:**
Panel discussion on the task forces, and possible effects on future public policy.
Ruth Rose-Lizée, Katie Cooke Task Force member; Shirley Martin, Chair, Special Parliamentary Ctte. on Child Care (unconfirmed); Lynne Westlake, Canadian Daycare Advocacy Association

C. **Day Nurseries Regulations and Enforcement: An Evaluation**
New regulations assessment, funding implications, possible legislative amendments, enforcement policies and public access to information.
Representatives from the Child Care Branch, Ministry of Community and Social Services

D. **Racism: Invisible Barrier to Good Day Care:**
Examines the ways that combatting racism is essential for quality day care.
Barbara Thomas, Consultant on anti-racist education

E. **Effective Media Relations:**
Using print and visual media, writing and distribution of news releases; planning news conferences.
Sheila Keenan – Ontario Federation of Labour Communications Director; Laurel Rothman, Daycare Coordinator, City of Toronto

F. **How to Unionize:**
Step-by-step guide to unionizing your day care centre or home day care providers, with case histories of successful organizing drives.
OPSEU organizer; Sue Smith, Action Day Care; Jamie Kass, Local 2204, Ottawa

G. **Child care for Rural Families:**
Discussion of particular problems of rural child care, with reports on rural initiatives.
Representative from Women Today; Rebecca Sugarman, Wellington Rural Child Care Network; Pat Morgan, Northumberland Child Care Project

H. **Dollars for Day Care:**
How and when to effectively apply for grants, plus funding sources for day care centres and local coalitions.
Sue Colley, Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care

I. **Indicators of Quality Care:**
Defining and implementing components of quality care.
Pam Doyle-Easton, George Brown College Learning Centre; Jill Harvey-Sellwood, Hydrokids Daycare

J. **How Do We Cope?**
Examines ways to deal with high risk and/or special needs children in day care programmes.
June Dellar, Ryerson Early Childhood Education

Workshop II Saturday 2:00-3:30

K. **Introduction to Daycare Funding**
Overview of funding for childcare in Canada.
Jane Bertrand, past-Chair, Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association

L. **Workplace Day Care:**
Pros and cons of workplace day care; operating problems, and implications for labour force manipulation.
Lesley Russell, Hamilton Coalition for Better Daycare; Jane Armstrong, Canadian Auto Workers

M. **Caring for Profit:**
Quality, costs and staffing problems in commercial child care, plus strategies to challenge collercial daycare lobby.
Martha Friendly, Daycare Research and Resource Unit, U. of Toronto

N. **Child Care for Francophones:**
Services available and problems encountered in the Francophone community.
Lise Corbeil-Vincent, Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association; Danielle Bruneau-Roy; Garderie Bouts de Chou, Hearst

O. **The Municipal Role in Childcare:**
A provincial overview of municipal child care services, including a discussion of current issues and future roles.
Kitty Francis, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, President; Maria de Witt, Metro Toronto Children's Services, Assistant Director; Maggie Ringling, Muskoka District Children's Services Advisory Group

P. **How to Lobby Effectively:**
How, when and who to lobby. Case histories of effective lobbies in Ontario.
Vivian McCaffrey, Ontario Public School Teachers Federation; Paula Prieditis, CUPE 2204, Ottawa; Michelle Schreyer, Windsor Coalition

Q. **Models for School-Age Programmes:**
Panel discussion on programming for school-age children, regulations, funding issues, quality and parental role.
Jane Robinson, North York Parks and Recreation; Julie Mathien, Toronto Board of Education; Noel Young, Child Care Consultant, North York Board of Education

R. **Resourcing or Regulating?**
A panel discussion on alternatives to group care, examines unregulated child care and supervised private home day care.
Irene Kyle, policy analyst; Barbara Linds, OPSEU organizer (unconfirmed); John Pepin, Family Day Care Services, Toronto

S. **Pay Equity Legislation: An Update:**
The latest news in government pay equity plans, and its potential implication for day care workers.
Margot Trevelyan, Equal Pay Coalition

T. **Designing Children's Environments:**
A presentation on designing indoor and outdoor play spaces which "empower" children to be creative and self-directed.
Nancy Brown, consultant on children's environments

CC 366

Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare

ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER DAYCARE

Moving Forward

Fourth Annual Conference and Lobby

October 24 - 27, 1986

George Brown College,
Casa Loma Campus
160 Kendal Ave.
Toronto

Source: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1986b).

Caption: A brochure from the *Fourth Annual Conference and Lobby* at George Brown College in 1986.

The coalition also pressed for changes to the Labor Relations Act in 1985 to allow in-home child care workers to become associate members of the garment workers' union. Former OCBCC staff organizer, Janet Davis, is quoted in the *Toronto Star,* for defending these workers' rights to unionize by underscoring how exploited these workers were: "everyone concerned with

day care is worried that unionized workers will wipe out home day care," she says. "Parents' costs could skyrocket. Yet the coalition is in support of the workers' organizing. They've been exploited for too long. Their work is undervalued. They deserve more" (Sweet, 1985, September 11).

Even when unionized, child care workers have limited leverage to extract concessions from the child care agency they are licensed with or the center they are employed with. Government does not participate in bargaining with child care centers or child care agencies despite the provincial government being the primary funder of centers and the municipal government setting the payment rates for home-care providers. Without additional government funding, child care centers have little recourse but to raise parent fees to provide higher wages, pitting the union against parents, including parents who sit on the centers' executive board. Unions' limited bargaining power is one reason unionization rates remain low in the sector, which stood at only 21.5 percent as of 2013 (Flanagan, Beach & Varmuza, 2013). This is also why the the organizing efforts of homecare workers in the province have been stifled. For example, after OPSEU successfully organized Cradleship Creche homeworkers in 1986 after winning a litigation case for their right to unionize, the union struggled to improve workers' compensation because the municipality did not participate in bargaining (Cox, 2005, p. 29).

By not participating in bargaining, Ontario provincial and municipal governments weaponized Ontario labor relations law, which dictates that bargaining occur between a union and the employer at a single site, to its advantage to better suppress the wages of child care workers and the costs of supporting Ontarians' social reproduction to the province. This outcome is intentional, not coincidental, with Quebec providing a demonstrative example of a provincial government expediently changing labor law to suppress child care workers' wages to avoid

higher costs for government. After the Centrale des Syndicats du Quebec (CSQ) and the Confederation des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN) began to organize in-home child care providers between 1999 and 2003 after Quebec's Labor Court recognized in-home child care providers as employees, and not independent contractors, the Quebec government reversed its decision to allow these workers to unionize (Rolland, 2017).

These difficulties point to the need for mandatory and binding sectoral bargaining with the government that controls funding and renumeration rates for child care workers. The Ontario District Council of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union recommended sectoral bargaining for home workers in 1993 recognizing that the limited leverage small bargaining units had inordinately impacts women, especially racialized and migrant women. The current model of voluntary broader based bargaining does not bind employers to engage with unions or honor negotiated agreements, and so they demanded a different bargaining model that is obligatory and binding (Ontario District Council of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union & Intercede, 1993).

While some unions showed interest in supporting sectoral bargaining at the OFL's 1988 and 1989 conventions, including support for a "designated sector" proposal for sectoral bargaining under the Ontario Labor Relations Act (OLRA) at the 1989 convention, the labor movement did not rally around sectoral bargaining. This is due to concerns about preserving existing representation rights at the local level; resistance towards the prospect of collaborating with other unions on mandatory councils of unions; and in anticipation of jurisdictional conflicts between unions seeking to represent child care workers. Without union support, the provincial government was unlikely to reform the OLRA to avoid what would have been a contentious and strongly opposed reform from employers (Slinn, 2020).

4.3.1 Emergent Racial Exclusions: Temporary Migrant care Workers & The OCBCC

Although the OCBCC publicly advocated to unionize the child care sector, the coalition, including its union affiliates, did not advocate for a legal pathway to unionize temporary migrant care workers who provide child care in the homes of middle- and upper-class families during the 1980s. Nor did the coalition maintain a working relationship with such workers because initial efforts to engage them failed (Susan Brown, union staffer served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 2000s, 2021).

Temporary migrant workers who provide child care are often hyper-exploited. Their exploitation is directly facilitated by their precarious legal status which shifted from automatic permanent residency status to a temporary status tethered to their employer in the 1970s. This decline occurred in tandem with the rising strength of the women's movement. This suggests that white women's entrance into the labor force came at the expense of racialized migrant women who were made to be more unfree to guarantee a reliable source of low-paid care labor for dual-income middle and upper-class households (Arat-Koç, 2018; Lightman et al., 2022).

Unable to change employers freely, these workers are especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They often work hours they are not paid for and perform tasks outside the scope of their role, all while facing sexual, physical, emotional, and financial abuse from their employers (Ferguson & McNally, 2015; Fudge, 2012; Koo & Hanley, 2016). Unlike other migrants, temporary migrant care workers are also not allowed to migrate with family members, separating women from their children for years. Until 2014, workers were also forced to live in the homes of their employers[18], making them especially vulnerable to abuse. These workers often withstood and continue to withstand such conditions in silence to maintain continual employment to qualify

[18] Due to widespread abuse, the federal government terminated the live-in requirement, replacing the Live-In caregiver Program with the caregiver Program in 2014.

for permanent residency under the 1981 Foreign Domestic Movement program, the 1992 Live-In caregiver Program, and the 2014 caregiver Program. But qualifying for permanent residency remains difficult because of strict language requirements and necessary referrals from potentially abusive employers (Arat-Koç, 2012; Arat-Koç, 2018).

Although temporary migrant care workers are not Canadian citizens and do not provide child care in licensed centers alongside child care workers and RECEs, their interests align with the OCBCC's objective of supporting the creation of a public child care system. Unionization would have reduced the hyper-exploitation of temporary migrant workers providing care in the homes of Canadian families due to improvements to their wages and working conditions, and their right to be protected by their union from wrongful dismissal by exploitative and abusive employers. This would reduce the popularity of the program as one form of marketized child care, further reducing the proliferation of marketized care in the child care sector.

Although the OCBCC made some efforts to engage with these workers, the coalition was ill-equipped – and did not make efforts to learn –how to engage with the complex working conditions and concerns of temporary migrant care workers. Susan Brown, who is a union staffer and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 2000s, reflects on this:

> I know there have been many attempts to try and engage foreign domestic workers because they're so horribly exploited. There was an attempt at one time here in Ottawa. We were approached by a number of licensed homecare providers who worked for community child care agencies. They were licensed through the agency, and they wanted to look into unionizing because they felt they weren't getting a fair shake. We worked with them for a while, but I'll tell you not only are they worried about getting fired but also of losing their citizenship/being

> deported. I don't think unions have got their head around that completely. A lot of fear from their own countries regarding how governments respond to dissidence (Brown, 2021).

Migrant workers' exclusion from the OCBCC demonstrates the reliance of the coalition and unions on organizing practices geared towards engaging with citizen-workers without fear of deportation; practices that are ultimately race-blind. The OCBCC's and union's lack of success in adopting more effective and equitable organizing strategies may be a consequence of being distracted with "higher priority" objectives, including advocating for welfare expansion to support Canadian child care workers and Canadian households. Consider that welfare expansion under Keynesianism has always excluded non-citizens. These race-blind racist assumptions embedded in Keynesian ideas and logic may have directly influenced how the OCBCC conceptualized the child care community, resulting in the exclusion of temporary migrant child care workers.

4.4 1984 – 1993: Mulroney Supports the Traditional Family with Tax Credits

In 1984, additional momentum was created for a national child care system when the Abella Royal Commission on Equality in Employment delivered its report, and Prime Minister Trudeau's Liberals appointed their Task Force on child care, under the direction of University of British Columbia sociologist, Katie Cooke. Both called for universal, public child care. This momentum was quickly halted when Conservative Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney began to initiate neoliberal reform after he was elected in September 1984. Inspired by the United States and the United Kingdom's embrace of free-market neoliberal politics, Prime Minister Mulroney's government dramatically transformed Conservative politics in Canada. He paired austerity and deregulation with a neoliberal discursive framing that valorized the role of the

individual and personal achievement in a competitive economy, undermining Keynesianism as commonsensical economic doctrine, policy, and ideology.

He also supplanted traditional Toryism, namely support for certain forms of government intervention if it upheld a white ethnic Nation and the heteronormative nuclear family. This included welfare support for "deserving" worker citizens. Instead, Prime Minister Mulroney and his government treated the state like a business, reducing federal responsibilities, selling off public corporations and pursuing free trade with the U.S., all of which was incompatible with building a public child care system (McKenna, 2015).

To chart a distinct course away from a universal and public child care model, Prime Minister Mulroney established the Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care (SPCCC) in 1985. The SPCCC called for a focus on the child "in the context of the family" , providing an early example of Prime Minister Mulroney's government using a neoconservative discourse to retrench traditional gender roles and the nuclear family. In this context, neoconservatism refers to a political rationality that links power with morality. While neoconservatives may not always be religious themselves, they often ally with religion to encourage "family values" that requires women involve themselves with child care, cooking, and cleaning. Unlike classic conservatism's commitment to frugality, fiscal tightness, and modest libertarianism, neoconservatives support a strong state that will use its strength to ally with and empower corporations (Brown, 2006).

The SPCC also emphasized the "primary responsibility" parents have the right to choose the best care for their children. This "right to choose" discourse was used to suggest that public child care infringes on families' right to select private in-home care and marketized child care. The "right to choose" discourse is undergirded by neoconservatism in its elevation of the preferences of the nuclear family above the expertise of child development experts and state

technocrats, and neoliberalism in its responsibilization of families now compelled to make this decision with limited resources (Antony & Broad, 1999).

Both the "right to choose" and neoconservative discourses were used to support Prime Minister Mulroney's retreat from expanding a public child care system while providing more opportunities for commercial child care expansion. Hence, instead of public child care expansion, the SPCCC recommended that the existing Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) be replaced by a Child Care Expense Credit to cover up to 30 percent of child care expenses, including those spent on commercial and unlicensed child care. Credits provide a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the money owed while a tax deduction decreases taxable income, resulting in slightly lower tax bill. The credit was not to exceed $3,000 per child under 14 and $12,000 per family. The SPCCC also recommended a refundable Child Care Tax Credit (CCTC) of $200 for the first child, $100 for the second, and $50 for each subsequent child (Timpson, 2001, p. 141).

These recommendations disproportionately supported middle- and higher-income families who had a larger taxable income and, therefore, had more money to spend on upfront child care expenses they could claim later, including child care provided by unlicensed and commercial operators. Low-income families, disproportionately like to be racialized, were unlikely to have the flexibility needed in their incomes to spend on child care when money was immediately needed to pay for rent, food, and other essentials.

Prime Minister Mulroney also began to dismantle the Family Allowance soon after being elected, despite initially calling the Family Allowance a "sacred trust". The Family Allowance had already become a taxable benefit in 1973. At the time of Prime Minister Mulroney's election, the benefit provided households with approximately a dollar a day per child for all households and was an example of a truly universal benefit. In May 1985, Mulroney's

government announced child benefits, including the Family Allowance, would no longer be fully indexed for inflation, beginning the gradual erosion of the value of the benefit over time. Then, in 1989, Mulroney imposed a surtax on the Family Allowance for households whose incomes were over $50,000, recovering the full value of the benefit when families made more than $55,240 annually. The claw back initially impacted 14 percent of families with children, and it was estimated that this percentage would double over the next eight years (Evans, 1994).

In response to the imposition of the surtax, the National Council on Welfare stated that "this claw back on child benefits... is the most significant change in social policy in a generation because it marks the end of universality as a fundamental and long-standing principle of Canada's system of social benefits" (National Council of Welfare in Evans, 1994, p. 109).

Mulroney's government officially abolished the Family Allowance on January 1, 1993, when the government restructured child benefits, amalgamating the Family Allowance, an additional income supplement, and a flat-rate child tax credit into a monthly income-tested benefit, known as the child Tax Benefit. The child Tax Benefit did not provide a higher level of benefit to the poorest families on social assistance because the benefit was almost identical to the previous patchwork of amalgamated benefits. Although the working poor were now eligible for a supplement of a maximum of $500 a year per family, the benefit began to be deducted when household net income reached a mere $21,000. This was lower than the unofficial poverty line in the early 1980s (Evans, 1994).

The dismantlement of the universal Family Allowance signaled the government's pulling away from the collectivist and universal objectives of some post-war Keynesian social policies. As Mulroney's government eroded universal supports, he also reversed previous governments' commitment to valuing and compensating social reproduction work in the home. Instead, tax

credits were used to modestly subsidize the expenses of middle- and high-income households and the child Tax Benefit was used as a negligible remedial measure to support low-income households (Evans, 1994).

4.4.1 1984 – 1993: Adapting to Mulroney's Anti-Feminist Attacks

To better undermine Keynesianism as commonsensical, Mulroney's government needed to undercut the legitimacy of groups calling for welfare expansion, including feminists and child care advocates. His Conservative government did so by transforming feminists into disreputable "special interest groups" for the public. Alongside other political enemies, including those who opposed the Charlottetown Accords, Mulroney labelled NAC an "enemy of Canada" in response to NAC's increasing opposition towards federal policy initiatives (Bashevkin, 1996; Thrift, 2018). This willingness to view women's groups as outside of "normal" politics disrupted the political opportunity structure for groups like NAC and the OCBCC while also leading to the "disappearance of the gendered subject". This allowed women and other "special interest" groups to be replaced by the neoliberal self-reliant individual who is not burdened with social reproduction obligations (Collier, 2015).

By delegitimizing feminist groups and their demands, Prime Minister Mulroney increased support for his government's neoliberal agenda, including privatization, deregulation, and "efficient" economics. This allowed Mulroney's government to undermine the legitimacy of a universal child care system that all women have a right to access and legitimized a marketized child care model targeted to alleviate child poverty, support child development, and improve the human capital of Canada's future workforce instead (Collier, 2015).

Mulroney's government's aversion to feminist demands was also a product of realpolitik. His cabinet and caucus contained pro-family lobbies who were reluctant to support legislation

that may encourage mothers of young children to work outside the home. This 32-member "Family Caucus" would meet with pro-family advocacy group leaders to address the concerns these groups had with Mulroney's government as it supposedly failed to deal with issues of importance to the traditional family. "The Caucus quietly bills itself as the defender of Christian values… it supports various pro-family positions, including the recriminalization of abortion, the elimination of tax breaks for common-law couples...it has also been credited with preventing amendments to the Human Rights Act that would recognize same-sex marriage" (Erwin, 1993 as cited in MacKenzie, 1997, p. 62). For these conservative Members of Parliament, child care disturbed the supposedly natural, maternal, stay-at-home role of women within the heterosexual family.

The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO) and the United Voices for Fair Treatment in Child Care, both lobbies for commercial day care operators, leveraged the same neoconservative and the "right to choose" discourses used by Mulroney's government to try and fearmonger against the establishment of a public child care system. In July 1992, United Voices argued in the media that the provision of universal day care would lead to the deterioration of the traditional male breadwinner family, suggesting that a public child care system would impose an unmanageable tax burden on families that would force both parents in nuclear families to work unreasonable hours. Regional Chairperson of United Voices, Jackie Cousins, claimed Ontario households will "have to pay $2,300 each in taxes initially and $1,100 per year on an ongoing basis to fund universal day care. This will mean an increase in the number of families where both parents work just so they can pay the taxes...those who have made the choice to stay home and raise their own children will have that choice taken away" (Share-Strom, 1992, July 23).

In the same article, United Voices and the ADCO also argued that commercial operators are not of poorer quality than non-profit and public operators. In this case, the ADCO used the media to publicly complain about the OCBCC, "calling us 'for' profit' centers... [which] puts a picture in people's mind that commercial operators were terrible for making money off the backs of children" (Share-Strom, 1992, July 23). Yet, the ADCO's rhetoric belied the reality that the group also lobbied to reduce training requirements for staff, increase children to staff ratios, reduce regulations around facility requirements, and direct public money to commercial child care providers. These changes would be in the best interests of commercial operators' bottom lines, allowing them to reduce the costs of labor and capital investments, all while receiving public money to increase profit margins.

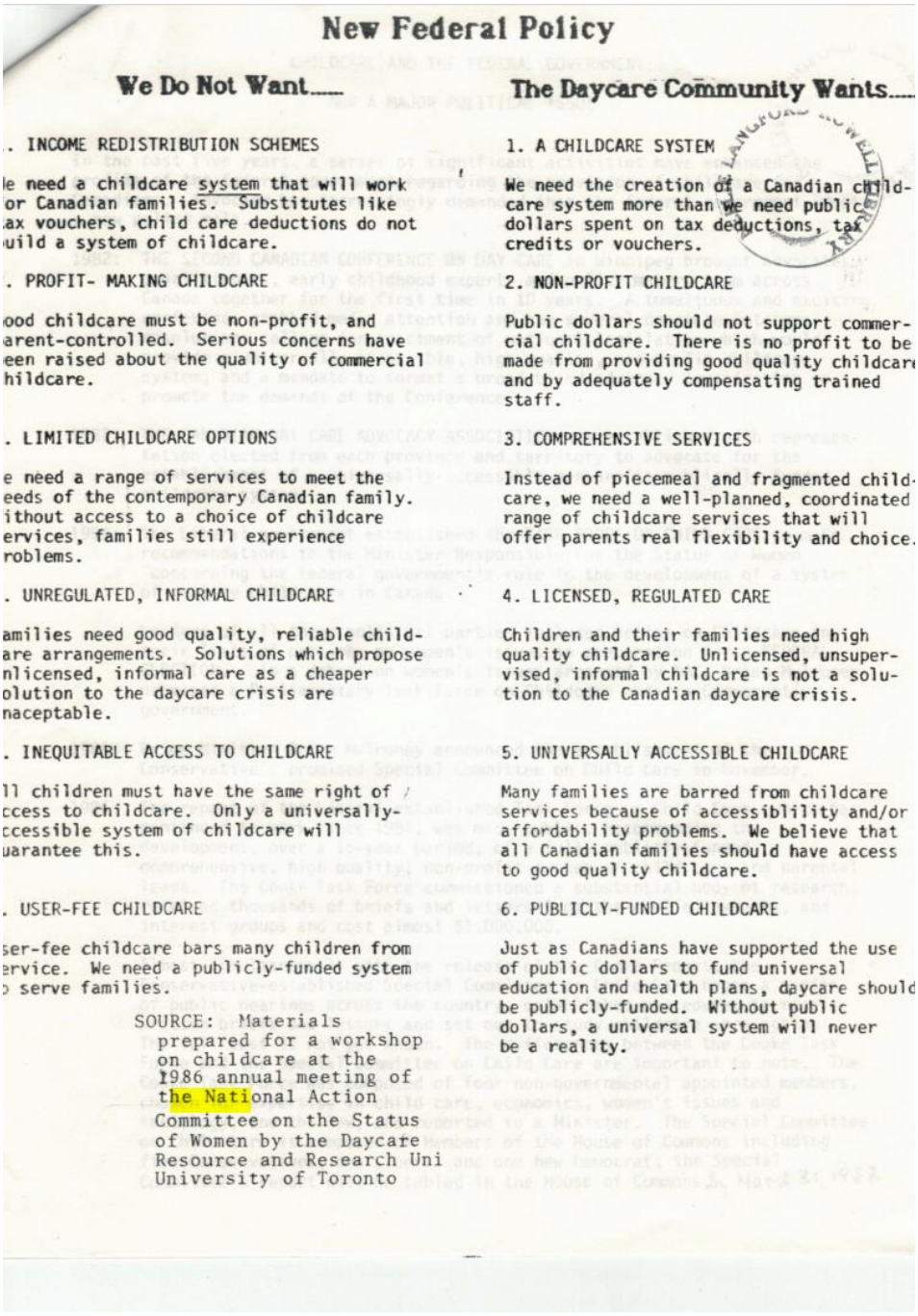
Reflecting on the effect the ADCO had on the coalition, Susan Brown (2021), who is a union staffer and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 2000s, notes, "we were always enemies. This is always the problem of how to advance a public system without drawing the ire of commercial operators because they'll get organized". Considering Brown's comments, the presence of the ADCO and United Voices, alongside Mulroney's government's ongoing hostility towards feminist groups, may have encouraged the OCBCC to avoid adopting a feminist framing around public child care in the mid-1980s.

The OCBCC's softened references to gender and feminism can be evidenced in the coalition's briefs to the government, reports, and conference programs produced during this period (The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1986a; The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, 1988; 1989). When these documents do reference women and gender, the framing is economic, focusing on women's labor force participation rates, without suggesting child care is also an issue of equity and social justice. For example, the only reference to women or gender in

a brief to the government of Ontario notes that, “the participation rate of women of child-rearing age is continuing at a rate of over 60 percent. This means that more and more women are demanding child care to allow them to continue to work” (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, 1988).

Another example is a fact sheet produced by the OCBCC that outlines the coalition’s political demands, including the need for licensed and regulated care provided by non-profit and public providers using public funds. The document does not explicitly reference gender equity or human rights as a justification for these policy reforms. Instead, the family as an undifferentiated genderless unit becomes the focus. The factsheet suggests that universal day care is needed because “many families are barred from child care services because of accessibility and/or affordability problems. We believe that all Canadian families should have access to good quality child care” (The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1986b).

Figure 4.2 Factsheet, The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1986



New Federal Policy

We Do Not Want.....

. INCOME REDISTRIBUTION SCHEMES

le need a childcare system that will work or Canadian families. Substitutes like ax vouchers, child care deductions do not uild a system of childcare.

. PROFIT- MAKING CHILDCARE

ood childcare must be non-profit, and arent-controlled. Serious concerns have een raised about the quality of commercial hildcare.

. LIMITED CHILDCARE OPTIONS

e need a range of services to meet the eeds of the contemporary Canadian family. ithout access to a choice of childcare ervices, families still experience roblems.

. UNREGULATED, INFORMAL CHILDCARE

amilies need good quality, reliable child- are arrangements. Solutions which propose nlicensed, informal care as a cheaper olution to the daycare crisis are naceptable.

. INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO CHILDCARE

ll children must have the same right of ccess to childcare. Only a universally- ccessible system of childcare will uarantee this.

. USER-FEE CHILDCARE

ser-fee childcare bars many children from ervice. We need a publicly-funded system o serve families.

SOURCE: Materials prepared for a workshop on childcare at the 1986 annual meeting of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women by the Daycare Resource and Research Uni University of Toronto

The Daycare Community Wants.....

1. A CHILDCARE SYSTEM

We need the creation of a Canadian child- care system more than we need public dollars spent on tax deductions, tax credits or vouchers.

2. NON-PROFIT CHILDCARE

Public dollars should not support commer- cial childcare. There is no profit to be made from providing good quality childcar and by adequately compensating trained staff.

3. COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES

Instead of piecemeal and fragmented child- care, we need a well-planned, coordinated range of childcare services that will offer parents real flexibility and choice.

4. LICENSED, REGULATED CARE

Children and their families need high quality childcare. Unlicensed, unsuper- vised, informal childcare is not a solu- tion to the Canadian daycare crisis.

5. UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE CHILDCARE

Many families are barred from childcare services because of accessiblility and/or affordability problems. We believe that all Canadian families should have access to good quality childcare.

6. PUBLICLY-FUNDED CHILDCARE

Just as Canadians have supported the use of public dollars to fund universal education and health plans, daycare should be publicly-funded. Without public dollars, a universal system will never be a reality.

Source: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1986a)

Caption: A factsheet on needed child care reform produced by the Ontario Coalition for Better Day care.

This represented a shift from the more militant feminist framing used in the coalition's founding document *Day care Deadline 1990*. The document was produced in collaboration with the OFL, who may have pushed the OCBCC to adopt a feminist framing. The following is just one example of the feminist discourse used in *Daycare Deadline 1990*, the OCBCC's founding document:

> In the province of Ontario, it is illegal to discriminate against anyone on the basis of sex. The Human Rights Code has legislated the right of women to participate fully in the society, yet the lack of adequate daycare serves make this right a lie...women are working together to obtain their rights. But the brick wall of inadequate daycare stands in the way (The Ontario Federation of Labour, 1990).

As the OBCC tempered its references to feminism and gender equity, the OCBCC's union affiliates continued to adopt gender equity and feminist discourses to frame their demands for a public child care system during this period.

In the OFL's internal documents, including the 1988 convention policy paper, *Still a Long Way from Equality*, the OFL argued that a public child care system is important for women's equality (Ontario Federation of Labor, 1988); submissions to the provincial government, including the OFL's 1989 submission on Workers and Family Responsibilities cited Chief Justice Dickson's argument that those who bear children should not be economically or socially disadvantaged in society (Ontario Federation of Labor, 1989); and in news media sources, the (then-former) OFL secretary-treasurer, Sean O'Flynn observed that "moves to promote pay and job equity are moot if women cannot be offered the same place in society that

men now enjoy" ('Day-care changed demanded', 1987, April 14), and argued that child care was necessary to women's equal place in society to men.

The OFL's use of feminist discourses to justify child care possibly reflected the persistent, if waning, influence of a distinct working-class feminism within trade unions. From the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, most women workers supported feminist equality objectives, and a minority of these women also supported socialist feminist demands. For example, socialist feminists focused on advancing issues around jobs and decent working conditions, pay equity, child care, access to birth control and abortion, and an end to forced sterilizations. These women pressured unions to adopt a feminist perspective, producing a distinct form of working-class feminism that brought feminism into unions and working-class issues into feminist organizing (Luxton, 2001).

By avoiding the use of a feminist framing during the 1980s, the OCBCC may have weakened the Ontario child care movement's long-term ability to successfully secure a public child care system as a human right. In contrast to the OCBCC, and despite operating in the same federal context, Quebec feminists did not minimize the connection between child care and gender equity in the same way English Canadian movements did. Instead, they continued to fight for child care as a citizenship right for women over the past forty years. Their persistent and consistent commitment to gender equity is thought to be one of the reasons why feminists and unions successfully pushed the Partis Quebecois government to establish Quebec's $5-per-day child care program in 1997 and why the program has remained intact since then (Arsenault, 2018).[19]

[19] Quebec feminists' success may also reflect the fact that being anti-federalist is popular in Quebec, given strong nationalist sentiments. As a result, Quebec feminist movements may have gained political capital within the province with nationalists by strongly opposing a "federal" neoliberalism and demanding a public child care system.

Notably, race was also absent in these public discussions of and appeals for a public child care system. The OCBCC's reference to "the family" and women, and unions' appeals based on gender equity and human rights, were race-blind because they did not include the unique needs of racialized families. To more accurately represent how race and racism determine the need for child care in Ontario, the OCBCC could have campaigned around how racialized families would have disproportionately benefitted from a public child care system because of the racialization of poverty. Trade unions could have also incorporated an anti-racist framing when drawing on feminist and human rights discourses when demanding a public child care system. By not doing so, the family and women are assumed to be white, obscuring how access to child care is an issue of gender and racial equity.

4.5 1985 – 1991: Peterson's Government Promises Bold Action on Child Care

Despite Prime Minister Mulroney's enthusiastic pursuit of neoliberal reform for the child care sector, he had limited ability to dictate how the provinces and territories provide and fund child care. This is because the 1867 Constitution Act dictates that the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction for social services. Provinces legislate quality standards for child care services, including the staff to children ratio, health and safety standards, the educational standards of early childhood programming, and staff qualifications. Provinces also hold most of the responsibility for planning, implementing, and improving child care provisioning (Cameron, 2009).

When Premier Peterson was elected in 1985 with a minority Liberal-NDP government, he leveraged this autonomy from the federal government when he promised Ontarians that his government would create a universal child care program in the province. He subsequently began expanding support for child care using new funding to create additional spaces in non-profit

daycares, full-day kindergarten classes for 5-year-olds and mandatory half-day kindergarten classes for four-year-olds, and child care spaces in new schools. Funding for child care and early childhood education initiatives reached $384 million for the 1990-1991 period, representing a $205 million increase from the 1987-1988 period (White, 1997, p. 17).

Premier Peterson's efforts to expand child care provisioning reflects how neoliberalism reform is embedded within, but not reduced to, wider networks and structures of neoliberalism operating at the federal and global levels, producing mixed outcomes at the local level (Peck & Tickell, 2017).

4.5.1 1987: Non-Profit Centers Oppose Educational Integration

The OCBCC did always consistently advocate for reforms that would best support child care's establishment as a public good under Premier Peterson though. Conflict arose within the OCBCC over the prospect of child care's integration into the education system when Premier Peterson's government gave parents the ability and funding to set up child care programs in schools via the School First program in 1987. "The parents would then hire child-care workers and convert some space in the school, such as a classroom or portable, into a child-care center" to provide extended day care for the province's "latchkey" children (Campbell, 1987 September 2). These child care workers were not directly employed by the schoolboard but hired by third-party operators who retained a contract with the school.

Unions' position was that school boards should directly provide child care rather than contract out such services because they recognized that their members' wages and working conditions would improve if they worked directly for the schoolboard. This is because unions can bargain directly with the schoolboard and the provincial government if child care workers are employed by the schoolboard. But unions are limited to bargaining with the non-profit center

if child care workers are employed by an operator that holds a contract with the schoolboard, which makes it more difficult to secure appreciable improvements to child care workers' wages and working conditions at the bargaining table. Furthermore, child care workers directly employed by schoolboards would not be forced to work split shifts before and after school, which is typical when working for a third-party operator providing extended day care.

According to Linda Smith (2021), who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, non-profit operators opposed the integration of child care into schools on the grounds that it would "schoolify" child care. The direct provision of child care by schoolboards, they argued, would be detrimental to young children, who require care and not formal education at very young ages. Instead, they suggested that children should not be forced to "sit at a desk all day" but should be allowed to play. They made this argument even though, Smith observes, the reality is that "you go into a pre-k classroom, and it looks just like a child care center" (Smith, 2021).

According to Wendy Peterson (2021), who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 1990's, other affiliates in the coalition were divided over this issue with some child care workers and the OCBCC's Board of Directors aligning with non-profits to oppose educational integration based on shared concerns around "schoolification":

> There were debates about whether child care should move into education or not long before it actually did. In the late 80s there were schisms over this. Some ECEs feel it would be a form of schoolification and the push down of academics, and there was a lot of allegiance to non-profits with the Board of Directors not wanting to give it up to institutionalization. It's my position that there would be good staff positions for ECEs in an educational setting. Instead of schoolification

> pushing down, let's think about playification pushing up. The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario really promoted this approach (Wendy Peterson, child care researcher and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 1990's, 2021).

While there continue to be legitimate concerns around the schoolification of early childhood education (Gananathan, 2011), unions were skeptical of non-profit operators' motives. Unions suspected that these operators were primarily concerned about losing an important revenue stream to schoolboards, recognizing that school-aged care is less costly to provide than pre-kindergarten care. As funding conditions for child care operators remained insufficient, with the first direct operating grants issued in 1987, non-profits may have been concerned about their short-term survival over what was in the best interests of child care workers and children.

Non-profits' self-interest was also a consequence of the shift from the small, activist parent-run non-profit centers that used to provide most child care in the province in the 1960s and 1970s to the medium and large centers run by professional administrators in the 1980s. Unlike parents, administrators' involvement in the child care sector was more likely to be a professional endeavor rather than a reflection of their political commitment to making child care more accessible. Gary Williams (2021), a CUPE Executive member, also suspected that some non-profit directors opposed schoolboard's direct provision of extended day care because they did not have a two-year diploma in early childhood education. Since the diploma was required to work as an early childhood educator for the schoolboard, these non-profit directors might lose their jobs if child care were integrated into the education system.

This conflict in the OCBCC over further educational integration, just like the conflict over unionization, points to an ongoing tension between the OCBCC's objective of establishing

child care as a public good and the realities of operating a non-profit child care center under neoliberalism. Prime Minister Mulroney's choice to fund tax credits while trying to reduce CAP funding signaled to non-profits that there would be no additional financial support from the federal government if they gave up extended day care to school boards. In this way, the increasing power of neoliberal ideas, policy reform, and discourse may have signaled to non-profits that they needed to maximize revenue sources, even at the expense of moving towards a public child care system.

In this debate, the OCBCC favored its non-profit operators by refraining from lobbying Peterson's government to force schoolboards take on the provision of extended day care directly. This created tension between the OCBCC's long-term objectives of building a public child care system and loyalty to the immediate interests of its non-profit operator affiliates. Child care workers, more likely to be racially diverse than the Executive Directors of non-profits, would be forced to bear the consequences of this position, working split shift work for lower wages at a non-profit providing extended day care. The OCBCC's justification for this stance is not clear and may be a combination of the effectiveness of non-profits "schoolification" argument within the coalition, and the coalition's concern about the financial consequences to non-profit operators.

While non-profit operators benefitted from the School First program by holding contracts with schoolboards, the contractual nature of this relationship meant that Premier Bob Rae was more easily able to end agreements between non-profit child care operators and schoolboards. In 1994, Rae made child care provision in schools voluntary to avoid providing an additional $350,000 per school to establish child care facilities. Not many schools ended up voluntarily holding a child care license although an increasing number of schools continue to be forced to

provide child care and extended daycare if there is sufficient parent demand (Walkom, 1994, March 31).

4.5.2 1986 - 1988: Peterson Supports Parents' "Right to Choose" Commercial Care

Not long after Premier Peterson was elected, he began to backpedal from creating the comprehensive public child care system he initially promised. A year after being elected, when it became clear that Premier Peterson was hoping the electorate would forget about his promise, former OCBCC executive, Susan Colley, told news media that "we were hoping to hear about a full plan for universally accessible child care as was promised last spring as part of the Liberal-NDP accord, but all we heard about were 'new spaces... in child care programs' - something the government knows will not solve the larger problems of accessibility, affordability and quality" (Monsebraaten, 1986, April 24). Here, and in other instances, the OCBCC sought to hold the government to account for its promises to child care advocates and to parents. No meaningful policy changes resulted from these efforts.

Premier Peterson's retreat from creating a public child care system in the province may have demonstrated the difficulty of significantly expanding welfare provisioning without federal financial support. Even though provinces have authority over child care provisioning, they are reliant on funding support from the federal government when the provincial portion of income tax collection, provinces' main source of revenue, is insufficient (Cameron, 2009). By 1990, Ontario had the lowest personal income tax rate in Canada for middle income households with children, exacerbating the province's ability to unilaterally expand welfare services without help from the federal government (Henderson, n.d.).

Although Premier Peterson retreated from building a public child care system, in December 1987, his government announced it would commit an additional $26 million to create

new day care spaces, give parents tax breaks for day care costs, and provide funds to both commercial and non-profit daycare centers, after securing funding from Mulroney's federal government for this purpose (Nixon, 1987). "Before the announcement, Ontario Social Services Minister John Sweeney was offering operating grants to non-profit centers only. But he said he would consider the same grants to commercial centers if Ottawa provided funding" (Fruman, 1987, December 4). And Ottawa did promise funding via a planned $3 billion that was to be spent over seven years under the auspices of the new Canada Child Care Act, otherwise known as Bill C-144 (idib.).

Mulroney's government planned to introduce Bill C-144 in 1988 to facilitate neoliberal reform across the country by removing binding standards on how the provinces could use federal money. Under CAP, the provinces were prevented from using federal funding to support commercial child care operators, but Bill C-144 did not impose these conditions. This allowed the provinces to support the expansion of commercial child care operators who tend to charge higher fees and provide lower-quality care using federal funding.

In tabling Bill C-144, Mulroney's government ignored the demands of NAC, independent feminists, and child care advocacy groups, who were invited to participate in the 1987 Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care (SPCCC) and who demanded a public child care system (Mahon, 1997, p. 404). Mulroney's government defended the bill, emphasizing the importance of giving families the "right to choose" between different child care options, including commercial child care. The bill also planned to reduce CAP funding and would have shifted $4 billion dollars away from subsidies and into the Canada Child Care Act in the form of tax benefits, further redistributing funds away from low-income families and towards middle- and higher-income households (Mahon & Collier, 2016; McKenna, 2015; White, 1997).

Support for commercial operators ran counter to the OCBCC's demand of building a high-quality public and non-profit child care system as part of a robust Keynesian welfare state. When Peterson's government announced it would be supporting commercial operators, the OCBCC and the OFL sprang into action, waging the *Kids not Cash* campaign in 1987. The campaign hosted public forums across Ontario to generate public support against the expansion of commercial operators who were known to provide lower-quality care and set higher fees. One of these forums was in Windsor, hosted at the hall of CAW Local 195, where a panel discussion was held with Susan Cowley, executive director of the OCBCC, Sean O-Flynn of the OFL, Gary Parent, president of the Windsor District Labor Council, and Michelle Shryer, an Early childhood Educator (Wamsley, 1987, April 6;'Day-care changes demanded', 1987, April 14).

Figure 4.3 Kids not cash campaign pin, 1987



Source: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, n.d.d).

Caption: A pin from the 1987 campaign, *Kids not Cash* that advocated against Premier Peterson's use of federal funding to expand spaces in the commercial sector.

Unfortunately, the campaign failed to convince Premier Peterson's government to exclusively fund non-profit and public child care providers. His government provided funding to create 100,000 new spaces in the commercial sector ('Coalition fears child-care profiteering', 1987, December 5), substantially expanding commercial day care in the province and demonstrating how federal neoliberal reform can be used to support neoliberal reform at the provincial level. As advancing federal austerity loomed, Peterson's government may also have perceived commercial operators as being more capable of scaling operations in the context of diminishing funding over time compared to non-profits concerned with quality and providing decent working conditions and wages to staff.

4.5.3 1987: Emergent Racial Exclusions: The Invisibilization of Race x Class

In 1987, the coalition also began to publicly discuss the issue of racism within child care. At a public forum co-hosted by the OFL and the OCBCC, the issue of racism was raised in a direct way. The forum was held as part of the OCBCC's response to the *White Paper, New Directions*, produced by Peterson's government that left open the possibility of continued funding for commercial centers (The Ontario Federation of Labour, 1987). The Congress for Black Women, which delivered programs to support Black education, health, housing, and employment, and campaigned around racism, sexism, and human rights, participated in the forum. The group spoke about the unique needs of racialized communities in the fight for child care. Here is a description of their intervention, which was published in an OFL report:

> Black parents, for example, have a need and desire to protect their children from racism, the Congress of Black Women told the Toronto forum. Since child care workers spend a great deal of time with children, parents are very concerned with matching their children to caregivers whose values they find attractive. Black

> parents are very fearful of child care workers who are not aware of their racial biases and who unintentionally make children feel dissatisfied with themselves. We feel that it is important for workers in such critical positions to be adequately trained to anticipate and care for growing minds. We recognize that this is a major task. However, if it is to be accomplished in a multicultural context it is even more complex (The Ontario Federation of Labour, 1987).

The concerns raised by the Congress of Black women appeared in a report to support the OCBCC's *Kids Not Cash* campaign, which reiterated that Black households face the added burden of "matching their children to caregivers whose values they find attractive". The document calls for child care workers to be adequately trained to accomplish this and for child care programs to reflect the "cultural variety of our society" (The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1987b). In the document's final recommendations, race is also mentioned in relation to building a comprehensive child care system that meets the needs of all children, including racialized children, rural children, children with disabilities, Francophone children, and children of shift workers.

The OCBCC did not discuss how racialized families would be disproportionately impacted by the expansion of commercial centers because of their higher likelihood of being low-income, and therefore, being more likely to be funneled into the lowest quality commercial providers. This is despite commercial expansion being a central focus of the *Kids not Cash* campaign. More cynically, the OCBCC may have felt that centering racism more explicitly in its campaign against commercial operator expansion would not mobilize white middle-class families whose interests were of chief concern to politicians. Structurally, the whiteness within

women's organizations, such as the OCBCC, no doubt played a role in de centering the voices and concerns of racialized women, including Black and Indigenous women.

The answer may be more complex than this though. Canada's policies on multi-culturalism may have made the coalition blind to race as it intersected with class. Multi-cultural discourses in Canada in the 1980s celebrated the "cultural diversity" of racialized groups while invisibilizing these groups' economically disadvantaged position in Canada, thereby delimiting how demands around race could be articulated by racialized groups, government, and other organizations. This culturalization of politics obscured the material realities of racial stratification in Canadian society and may have impacted how the Congress of Black Women and the OCBCC discussed and advocated around race and racism (Bannerji, 2000; see also Galabuzi et al).

The OCBCC's articulation of child care access and supply from a race-blind perspective may also reflect the race-blind assumptions embedded within ideological understandings of universalism under Keynesianism and within broader Keynesian discourse. Welfare expansion in Canada historically excluded racialized people which was justified by their supposed lack of belonging within a putatively white colonial nation. Some of this exclusion from welfare provisioning was engineered by denying racialized people access to Canadian citizenship. Explicitly racist immigration policies, like the Chinese Head Tax and contemporary temporary migrant labor laws, bar racialized people from accessing citizenship and welfare provisioning (Baker & Robeson, 1981; Drolet, 2016; Government of Canada, n.d; Hussen, 2019, July 8). In this way, universal access never fully included racialized people, and it was not meant to.

Even when racialized people are included in welfare provisioning, the experience could and can be violent and dehumanizing, as has been the case for Indigenous peoples. Given the

histories and ongoing realities of colonialism, Indigenous peoples are justifiably wary of colonial state intervention. Infamously, Indigenous peoples who are "Status Indian" under the colonial Indian Act were forcibly removed from their parents in a genocidal project that sought explicitly to assimilate Indigenous children as unskilled laborers into white society. In the residential schools, thousands of children died and many more were subject to physical and sexual abuse. The residential schools operated for more than one hundred years; the last residential school only closed in 1996.

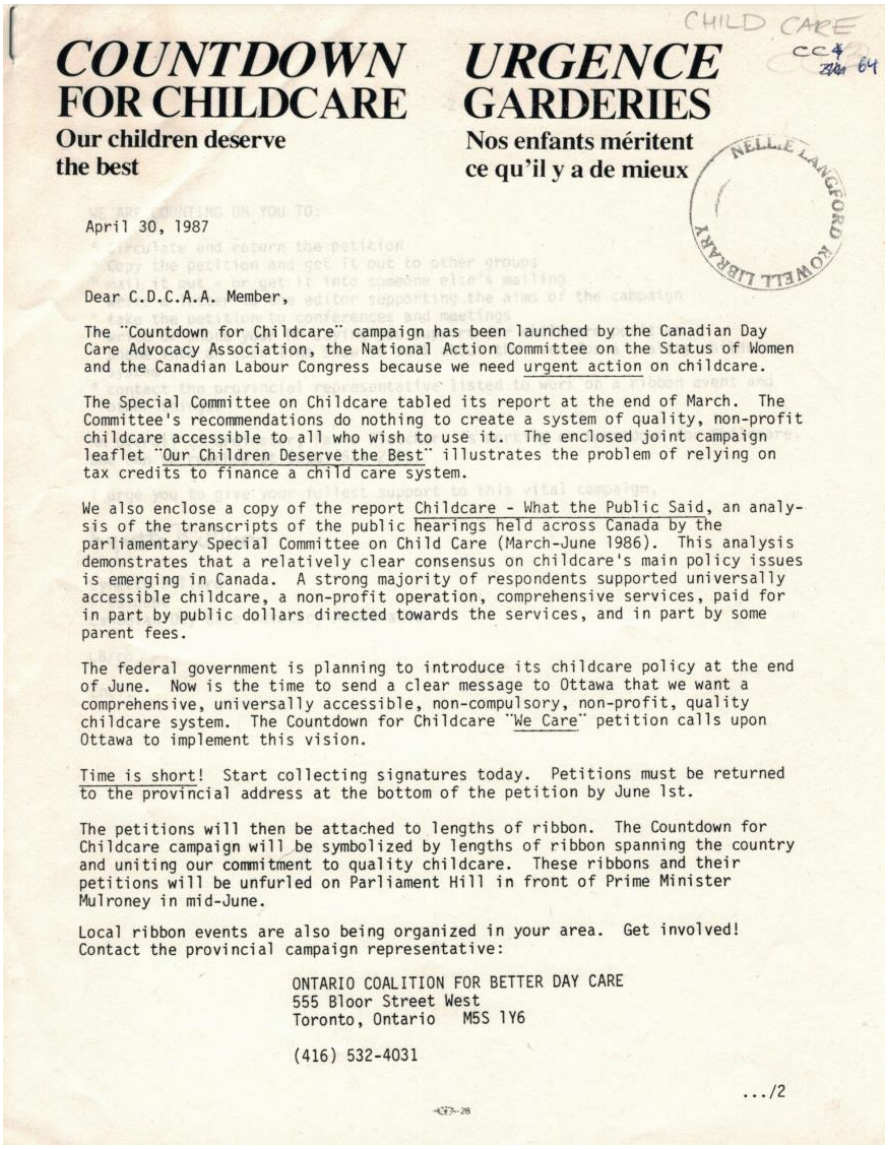
Indigenous children were and still are removed both from their homes and from their communities under the onus of protecting child welfare ever since child welfare services were extended into First Nations communities in the late 1950s (Green, 2009; Shewell & Spagnut, 2002). Because of these experiences, Indigenous peoples desire autonomy and self-determination rather than paternalistic and disciplinary inclusion. Against such histories, Indigenous communities seek to enact their right to self-determination, especially with respect to bringing up their own children in their own languages and according to their own worldviews. In this context, an expansive welfare state that includes universal child care may simply not be seen as desirable by Indigenous and other marginalized communities. The OCBCC does not seem to have taken Indigenous perspectives about child care into account at any time during this period.

4.6 1987 - 1988: Campaigning to Kill Bill C-144

After Premier Peterson expanded commercial child care with the promise of federal funding via Bill C-144, the OCBCC recognized the Bill as a major and ongoing threat to the provision of child care as a public good in the province. The OCBCC supported the national campaign, *Countdown for Child Care*, spearheaded by the Canadian Day care Advocacy Association, the Canadian Labor Congress, and NAC in April 1987. The campaign called for the

public to collect signatures in support of a “comprehensive, universally accessible, non-compulsory, non-profit, quality child care system”, reaffirming the OCBCC’s objectives and demonstrating the alignment in vision between provincial and national child care advocacy organizations and trade union bodies (The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1987). The petitions were attached to lengths of ribbon and unfurled on Parliament Hill in June 1988 when Prime Minister Mulroney planned to introduce Bill C-144.

Figure 4.4 Countdown for child care, memo, 1987



CHILD CARE
cc4
Zhao 64

COUNTDOWN FOR CHILDCARE
Our children deserve the best

URGENCE GARDERIES
Nos enfants méritent ce qu'il y a de mieux

NELLIE LANGFORD KOWELL LIBRARY

April 30, 1987

Dear C.D.C.A.A. Member,

The "Countdown for Childcare" campaign has been launched by the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Canadian Labour Congress because we need urgent action on childcare.

The Special Committee on Childcare tabled its report at the end of March. The Committee's recommendations do nothing to create a system of quality, non-profit childcare accessible to all who wish to use it. The enclosed joint campaign leaflet "Our Children Deserve the Best" illustrates the problem of relying on tax credits to finance a child care system.

We also enclose a copy of the report Childcare - What the Public Said, an analysis of the transcripts of the public hearings held across Canada by the parliamentary Special Committee on Child Care (March-June 1986). This analysis demonstrates that a relatively clear consensus on childcare's main policy issues is emerging in Canada. A strong majority of respondents supported universally accessible childcare, a non-profit operation, comprehensive services, paid for in part by public dollars directed towards the services, and in part by some parent fees.

The federal government is planning to introduce its childcare policy at the end of June. Now is the time to send a clear message to Ottawa that we want a comprehensive, universally accessible, non-compulsory, non-profit, quality childcare system. The Countdown for Childcare "We Care" petition calls upon Ottawa to implement this vision.

Time is short! Start collecting signatures today. Petitions must be returned to the provincial address at the bottom of the petition by June 1st.

The petitions will then be attached to lengths of ribbon. The Countdown for Childcare campaign will be symbolized by lengths of ribbon spanning the country and uniting our commitment to quality childcare. These ribbons and their petitions will be unfurled on Parliament Hill in front of Prime Minister Mulroney in mid-June.

Local ribbon events are also being organized in your area. Get involved! Contact the provincial campaign representative:

ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER DAY CARE
555 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1Y6

(416) 532-4031

.../2

Source: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, 1987).

Caption: This memo from the OCBCC asks supporters to sign a petition opposing Bill C-144.

The OCBCC, Child Care Now, and CUPE also ran public awareness campaigns against the bill before the 1988 federal election, using the media to warn the public about the implications of Bill C-144. They warned that the Bill would create a dual-tier model of child care where wealthy and middle-class families could use tax credits to access child care while low-income families would be increasingly denied access to subsidies. Funding for commercial operators would also increase the number of lower-quality commercial child care providers across the country (Turgeon, 2014, p. 236). In this way, the OCBCC and other child care advocacy organizations publicized the redistribution of funding away from the neediest low-income families and towards middle-income and higher income families, drawing on Keynesian ideas that welfare provisioning should be based on need.

The public opposition generated by these campaigns may have forced Prime Minister Mulroney to withdraw Bill C-144. Mulroney's government may have feared that the bill would become an election issue for an increasing number of dual-income families who needed child care but whose modest incomes made marketized care too expensive and tax credits and benefits of little help.

Figure 4.5 'kids are not for profit' &'profit day care hurts kids' campaign pins, 1988



Source: [Left Image]: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, n.d.c).

Source: [Right Image]: (Murton, D. [@del_murton], 2022, January 21).

Caption: Pins in support of the campaign to end Bill C-144, which would have removed binding standards on how the provinces and territories could use federal funding for child care.

After successfully pressuring Prime Minister Mulroney's government to kill Bill C-144, advocates saw the opportunity to build momentum towards electing a new child care -friendly federal government in 1988. These advocates, including NAC, the CLC (Canadian Labor Congress), the CDCAA (Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association), the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the National Anti-Poverty Organization, and the Canadian Association of Business and Professional Women, tried to make a public child care system an election issue. During the election campaign, Mulroney questioned the fairness of universality and universal systems, thereby undermining Keynesianism as commonsensical while providing a public rebuttal to activists, including child care activists, trying to influence the outcome of the election (Ismael, 1987).

In the end, activists were not successful in changing the outcome of the election. Mulroney won a second majority for his Conservative government, despite only winning 43 percent of the popular vote. Emboldened by his majority, Mulroney's government cut $4 billion earmarked for the creation of an additional 200,000 subsidized child care spaces in 1989, which was a key budget cut that had been proposed in the withdrawn Bill C-144. In metro Toronto alone, this would have devastating consequences for families where about 5,000 eligible families

were on the waiting list for subsidized spaces. Since racialized families are disproportionately dependent on subsidies because of the way in which race intersects with class, Mulroney's subsidy cuts would inordinately impact this population.

In a desperate bid to reverse the proposed cuts, the OCBCC escalated its action beyond educational campaigns and public forums, collaborating with the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Workers and NAC on a national campaign. They sent donated cookies collected from day care centers across Canada on a VIA Rail train to Finance Minister, Michael Wilson's office in Ottawa to "derail" Wilson's April budget. Cookies were delivered to the office with each cookie symbolizing parents' opposition to the proposed funding cuts. The inoffensive nature of the cookie ensured the campaign was accessible to parents and workers uncomfortable with militancy. An excerpt from the *Toronto Star* noted the sarcastic tone of the campaign.

> Michael Wilson, have a cookie. child care advocates want to give Canada's finance minister a taste of what they go through to raise funds for cash-strapped centers... "We're saying to Wilson, 'You do the bake sales. Here's the cookies, you sell them and provide funding for day care," said Fiona Knight of The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (Moloney, 1989, June 5).

This spectacular and, in many ways, humorous campaign failed to pressure Mulroney's majority government to reverse its austerity plans, signaling to child care advocates that 'there is no alternative' to neoliberal reform. In cutting subsidies, Prime Minister Mulroney eliminated support to low-income families, further undoing government commitment to support the most deserving families. In this way, Mulroney provided a further rebuke to Keynesianism and the idea that the welfare state had a responsibility to provide for those most in need.

4.7 1990-1995: Creating Consensus Around Child Care Under Rae

In 1990 on the cusp of a recession, NDP Premier, Bob Rae, was elected on a progressive platform in Ontario, signaling the electorates' increasing skepticism of neoliberalism. His party had promised to increase corporate taxes, increase funding for education, exempt the poor from paying income taxes, and expand child care provisioning.

In 1991, his government released a public consultation paper, *Child Care Reform in Ontario: Setting the Stage*, announcing the government's plan to make universal child care available by February 1994 (White, 1997, p. 18). In response, the OCBCC applauded Rae's promised move towards establishing a public child care system but insisted his government immediately increase the number of subsidies available to make child care more accessible to low-income families – families disproportionately likely to be racialized. This demonstrated the coalition's awareness of equitable expansion for low-income families as the government moved towards establishing a public child care system (Beck, 1991, December 12).

In support of universal and public child care, Rae's government passed reforms to reduce commercial operators' incursion into the sector, spending $75 million over five years to encourage commercial child care operators to convert to the non-profit system. Recall that this was an important objective for the OCBCC because of commercial operators' tendency to provide lower-quality care. Rae's government continued with these reforms despite protest from commercial operators and their advocacy group United Voices who fearmongered that excluding commercial operators would reduce families' access to child care (Beck, 1991, December 12; Mackie, 1991, December 3). Rae's government also announced it would provide up to 20,000 additional child care subsidies for unemployed parents returning to work or participating in work-related training (White, 1997, p. 18). Further, Premier Rae publicly avowed that subsidies

were not the solution to guaranteeing family access to child care since they provide limited coverage, supporting some families but not all those in need (White, 1997). In this way, Premier Rae affirmed his government's goal of eventually establishing child care as a universal and public good, assuring advocates and the public that he would not use subsidies to relegate child care to a welfare service.

Unfortunately, beginning in 1990, Premier Rae was confronted with a rapidly deteriorating economic and fiscal situation. GDP contracted by 3.4 percent from 1990-1991, producing an unemployment rate rivalling that seen during the Great Depression (Yalnizyan, n.d.). As a result, Premier Rae began making budget cuts to the social services in 1992, demonstrating how economic crisis acted as a brake to welfare expansion, even under the NDP, who were ideologically aligned with building out a strong welfare state.

By May 1993, the OCBCC had pulled out of budget negotiations for the public sector with the province after Premier Rae stubbornly slashed $2 billion from the public-sector payroll despite major protests from child care advocates and public sector unions. The cuts directly impacted child care workers employed by schoolboards (Tobin, 1993, May 29).

During this period, activists loudly protested austerity under Premier Rae. In June 1993, CUPE locals targeted the offices of NDP MPPs to protest austerity (Boyle, 1993, June 10); in July 1993, 4,000 civil servants converged on Queen's Park against Premier Rae's "social contract" (Powell, 1993, July 11); in November 1993, OFL members stormed the legislature after Premier Rae imposed wage restraint on 950,000 public servants ('Rae target of unruly protest', 1993, November 25); and in February 1995, parents and trade unionists confronted Premier Rae at an NDP fundraiser, calling him a "monster and a coward" after making the

decision to close the Thistletown Regional center for children with special needs (Mascoll, 1995, February 11).

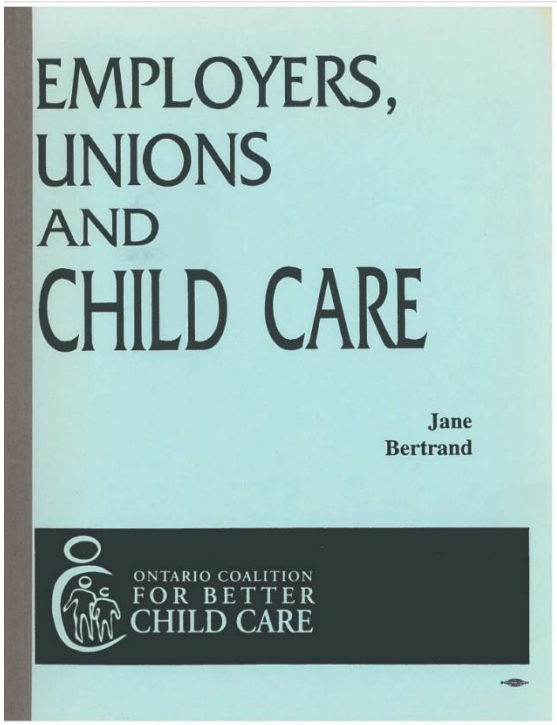
Interestingly, there is no evidence that the OCBCC participated in these in-person rallies or protests. Nor did the coalition host additional public forums or other public campaigns during Premier Rae's tenure, as the OCBCC did with the intransigent governments of Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier Pearson. This may be because the OCBCC perceived militancy as inappropriate considering the seriousness of the recession and Premier Rae's intractability in the face of mass protests from civil servants and trade unions. The coalition may have also hoped that more restrained advocacy would protect a future collegial relationship with the government and the NDP in the event of re-election during less economically trying times.

Instead, recognizing the difficulty of securing welfare expansion during an economic crisis, the OCBCC changed strategy. In their new communications, the coalition directly appealed to employers, suggesting that they are partners with unions in the fight for national child care. In the 1993 pamphlet, *Employers, Unions, and Child Care,* the OCBCC argued that "employers and unions can support the development of public policy for a comprehensive child care system". The brochure, printed by the OFL and the United Steelworkers of America, presents a public child care system as a substitute for more costly employer-provided child care while also positioning unions as partners in this fight.

In pivoting towards trying to build consensus amongst employers and unions towards building a public child care system, rather than campaign to pressure government to reverse austerity measures, the OCBCC recognized the power neoliberal reform, and ideas had in determining what was possible for welfare expansion during a recession. As the economy reeled, child care had to be sold as a good financial decision for government and business, rather than

simply because women and households required government support to meet their social reproductive needs.

Figure 4.6 ‘Employers, Unions, and Child Care’, pamphlet, 1993



Source: (Bertrand, 1993).

Caption: The front page of the pamphlet, “Employers, Unions, and Child Care”, designed to educate workers and employers on the benefits of unionization and a public child care system. The publication was produced by the OCBCC and printed by the OFL and the United Steelworkers of America (Bertrand, 1993).

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the coalition was able to build a united front amongst employers, unions, and advocates. This may have reflected how high unemployment

lessened pressure on employers to provide supplementary services, like child care, while increasing pressure on trade unions to drop "extraneous" issues like child care to focus on winning concessions around job stability and retention during a recession (Kirton, 2019).

As the OCBCC and the OFL tried to create consensus for a public child care system, the OFL also demonstrated an ongoing interest in supporting sectoral bargaining. The OFL released *The Big Picture*, a comprehensive study of sectoral bargaining in late 1993. Unfortunately, the report did not garner much support from its union affiliates, some of whom were skeptical or even hostile towards sectoral bargaining. This includes OPSEU, which did not see sectoral bargaining as useful given that some unions were already engaged in relatively centralized bargaining. CUPE also opposed sectoral bargaining, believing it would interfere with the autonomy of its locals, producing bureaucracy instead of independence and democracy.

In the absence of consensus from the labor movement, Premier Rae finalized a two-year consultative process that was supposed to result in the incorporation of sectoral bargaining into the Ontario Labor Relations Act by passing Bill 40 in 1993 without including sectoral bargaining provisions. Without a united support from unions, Rae's government could not move ahead with any reforms due to significant employer resistance and the difficulty of finding someone to head the task force and serve as its research director because of the perceived difficulties of grafting sectoral bargaining onto Ontario's current labor relations statute (Slinn, 2020). This was a lost opportunity for the child care sector whose workers would have benefitted from sectoral bargaining because of the low unionization rates and limited leverage to negotiate meaningful concessions during bargaining with individual child care centers and agencies that represented home-based child care providers.

In another attempt to protect progressive child care reforms Premier Rae had implemented early in his term, the OCBCC presented a set of policy proposals to the government in January 1994. The proposals sought to protect vulnerable child care programming, including lunch-time programs, after-school recreational programs, and day care sector inspections and regulations that were at risk of being defunded under austerity (MacKinnon, 1994, January 31). There is no evidence Premier Rae saved these programs in response to the OCBCC's appeal.

By March 1994, the NDP declared that no new money would be devoted to child care. During this time, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's Liberal government, who was elected in 1993 with a neoliberal agenda directly informed by the business lobby, limited transfer payments to Ontario's healthcare, post-secondary education, social assistance, and social service programs. As part of this reduction, the federal contribution towards child care dropped from 50 to 32 cents for every dollar spent by the provincial government, further exacerbating the province's financial distress and acting as a brake on welfare expansion (White, 1997).

Premier Rae blamed federal austerity for his broken campaign promises around child care. It is noteworthy, however, that he did not take advantage of federal funding when it was available. Short-term project-based funding, like the Strategic Initiatives Fund, which was available during Prime Minister Chretien's time in office (1993-2003), could have been used to save 6,000 child care spots for Jobs Ontario participants (White, 1997, p. 18). In exchanges with the media, the OCBCC suggested that Premier Rae's refusal to use the Strategic Initiatives Fund reflected the NDP's belief that child care was not an important election issue (Lakey, 1994, April 15). A more charitable interpretation is that Premier Rae may have been reluctant to assume the longer-term provincial costs of fully funding an additional 6,000 child care spots once the Strategic Initiatives Fund was no longer available.

In what seems like a final exasperated appeal, former OCBCC Executive Director, Kerry McCuaig spoke to media in November 1994, observing that" Ontario has been promising to fund [child care] reform without federal dollars for years and it's time they stopped dragging their feet" (Monsebraaten, 1994, November 29). Such frustrated appeals to the government to act on their promises went unheard, confirming how an economic crisis coupled with austerity at the federal level can prevent even progressive provincial governments from expanding the welfare state despite public demand and pressure from activists.

4.8 Summary

The OCBCC's early objective of establishing child care as a universal, affordable, and high-quality public good was influenced by the previous forty years of welfare expansion under Keynesianism. As the OCBCC campaigned for a universal child care system during the 1980s and 1990s, this objective was often undermined by the federal governments of Mulroney and Chretien who facilitated neoliberal reform at the provincial levels by limiting and removing conditions from federal funding that prevented public child care expansion while facilitating the proliferation of commercial child care. Neoconservative and neoliberal inflected discourses deployed by Prime Minister Mulroney's government that promoted the preservation of the traditional family and families "right to choose" marketized and unlicensed child care also sought to undermine support for a public child care system. These neoconservative, and often anti-feminist, attacks forced the OCBCC to avoid a feminist framing in its campaigning and communications. Occasionally, support for a public child care system was sabotaged within the OCBCC by non-profit affiliates who opposed unionization and the integration of extended day child care into the education system to prevent higher labor costs low and lost revenue under austere funding conditions. The OCBCC also ignored the unique needs of racialized people,

including temporary migrant workers and racialized households, due to outdated reliance on the race-blind assumptions of universalism within Keynesianism and the way multi-culturalism delimited how race could be discussed in relation to class during the 1980s.

Chapter Five: Saving Child Care from the "Commonsense Revolution" (1995 – 2002)

Chapter five covers the period from 1995 – 2002 and covers the terms of Conservative Premier, Mike Harris (1995 – 2002) and Liberal Prime Minister, Jean Chretien (1993-2003). In this chapter, I consider how Prime Minister Chretien's support for federal decentralization, namely when his government replaced the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), supported neoliberal reform at the provincial level. I then explore how Premier Harris took advantage of federal decentralization to advance neoliberal reform which he justified using some of the same neoconservative and neoliberal discourses Prime Minister Mulroney drew upon. I also consider how this reform disproportionately impacted racialized families and households' social reproduction. In response to Premier Harris' proposed and implemented neoliberal reform, I consider why the OCBCC adopted more militant and disruptive tactics, and how the coalition's strategy during this time can be understood in relation to a wider atmosphere of militancy fostered by other advocacy organizations and labor unions.

5.1 1995-2002: Combatting Harris' Austerity with Child Care Center Walkouts

By 1995, Ontario voters had become disenchanted with NDP Premier Rae. As a result of the recession, Rae was forced to backtrack on his promises of expanding welfare initiatives, like public auto insurance and universal child care, while forcing civil servants to take up to twelve days off without pay per year, otherwise known as "Rae Days". In this context, soon-to-be Conservative Premier, Mike Harris, won the public's support and trust with his *Common Sense for a Change* campaign, based on promises to cut welfare benefits, taxes and spending to reduce the province's debt after the recession of the early 1990s (Albo & Evans, 2019; Morrow, n.d.; Ready, 2016; Parkes, 2001, April 16). Harris would go on to win a parliamentary majority with a

little under 45 percent of the popular vote (given the first past the post system) during the 1995 provincial election.

A key objective of Premier Harris' "common sense" platform was the privatization of child care provisioning. Leading up to the June election, the future Premier had already indicated his opposition to the provincial government funding child care spaces and suggested that he would replace subsidies, which can only be used for licensed child care operators, with vouchers for low-income parents that could be used on whatever form of child care they preferred, including public, commercial, licensed, and unlicensed care. In doing so, Premier Harris, like Prime Minister Mulroney, deployed the same "right to choose" discourse Prime Minister Mulroney had used to justify his retreat from funding public child care while subsidizing the operations of commercial and unlicensed child care. Like Prime Minister Mulroney, this discourse elevated the family as the rightful decision-makers above policy experts, pointing to the discourse's neoconservative elements. It also shifted more responsibility onto the family to be self-sufficient under neoliberalism, forcing families to take on greater decision-making responsibilities when choosing a child care provider. The reform would also force families to pay more money out-of-pocket for child care expenses recognizing that vouchers are unlikely to significantly subsidize child care costs in the way that child care subsidies do (Antony & Broad, 1999).

Besides consumer choice, Premier Harris emphasized the importance of family in child-care provisions, suggesting households rely on informal networks of care including extended family, friends, and neighbors, rather than expect support from the government (White 1996, p.20). In this way, Premier Harris also sought to shift the responsibility for social reproduction back onto the community despite the increasing demand for child care by dual-income

households. By suggesting that the care of a neighbor was sufficient for household's child care needs, Premier Harris also diminished the value of child care provided by trained professionals in licensed settings.

Premier Harris would also cut social assistance rates by 21.6 percent in October 1995, signaling that his government was unwilling to support the informalized care of low-income households on social assistance even as it recommended families rely on informalized care for their child care needs. In this way, such households, especially those headed by single women, were placed in an impossible situation where they could not afford to care for their children themselves but were faced with the prospect of being unable to afford any type of child care either if the voucher system were to replace subsidies (Nesbitt, 2018a).

Former OCBCC executive, Linda White, suggested it was relatively easy for Premier Harris to begin defunding child care because Premier Rae did not adopt structural changes that would have made child care part of the public system. Instead, Premier Rae provided additional funding that could easily be rescinded, including wage top ups and direct operating grants (White, 2021).

Ultimately, Premier Harris' election victory suggested that much of the public mood, if not a majority, had shifted to the right. Harris' use of stigmatizing language that cast the poor as undeserving dependents of the state who are responsible for their own impoverishment, contributed to this shift as the public saw welfare expansion as serving the undeserving, rather than hard working tax payers (White, 2018, November 1).

Public support for Harris also reflected a fear of social change, which Harris' emphasis on "traditional" family values purportedly answered. Notably, Harris' support for the free market – and associated promises of innovation and job creation – also sought to answer fears of job

loss, as free trade pulled industrial jobs to Mexico and as the 1990s consumer inflation rate hit a markedly high 26 percent which especially hurt poor households (Blizzard, 1995; Don, 1999).

Not all the public was onside Harris' "common sense" neoliberalism though. To try and prevent Premier Harris from implementing his promised reforms child care workers, lesbian and gay rights activists, anti-poverty activists, social assistance recipients, and feminists, acting in coalition under the direction of NAC, protested across the province as part of the *Embarrass Harris* campaign only 18 days after Premier Harris was elected on June 26, 1995. The campaign rallied more than two thousand people, kicking off a summer of growing protests in opposition to Premier Harris' proposed cuts to social welfare programs (Nesbitt, 2018a). The magnitude of this initial rally reflected the scale of Premier Harris' proposed cuts, most notably the 21.6 percent cut to social assistance which was widely seen as cruel and objectionable for drastically reducing social support to the neediest (Nesbitt, 2018a).

In turning to mass protests, advocates used the disruptive physical presence of the protest to invalidate Premier Harris' proposition that these reforms would benefit the public. The thousands of people who initially rallied in the streets made incontrovertible that a share of the public did not agree that they would benefit as families or consumers as Premier Harris suggested they would when he relied upon neoconservative and the neoliberal and neoconservative inflected "right to choose" discourses to justify the reforms.

After this initial cluster of protests during the first month of Premier Harris' time in office, CUPE Local 2484, representing child care workers in Toronto, held an emergency membership meeting on Sunday July 16. Their aim was to discuss the $1 billion in cuts to the social services sector expected to be announced shortly on July 21st by Finance Minister Ernie Eves. Being part of the social services, child care would be impacted by such cuts, and the union

had come together to decide on a strategy to pressure the government to preserve funding. During the meeting, members voted to walkout on July 20th, the day before Minister Eves announced the budget cuts. Much was at risk, including the expected elimination or change to the subsidy system that paid for the child care of 14,000 children of unemployed parents, which would have a disproportionate impact for racialized households. An $8,000 wage subsidy for 14,000 child care workers was also at risk of being eliminated (Toughill, 1995, July 18).

Despite their concerns over the cuts, the OCBCC and CUPE Ontario were initially hesitant to endorse the walkouts. According to Mary Anderson (2021), who served as a CUPE Executive for a child care local in the 1990s and 2010s, the OCBCC wanted to delay any action to provide more time for planning. The OCBCC's hesitation may have reflected a concern over not wanting to alienate parents who would be forced to stay home with their children rather than go to work during the walkout. By endorsing a walkout without clear communication with parents beforehand, the OCBCC may have feared losing the support of parents who had supported the coalition's campaigns in the past.

For his part, CUPE President, Sid Ryan, wanted to avoid an "all-out war" with the provincial government at the start of Premier Harris' term (Nesbitt, 2018a). In response to such concerns, demonstrating a rift between CUPE executive and rank-and-file child care workers, CUPE 2484 stood fast on its walkout decision: "And our local said, nope, we've got to go" (Mary Anderson, CUPE Executive for a child care local in the 1990s and 2010s, 2021). Soon after, Ryan changed his mind and endorsed the action, warning that the provincial cuts would throw child care workers into poverty, drive workers out of the profession, and destroy the non-profit child care system (Toughill, 1995, July 18).

On the day of the strike, over a thousand people met at Queen's Park, including children, mothers, child care workers, and child care operators from 85 centers. centers bolstered numbers by making the rally an outing for children, parents, and their staff, demonstrating that any fears the OCBCC may have had about alienating parents were unfounded in this case and possibly ameliorated by the communications work centers did with parents before the walkout (Monsebraaten, 1995, July 21; Nesbitt, 2018a). The event, merging a strike and a protest, was a success, rallying far more people than the 350 members belonging to CUPE 2484.

Despite the success of the walkout in bringing together parents, child care workers, and advocates, the government announced on July 21st, the day after the walkout, that it would be cancelling the subsidy program introduced by Premier Rae that was used to convert commercial centers to non-profit centers. This was a major blow to the OCBCC which advocated for the exclusion of commercial operators because of their tendency to provide lower quality care. The Harris government also downloaded 20 percent of the costs for the 14,000 subsidized child care spaces onto municipalities, which did not have any new funding to pay for these spaces. Possibly because of the strike the day before, Premier Harris spared the $8,000 wage subsidy for 14,000 child care workers[20] and, at the regional level, the Metro Toronto Council also made emergency funds available to help support child care centers through to the end of 1995 (Joyner, 1995, July 26, Nesbitt, 2018a).

[20] Although Premier Harris spared the wage subsidy for child care workers, he suppressed the wages of temporary migrant workers by barring their right to unionize by repealing The Agricultural Labor Relations Act, S.O. 1994, c six in 1995. The act was passed by Rae's government and permitted migrant workers the right to unionize. After repealing this act, Premier Harris passed the Labor Relations and Employment Statute Law Amendment Act, S.O. 1995, c 1, Sched. A in 1995, officially closing the short window unions had to legally engage temporary in-home Child care workers (Russo, 2018). By preventing unions from organizing temporary migrant workers, Premier Harris suppressed the price of one type of marketized child care provided by racialized migrant women.

Although the protest did not achieve all its aims, a new network of child care activists was formed because of the action. This network went on to initiate local actions at the offices and businesses of Conservative MPPs, including Al Pallidini's car dealership in Vaughan ("Day-care workers protest cuts", 1995, July 21; Monsebraaten, 1995, July 21). These actions put MPPs in direct contact with parents who were their constituents. When parents from rural and suburban ridings participated in these campaigns, Conservative MPPs took notice, recognizing that these people were not just Toronto-based advocates, but their constituents who could vote against them during the next election.

OFL staffer, Karen Harris, observes how campaigning was made accessible to parents during this time:

> Parents of young children, it's very difficult for them to get time off work to come to lobby [their MPP]. They're stretched beyond belief between work and young kids. We figured out a number of activities that they could do, like sending in a fax to their MPP....And the other [strategy] is inviting the MPP for a tour of the child care facility and doing that when the parents are picking up the kids. The parents have an opportunity to talk to the MPP. [Strategizing involved] taking a look at what would work best in providing parents the tools to be activists (Karen Harris, OFL staffer, 2021).

In addition to these tactics, parents scheduled meetings with their MPP or protested in the hundreds in front of their local offices, and if MPPs did not attend these meetings or neglected to come to their office that day, their constituents followed up with them. In this way, the coalition continued to leverage parent involvement in its campaigning while trying to target Conservative

MPPs more directly by visiting them in their ridings. This made the political risks of neoliberal reform more palpable to politicians.

Campaigning was not accessible to all parents though, with Alison Carmichael (2021), who served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, noting low-income and racialized parents faced more barriers to participating in advocacy work compared to middle-class white professionals. As a result, the OCBCC relied on "highly educated people who have flexibility in their jobs, people who have English as their first language, people who are comfortable confronting government" (Alison Carmichael, 2021) to join the child care movement, so that those who needed child care the most were the least represented in the OCBCC. In this way, the coalition continued to rely on race-blind organizing strategies that excluded racialized parents who may have wanted to participate in the campaign but required more inclusive and accessible options. Although not all parents had an equal ability to participate in the walkout, it was nonetheless a success in terms of gathering significant numbers and drawing public attention to the urgent needs of child care workers.

In early November 1995, a confidential Ministry of Social Services report was leaked to *The Toronto Star*. The Report proposed go eliminate direct child care subsidies for 68,000 low-income parents, many of whom would have been racialized, and replace them with vouchers valued from $346 to $390 per month that could be used for licensed and unlicensed child care. In doing so, the report demonstrated that the government was fully intending to carry out Harris' campaign promise of giving parents the "right to choose" the child care provider of their preference, including unlicensed care. Carol Gott, President of the OCBCC, warned that licensed child care would be devastated since the vouchers did not come close to covering the $700 needed to cover centers' average monthly costs of caring for a child (Monsebraaten, 1995,

November 3; Tough ill, Nesbitt, 2018a; 1995, November 18). The significant discrepancy between voucher value and costs of child care, they warned, would force low-income parents back on welfare with newer, lower rates under Premier Harris, thereby increasing the social reproductive burdens for families unable to afford market rates for child care even with the vouchers.

In response to the report, the Toronto School Board called a meeting on November 7th where thousands of people packed the downtown office. There, attendees learned from speakers from child care agencies, educational institutions, parents, and politicians that the proposed cuts to municipal transfer payments for subsidies would cost Toronto up to 5,000 subsidized child care spaces. This meeting built support for a planned *Walk for Child Care* on November 13th, led by the Metro Coalition for Better child care, a local affiliate of the OCBCC. The walk proved to be a remarkable success, resulting in at least a hundred small rallies held across Metro Toronto involving approximately 5,000 child care workers, parents, and children (Monsebraaten, 1995, November 14; Nesbitt, 2018a). With an estimated 20 percent of the city's five hundred licensed child care centers participating in the protests that were held in dozens of suburban neighborhoods, advocates sent a strong message to Premier Harris that this was an issue that resonated inside of Conservative wards (Monsebraaten, 1995, November 14).

For the OCBCC, vouchers were a clear threat to a public child care system because they subsidized households' child care expenses with unlicensed and commercial providers, thereby facilitating the expansion of marketized care, instead of funding licensed public child care directly. Encouraged by the success of the *Walk for Child Care,* the OCBCC took the protest province-wide on November 24, 1995. Based on the OCBCC's estimates, 800 centers fully closed for the day, with 400 more partially closing, impacting 50,000 children. And with the

participation of approximately 11,000 child care workers at two dozen rallies across the province, the walkout successfully met its objective of disrupting the wider economy to better demonstrate how essential child care is to paid work (Ibbitson, 1995, November 25;'Day-care centers shut down', 1995, November 25; Wright, 1995, November 25 in Nesbitt, 2018a), as noted by former OCBCC President, Cheryl MacDonald: "This will show employers how much their own employees rely on child care as people are forced either to take time off work or bring children into the office" (Toughill, 1995, November 18 in Nesbitt, 2018a).

The Toronto rally held at Queen's Park on the same day was attended by 3,000 child care workers, parents, and children, some of whom were transported by union-sponsored buses to the event. Popular slogans featured on posters and pins pointedly positioned the government as acting against the interests of children. Campaign slogans, including "Don't balance the books on the backs of children!" and "Mike Harris: Pick on Someone Your Own Size" were designed to disrupt Harris' attempt to promote such reforms as centering the needs and rights of the family. "The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Rocks the Boat" emboldened child care workers to act with militancy, which was a much-needed encouragement since some child care workers felt a tension between their professional identities as care workers and acting as an advocate for themselves and the sector ('Day-care centers shut down', 1995, November 25 in Nesbitt, 2018a; Wright, 1995, November 25).

Figure 5.1 “The hand that rocks the cradle needs to rock the boat” campaign button, 1995



Source: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, n.d.b).

Caption: A button from the November 24th child care walk-out to protest Harris’ cuts to subsidies.

After the walkouts, Harris’ government distanced itself from the report, backing away from replacing direct child care subsidies with vouchers (White, 1997). This is an example of a rare victory for the OCBCC during this period, demonstrating the power of militant and disruptive action when advanced by large numbers of the public.

Unsurprisingly, the walkouts were not supported by commercial child care operators which remained open to continue serving the largely middle-class families who could afford to pay market rates for child care. For commercial operators, Premier Harris was received as a welcome change to Premier Rae, who they viewed with hostility because of his government’s efforts to transition commercial operators to non-profit status (Nesbitt, 2018a; Wright, 1995, November 25).

In hindsight, 1995 represents a period of peak militancy for the coalition. During this time, the OCBCC shifted from relying on non-disruptive public education campaigns (e.g., public forums) and petitioning, to spearheading a province-wide child care walkout against

Premier Harris' planned neoliberal reforms. Much of this militancy can be understood in relation to a willingness by other activists, including anti-poverty activists and feminists, community groups, and labor unions, to lead large political strikes, mass demonstrations, and other forms of protest during this period against Harris' neoliberal reforms that touched the education system, social assistance, public housing, health care system, workers' rights, and tenant protections (Kelpin, 2021, January 4). This widespread militancy became known as *The Days of Action*, and it created new militant possibilities for the OCBCC's own campaigning. The sheer size of the cuts proposed by Premier Harris likely also compelled the OCBCC to consider more disruptive and in-person actions, explaining why the coalition facilitated a mass strike under Premier Harris but not Premier Rae.

5.1.1 1996: Rallying to Defeat the Ecker Reform

In the aftermath of the walkouts of 1995, the OCBCC tried to appeal to Queen's Park in June 1996 to avoid further neoliberal attacks on the child care sector. The coalition's aim was to reverse the $100 million in cuts made since the government announced its economic statement on July 21, 1995. Explaining their position to government against further austerity, then-OCBCC executive director, Kerry McCuaig, stated that:

> No previous government has reduced funding for child care in the past. Responding to changing workforce participation rates by parents with young children, growing child poverty rates and the overwhelming research which indicates the benefits of quality programs for children, each consecutive Ontario government has increased its funding commitment to child care. In the past 15 years, the provincial child care budget increased from $144 million in 1981 to $560 million in 1994. Each new investment was aimed at enhancing the quality

and accessibility to child care (McCuaig, Standing Committee on Social Development, June 10, 1996).

In this statement, McCuaig counterposed Premier Harris' austerity with previous provincial governments' expansion of and support for the child care sector, as this was necessitated by changing economic and social conditions that continued to produce a demand for child care in the province. Even as McCuaig referenced child poverty and workforce participation in her appeal, avoiding any reference to feminism, this was not enough to convince Harris' government to cancel its planned cuts. As a direct result of these cuts, child care programming and subsidy provisioning was dramatically impacted in Ontario. As of February 1996, the following changes had taken effect:

Table 5.1 Major Child Care Neoliberal Reform Under Premier Harris

Programs Changes	• Cancellation of an early childhood education pilot project. • Cancellation of child care programs that support the integration of children with special needs. • Cancellation of the conversion program for commercial child care. • 19 child care programs closed.
Funding Changes	• Cut funding for junior kindergarten. • Cancelled funding to child care centers already built in new schools. • 10 percent cut in funding to family resource centers. • Cancelled funding to program development. • Cut pay equity payments, resulting in reduced staff salaries[21].

[21] In 2001, after pressure from rank-and-file members, CUPE National, alongside the Ontario Nurses' Association, OPSEU, United Steel Workers Union, and four individual women, issued a Charter challenge ordering Harris'

	• Cancelled funding to a dozen community-based planning groups.
Subsidies	• 743 of the 14,000 Jobs Ontario child care subsidies were lost. • 12 regions froze their subsidy intake. • 16 areas increased their user fees to subsidized families. • 30,000 families eligible for subsidies continued to wait for access to regulated, quality care.

Source: (McCuaig, Standing Committee on Social Development, June 10, 1996).

In September 1996, the government released the Ecker Report overseen by Janet Ecker, MPP for Durham West, and Minister David Tsubouchi, parliamentary assistant to Community and Social Services. The Ecker Report proposed another round of neoliberal reforms that included cutting child care workers' salaries by 25 percent, (or $4,500 over three years), raising child-staff ratios, and applying less stringent requirements for buildings that house child care centers. The savings from these cuts were to be channeled into the creation of additional child care spaces in mostly commercial centers, effectively combining austerity, deregulation, and marketization in one neat set of proposals that would have also significantly lowered the quality and safety in child care centers (White, 1997).

government provide funds for pay equity. Preceding 2001, Harris had advised employers that they were now responsible for all further annual equity adjustments which was an impossible task for cash-strapped child care centers. In 2003, the Charter challenge was successfully settled, with Mediator Gerry Lee, determining that 100,000 women in predominately female public sector workplaces, including those working in child care, should receive up to $414 million in pay equity funding from the Ontario government for the period 2003-2006 (CUPE, n.d.c.; Morrow, n.d.).

With this Report, Harris continued to demonstrate his government's perception of child care as little more than a holding center for children, rather than a form of early childhood education where children would be cared for in safe spaces by well-trained and compensated staff. Merely housing children in potentially unsafe centers overseen by overworked and poorly paid staff reduced the value of this essential care work and undermined the OCBCC's vision of establishing child care as a high-quality public service in the same way public education was.

Commercial expansion using public funds would not have been possible under the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), but Premier Harris had the freedom to fund commercial operators using federal dollars after Prime Minister Chretien replaced CAP with the block-funded Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) in 1996 (White, 1997, p. 25; Mahon, 1997, p. 404). Unlike CAP, the CHST did not issue federal funds to match provincial contributions. It also gave the provinces the flexibility to use federal money to pay for healthcare, post-secondary education, and welfare without any conditions, allowing the provinces to deregulate and marketize welfare provisioning using federal money (LeBaron, 2010, p. 899).

By replacing CAP with the CHST, Prime Minister Chretien achieved what Prime Minister Mulroney had first attempted: remove conditions on federal funding. Like Prime Minister Mulroney, Prime Minister Chretien's neoliberal agenda was directly informed by the business lobby. The Liberal's 1993 campaign platform was developed with the assistance of private sector experts, including billionaire Paul Desmarais Sr, who was also on good terms with Prime Minister Mulroney. The public debt accumulated during the recession in the early 1990s also provided the pretext needed to advance neoliberal reform across the country (Rozworski, 2015, April 29).

Prime Minister Chretien's introduction of the CHST did not elicit public resistance from the OCBCC as Prime Minister Mulroney's failed Bill C-144 did. This is perhaps because of Prime Minister Chretien's strategic introduction of the CHST, which involved obscuring the implications of the CHST to the public. This made the CHST more difficult for activists to campaign around compared to Bill C-144. Chretien's government accomplished this covert introduction of the CHST by claiming that they were "taking seriously the need to control spending, reduce the deficit, and encourage policy flexibility in a diverse federation", thereby responding to real public concern about overly generous social assistance programs, while using complex federal and provincial fiscal terms to obscure how the CHST would accomplish this (Bashevkin, 2000; Dobrowolsky, 2004). By using more abstract language that was devoid of layman's references (e.g., "control spending" without explaining what this will entail in an accessible manner), Chretien's' government reformed federal transfer policy by stealth to confuse the electorate and insulate the government from criticism (Battle, 2018 July 23).

As a result, the OCBCC decided to focus their efforts at the provincial level in response to the report released by Conservative MPP, Janet Ecker, hosting a rally at Queen's Park in October 1996. The rally brought hundreds of rain-drenched parents and advocates to the steps of the Legislative Assembly where advocates met the press to demand public hearings. Holding umbrellas and signs and with children in tow, parents marched to the legislature chanting, "Stop using children", while shouting down Janet Ecker, who tried to address the rally, even plunging into the crowd at one point ('Parents want hearings on child', 1996, October 21; Turgeon, 2014, p. 236). Ecker tried to vacillate on the government's position at the rally, stating that the reforms were not policy yet and that she intended to consult with community groups. In response, former OCBCC executive director, Kerry McCuaig, stated: "she's consulted with people she's chosen to

consult with...the opportunity for parents to have a say has been limited" ('Parents want hearings on child', 1996, October 21). Fortunately, the rally exerted sufficient pressure, forcing Harris' government to cancel the Ecker reform after realizing that fierce parental pushback could have consequences at the ballot box.

After the defeat of the Ecker reforms, Premier Harris made modest child care support contingent on a family's participation in work, training, or education by introducing the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families in 1998. Somewhat illogically, the family received the modest benefit that provided a maximum of $1,100 per year irrespective of whether they had child care expenses or not. In this way, the benefit detached child care support from actual need while using the benefit to discipline parents to participate in the labor market (Vosko, 2006, p. 152). The benefit was part of the government's broader "workfare" strategy that made benefit eligibility contingent on workforce participation, further undermining Keynesian notions of "deservingness" based on need. This strategy also did nothing to increase the number of regulated public and non-profit child care spaces available to meet household demand (Mahon, 2001). These outcomes were obviously counter to the OCBCC's goals of establishing child care as a universal good based on need, and it disproportionately impacted racialized households who were more likely to have a more precarious attachment to the labor market and would not qualify for the supplement.

Although not all the OCBCC's campaigns were successful during the Harris era, the child care movement was recognized as a formidable foe by the Harris government. As former OCBCC executive member, Linda White, recalls, "Janet Ecker, who was the minister [of social and community services] at the time, did say 'don't underestimate the child care lobby. They're a very powerful and effective lobby'. I've since spoken to Janet, and she did say we were among

her worst nightmare" (White, 2021). If the child care movement was able to demonstrate it was a formidable public opponent, nonetheless, even large protests mobilized over many months failed to stem major cuts to social programs under Premier Harris, including to child care.

5.2 1999-2001: Selling Child Care as an Investment to Chretien's "Third Way" Government

By the end of the 1990s, Chretien's government declared the deficit crisis was over as the economy improved and unemployment rates declined. The debate now was what to do with this surplus. Prime Minister Chretien suggested a "balanced" approach where part of the surplus would go towards paying down the debt and part would be reinvested in social programs, presenting the OCBCC and the child care movement with a new opportunity to expand child care.

The Liberals stated that paying down the debt was important "because we owe it to our children to do so" but the government would also "invest in the social fabric of the country, particularly in healthcare" and "increase investment in learning, research and innovation" (Dobrowolsky, 2004). It seems that neoliberalism was being superseded by the social investment state, which did not represent a revival of Keynesian-style welfare expansion, but a "Third Way" that balanced modest welfare expansion with deficit management. "Third Way" politics were taken up elsewhere and by other Western leaders, including Bill Clinton in the U.S. and Tony Blair in the United Kingdom, who sought a compromise between support for economic liberalization and support for social spending (Gazso, 2006; Giddens, 2013).

Prime Minister Chretien's shift to a social investment state was not without precedent. Before his government was elected in 1993, he had campaigned promising to develop a national strategy for child care, including increasing child care spending by $720 million over three years and providing 50,000 new regulated spaces every year for three years. These promises were

outlined in the federal Liberal party's 1993 Red Book of policy proposals, officially titled *Creating Opportunity: The Liberal Plan for Canada*. But after Chretien won the federal election, it soon became clear to feminists, leftists, and other advocates that the Prime Minister's initial commitments to strengthening social programs and upholding universality would be overridden by his government's preoccupation with reducing the deficit through neoliberal reform (Dobrowolsky, 2004).

In turning back towards investing in welfare, Chretien's government was responding to the Liberal's changing electoral fortunes in Atlantic Canada, which had been disproportionately impacted by federal austerity as Canada's poorest and most underdeveloped region (MacDonald, 1998). In the 1997 federal election, the Liberal party won a mere 11 seats in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick, and the party was completely shut out of Nova Scotia (Yaffe, 1999, August 18). Chretien's government also seemed to be contemplating its legacy, not wanting to be remembered for neoliberal reform. "When they look back on us 50 years from now," Toronto-area MP John Godfrey mused to reporters at a Halifax federal caucus meeting, "what will be the great thing that we did? Will anyone remember that we gave them tax cuts?" (Yaffe, 1999, August 18).

In response to Premier Chrétien's government's turn towards a social investment approach, the OCBCC and anti-poverty advocates called on Ottawa to spend $2 billion to build a national infrastructure fund for early childhood learning and care programs; $1 billion to expand the National child Benefit, which was a monthly income-tested benefit for low-income families, disproportionately likely to be racialized; and $1 billion to create a universal maternity and parental leave system, which would benefit families with more precarious attachment to the labor market, including racialized families. Notably, the OCBCC's demands did not include a national

child care system. Prime Minister Chretien's history of adopting neoliberal reform to control spending and reduce the deficit may have tempered the coalition's expectations of what was possible. Hence, the OCBCC adopted what the coalition thought were realistic demands more likely to be taken up by a "Third Way" government wanting to create a positive legacy for itself (Orwen, 1999, August 9).

To advocate for these demands, the OCBCC returned to earlier, successful "mail-in" campaigns and targeted the upcoming federal budget. The OCBCC circulated orange postcards to be signed by thousands of children in Toronto urging Chretien's government make the upcoming budget "a gift to the country's children", 1.4 million of whom live in poverty. The postcards were collected and delivered in mail tote bags by two federal ministers at a Liberal cabinet retreat in Halifax in August 1999. Visitors to Toronto's pools, libraries and community centers were also encouraged to send postcards to the federal Finance Minister, Paul Martin. Although the campaign placed a special emphasis on the most disadvantaged children, the OCBCC brought attention back to the need for universal provisioning, as well. The then-OCBCC executive director, Mary Ann Bedard, told the *Toronto Star* that, "we are encouraging the federal government to focus [its] attention on supporting not just poor families but all families with children" (Orwen, 1999, August 9).

The postcard campaign was not widely covered in the media, and it failed to convince Prime Minister Chretien to meet its demands. Instead, he doubled the amount of leave available to parents who qualify for Employment Insurance (EI), which he announced would be available to parents by 2001 ('Ottawa doubles parental leave', 1999, October 14). This reform did not benefit families with more precarious attachment to the labor force and who did not typically qualify for EI, including racialized families with more precarious attachment to the labor market.

Prime Minister Chretien also fortified the Canada child Tax Benefit with $2.5 billion by 2004, which his government announced in the 2000 budget (Hebert, 2000, June 9). The Canada child Tax Benefit was intended to replace welfare-delivered child benefits. The goal was to pay all low-income families the same amount, regardless of their income source, unlike the previous system which provided larger benefits to low-income families on social assistance (Battle & Torjman, 2000). This reform also disproportionately negatively impacted racialized households who were more likely to be on social assistance than non-racialized households.

By targeting reforms to support families who demonstrated strong labor market attachment while shifting welfare benefits away from the poorest families, Prime Minister Chretien reserved expanded welfare provisioning for "deserving" households who met the government's labor market expectations. In this way, the federal government's new Social Investment Strategy drew upon the same disciplinary motifs that were apparent in Premier Harris' neoliberal approach towards welfare provisioning where welfare eligibility was detached from actual need and made contingent on labor market participation. In doing so, Chretien's government demonstrated that his "Third Way" politics was not a move towards more universal provisioning as part of a renewed Keynesian welfare state. Instead, his government undertook modest welfare reform that continued to be influenced by neoliberal ideology and ideas, including the importance of individualism and the self-sufficiency of the citizen-worker who accessed social provisioning only after proving consistent attachment to the labor force. This "Third Way" welfare reform was race-blind, disproportionately denying racialized households access to welfare provisioning because of their more precarious attachment to the labor market.

In 2001, the OCBCC and CUPE campaigned once again for federal dollars to be used towards public and non-profit child care expansion. To create public awareness of their demands,

they hosted open workshops with families and workers across Ontario, rather than campaign more militantly, partially reflecting the gradual diminishment of militancy from labor groups and other advocates across the province. They explained how Harris' government should spend the $844 million given to the province through the federal *2001-2006 Early childhood Development Initiative*. The initiative allowed the province to spend federal funds in any of the following areas: healthy pregnancy, and birth and infancy; parenting and family supports; community supports; and early childhood development, learning, and care (Cool, 2007). These workshops resulted in consultations with more than 500 child care workers, parents, and municipal officials in 11 communities across Ontario over the summer and formed the basis of a report.

The report by the OCBCC and CUPE reiterated the OCBCC's call for a universal public child care system by calling for the development of a Quebec-style child care program providing affordable, high-quality regulated care, rather than the free-market voucher system preferred by the Harris government. The report also called for the maintenance of municipal child care centers that tend to provide higher-quality care for children and better wages and working conditions for staff, more funding for children with special needs, and improved wages and working conditions for child care workers (Perkel, 2001, October 24).

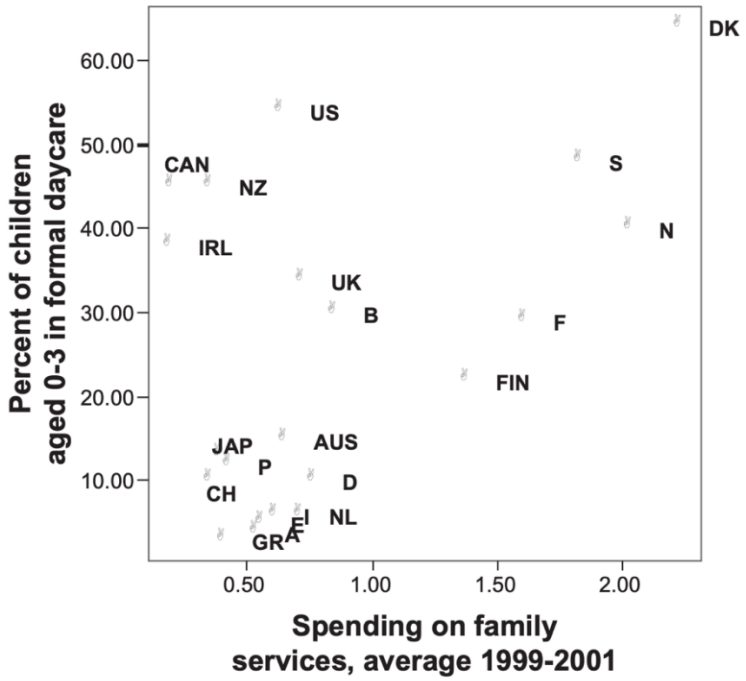
Unfortunately, the public forums had little effect on Premier Harris. Along with Alberta's Conservative government, Harris' government was one of only two provincial governments who did not use the bulk of the *Early Childhood Development Initiative* for child care. In fact, Ontario spent none of its first installment of the $114 million total on child care, despite a 30 percent increase in demand for subsidized child care spaces over the past three years. Instead, the province chose to use funding for child health programs. Dan Miles, a spokesperson for the provincial Ministry of Social Services, stated that the province did not use the funding for

regulated child care because it "believes parents need to have more options", drawing upon a "right to choose" discourse to justify the government's lack of investment in the child care sector. He suggested that parents could hire caregivers using the money they received through the *Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families*. The supplement provided a maximum of $1,100 per year for households involved in education, training, or work, and did not actually support households' ability to choose between a variety of high-quality child care options because of its low value (Orwen, 2001, Oct 04).

With provincial funding in short supply and 16,686 Toronto children on a waiting list for child care in 2001, many low-income parents, disproportionately likely to be racialized, were forced to quit their jobs and go on social assistance. Cheryl Sponagle, who was interviewed by the *Toronto Star*, stated that she was forced back on social assistance after a provincial funding cut forced her 6-year-old son out of extended day care. Referring to Ms. Sponagle's case when commenting on the dire situation of child care in the province for the news piece, Mary-Anne Bedard, then executive director of the OCBCC, explained, "it's clear that the present system is not responding to the needs of families in Ontario…Even parents who can pay full fees may wait up to 18 months for a space" (Orwen, 2001, Oct 04). Although many parents were confronted with inadequate child care, none of these campaigns changed the Ontario Government's commitments to turning child care into a marketized commodity while shifting the responsibility for child care back onto households who could not afford to pay market rates.

5.3 Measuring Government and Private Household Spending on Social Provisioning

Figure 5.2 Government spending on family services, OECD countries, 1991-2002

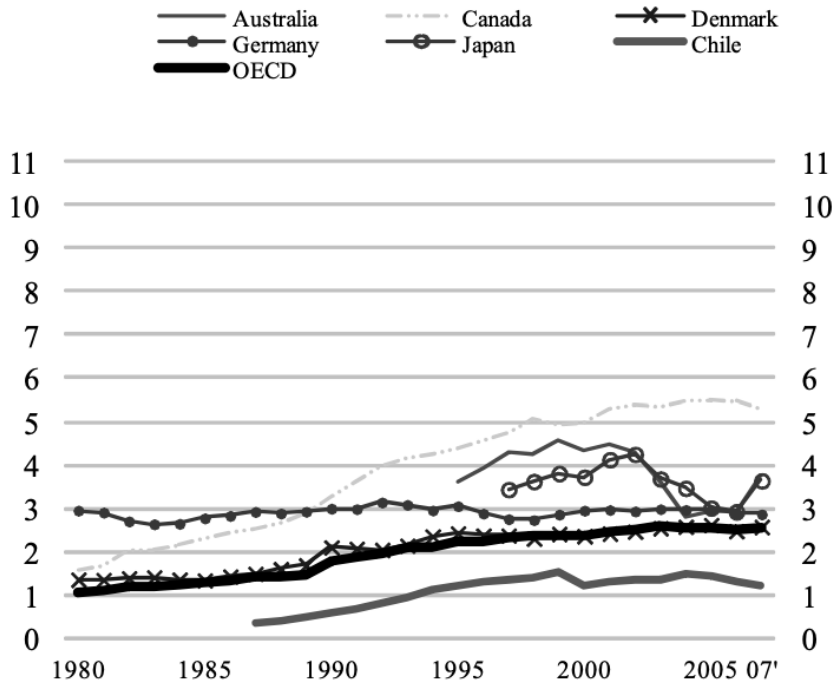


Source: (Bonoli & Reber, 2010)

The OCBCC's struggle to improve child care policy at the federal and provincial levels had consequences. This image demonstrates that although the percent of children between the ages of 0 to three enrolled in formal care approached 50 percent in the country, Canada only spent approximately 0.25 percent of its GDP on family services from 1999-2001. In comparison to other OECD countries, including the markedly neoliberal Anglo-Saxon nations of the United States and the United Kingdom, Canada spent the least on child care as a percentage of GDP despite having one of the highest enrollment rates in child care during this period.

While recognizing that total government spending is not always an indicator of the coverage and quality of social provisioning, it is one consideration when assessing how government is supporting welfare expansion. To better evaluate how low government welfare spending impacts households' social reproduction, we should also consider the personal costs households may bear in struggling to meet their social reproduction obligations over this period.

Figure 5.3 Private social spending, in percentage of GDP, 1980 to 2007



Source: (Adema & Ladaique, 2009)

This image demonstrates that compared to the OECED average, Canada, who is like other neoliberal countries including the UK, the USA, New Zealand, and Australia, witnessed significantly higher increases in gross private social spending as a percentage of GDP since 1980. This means that Canada's social protection system has relied to an increasing extent on

Canadians' private spending to meet their personal needs, signifying the decline of a large welfare state that provides social services, including child care, as public goods.

5.4 Summary

From 1995 – 2002, the OCBCC faced advancing neoliberal reform from Premier Harris who sought to defund, deregulate, and destroy support for non-profit and public child care. Premier Harris justified this reform by referencing his support for "the family" and his desire to give households more consumer choice, belying the reality that the neediest households, especially those who are racialized, were increasingly unable to access child care without subsidy support. During this period, the OCBCC sought to preserve child care provisioning at the provincial level. Encouraged by a wider atmosphere of militancy in Ontario and pushed by CUPE rank-and-file child care workers, the OCBCC resorted to a more militant and disruptive campaigning style against Premier Harris' reforms. This was sometimes successful in preserving child care workers' wages and preventing further austerity, deregulation, and marketization. When Chretien's government shifted to a "Third Way" social investment strategy in the late 1990s, the OCBCC took advantage of a political window to campaign for federal dollars to be invested into universal child care reforms. Instead, Prime Minister Chretien expanded support for "deserving" households with strong labor market attachments while shifting funds away from the neediest households on social assistance. In doing so, he demonstrated how "Third Way" welfare reform continued to rely upon neoliberal notions of deservingness based on labor market attachment, rather than expanding universal programs.

Chapter Six: Losing National Child Care, Gaining Full-Day Kindergarten (2003 – 2018)

Chapter six covers the period from 2003 – 2018, covering the terms of Liberal Prime Minister, Paul Martin (2003 – 2006), Conservative Prime Minister, Stephen Harper (2006-2015), and Liberal Premier, Dalton McGuinty (2003 – 2013). I consider how the OCBCC campaigned in relation to a shifting "Third Way" politic taken up by Prime Minister Martin and Premier McGuinty by adopting a child development discourse that connected child care to future economic returns. I consider how internal OCBCC conflict around the issue of educational integration was resolved during this period, and to what effect. I also consider how the OCBCC campaigned against Prime Minister Harper's pursuit of neoliberal reform, which he justified using neoconservative and "right to choose" discourses. Throughout this chapter, I consider how the OCBCC began to incorporate racial equity more explicitly into its campaigning, and what consequences federal and provincial child care policy reform had for racialized families and households' social reproduction.

6.1 2003-2006: Campaigning to Save Martin's National Child Care System

Paul Martin was elected Prime Minister in 2003 with a minority government following Prime Minister Chrétien's resignation after losing a leadership review. Soon after, Martin's Liberal government announced its intentions of spending $5 billion over five years to create a national early learning and child care system, otherwise known as the Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Foundations Program. Prime Minister Chretien's commitment of $1.05 billion towards public child care expansion through the MFA (Multilateral Framework Agreements on Early Learning and Child Care) in 2003 established the groundwork for Martin's ELCC program, which was contained in what was called the Foundations Program, centered four

principles: Quality, universality, accessibility, and developmental programming. Martin used the ELCC to secure the NDP's support for his minority government (Langford et al., 2016).

Prime Minister Martin's budget did not offer details about how the 1.5 billion in early child care funding would be allocated though. To ensure federal money was used to fund non-profit and public child care operators, the OCBCC and the OFL pioneered the *Child Care Build It Right* campaign in 2005. The OCBCC was already familiar with the consequences of federal funding without conditions when Premier Peterson used federal funding to support the expansion of commercial operators in 1987, turning away from building a public child care system. The OCBCC wanted to avoid this outcome again and sought to exclude commercial operators who provided child care as a profitable service rather than a public good, which had no place in a public child care system.

For the bulk of the campaign, the OFL and the OCBCC hosted public forums in 15 cities, including Sudbury. Campaign organizers connected with local child care providers to develop the campaign's demands and draw attention to local child care issues. The consensus from forum participants was that strings needed to be attached to money to ensure it went directly to children. The final demands of the campaign were that government should issue funding directly to centers, rather than as supplements or vouchers; put money into a capital fund so centers can expand; provide wage increases for child care workers; and ensure child care fees were no more than $10-per-day. These demands supported the transition of child care from a fee-based welfare service to a public good. The forums culminated in a day of collective lobbying at Queen's Park in April (Bradley, 2005, March 4). While the forums highlighted the demands of parents, it is not clear whether the campaign sought feedback from racialized parents who would have disproportionately benefitted from subsidy expansion alongside a fee reduction to $10-per-

day. The cost of $10-per-day is still too expensive for some low-income and impoverished households who are more likely to be racialized, meaning that these households would still require subsidies if there is any fee associated with child care.

After initially failing to establish one multilateral agreement with all the provinces, Martin's government succeeded in establishing individual bilateral agreements with all ten provinces in 2005. As soon as Prime Minister Martin negotiated child care funding agreements with the provinces and territories, the nascent national child care system was put at risk. In the 2006 federal election, Prime Minister Martin went head-to-head with Conservative party leader, Stephen Harper. Harper had already established his position on child care in his 2003 speech when he stated that the traditional family was "key to a conservative agenda", signaling to the social conservatives in his base that child care would not become a public program during his time in office. In doing so, he drew upon a similar neoconservative discourse as that used by Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier Harris who both referenced the need to protect the traditional heteronormative nuclear family as a justification for dismantling support for public child care (Snow & Moffitt, 2012).

To save the child care deals from a prospective Harper government, the OCBCC tried and failed to convince enough of the public to not vote for the Conservatives. The OCBCC spoke to the media and produced press releases to raise public awareness of the implications of a Conservative win for a national child care system. In an excerpt from the *Windsor Star*, Irene Harris, vice-president of the OFL and spokeswoman for the OCBCC, warned that "a Tory win would be a disaster; they favor child care tax credits, not a universal plan that's affordable and accessible to all Canadian families... We've been fighting for [a national child care system] for 30 years; what a shame for us to get so close and not have a chance to have it passed" (Macaluso,

2005, April 19). Other child care advocacy organizations, including the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), Child Care Now, and provincial-level advocacy associations also campaigned to save Prime Minister Martin's promise of a national child care system and warn against a Conservative win (Alison Carmichael, who served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990s, 2021).

Unfortunately, Prime Minister Harper won with a minority government and 36 percent of the popular vote due to the first past the post system. Some observers have suggested that those who did vote for the Conservatives did not seek to move Canada rightwards nor because of a dislike for Liberal policies, but because the public perceived the Liberals to be arrogant, lacking integrity, and governing within a "culture of entitlement" (Cody, 2008).

Whatever the reasons for Harper's victory, child care advocates quickly realized that he had no intention of working with the child care movement. As Alison Carmicheal, who served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990s, remembers:

> Oh, I think I attended the very last meeting that the Stephen Harper government ever had with the Child Care Advocacy Association. It was very soon after the 2006 election when they were elected as a minority government, and it was very clear at that meeting that it would be the last. They had absolutely no interest in meeting with child care advocates. They did not believe that the federal government had any role to play except with respect to providing parents with some financial support, and they completely believed in a market-based approach to child care (Carmichael, 2021).

These suspicions were confirmed as Prime Minister Harper carried out the work Prime Minister Mulroney had started when his government began to attack feminist organizing and

undercut the government's ability to pursue initiatives that supported women's equitable place in society. Prime Minister Harper excluded lobbying groups from being eligible to receive funding from Status of Women Canada and cut and then eliminated funding to The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC) in 2009. His government also cut and declined funding project proposals from The Canadian Child Care Federation, the Child Care Resource and Research Unit, and the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (Findlay, 2015).

In addition to defunding Status of Women Canada, the word "equality" was also removed from the Status of Women's mandate and replaced by "facilitate women's participation in Canadian society by addressing their economic, social and cultural situation". Harper also closed a dozen of the 16 regional Status of Women Canada offices across the country and eliminated $1 million for the Status of Women Independent Research Fund (Bashevkin, 2012). Together, these actions eroded the Status of Women's ability to pursue initiatives to improve women's equity in Canada.

Prime Minister Harper also undermined women's ability to fight for economic equity and equality through the legal system. He cancelled the Court of Challenges (CCP) program that provided funding to individuals challenging discriminatory government legislation. He also established the discriminatory Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act that reintroduced sex discrimination into pay practices by introducing additional criteria that would allow public sector employers to consider "market demand" in determining compensation, ensuring higher pay for men even if the work was of equal value to comparable women's work (Dobbin, 2010; Nadeau, 2011; Strumm, 2015).

In undermining the work of women's advocacy organizations and the government's ability to support women's equality initiatives, Prime Minister Harper's actions supported a

regression in women's economic and social position in Canadian society. In being paid less than men while having no right to child care as a public good, more women would be forced to remain in a traditional family dynamic because they could not afford to live in an alternative family form. This would support the further privatization of social reproduction and the banishment of child care to the private domestic space where women would be expected to labor without pay.

As Prime Minister Harper remained uninterested in engaging with child care advocates, the OCBCC campaigned to save the child care agreements former Prime Minister Martin made with the provinces and territories in 2005. They mounted the campaign, *Code Blue for Child Care*, a slogan evoking imagery meant to suggest the resuscitation of Martin's child care deal before it flatlined. Yet Prime Minister Harper remained resolute in his decision to cancel the agreements, ending the program in 2006, despite the OCBCC collecting 100,000 signatures over the course of six weeks from parents in support of saving the child care program (Cheryl Davis, Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, 2021).

In its stead, Prime Minister Harper provided a Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB), which paid out a flat rate of $100 per month for young children to all families irrespective of income. Prime Minister Harper funded the UCCB by removing the young child supplement money ($249 annually for low- and modest-income families) from the adjusted-for-income Canada Child Tax Benefit. This exacerbated the inequitable distribution of funds across income groups by giving the same amount of money to higher-income families as low-income families. The UCCB also provided a higher benefit to single-earner two parent households – those that most closely resembled the traditional nuclear family - compared to dual income or single parent households (Bezanson, 2010). Battle points to the UCCB's primary contradiction, noting that

this distribution of funds "makes no sense, as families that pay for out-of-the-home child care have higher expenses than do those with a work-in-the-home parent" (Battle 2006, p. 5).

In this way, the UCBCC produced race-blind racist outcomes by shifting funding away from racialized households who are more likely to be low-income than white households and Black women who are more likely to head single parent households (Calliste, 2001; Christensen & Weinfeld, 1993; Henry, 1994). Black women, especially from Jamaica, Haiti, and Somalia, are often forced to migrate to Canada alone or as single mothers (Mata, 2011). In the case of Caribbean women, those arriving as migrant workers in Canada are often legally required to leave their spouses and children behind (Arat-Koc, 2001). It is not uncommon for Somali women to become single parents before migration, either because their husbands perished through war or the family was forced to separate in the process of seeking asylum in Canada (Israelite, Herman, & Alim, 1999; Spitzer, 2006).

The goal of the UCBCC was also not to help households access regulated child care, which averaged $677 per month in Ontario in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2011), because it did not nearly cover those costs or increase child care supply (Bezanson, 2010; Findlay, 2015). Rather, the UCCB's purpose was to privilege a certain family form and acted as a neoconservative policy instrument that benefitted affluent and traditional families at enormous costs for the public. In doing so, Prime Minister Harper continued to rebuff public child care expansion for the child care sector, while exacerbating differences between families, disadvantaging low-income and impoverished families who are more likely to be racialized.

In 2007, Harper's government continued to implement policies that disadvantaged low-income families by introducing a non-refundable child tax credit, which was a policy tool also used by Prime Minister Mulroney in place of direct support for child care. The child tax credit

provided federal income tax savings of up to $300 per child under 18. The tax benefit was granted to all except the poorest families who would have been disproportionately likely to be racialized and who did not earn enough to receive the savings (Bezanson, 2010, p. 100).

In this way, Prime Minister Harper used federal funding to facilitate a further regression from supporting universal child care access by slightly subsidizing the costs of child care for deserving families with demonstrable labor market attachment via the tax system instead of directly funding non-profit and public child care. This did nothing to solve the problem of child care's affordability, accessibility, or quality, and demonstrated another case of the federal government limiting child care expansion provincially by redirecting federal efforts and funding towards neoliberal policy measures.

6.2 2003-2013: McGuinty Supports Child Development with Full-Day Kindergarten

As Prime Minister Harper doggedly pursued neoliberal reform at the federal level, Ontarians elected Liberal Premier, Dalton McGuinty, who won with 46.4 percent of the popular vote and a majority government in 2003. Premier McGuinty positioned himself as a moderate, proposing to prioritize public sector healthcare and education, environmental protection, and a tax freeze. Recall that this "Third Way" politic was also promulgated by Prime Minister Chretien who paired modest welfare expansion with managing the deficit via a social investment approach.

In his first few years in office, Premier McGuinty practiced this moderate politic by committing to reduce the $5.6 billion deficit inherited from Premier Harris' government while making modest investments in health and elder care, education, municipal transfers, and social assistance. Yet Premier McGuinty failed to fully repair the cuts made by Premier Harris, demonstrating his government's commitment to fiscal austerity at the expense of needed welfare

reform. His government also privatized services formerly covered under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, including eye examinations and physical rehabilitation, and imposed health premiums ranging from $60 to $900 per year (Fanelli & Thomas, 2011).

After Prime Minister Harper cancelled former Prime Minister Martin's national child care system in 2006, he committed to giving the provinces and territories one year of federal funding as originally promised as part of the program. Continuing to practice his moderate approach to social spending, Premier McGuinty took this last federal payment and split it into four to fund the next four years. After this period, the provincial government committed to another year of bridge funding, amounting to $18 million, but refrained from promising additional funding over the long-term (Cheryl Davis, Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, 2021; Friendly, 2006).

In 2010, when bridge funding was scheduled to end, McGuinty's government decided to make up the $63.5 million shortfall permanently. This was done after an appeal from the OCBCC which warned that 7,600 low-income families would lose access to child care ; 1,862 workers would lose their jobs in the early learning and child care sector; and $148 million would be lost for Ontario's economy if the provincial government refused to permanently provide the funding (Calver, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, February 3, 2010;Department of Finance, 2010).

Prime Minister Harper's relentless pursuit of neoliberal reform meant that any new public child care expansion would have to be fully funded by the province. Recognizing that child care provisioning is dependent on funding contributions from both the federal and provincial governments (Cameron, 2009; Cammisuli, 2021), federal austerity under Harper presented

difficulties for activists seeking to convince the provincial government to expand child care provisioning without federal financial support.

In 2007, Premier McGuinty announced that if he was re-elected that year, he would establish full-day kindergarten (FDELK) for four- and five-year-olds. This was one part of the comprehensive early learning and childhood system that was called for in Dr. Charles Pascal's 2009 report, *With Our Best Future in Mind*. As part of a comprehensive early child care system, Pascal envisioned early childhood educators working as a team with certified teachers to provide high-quality education for young children.

According to Premier McGuinty, the impetus for FDELK was to support later student outcomes, including increasing students' chances of completing university or other forms of post-secondary education and attaining a good job (CBC News, 2010, December 15). The government's intensified focus on educational outcomes reflected new information coming out of Ontario schools that test scores and graduation rates were falling, boys were struggling in literacy, and girls were opting out of math and science classes. With up to a third of Grade 1 students beginning primary school so far behind they never caught up in reading, writing, and number knowledge skills, expanding household's access to kindergarten promised to be one avenue the government could use to set students up for later success. Successful students eventually became the high-skilled workers Ontario needed in a more knowledge-based economy (McCuaig, 2019).

In this context, Premier McGuinty used a child development discourse to justify FDELK. This discourse characterizes child care as a worthwhile investment that will produce future high-return workers (Coulter, 2009, p. 195). The 1999 report *Early Years Study: Reversing the Brain Drain* by Fraser Mustard and Margaret McCain, commissioned by the Ontario Government,

contributed critically to the child development discourse and its public dissemination. The report discussed the beneficial impact child care had on children's emotional, behavioral, and cognitive abilities and subsequently on their educational trajectories. The conclusions effectively reframed child care as a form of early childhood education rather than merely as a place children went while their parents worked (Mustard & McCain, 1999).

The Report also connected improved educational outcomes for children with future benefits to the economy, positioning child care a means to improve children's human capital. This was directly mentioned in the report's conclusions:

> A key strategy for improving the capabilities for innovation of the next generation of citizens is to make early child development a priority of the public and private sectors of society... Since a competent population that can cope with the socioeconomic change is crucial for future economic growth, the subject of early child development must be a high priority for a society and its governments (McCain & Mustard, 1999).

As Ontario entered a recession in 2008, McGuinty had good reason to consider what type of skilled workforce would be needed to support economic growth. The Canadian economy was heavily invested in economic sectors liable to be disrupted or replaced, including oil, gas, and heavy manufacturing (MacArthur, 2020; Olawuyi & Pereira, 2022). This concern was reflected in the provincial government's 2010 budget speech stating the government's focus on preparing workers for jobs in the new economy, including jobs in technology. Education was underscored as essential for producing the workers of tomorrow, with the speech noting that "Ontarians are some of the most highly skilled and educated workers in the world. This is our great competitive advantage" (Duncan, 2010).

Notably, as McGuinty's government focused on promoting FDELK, with the support of the child development discourse, as necessary to a strong competitive provincial economy, it tended to avoid directly discussing the implications of FDELK for gender equity. Some of this may have to do with the diminishment of feminist movements and advocacy groups and the attacks on feminist and women's groups by Prime Ministers Mulroney and Harper that delegitimized gender equity and feminism in political discourse. Linda Smith, who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, reflected how these ant-feminist attacks shaped the public discussion around child care, leading to the introduction of the child development discourse:

> What drove the discussion from the late 70s to 2000 was mothers need child care. I'm simplifying it but that was the driver. I mean, there are other things. It was good for anti-poverty, it was good for cultural identity, you know, all that kind of stuff, but the main driver was women need child care. There was also a feminist movement at that time, which was quite strong, and people listened to feminists and then feminism became a dirty word. So, then we come to 2000, and the dialogue changed to focus on [child] development (Smith, 2021).

Although the government used the child development discourse to justify the expansion of public child care, this approach also perpetuated the harmful ideology that care is primarily useful because it makes children into higher value workers who can support economic growth. Education concerns are narrowly focused on improving the mind, rather than the child's body and emotions, including, for instance, learning empathy (Langord et al. 2017). Care for the narrow purpose of future economic productivity can be contrasted unfavorably with care

supported for more humanistic reasons, including developing inquiring minds who can learn for learnings own sake.

Linda Smith (2021), who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, remembers that because of its economistic connotations, many in the child care movement rejected the child development model, refusing to reduce children to "widgets in a system". Despite this aversion, the OCBCC pragmatically adopted elements of this discourse when speaking directly to government when advocating for additional financial support for the child care sector. The then-OCBCC, executive director, Andrea Calver, to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, for example, strategically adopted this new discourse to advocate for child care:

> Early learning and child care is a vital service. Research has shown us that the early years are critical for brain development, as well as social and emotional development of children; early learning and child care is vital for families who depend on these programs in order to go to work or go to school; and early learning and child care is also fundamental for our communities and our economy (Calver, 2011, January 31).

In this case, Calver paired a child development discourse with a focus on supporting working families contributing to the economy to call for an additional $300 million over two years to support the child care sector.

But the child development discourse is race-blind and risked categorizing racialized children as deficient or "at risk" if they do not model academic performance according to a white Eurocentric standard (Pérez, 2019). For example, by focusing on improving the performance of "at-risk" children's language, the education system undervalues how such students may engage

in learning using more “informal”, non-conventional, and “non-native like” language. The “risk” label and the increased focus on helping students “catch up” can also be used as a rationale to relegate students to special programs not subject to more rigorous academic practices, and ironically removes students from the opportunity to meet the academic standards they are deemed to be falling short of (Wang et al., 2021). In this way, supporting the development of “at risk” students through FDELK linked the demographic qualities of children and their families to their perceived oral and written language deficits producing race-blind racist outcomes (Dyson, 2015).

By focusing on the child as the site of intervention, the child development discourse also obscures the family as a unit in which the child is situated. Impoverished parents, who are disproportionately racialized, often cannot properly support the growth and development of children. Yet families are not discursively framed as sites of support (e.g., income support), just the child is. Consequently, FDELK’s ability to improve children’s development outcomes will always be limited if impoverished families’ social reproduction needs are also not met.

Despite Premier McGuinty’s modest investments in social assistance, he failed to repair the cuts originally made by Premier Harris to the program. In 2010, his government also removed the special diet food subsidy for those on social assistance, exacerbating households’ ability to properly care for children with special dietary requirements (Fanelli & Thomas, 2011). This means that as McGuinty reformed welfare expansion, low-income households on social assistance were increasingly unable to fully support their children’s development because of impoverishment, despite child development being a primary focus on McGuinty’s government.

The state could then use this context to justify intervening into these households, such as when signs of child “neglect” are identified by a care provider. This intervention is often violent

and disciplinary, especially for Indigenous and racialized families. This further demonstrates how modest welfare reform that prioritizes economic growth under "Third Way" governments, like McGuinty's, have race-blind racist outcomes for marginalized households (Blackstock, Bamblett, & Black, 2020; Cénat et al., 2021; King et al., 2017).

6.2.1 2010-2011: Fighting for School Boards to Take on Extended Day Care

In 2010, Premier McGuinty created another measure in support of Dr. Charle Pascal's Report, which argued for a "seamless" early learning transition between during and extended day care. McGuinty's government introduced schedule 10 in Bill 173 of the Education Act in 2010 that allowed school boards to contract with third parties to run extended-day programs as part of Ontario's new early learning program.

In an about-face from its position against educational integration in the 1980s, the OCBCC opposed contracting extended day care out to third parties and instead demanded that Premier McGuinty mandate school boards provide this care directly. Here, Andrea Calver, then OCBCC Executive Director, speaks to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs about the need to avoid further burdening the child care system with extended day care in support of building a universal child care system:

> In addition, by allowing school boards to have third party operators for the extended day program, we believe the Ontario government is shifting responsibility for the extended day on to Ontario's underfunded and poorly supported patchwork of early learning and child care programs. The move away from the school boards delivering extended day care is a move away from a publicly operated and universal system. As a result of chronic underfunding, Ontario only has enough licensed child care spaces to serve 20 percent of

children, and child care operators will not be able to operate universal programs (Calver, 2011, April 21).

In this submission, Calver notes the problems of supply and accessibility in the child care sector, emphasizing that relying on an already strained sector to provide extended day care would only exacerbate households' already limited access to child care. Here, we see a shift from the OCBCC's focus on the immediate short-term financial needs of non-profit operators in the 1980s to refocusing on building a universal and accessible child care system for all families – the OCBCC's primary objective since 1981.

The coalition remained cognizant of non-profit operators' financial difficulties though. To support non-profits, Calver suggested that the provincial government reinvest the $119 million it would save in wage subsidy funds if school boards took on extended day care back into child care. She also demanded that the government provide more capital funding to child care centers so that they could adapt to serving a younger, and more expensive, age group and a further $300 million over two years to lower parents' fees and raise the wages of child care staff through direct grants (Calver, Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, January 31, 2011; Calver, Standing Committee on Social Policy, March 23, 2010). Without additional financial support, non-profit programs faced the real possibility of foreclosure as the effects of FDELK would increase vacancies at centers and increase costs to centers and parents (Cheryl Davis, Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, 2021).

It is not clear why the OCBCC chose to advocate that school boards provide extended day care, reversing its position from the 1980s. One possible reason may be because child care was transferred from the Ministry of children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education in 2010, in support of the government's focus on child development. The newly established Early

Years Division in the Ministry of Education developed pedagogical supports for RECEs to work within a framework intended to merge the approaches and philosophy of early childhood education with the kindergarten program (Ministry of Education, 2021). As the ministry worked to create a unifying pedagogical framework across early learning settings that focused on play-based inquiry and self-directed learning, arguments against educational integration based on "schoolification" grounds also became outdated.

In 2010, as they did in the 1980s, CUPE and the OFL both demanded that the provincial government compel school boards to directly provide extended day care. They also requested concrete timelines establishing when extended day care would be available. An excerpt from the submission to Queen's Park by CUPE President, Fred Hahn, reads:

> There has to be a clear timetable for offering this extended day to all children … we believe strongly, based on Pascal's recommendations, that all of these programs must be provided by staff employed directly by school boards (Hahn, Standing Committee on Social Policy, March 23, 2010).

In a similar vein, Carrol Anne Sceviour, representing the OFL, advised the government that schools should not be given the ability to opt out of providing extended day care by contracting out services to a third party, including to non-profit operators. "If you contract out to a third party, what you would impinge on is that need for children to have a greater sense of security, belonging and a place. It is that sense that both children and parents need (Sceviour, Standing Committee on Social Policy, March 29, 2010). Notably, this sense of belonging is more likely to be experienced by white children of middle-class families than for other children because of racism present in the school system (Carr, 2008; Galabuzi, 2014; James, 2021).

Andrew Garret (2021), a child care researcher, noted that as CUPE and the OFL spoke to government to make necessary legislative changes, CUPE also worked to convince individual schoolboards to take on extended day care outside of a provincial mandate. In doing so, unions supported better working conditions for child care workers as a highly feminized and racially diverse profession. These workers could work directly for the schoolboard providing extended day care working a full day (either 7am – 3pm or 10am – 6pm) with a guaranteed pension and benefits for higher wages, rather than for non-profit contractors where they would have to work split shifts (7:00 – 9:00am and 2:30 – 6:00pm) for lower total compensation.

Not all members of the OCBCC were in favor of school boards providing extended day care though. The teachers' unions that occupied positions on the OCBCC's executive board and membership council, and which were in favor of educational integration in the 1980s, were now threatened by potential RECE encroachment into their members' sphere of professional practice. They opposed further educational integration on the grounds of wanting to protect teachers' authority in the classroom and protect higher paid teachers from being displaced by lower paid RECEs (Mary Anderson, CUPE Executive for a child care local in the 1990s and 2010s, 2021). Recognizing that RECEs, who had recently become a regulated profession in 2007, are trained to teach children up to the age of 12, teachers' unions may have feared that McGuinty's "Third Way" government would be tempted to use lower-cost RECEs to reduce education spending without disrupting service provision. Hence, teachers' unions shift in position around educational integration may have reflected how the threat of neoliberalism and Premier McGuinty's reference to reducing the deficit influenced these unions' opposition towards school boards directly providing extended day care.

Despite the OCBCC's, CUPE's, and the OFL's strong position in favor of further educational integration, the McGuinty government continued to allow for extended day care to be contracted out to third parties. Premier McGuinty may have wanted to avoid spending more on RECE wages and compensation since such workers would now be represented by the Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU) once they were employed by the schoolboard.

The decision to allow the contracting out of extended day care had significant consequences for RECEs working for third party contractors, as noted by Linda Smith, who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's:

> The [non-profit] child care operators couldn't attract any staff to work those programs because who in their right mind wants to work from 7:00 till 9:00 in the morning and then come back and work from 3:30 to 6:00pm? Those were the jobs that were being offered. And then they're looking at their ECE counterparts working in the kindergarten classrooms that are working a nine to three job, making twice as much money as them. They have benefits, they have a pension plan. They've got a real job as opposed to these poor sops. It was a real loss - that was back in 2010 when that happened (Smith, 2021).

Gary Williams (2021), a CUPE Executive member, similarly notes that RECEs working for non-profits were and are faced with the possibility of a small or no pension, no WSIB coverage, and lower wages compared to their peers working within the school system. In 2010, RECEs employed with the schoolboard were paid almost $10/hour more[22] and they had a pension and automatic WSIB coverage.

[22] Although this gap has narrowed in recent years. As of 2023, RECEs were paid $25.50 in non-profit licensed centers vs. $28 in FDELK (Akbari, et al., 2024).

Premier McGuinty remained firm in contracting out extended day care to third parties. At the same time, he hesitated to allocate enough money to fully fund FDELK. Premier McGuinty himself stated that the $200 million set aside for the 2010-2011 period and the $300 million for the following year was not enough to fund a fully phased FDELK program across the province (Cheryl Davis, Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, 2021 and see Mahoney, 2007, November 28). Loosening government purse strings for FDELK was in tension with Premier McGuinty's commitment to reducing Ontario's deficit by $1.78 billion annually. He maintained this commitment while reducing Ontario's general corporate income tax rate from 14 percent to 11.5 percent, which cost Ontario $1.6 billion in revenue (Eisen, B., 2019; Eisen & Lafleur, 2019; Hahn, 2013).

But this fiscal frugality did not last and by the 2011 election, a campaigning Premier McGuinty promised voters that he was committed to making FDELK available in all schools by 2015. His opponent, Conservative leader, Tim Hudak, called the $1.5 billion program "too expensive as designed [and he wanted] to give parents the choice of full-day or half-day classes" (Ferguson & Talaga, 2010, September 7). There is no evidence of the OCBCC campaigning in support of Premier McGuinty over Conservative party leader, Tim Hudak, for the 2011 provincial election to try and preserve FDELK. This can be contrasted with their efforts to support Prime Minister, Paul Martin, over the then Conservative party leader, Stephen Harper, during the 2006 federal election.

After winning the 2011 election with a minority government, Premier McGuinty followed through with his promise. By 2012, 900 more Ontario schools offered full-day kindergarten, and almost half of the province's four- and five-year-olds (120,000) were in school full-time (The Canadian Press, 2011, March 2).

Although primarily intended to support children's development, FDELK also supported the social reproduction of Ontario households who were now able to access child care as a public good and citizenship right without paying a fee. As a result, FDELK had some limited effect on women's labor force participation rates for specific subgroups. Mothers of one child were about eight percent more likely to work full-time and mothers with low education worked on average 2.3 hours more per week. These limited effects point to ongoing constraints on mothers' ability to work, including monetary and time barriers, and the limited availability of affordable and accessible child care during after school hours, indicating that universal extended day care should be provided in support of gender equity (Dhuey, Lamontagne & Zhang, 2021).

6.3 2014-2015: #votechildcare 2015

With this provincial success in view and with Prime Minister Martin's failed national child care system still in recent memory, the OCBCC, CUPE, the Canadian Labor Congress, the Canadian Child Care Federation, the Child Care Advocacy Association, and the Child Care Research and Resource Unit organized a national conference called *Child Care 2020: From Vision to Action in 2014*. This conference was supposed to create consensus and momentum around a national child care plan preceding the 2015 federal election. CUPE took on the responsibility of acting as the primary organizer and funder of the conference. The hope was to shift from the era of Prime Minister Harper, who was hostile to public child care, with a new government more favorable to a national child care program.

Cheryl Davis (2021), Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, reflected that "we had $50,000 in the bank, and we decided, we're just going to blow it all, we're just going to do whatever it takes. If it takes all $50,000, we're going to do it". The money was used to fund 650 delegates and expand the scope of the conference by prioritizing the representation of

marginalized communities, including Indigenous groups, such as the BC Aboriginal child care Society and the Center for Aboriginal Human Resource Development, and organizations for disabled children, including SpeciaLink and the National Center for Child Care Inclusion. According to Davis:

> We made a real effort to include Indigenous organizations and child care advocates within Indigenous communities. We had specific sessions on Indigenous early learning and child care and we also really wanted to make sure that when we spoke about the inclusion of children with special needs, which is always going to be a big issue for the child care movement. We also had to really think hard about how to address the particular needs of racialized communities and communities with different languages and cultures. How do we make sure it's a culturally safe system? So these were some new elements for debate and on the agenda in 2014, and we came out of that conference much stronger (Davis, 2021).

As Davis mentioned, the conference did offer one optional mini plenary on Indigeneity and the importance of Indigenous self-determination in child care provisioning (e.g., 'How will the child care needs of Indigenous communities be met?') amongst 13 other options. That stated, the agenda did not include any primary sessions explicitly dedicated to race or Indigeneity, and there were no sessions devoted to child care provisioning for racialized families (Child Care 2020 from Vision to Action, 2020).

Inclusion was also centered in the OCBCC's discussion paper on the conference, titled *Child Care in Canada by 2020: A Vision and a Way Forward*. Notably, the OCBCC shifted how it advocated for universalism, de centering whiteness to underscore the need for equitable child

care access. Here is an excerpt from the document that explains how families' access to child care can differ based on income, ability, migration status etc.:

> Since well-designed high quality [Early childhood and Education] programs benefit all children and families as well as enabling specific groups (women, low-income families, children with disabilities, newcomers to Canada), they should be accessible for all children regardless of their ability, economic, cultural or linguistic circumstances, where they live in Canada or whether their parents are in or out of the workforce, studying or working non-standard hours... [Early childhood and Education] should be available at affordable fees or no fee (like kindergarten)... there may be special measures to eliminate financial barriers for vulnerable children and families (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, 2020).

The following excerpt also demonstrates how the OCBCC shifted how it discussed issues around race. In contrast to 1987 when the OCBCC neglected to consider how race and class intersected to impact racialized households' access to child care, the coalition was now considering accessibility and affordability as an intersectional issue.

The OCBCC discussion paper briefly mentions that in considering a high-quality child care system, "frameworks and programs should also incorporate human rights considerations such as full inclusion of children with disabilities and respect for diversity". "Development of the policy framework will require commitment from federal leadership—Canada's "glue" —but must also be developed in collaboration with provinces, territories, and Indigenous communities" (p. 13). While not explicit in discussing the problems of racism in child care settings, the document references the importance of adopting a collaborative approach with Indigenous

communities in the development of a national child care system to avoid adopting a "one size fits all" system (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, 2020).

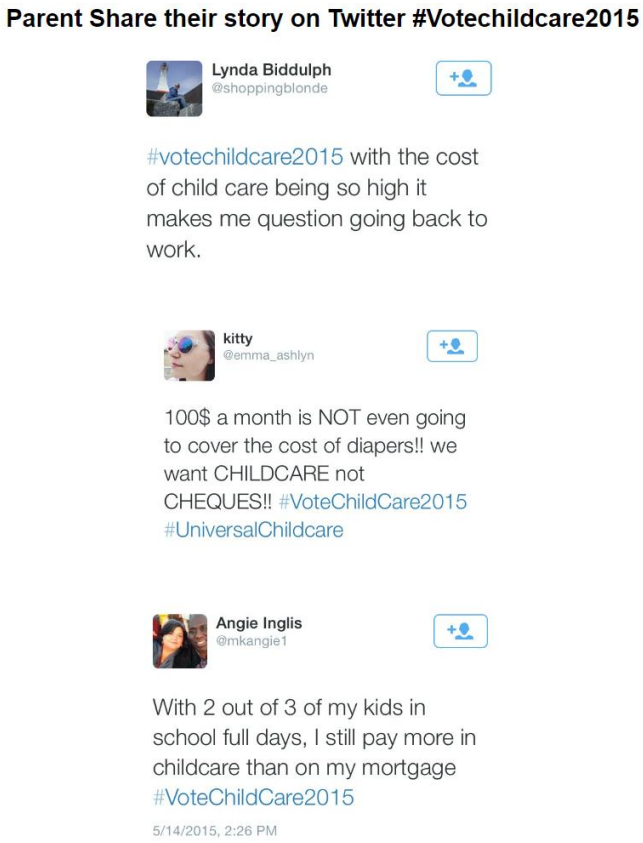
Although Indigeneity had become a more prominent focus in the OCBCC during this period, is not clear whether Indigenous organizations were more involved with the OCBCC. I could not find records of the organizations that sat on the OCCB's membership council and executive committee during this time. The membership records I had access to suggest that Indigenous and anti-racist organizations were not formally involved in the OCBCC upon its founding and in 2022. This suggests that if and when they did participate in the OCBCC, it may have been in a more informal or consultative capacity.

The OCBCC's increasing focus on intersectionality and the child care system may be a consequence of anti-racist and Indigenous activism occurring across Canada and in the U.S. during this period. This notably included the #blacklivesmatter protests that began in earnest after the killing of Trayvon Martin in the U.S. by George Zimmerman in 2012, and the #idlenomore movement that began around the same time and advocated for Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous rights in Canada.

On the heels of the conference after having successfully galvanized support for a national child care system amongst a wide range of organizations, the OCBCC attempted to raise the profile of child care with the public preceding the 2015 federal election. In social media, the OCBCC started the twitter hashtag campaign "#votechildcare 2015" that encouraged parents to share their stories on Twitter [now "X"] of why child care mattered to them and the difference a national system could make for their families. Campaign messaging focused on issues of affordability to underscore how ineffective Prime Minister Harper's $100 UCCB was in

facilitating parents' access to child care and in more generally supporting households' social reproduction needs.

Figure 6.1 #votechildcare 2015, tweets



Source: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, n.d.e).

Caption: To raise the profile of child care during the 2015 federal election, the OCBCC created the twitter hashtag campaign #votechildcare 2015.

The campaign was a success. In May 2015, the #votechildcare 2015 hashtag began trending on Twitter, reflecting a high level of public engagement with the campaign. In October 2015, five months after the campaign began, the federal NDP leader, Thomas Mulcair, announced his party's eight-year plan to create 1 million child care spaces in the country that

cost no more than $15-a-day. Then, a week later, Harper's government announced a beefed-up UCCB of $160 a month for every child under the age of six and $60 a month for children under the age of eighteen (Monsebraaten, 2014, Dec 28). Perhaps trying to strike a middle ground, the Liberals promised to scrap the UCCB and other family benefits, replacing them with a higher value Canada Child Tax Benefit for households earning less than $150,000, flexible parental leave, and a National Learning and Child Care Framework ('Election issues 2015: A Maclean's primer on child care', 2015, September 10).

From an equity perspective, the NDP's proposal would have best served lower income households by building one million regulated spaces set at a rate that would be more affordable to working-class families. Although $15-per-day is still too high a fee for many impoverished families and one million spaces was unlikely to fully meet demand for child care across Canada. This contrasts with the Conservative's proposal that would have provided additional limited benefit to all households, irrespective of need, and without a plan to support the expansion of regulated child care across the country. While the Liberal's plan to scrap the UCCB and replace it with a tax benefit redistributed funds away from the highest earners, tax benefits are not of benefit to the most impoverished and the party did not have a plan for expanding child care or making it more affordable.

In response to these campaign promises, OCBCC executive director, Carolyn Ferns wrote an op-ed for the Globe and Mail criticizing Prime Minister Harper's program as radically inadequate to meeting the needs of most parents of young children:

> I agree there are 'deep differences in philosophy on display this week' with the NDP's national child-care plan contrasting with Stephen Harper's tax cuts-and cheques approach. But to suggest that both Thomas Mulcair and Mr. Harper 'offer

> real options on daycare' is hogwash. The NDP plan aims to build a million affordable child-care spaces. Mr. Harper gives parents $100 - which neither makes a dent in child-care fees nor gives parents spaces to access. Yes, both Mr. Mulcair and Mr. Harper are options, but only one has a child-care plan (Ferns, 2014, Oct 17).

As the election campaigns continued, the OCBCC organized public actions involving parents to bring attention to the issue of child care. This included "spring into action for child care" picnics during the month of May 2015, including a picnic at Toronto's Trinity Bellwoods Park. Other groups and individuals unaffiliated with the OCBCC also campaigned for child care, including in Ottawa where an unidentified group staged a "pop-up playgroup", and in Toronto where a parent hosted a community event called *Affordable Child Care: Why Wait*? for parents to share their experiences and discuss how they want Ottawa to help (Monsebraaten, 2015, May 07).

Unfortunately for the child care movement, the NDP candidate Mulcair, an early frontrunner, lost the 2015 election to Liberal Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau. It seems that Mulcair's attempt to cast the NDP as moderates by promising not to raise income taxes on the wealthy failed to win voters' trust (The Canadian Press, 2013, October 6). Mulcair's pandering to the wealthy was an attempt to "modernize" the NDP, bringing the party closer to the center. This was preceded by the party voting to remove references to "socialism" from its constitution in 2013, demonstrating how capitalist ideology (e.g., "there is no alternative") and neoliberal discourse had infiltrated the party and its members, shaping NDP policy and practice (Payton, 2013, April 14).

As the *ABC* campaign (*Anybody but Conservative*) rallied the electorate towards the "winning" candidate, then Liberal candidate Trudeau successfully challenged Prime Minister Harper's charge that he's "just not ready". This pushed the Liberals into first place with 39 percent of the popular vote; they won a majority or the parliamentary seat and the NDP was relegated to third place with just less than 20 percent of the vote. Perhaps voters thought that if presented with the choice of two centrist parties and one right of center party, it would be wise to select the centrist party that had a longer track record of governing the country.

Although child care was not central to Prime Minister Trudeau's platform, the popularity of the child care question during the federal election forced the Liberals to make certain commitments during the election campaign. This included a national child care framework that set "high-level goals around affordability, quality and accessibility for families that wanted to use the service" , while lacking details on timelines or concrete objectives. Compared to the one million affordable child care spaces Mulcair had proposed, this was clearly a loss for the child care movement. At the time, Prime Minister Trudeau dismissed the idea of a national child care system, calling it a one-size-fits-all system that would be "impractical and unfair", stating that the federal government should not tell the provinces how they should deliver welfare services to citizens ('Trudeau says up to provinces to lead on future child-care programs', 2019, September 5). Trudeau's unwillingness to practice a more centralized federalism potentially reflected his hesitancy to exert more control over provinces after Prime Minister Chretien gave the provinces and territories more freedom to spend federal funds without conditions after he replaced CAP with the CHST in 1995.

6.4 Summary

The 2003 – 2018 period was characterized by history-making wins and losses for the OCBCC, beginning with the introduction of Liberal Prime Minister Martin's national child care system in 2005, its cancellation by Conservative Prime Minister Harper in 2006, and Liberal Premier McGuinty's introduction of full-day kindergarten in Ontario in 2010. Harper justified his cancellation of Martin's national child care plan and its replacement with an insufficient and unfair universal child benefit using the same well-worn neoconservative discourses used by Mulroney and Harris that centered the protection of the traditional nuclear family. At the provincial level not long after, Premier McGuinty, established full-day kindergarten and extended day care in schools in pursuit of supporting the development of children as future workers, reflecting McGuinty's "Third Way" politic of pairing moderate welfare expansion while continuing to prioritize deficit management and economic growth. The OCBCC supported such reform while lobbying government to force school boards to directly take on extended day care to improve conditions of care for children and work for RECEs. Although a catastrophic loss for the child care movement at the time, the legacy of Martin's failed national child care program provided the impetus for the OCBCC and CUPE to try and create consensus amongst advocates and the public around a renewed vision for a national child care system before the 2015 federal election that ended with the election of Liberal Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, who dismissed a national child care system as impractical and unfair.

Chapter Seven: Fighting for $10-a-Day Child Care (2018-2023)

Chapter seven covers the period from 2018 – 2022, covering the terms of Liberal Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau (2018 – 2022), and Conservative Premier, Doug Ford (2018 – 2022). In this chapter, I consider the OCBCC's objectives and strategies in response to Premier Ford's deployment of neoliberal policy to deregulate, defund, and marketize the child care sector, and Prime Minister Trudeau's announcement that his government would work with the provinces and territories to establish of $10-per-day child care across the country. I consider the OCBCC's campaign strategy during this period, noting when the OCBCC and its union affiliates shirked from supporting disruptive action and how the coalition continued to downplay references to gender equity to work across party lines. I also explore what consequences Ford's neoliberal reform, and the promise of a national child care system had for child care workers and racialized households.

7.1 2018-2023: Ford Makes Ontario Open for Commercial Child Care Expansion

The momentum created around child care during the 2015 federal election may have pushed former Liberal Premier, Kathleen Wynne, to release a visionary statement promising to provide free child care for children two and half years and up. "Never mind that everybody knew that she was going to be wasted in the election, but for a governing party to put out that kind of visionary proposal, it was incredibly important. It shows how the public understanding of child care has changed" (Linda Smith, who is a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, 2021).

Beyond trying to tempt the electorate with free child care to avoid a devastating loss at the polls, the Liberals' political will for significant child care expansion points to the party's ongoing commitment to using a "Third Way" politic. This included pairing targeted welfare

expansion alongside ongoing neoliberal reform, including selling off 60 percent of the publicly owned utility company Hydro One (Salutin, 2018, March 6) and, like Premier McGuinty, maintaining Harris-era cuts to social services. In 2016, Wynne's government proudly touted that "Ontario was the leanest government in Canada, with the lowest per capita program spending of any province … and is projected to remain so" (Albo, 2018; Ontario Ministry of Finance 2016, 174).

Unfortunately, if predictably in the view of Linda Smith, a child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, Premier Wynne lost the 2018 provincial election. She was replaced by Conservative Premier, Doug Ford, who sailed to victory – albeit with just over 40 percent of the popular vote -- using a folksy populism, claiming he would represent the interests of "the people" and clean up government corruption. Ford's populist appeal capitalized on the public's distrust of the Liberal party which was perceived as elitist and corrupt; a perspective that was further solidified after Premier McGuinty cancelled two power plants in Mississauga and Oakville at huge public expense and after Premier Wynne partially privatized Hydro One.

Premier Ford paired right-wing populism with a standard neoliberal agenda, including austerity, deregulation, and marketization. Upon his election, Ford declared he was making "Ontario open for business" while "respecting taxpayers" by creating opportunities for the commercial sector and reducing welfare spending (Budd, 2020). These neoliberal inflected discourses implied a direct connection between policies that favor minimal government intervention and personal economic wellbeing. Supposedly, such policies will create jobs (with no concern for their social usefulness, workplace quality, or pay) and therefore be good for "the

people". The reality of such "open for business" regulatory frameworks is very different (Winfield & Hillson, 2022, May 24).

As part of Premier Ford's efforts to create more opportunities for the commercial sector, he relaxed child care regulations for unlicensed home-based child care via Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act* in 2018. The aim was to make unlicensed home-based care a more "viable" business model. The Bill increased the ratio of very young children to carers, allowing up to three children under the age of two in an unlicensed in-home day care, up from the previous maximum of two young children per carer. Child care providers could also exclude their own children from the total count of children beginning at the age of four instead of dix years (Jeffords, 2018, December 7).

Much like Premier Harris and Prime Minister Mulroney, Ford's government also eliminated opportunities for advocates to engage with government to express concern about the Bill. In 2018, Premier Ford disbanded the previous Liberal government's Minister's Advisory Committee on Early Learning and child care, which the OCBCC had participated on as a committee member (Friendly, 2019a). After Premier Ford dismantled the Ministry's Advisory Committee, he replaced it with a sectoral advisory group that excluded trade unions and child care advocacy organizations, including the OCBCC, the AECEO (Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario), the Atkinson Center[23], and the CRRU (Child Care Resource and Research Unit).

Melanie Scott (2021), a CUPE union executive, noted that the Ford government, "does not want to engage with us. During this period, the OCBCC has had to content itself with

[23] Established in 2000, the Atkinson Center for Society and child Development mobilizes research to strengthen the quality of early childhood practice and inform public policy and discourse. The Center is in partnership with George Brown College's School of Early childhood, and together, they provide training in policy research to undergraduate and graduate students.

receiving information from non-profit operators who were invited to participate in this new sectoral advisory group, including news of negotiations between the federal government and Ontario over establishing $10-a-day child care" (Scott, 2021).

With more limited opportunities for engagement, the OCBCC and CUPE spoke directly to Queen's Park. The OCBCC made a formal submission to the Standing Committee on General Government advising against the implementation of Bill 66, arguing that the Bill would put "young children's health, safety, and well-being at risk" by lowering program standards (Richardson, 2019, March 18). CUPE also made formal submissions to the Standing Committee on General Government, using forceful language to remind MPPs of the deaths of children in unlicensed home care over a seven-month period in 2013-2014:

> Eva Ravikovich, two years old; Allison Tucker, two years old; Aspen Juliet Moore, nine months old; an unidentified four-month old baby—I want the committee to remember those very young Ontarians and have those memories guide your actions...I hope that your actions on Bill 66 don't add to this list, but I'm not optimistic since schedule three will allow an increase in the number of children one person can supervise in unlicensed care. It also reduces the age in which the caregiver's own children no longer count towards the ratio. Changing child care ratios for the worse will, quite simply, endanger our children and should not be part of this omnibus legislation (Hartvisken, 2019, March 18).

Beyond wanting to make unlicensed child care into a more profitable business model, the Ford government's willingness to further degrade standards in unlicensed child care also reflected its unwillingness to reduce quality disparities between licensed and unlicensed settings. The only rule unlicensed care providers must abide by is limits to the number of children they

can care for. In contrast, licensed child care providers must follow rigorous health, safety, and programming standards and are inspected on an annual basis. Unfortunately, Bill 66 passed without amending the child care to carer ratios as demanded by child care advocates to ensure children's safety. We do not know if Bill 66 resulted in more children's deaths in unlicensed care because coroners in Ontario do not note the context when deaths occur in unlicensed child care settings (Monsebraaten, 2014, February 28).

By further lowering standards in unlicensed child care, Ford's government was disproportionately putting the children of racialized households at risk. Licensed care is more readily available in high income neighborhoods, and there tends to be a deficit of spaces in lower-income, racialized communities throughout the middle and peripheral suburbs in Toronto. As a result, racialized households are more likely to rely on unlicensed child care because they tend to live in child care deserts where there are not enough licensed and affordable child care providers (Macdonald, 2018; Hulchanski, 2010).

Ford also planned to eliminate a $50-million stabilization support fund used to provide a $2 wage enhancement for the 25 percent of the child care workforce who earned minimum wage, further exacerbating the staff retention crisis child care centers were dealing with. The increasingly diversity amongst child care workers meant that the cancellation of wage supports to the sector was also an issue of racial equity. Notably, as of 2023, one-third of child care workers were immigrants or non-permanent residents compared to one-quarter of workers in all other occupations (Uppal & Savage, 2021). As of 2023 in Toronto, 41 percent of child care staff identified as racialized with 12 percent identifying as Black, 10 percent identifying as South Asian or Indo-Caribbean, nine percent identifying as Southeast Asian, and four percent identifying as First Nations, Inuit or Metis (Toronto Children's Services, March 2023).

Recognizing that racialized women are more likely to work without qualifications in child care centers, these women would have disproportionately benefitted from the wage supplement Premier Ford was proposing to cut.

Ford's government also planned to cut provincial child care funding to the municipalities who are tasked with administering low-income child care subsidies in the province. These cuts were projected to result in the cancellation of 6,166 subsidized child care spaces for low-income parents who, recall, are also disproportionately more likely to be racialized (Rider, 2019, May 2). Meanwhile, Ontarians, especially Torontonians, were already paying the highest child care fees in the country with the median cost of child care reaching $1,457 per month in Toronto for toddler spaces[24].

The OCBCC directly appealed to government to protect municipal child care funding, arguing for the continuation of the $2 wage enhancement grant for child care workers. The coalition emphasized that a hallmark of a universal and high-quality system necessitated decent work and pay for child care workers accompanied by low or no fees for parents (Ferns, 2020, January 17). In this way, the OCBCC continued to reference the desirability of providing child care as a high-quality public good rather than as a targeted welfare service for variable quality for low-income and impoverished households.

Ford's government significantly underestimated the actual value of the cuts to municipalities. This resulted in a public dispute with the City of Toronto, which calculated that the real value of the cuts would be $84 million to the city alone. This was significantly higher

[24] In comparison, median fees were $179/month in Montreal; $451/month in Winnipeg; $608/month in Charlottetown; $680/month in Regina; $726/month in St. Johns; $727/month in Fredericton; $829/month in Halifax; $850/month in Whitehorse; $917/month in Edmonton; $990/month in Yellowknife; $1,100/month in Calgary; $1213/month in Iqaluit; and $1112/month in Vancouver (MacDonald & Friendly, 2019).

than the $40 million in cuts Ford's government initially suggested would be eliminated for the entire province. In addition, the media reported another $93 million was going to be cut from capital funding which is used for center expansion and construction (Friendly, 2019). Outspoken criticism from Ontario's mayors, who characterized the cuts as "downloading by stealth", forced Ford's government to step back from eliminating the funding in May 2019 (Jones, 2019, May 27).

Although Premier Ford was forced to abandon this attempt to defund the municipalities, he remained committed to advancing neoliberal reform. In 2019, the Ford government announced that a tax credit, known as CARE (Child Care Access and Relief from Expenses), would be provided to eligible parents to give families the "right to choose" and receive modest support for fees associated with the child care of their preference. Families who received the credit could claim up to 75 percent of their eligible child care expenses for services provided by child care centers, homes (e.g., unlicensed care), and camps. Premier Ford, much like Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier Harris, deployed a "right to choose" discourse to justify why his government introduced a modest tax credit to partially subsidize all care, including marketized and unlicensed care, instead of building a public system.

Like all tax credits, the CARE credit disadvantaged low-income families who did not have flexibility in their incomes to spend on child care, and therefore, could not take full advantage of the tax credit. This contrasts with a higher income family who may not be reimbursed at the same rate as a low-income family but may receive more total money back because they have more total expenses to claim (Gong & Breunig, 2017; Friendly, 2019). For example, a household that makes less than $20,000 a year would receive a CARE credit calculated by multiplying its child care expense deduction by 75 percent. Compare this to a

household that makes between $60,000 and $150,000 a year and would receive a CARE rebate calculated by multiplying its child care expense deduction by 51 percent minus two percent per each additional $3,600 in income above $60,000. Although low-income households are reimbursed at a higher rate, they are unlikely to have higher child care expenses than middle- and higher-income households which can more easily afford to pay upfront for child care expenses and will receive a higher return as a result.

Tax credits also push low-income parents to rely on less-costly, low-quality, unlicensed care, since credits do nothing to rectify child care deserts in low-income racialized neighborhoods. This then encourages more low-quality operators to enter the market whose operations are partially subsidized by the government through the provision of the tax credit (Friendly, 2019).

The CARE credit was criticized by the OFL, which made a formal submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, reiterating the need for a truly public child care system, arguing that "tax credits do not build quality child care spaces, reduce waitlists or create decent work for all child care workers" (Buckley, 2019, May 8). Such criticisms went unanswered by the Ford government.

Nonetheless, while it is tempting to directly compare Premier Ford with Premier Harris, former OCBCC executive, Linda White, advised against conflating the two. While Premier Ford attempted to increase opportunities for commercial child care operators in the province and reduced safety standards in unlicensed care, he did not try to completely defund child care to transform it into a market commodity. White notes that "Ontario, even under Ford, spends a lot more on child care. It's like over $2 billion that is spending on child care right now. Ford is still forcing school boards to provide before and after school care if parents want it, it's still building

new child care in schools" (Linda Smith, child care researcher and served on the OCBCC's Executive in the 1990's, 2021).

7.2 2020 - 2023: Trudeau Builds Towards $10-Per-Day Child Care

As Premier Ford created new opportunities for commercial child care, during the 2020 speech from the throne Prime Minister Trudeau announced that his government would build a national child care system as part of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System. The federal government's Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework outlined the broad strokes of this plan, including prioritizing expanding child care 'primarily' through public and non-profit providers, growing a qualified early learning and child care workforce, and planned gradual fee reductions until child care reaches on average $10-per-day by 2025 (Platt, 2020, September 24).

Public support and political will for this history-making intervention was the consequence of decades of activism by the OCBCC and other child care. As a pandemic-induced "she-cession" drove women out of the workforce (Yalnizyan, 2022, March 1), the timing was just right for Prime Minister Trudeau's "feminist" minority government to deliver this unprecedented intervention into child care with the backing of the NDP.

7.2.1 2020-2023: Emphasizing the Economic Benefits of $10-Per-Day Child Care

Trudeau's government mixed feminist and neoliberal inflected discourses to justify building a national child care system. Prime Minister Trudeau referenced feminism, for instance, when he proclaimed that, "this crisis has created a "she-cession" and has threatened to roll back the hard-fought social and economic progress of all women."

But he also deployed neoliberal inflected discourses that emphasized the importance of a public child care system for short- and long-term economic growth. For example, Trudeau's

government characterized child care as a social investment that could support middle-class families and the economy in the Liberal's platform *Real Change: A New Plan for a Strong Middle Class* published in 2020, and in 2021, Trudeau stated that "access to affordable, quality child care will give our children a good start in life, help Canadians find and keep good jobs, and create a more resilient country and economy" ('Trudeau vows to tackle "she-cession" after new report says pandemic has been worse for working women', 2021, March 8). Trudeau's government may have mixed feminist and neoliberal inflected discourses to appeal to socially progressive sections of their base and Conservative provincial governments who still needed to be convinced to sign on to establishing the program at the provincial level. This notably includes Ontario Conservative Premier Doug Ford and Alberta United Conservative Premier, Jason Kenney.

Given that the Ford government was not at all committed to feminism but publicly committed to economic growth, the OCBCC pragmatically chose to emphasize the economic benefits of $10-per-day child care. For example, the OCBCC underscored how the program would increase tax revenues if more women joined the labor force. This was clear when OCBCC executive director, Carolyn Ferns, spoke to Queen's Park in 2020:

> The economic impacts of affordable child care really can't be overstated. I was talking to a mother the other day who was saying that child care should be seen along the same lines as transit or roads: 'It's my route to work.' That's what she said. 'I couldn't get to work if it wasn't for child care.' I think that's really important. The experience in Quebec has shown exactly that. By investing in child care, by making it affordable for families and truly expanding spaces to meet the need, the government has actually seen their revenues increase, simply

> because of the increased workforce participation of mothers. So it's really an economic win to invest in child care (Ferns, 2020, January 17).

Ferns also argued that child care was necessary to end the pandemic-induced "she-cession", emphasizing that "if we want the economy to come back, if we want to power the re-entrance of women to the workforce, we're going to need to have child care and we're going to need to address it" (Lieberman, 2021, October 26).

Yet some of the RECEs I interviewed expressed skepticism about emphasizing the benefits child care would have for the economy, suggesting economic growth would come at the expense of children's wellbeing (Lieberman, 2021, October 26). When I asked Vanessa Clark, an RECE, what she thought about solving the "she-cession" using $10-per-day child care, she reflected that the focus on economic growth was being used as a trojan horse to expedite a child care model good for the economy but not good for children.

> That's my concern, that we're just going to have a new system that doesn't put kids first. [The government] is going to say we're putting parents ahead, but parents are no further ahead. The end thing is we're putting the economy ahead. We're putting the government ahead of families, but we're going to sell it as 'hey, families, this is good for you'. But at the end of the day, is it any better for kids? (Clark, 2021).

Clark's skepticism was, in part, well-founded. Although the pillars of the federal government's child care expansion plan focused on a gradual fee reduction and expansion occurring in the public and non-profit sectors, the federal plan did not do enough to ensure quality of care. This is because Trudeau's government did not attach conditions that would have required provinces and territories to use a certain percentage of federal funding to fairly compensate child care workers to support quality of care in centers. The absence of these

conditions reflects the limits of a more centralized federalism after the elimination of the CAP and an unwillingness to provide the federal funding needed to make this achievable.

Despite the OCBCC's economistic appeals to Ford's government, Premier Ford prolonged, delayed, and made excuses for refusing to sign a bilateral agreement with the federal government. Premier Ford justified this delay by claiming he wanted to ensure Ontario got a 'fair deal', as he tried to secure more than the $10 billion in funding initially promised by the federal government. He claimed that Ontario deserved more financial support to cover the costs of FDELK. Premier Ford also demanded the flexibility to use federal dollars to support commercial child care expansion via a "no-strings" transfer of funding, despite stipulations in the Multilateral and Early Learning and Child Care Framework that expansion should occur in the public and non-profit sector (Government of Canada, 2022; Stone & Mercer, 13 December 2021). In doing so, Premier Ford demonstrated his dogged commitment to facilitating the expansion of commercial care in the province.

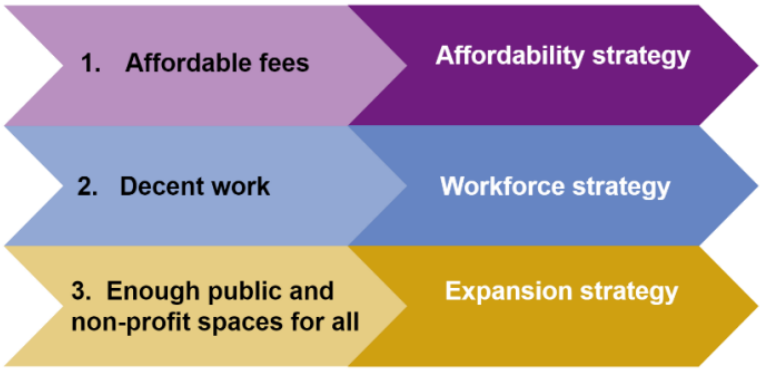
As the Ford government continued to delay signing onto $10-per-day child care, the OCBCC turned to public campaigning to pressure Queen's Park. "So that's one of the reasons that really drove the strategy to do much more outreach and work in constituencies", noted, OCBCC staffer, Laura Graham (2021). This included inviting MPPs to child care centers, especially in ridings won by small margins, to remind elected officials that child care is important to their constituents, thus reviving a strategy used during the Harris-era.

7.3 2021-2023: Child Care During the Pandemic

The onset of the pandemic complicated and increased the danger of hosting in-person events (CUPE Ontario, 2022). Because of this, the OCBCC chose to rely on other tactics, including phone zaps (e.g., calling elected officials) and petitioning. One such campaign, known

as *Rise Up for Child Care,* placed pressure on the Ford government to establish $10-per-day child care in the province in 2021. The campaign asked Ontario residents to sign a petition and then to call Premier Ford and Education Minister, Michael Lecce, to urge the government to sign a child care deal with the federal government. Residents were encouraged to share what $10-a-day child care would mean for their families e.g., "Affordable fees would mean I can make decisions about my child's care based on what's best for them, not just what we can afford" (the OCBCC, 2021).

Figure 7.1 *Roadmap to Universal Child Care,* the Three Pillars



Source: The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care & The Association for Early Childhood Educators, 2021, July).

Caption: The three-pillar formula detailed in the OCBCC's and the AECEO's *Roadmap to Universal Child Care,* part of a 2021 campaign intended to push the Ford government to sign onto $10-per-day child care while meeting the needs of Ontarian families.

The demands of *The Rise Up for Child Care* campaign were detailed in the publication, the *Roadmap to Universal Child Care,* a set of recommendations developed by the OCBCC and the AECEO based on three pillars: affordable fees, decent work, and sufficient public and non-profit spaces for all families in need (The OCBCC & the AECEO, 2021, July). Notably, after forty years, the OCBCC's objectives in 2021 closely mirrored its early demands first established in 1981 when it called for the establishment of child care as a universal, affordable, and high-quality public good rather than as a service that could be provided as a commodity for sale on the market. A notable difference in the 2021 campaign is the coalition's explicit inclusion of a workforce strategy, making explicit the connection between decent work for staff and quality of care and accessibility for households.

In the last five years, the child care movement was also forced to contend with new crises in the child care sector caused by government mismanagement during the pandemic. In 2021, Ford's government announced its Emergency Child Care Plan for essential workers. This plan designated child care as an essential service during the pandemic without mandating that child care workers be given prioritized access to vaccines, personal protective equipment, and rapid tests, unlike other educational workers (Somos, 2021, April 16; Ziafati, 2022, January 4). "We're still working with children who can't be vaccinated, yet we were not considered frontline to get vaccinated. We had to wait. There were a lot of protocols that weren't put in place. I feel that the government doesn't think about what we do and the importance of what we do" (RECE, Eloise Toussaint, 2021).

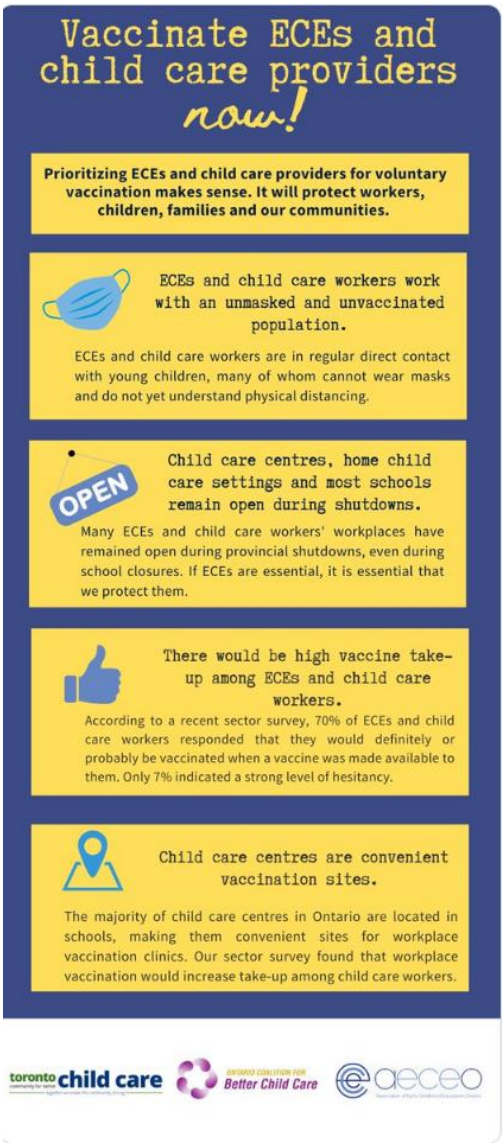
The treatment of child care workers as essential yet expendable reflects the longstanding devaluation of social reproduction under capitalism. Child care has always been essential, providing value to the economy by (re)producing the next generation of workers, but the

perceived value of this work and the worker historically has been low. Marx himself notably ignored how social reproduction is accomplished, considering the reproduction of the working-class as a natural process occurring in the private sphere (Giménez, 2018). The consequence of being invisible is that child care workers doing important social reproduction work are ignored by policymakers, even though their work is essential, much like other frontline workers, including grocery clerks, who were expected to work without proper PPE in unsanitary, unsafe, and crowded environments.

Considering how diverse child care workers are, much like other frontline workers, this pandemic policy also disproportionately impacted racialized workers who were expected to risk their health, or even their lives, for more privileged workers who needed child care during the pandemic and had access to proper PPE (e.g., doctors, nurses).

In response, beginning in April 2021, the OCBCC, the AECEO, and the Toronto Community for Better Child Care campaigned the government to give child care workers prioritized access to vaccines by encouraging Ontarians to send a letter to their local representatives (Parker, 2021). But from the perspective of RECE Emilie Borghese, these actions were not enough:"...it seems like they're doing lots of advocacy. I've signed petitions, certainly, I know they're sending the letters places. But it seems to me that the government is not listening to anything that these respective organizations have to say ever" (Borghese, 2021). Such frustrations were widely shared by other RECEs at this time.

Figure 7.2 “Vaccinate ECEs and child care providers now!”, campaign demands, 2021



Source: (Ontario Coalition for Better child care [@child care ON], 2021, April 12).

Caption: Campaign materials used to pressure elected representatives mandate child care workers have prioritized access to vaccination, alongside other essential workers.

Yet the coalition did not consider more direct forms of action, including organizing a walkout or a sickout, as an appropriate way to protest unsafe working conditions during the pandemic. As the coalition continued to rely on ineffective petitioning, and in the absence of expedient government action, two child care centers in the Waterloo region threatened to go on a wildcat strike if Premier Ford did not give child care workers prioritized access to the vaccine. In doing so, they acted independently of the OCBCC and trade unions. Gabrielle Laurent (2021), an RECE, reflected that it took only three days after announcing the strike before Premier Ford revised his policy, making child care staff eligible for prioritized vaccine access. She noted that while the OCBCC and trade unions were supportive, they did not initiate the wildcat strike action, encourage wildcat strike action to spread to other centers outside of Waterloo, or publicize the threat of a wildcat strike more widely, suggesting the coalition did not want to be publicly associated with it.

The coalition's hesitancy to facilitate any kind of broad labor disruption may have been rooted in a desire to avoid associating the OCBCC with a wildcat strike that would disproportionately impact essential workers, potentially turning public opinion against the child care movement during the pandemic. The OSBCU (Ontario School Board Council of Unions) faced a similar issue when the union threatened to go on a wildcat strike in 2021 if Ford did not withdraw the use of the notwithstanding clause to impose a contract on these frontline educational workers. The OSBCU was criticized by some among the left for failing to use the momentum from their campaign to facilitate a general strike to force bigger political concessions from Premier Ford (Schoots-McAlpine, 2022). But the OSBCU may have feared that a prolonged strike by education workers would have turned public opinion against workers, given the strain this would have put on parents as schools remained closed.

And in contrast to the general strikes occurring during the Harris era, there was not the same level of coordinated labor militancy to oppose Premier Ford's mismanagement of the pandemic. This reflects years of declining labor activism facilitated by eroding union coverage and the provincial government's eagerness to discipline unions using wage suppression and back-to-work legislation. Without unions pioneering direct actions, the OCBCC was not well positioned to campaign using more direct forms of action in the absence of strong relationships with other labor organizations and workers' movements operating with similar goals.

Finally, with Premier Ford still refusing to sign on to $10-per-day child care, the OCBCC may have wanted to avoid further antagonizing him. The OCBCC may have feared that disruptive action would have made Premier Ford even less amenable to supporting the expansion of public and non-profit care in the province, especially when these child care providers and their advocacy organization were making themselves such a political nuisance.

Then, in December 2021, Ford's government announced it would be cancelling PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing and COVID-19 case reporting in child care centers in December 2021, limiting testing to high-risk groups despite rising infection rates, possibly indicating Ford's attempt to downplay his government's mismanagement of the pandemic. By refusing to document the persistent high rates of the virus, the government may have wanted to signal that the pandemic was declining or over. Instead, the decision caused the public opinion of the Premier to spiral downwards (Grenier, 2021, April 22).

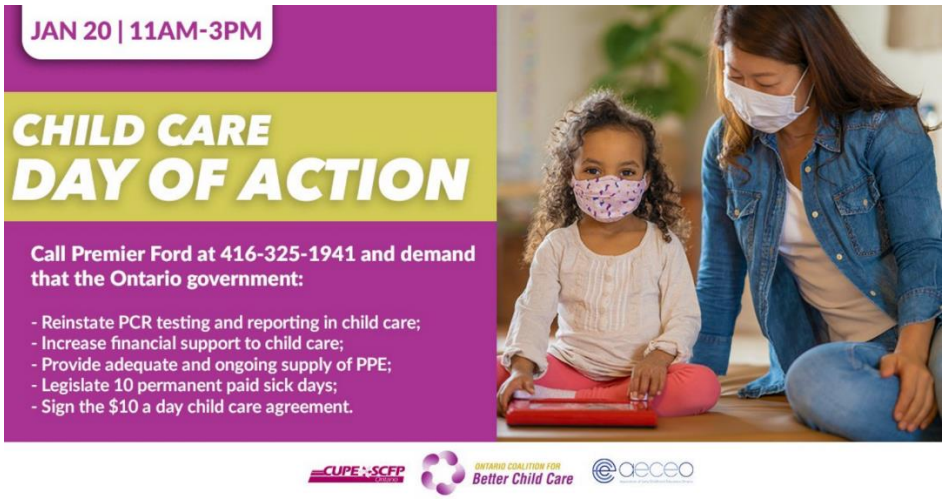
In response to Premier Ford's decision, the OCBCC, the AECEO, and CUPE organized a day of action "phone blitz" on January 20, 2022, encouraging Ontarians to call elected officials to reinstate the cancelled reporting measures. In addition to reinstating PCR testing and reporting in child care settings, the campaign also demanded increased financial supports to child care, the

provision of adequate PPE to child care workers, the legislation of 10 permanent paid sick days, and that Premier Ford sign on to $10-per-day child care while excluding commercial providers from public funding.

To emphasize the importance of public and non-profit expansion, OCBCC Executive Director, Carolyn Ferns, issued an open letter (Ferns, 2022) to the government and spoke to the media to assert that "we really need every dollar of this to go toward reducing fees for families and improving wages for educators" in support of a fully public child care system (Kennedy, 2022, March 7).

Unfortunately, the government did not respond to the coalition's demands to reinstate COVID-19 case reporting, supply PPE, and reinstate PCR testing at child care centers, possibly reflecting the government's ongoing efforts to downplay the severity of the pandemic. At the time of writing, the Ford government had not legislated paid permanent sick days and had cancelled the three temporary government-funded sick days it established during the pandemic for all workers.

Figure 7.3 child care day of action, January 20, 2022



Source: (AECEO [@AECEO], 2022, January 19).

Caption: Image of promotional material for a day of action that used a phone blitz campaign to pressure Ford to sign the $10-per-day child care agreement and protect child care workers during the pandemic.

Fortunately, early in 2021, the OCBCC, the AECEO, and trade unions succeeded in pressuring Ford to make child care staff without RECE credentials eligible for a $2-per-hour wage enhancement during the pandemic after securing 13,000 signatures that were hand delivered to Queen's Park, according to non-profit child care operator, Margaret Thomas (2021). The success of this campaign may reflect the government's acknowledgement that the extraordinary circumstances posed by the pandemic required special measures. The pay increase was not seen as necessary to everyday high-quality child care or as recognition of the important work child care workers were doing, but rather as an "extraordinary" measure during the pandemic to pragmatically ensure there were enough child care workers to provide child care for essential services.

A wage enhancement was critical during this period to bring RECEs back into the sector. In 2021, pandemic-related closures, lower child enrollment, and poor working conditions resulted in a 21 percent lower employment rate among child care workers, compared to the year before. If wages and working conditions remained the same, advocates feared many child care workers would not come back to the sector at all, throwing the child care sector into a deeper crisis ('Employment among child-care workers 21 percent lower in February 2021 than in previous year', StatsCan, 2021, June 26).

The exodus of child care workers from the sector during the pandemic and on the precipice of Premier Ford signing on to $10-per-day child care is an outcome of the limited

recognition child care is granted under neoliberalism. Prime Minister Trudeau's and Premier Ford's efforts to support child care provisioning in service to long-term economic growth and short-term economic stability, respectively, did not significantly transform the devaluation of child care and child care workers. In this way, neoliberalism can only provide a limited recognition of child care such that child care is valued for supporting the economy, without recognizing this work as inherently valuable. The result is that child care is funded just to the extent where the service is available to relieve parents of their child care obligations for eight hours, but not much beyond this to ensure quality and decent work for the mostly women, many who are racialized, who provide this service.

Premier Ford eventually signed onto $10-per-day child care on March 28th, 2022. Ontario was the last province to do so. The resulting "Canada - Ontario Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement - 2021 to 2026" committed Ontario to: a) providing a 50% reduction in average parent fees for licensed child care by the end of 2022, reaching an average of $10-per-day by the end of 2026, b) creating more licensed child care spaces predominately through non-profit and public providers, c) addressing barriers to the provision of inclusive and flexible child care, and d) valuing the early childhood workforce and providing them with professional development and training opportunities (Government of Canada (2022).

Ontario was also one of two provinces that planned to use federal money to support commercial operators, which was in opposition to the OCBCC's central objective of establishing child care as a public good and not as a commodity. By including commercial operators, Premier Ford demonstrated his ideological commitment to carving out opportunities for commercial expansion despite these operators providing lower-quality care (Friendly, 2019a). Ford's ability to opt out of exclusively funding public and non-profit child care operators may point to the

limits of federal control in a post-CAP era, where decades of neoliberalism and a more decentralized federalism produced a kind of path dependency model that curbed some of the federal government's efforts to build child care as a public service.

Despite guaranteed public funding, some commercial operators refused to sign on to $10-per-day child care, claiming they would be bankrupt if they were forced to adhere to the same financial accountability oversight measures as non-profit and public operators. In response to these arguments, Premier Ford removed profit caps for commercial operators (Jones, 2022, August 19). The OCBCC reacted by demanding the exclusion of commercial operators and the Federal Minister of Families, children and Social Development, Karina Gould, advised Ontario Education Minister, Stephen Lecce, that these changes "may run counter to the objective of ensuring the sound and reasonable use of public funds" (Ferns, 2022, June 16; Mendleson & Kennedy, 2022, September 23).

In the absence of profit caps, commercial operators could more easily shift public funds away from wages for staff and capital investments in infrastructure to take as a profit. This would further erode quality in commercial centers as qualified staff would be forced out of commercial centers to seek work in another center or another sector in search of better wages and working conditions. As a result, commercial centers would be forced to increasingly rely on unqualified staff willing to work for lower wages. Despite these consequences to child care quality, Ford continued to allow commercial operators to operate without profit caps as of 2023.

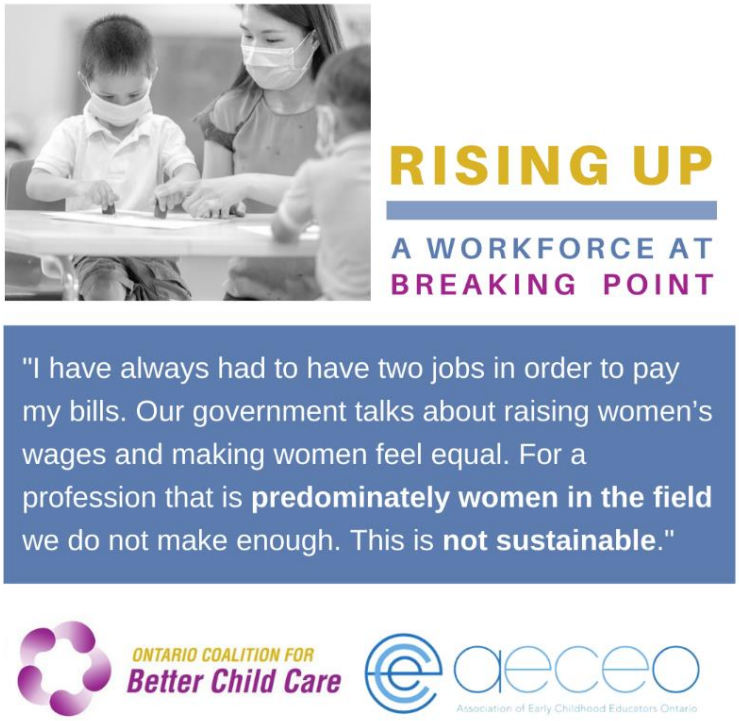
Even with the establishment of $10-per-day child care in Ontario, child care workers, most of whom were women and many of whom were racialized and immigrants, remained skeptical that their wages would increase despite the influx of new public money. Fatima Abdallah, a racialized RECE, observes:

> The $10-per-day child care is good for the parents, but will it affect our salaries? Because this is really not doing good. I don't like it. Now I'm not working, I resigned from the sector. When I was in the center, all the educators were talking about if it's good for us. It's not clear how it's going to affect us. They're not giving us enough money. We deserve better (Abdallah, 2021).

After Premier Ford signed onto $10-per-day child care on March 28th, 2022, he proved child care workers like Fatima correct. He refused to establish a wage grid, instead implementing an insufficient base wage of $18-per-hour for RECEs in 2022 that would increase by a $1 per year until reaching $22-per-hour in 2026 (Jones, 2023, January 14). As of 2021, this was below the $22.08-per-hour Toronto living wage and below the living wage to afford the basics in 10 of Ontario's 23 regions (Davidson, 2021, November 1). Notably, Premier Ford did not provide any additional funding to increase the wages of child care workers without RECE credentials working in licensed child care, despite these workers comprising 40 percent of all workers as of 2021 (The Atkinson Centre, 2024).

As Premier Ford continued to ignore the needs of workers in the child care sector, the OCBCC and the AECEO ran another campaign in 2022. Titled *A Workforce at Breaking Point: Rising Up,* the campaign demanded the Ford government establish a wage grid to provide RECEs and child care workers without RECE credentials with a living wage and decent work standards (The OCBCC & the AECEO, 2022). The campaign involved sharing child care workers' stories about their work, highlighting the severity of the workforce crisis and the staffing and quality issues caused by low wages and poor working conditions. The stories shared by workers underscored how the low payment of child care workers was an issue of gender inequity considering how highly feminized the sector was.

Figure 7.4 Rising up campaign, child care worker personal story, 2022



Source: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care & The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, 2022).

Caption: The OCBCC and the AECEO featured workers' stories of hardship in the sector to illustrate the need for a wage grid and work improvement to retain and attract the staff needed to make $10-per-day child care a reality.

As Premier Ford continued to refuse to offer child care workers a living wage and decent working conditions, he hypocritically tapped government coffers to cover the cost of tuition for police recruits. This plan cost close to $34 million annually. In doing so, Ford demonstrated his government's willingness to continue devaluing the care of women, many who are racialized, to grow the economy and balance the budget, while supporting a predominantly male-oriented and

well-paid profession that, moreover, surveils and harasses racialized people. This reflects the gender-blind and race-blind sexism and racism of his government's fiscal practices and his orientation toward "law and order" over child and parental welfare (DeClerq, 2023, April 25).

As of 2023, the OCBCC and its union affiliates continued to campaign the government to implement a fair wage scale that starts at $25-per-hour for child care workers without RECE credentials and $30-per-hour for RECEs (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, 2022). The coalition also demanded government provide benefits and pensions, paid sick days, professional development time, and paid programming time for child care workers to transform child care into a valued profession.

Ideally, these demands could have been incorporated into unions' negotiations with employers during collective bargaining as part of a powerful dual strategy that paired unified collective bargaining demands with a political campaign to improve child care workers' compensation. Unfortunately, unionization rates in the sector remained relatively low, languishing at 21.5 percent across Canada (CUPE, n.d.b.) which diminished the possibility and impact of this type of campaign.

Cheryl Davis (2021), Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, reflected that the child care sector's low unionization rates are partially a consequence of unions' apparent lack of concern for the sector despite the expansion of $10-per-day child care in the province:

> [With] universal child care, we're talking about hundreds of thousands of new jobs. You would think that unions would be thinking about that and saying, 'we really need a strategy to make sure it's a unionized sector' so that the relationship between the advocacy movement and the unions is not just about making policy changes. [This] is still really important, but unionizing is too. It's sort of beyond

> my comprehension [that unions do not organize more in the child care sector]. CUPE originally had always said that it's a priority to organize child care workers, but there's not much evidence that any union is doing that (Davis, 2021).

CUPE's perceived lack of interest in organizing more child care workers may stem from the difficulties of exacting concessions from child care centers even after unionizing a group of child care workers. This is partially a consequence of the difficulties of organizing small sites of precarious workers, considering the high level of attrition in the sector, and because government does not participate in bargaining as a primary funder of the sector (Doorey, 2020). In this context, the child care sector needs sectoral bargaining to make appreciable gains for all child care workers recognizing that government would participate in sectoral bargaining and a sectoral agreement could be applied to all workers in a sector that has been difficult to unionize (Slinn, 2020).

As of 2022, the child care workforce remained in crisis as centers struggled to hire and retain qualified staff due to the low wages and poor working conditions that characterize work in the child care sector. As child care workers remain in short supply, so do child care spaces. As of 2022, Ontario was 220,000 spaces short to meet rising parental demand (Jones, 2022, November 15). Racialized families were and are disproportionately likely to be amongst those denied access to child care because of their higher likelihood of living in child care deserts (Shah et al., 2016). As spaces remain scarce, these families are more likely to be funneled into the lowest quality forms of care in unregulated and lower-quality centers, a situation that is rife in Quebec, According to Gary Williams (2021), a CUPE Executive member (also see Fortin, 2017; Lefebvre, 2004; Prentice, 2007).

7.4 Summary

Beginning in 2018, with the election of Premier, Doug Ford, the OCBCC tried, and sometimes failed, to campaign against Ford's plans to defund, deregulate, and further marketize the child care sector, all of which disproportionately impacted child care workers and racialized households. Further demonstrating the variable uptake of neoliberalism across multiple levels of government, as Ford continued to advance a neoliberal agenda in Ontario, Prime Minister Trudeau announced in 2021 that the federal government would build a national child care system that would support women, children, and most importantly, the economy. What remained consistent despite differences in the provincial and federal government's approach to child care was the devaluation of child care workers as a highly feminized and racialized occupation, especially during the pandemic. Although the OCBCC and its allies campaigned for better protections and compensations for child care workers, reluctance from the coalition to support disruptive action and the low unionization rates within the sector hindered real progress towards this goal.

Chapter Eight: The Influence of Organizational Structure on Coalition-Building

Chapter eight explores how the OCBC's practice of race-blind organizing can be understood in relation to the OCBCC's, CUPE's, and the OFL's domination by white workers and activists at the leadership level at two points in time: 1981 and 2024. The chapter further explores how the OCBCC's, the OFL's, and CUPE's domination by white people is a consequence of race-blind policies and processes the influence executive composition despite the establishment of affirmative action measures intended to increase representation from certain underrepresented groups. Throughout the chapter, the organizational models of these organizations are considered in relation to larger economic, political, and social shifts.

8.1 1980s: The Coalition's Early Domination by White Activists

The previous chapters demonstrated that the OCBCC tended to rely on race-blind organizing practices that impacted how inclusive the coalition's objectives and strategies were of racialized people. For example, recall that the OCBCC did not campaign around racism in child care settings and the need for culturally appropriate care for racialized, immigrant, and Indigenous children until 2023[25]. When the OCBCC did advocate for issues that disproportionately mattered to racialized households, such as subsidies, these objectives were not articulated in relation to racial equity. Finally, the OCBCC's reliance on non-disruptive campaigning and hesitancy to support child care center walkouts to avoid alienating parents may have resulted in lost opportunities to improve the wages and working conditions of child care workers as a highly feminized and racially diverse profession.

[25] In 2023, the OCBCC and the AECEO began co-hosting regular sessions with child care workers and other activists around how to build an anti-racist child care system.

I suggest in this chapter that the coalition's domination by white women is one proximate cause of the OCBCC's race-blind organizing tendencies. Although I could not find a record[26] of the individual members who sat on the OCBCC's executive in 1981, former OCBCC Executive Member, Linda White, reflected that from the beginning, like many feminist organizations operating during the 1980s, the OCBCC was dominated by white women.

> It was very white. I mean, with the exception that First Nations organizations were part of it. There was a recognition at the time, which was true for all social justice organizations, that we were very white-led. That we were middle class. Let's face it, it was people who were privileged enough to have the time to be a social activist (White, 2021).

White women's dominance in the OBCC, like other advocacy organizations in the 1980s, is partially a consequence of such women having more time for activism because they were more likely to have entered better paid and higher status work or because they were more likely to be supported by a male breadwinner than racialized women (Fortin & Huberman, 2002). Their access to strong homophilic white networks, including NAC, which was founded and led by white women until Sunera Thobani's tenure as Chair in 1993, also gave them an entry point into mainstream women's organizations.

Knowing that most social justice organizations during the 1980s were dominated by white advocates, as White (2021) notes, it is also probable that the two child care advocacy organizations and the anti-poverty and social development non-profit organization affiliated with the OCBCC in 1981 were also led by and sent white advocates to represent these organizations at the OCBCC, although I could not find official records of this.

[26] See appendix for a list or organizations associated with the OCBCC in 1981.

Notably, ten of the thirteen founding organizations of the OCBCC were unions who similarly struggled to include and elevate racialized workers to positions of power during the 1980s because of entrenched racist and sexist policies and practices that prioritized the role of white male full-time, elected, or appointed leaders to act on behalf of and prioritize the interests of other white male members (Schenk 2003; Moody 1988; Ross & Jenson, 1986). Evidence suggests that at the highest echelons of power, white workers dominated CUPE and the OFL. As of 1981, the CUPE National President was a white woman and the CUPE national Secretary-Treasurer was a white man. Similarly, as of 1981, the OFL President and the OFL Secretary-Treasurer were both white men.

As racialized workers were excluded from accessing power and influence in most organizations during the 1980s, there is no evidence that racial justice or immigrant organizations were formally affiliated with the OCBCC during this early period. Although White (2021) mentions the participation of First Nations organizations, I could not find any evidence of their formal participation in the coalition as executive members. This suggests that these organizations may have had a more consultative or transient affiliation with the OCBCC during this period. Since racial exclusions have always been embedded in supposedly universal welfare provisioning under Keynesianism, it would have been important to include racialized voices within the OCBCC to formulate objectives that were truly equitable in scope.

8.2 2024: Contemporary Whiteness in the Coalition

Over the next forty years, the OCBCC occasionally engaged with issues of race and racism, including the more explicit discussion of the unique needs of Indigenous and racialized communities at the 2014 national conference *Child Care 2020: From Vision to Action.* But overall, the OCBCC's incorporation of race and racism into its campaigning was limited until

2023. The organizational structures of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL contributed to these ongoing racial silences within the coalition as a function of race-blind policies and processes that disenfranchised racialized child care workers and parents within these organizations.

8.2.1 The OCBCC

When I interviewed my research participants for this project in 2021, all seven of the women I interviewed from the OCBCC were white, suggesting that the racial composition of the OCBCC's executive had not changed significantly since the early 1980s. This was proven true upon a closer examination of the OCBCC's three executive bodies.

As of 2024, all five of the Executive Officers that carry out the activities of the coalition in-between Provincial Advisory Council meetings were white. Seven of the ten Board of Director members that focus on high-level objectives and strategy while providing oversight and accountability for the OCBCC were white. Finally, 24 of the OCBCC's 29 Provincial Advisory Council members were white. The Provincial Advisory Council is a larger body of elected member representatives that includes 11 organizational representatives, 13 regional center and local advocacy group representatives, and five individual members. The Council meets twice annually to provide advice and direction to the OCBCC.

Of the 11 people acting as organizational representatives on Provincial Council, eight were white. Organizational representatives tend to be high-ranking paid union staffers and Executive Directors of non-profit child care centers, and as a result, are more likely to be white because of the racial stratification within the labor market where higher paid and higher status positions are disproportionately held by white workers. As such, these representatives do not reflect the racial diversity found within their organizations, recognizing the growing racial diversity of the workforce, especially the child care workforce. Hence, the OCBCC's policy of

prioritizing organizational representatives institutionally produces an overrepresentation of white people within the OCBCC's Provincial Council that does not reflect the racial diversity present in the child care sector (Uppal & Savage, 2021).

The OCBCC's reliance on a model that favors the representation of organizations over individuals may partially be a consequence of operating under financially austere conditions under neoliberalism. As the federal governments of Prime Minister Mulroney and Prime Minister Harper defunded Status of Women Canada and barred women's advocacy groups from accessing federal funding, the OCBCC became more reliant on funding from its affiliates (Bashevkin, 2012; Collier, 2015; Dobrowolsky & Jenson, 2004). This potentially pressured the coalition to prioritize the representation of organizations, many of whom had white leadership, who could contribute funding, instead of prioritizing the representation of racialized individuals who could not – and yet who most needed representation.

Of the 13 people acting as regional center and local advocacy group representatives on Provincial Council, 12 were white. Although regional representatives from the northeast (Algoma District, City of Greater Sudbury, District of Cochrane, District of Timiskaming, District of Nipissing, District of Manitoulin, District of Sault Ste Marie) and the northwest (Kenora District, Rainy River District, Thunder Bay District), live and work in communities that have significant Indigenous communities, none of these representatives must be Indigenous. This points to a lost opportunity for the OCBCC to remediate the lack of racial diversity within its Executive bodies.

It is also not uncommon for the Provincial Council spots for representatives of rural and remote areas of Ontario to remain empty. This matters because the concerns of these representatives, even if they are white, are more likely to overlap with the concerns of

Indigenous people. For example, rural and remote households, like racialized and Indigenous households, are more likely to live in child care deserts (58 percent) compared to suburban neighborhoods (44 percent). As a result, rural households, like Indigenous and racialized households, are more likely to sit on child care wait lists, use unlicensed child care, and/or opt out of paid employment (Prentice & White, 2019).

The underrepresentation of representatives from rural areas and Northern Ontario has been exacerbated within the OCBCC as federal governments cut funding to non-profit organizations. According to Kathy Jackson (2021), who is a retired union staffer and served on the OCBCC Executive in the 2010s, funding cuts meant the OCBCC had less money to fly Provincial Council members in from remote and northern locations, eventually forcing the OCBCC to end what had been an equity-supportive policy.

Finally, of the five individual members that sit on Provincial Council, four were white. Reserving spots for racialized and Indigenous people in this section of Provincial Council would also help circumvent racialized peoples' marginalization in their organizations by allowing them to participate in the OCBCC's executive as individual members. As of 2024, the OCBCC only has a "special constituency" reserved for Francophones.

Hence, of the 29 Provincial Council members, 83 percent of the Provincial Council were white and 14 percent were racialized. Considering that three in ten Ontarians identified as a visible minority in 2016, a representation rate of 0-20 percent for racialized people within the OCBCC's three executive bodies demonstrates that the OCBCC is not representing racialized people in proportion to their existence in the general population (Statistics Canada, 2022c). Because racialized households and child care workers have unique needs, their representation in

executive bodies should perhaps even surpass their representation within the general population to ensure such workers can act with sufficient influence and power within the coalition.

Refer to the following chart for a more detailed breakdown of executive composition by gender and race.

Table 8.1 Racial and Gender Composition of the OCBCC's Three Executive Bodies, 2024[27]

Directive Body	White Man	White Woman	Racialized Man	Racialized Woman	Racialized Non-Binary Person
Executive Officers (5)	1	4			
Board of Directors (10)		7		2	1
Provincial Council – Organization representatives (11)	2	6	1	2	
Provincial Council - regional center and local advocacy group representatives (13)	1	11			1
Provincial Council – Individual members (5)		4		1	
Total	4	32	1	5	2

8.2.2 The OFL and CUPE

The OCBCC's race-blind organizing strategies partially reflect how the OCBCC's trade union affiliates, including the OFL and CUPE, struggle to prioritize racial equity within their

[27] Refer to Appendix C for a detailed overview of the OCBCC's affiliates, including the names of the individuals representing organizational affiliates.

own organizations. Although the OFL and CUPE diversified their executives by creating affirmative action seats and created autonomous committees for marginalized workers, both unions continue to rely on hierarchy, centralization, and bureaucracy that impacts how effectively these organizations prioritize and campaign around racial and gender equity.

In 2024, the OFL's representative within the OCBCC was a white woman who sat as an Organizational Representative on Provincial Council and as a Board Member. The likelihood this representative advocated for issues around race and racism within the OCBCC would have depended on the OFL's organizational-level objectives around race and racial equity, which would have been directly related to how effectively racial inclusion was prioritized in the federation's two main executive bodies.

The OFL's first directive body is its fifteen-member Executive Committee which is responsible for the administration of the OFL; overseeing the implementation of OFL policies and procedures; reviewing and approving all the OFL's expenditures; and providing recommendations to the Executive Board regarding policies, budgeting, and approval of collective bargaining agreements with OFL staff and compensation for excluded staff. As of 2024, 73 percent of the fifteen-member Executive Committee were white and 13 percent were racialized women.

The OFL's second executive body is the thirty-six-member Executive Board that manages the affairs of the OFL between conventions and chairs the OFL standing committees that coordinates the labor movement's work around policy and political activism. As of 2024, of the thirty-six-members who sit on the Executive Board, 72 percent were white and 17 percent were racialized women. Refer to the following chart for a breakdown of executive composition by gender and race.

Table 8.2 Racial and Gender Composition of the OFL's Two Executive Bodies, 2024

Executive Body	White Man	White Woman	Racialized Man	Racialized Woman	Racialized Non-Binary Person	Indigenous Man	Indigenous Woman
Executive Committee (15)	6	5	1	2		1	
Executive Board (36)	11	15	4	6		1	
Total	16	20	5	8	0	2	0

Compared to the OCBCC, the OFL has had more success including racialized workers in its executive bodies such that racialized workers' representation mirrors their representation within the general population. One reason for this is because the OFL's thirty-six-member Executive Board includes fourteen affirmative action Vice Presidencies, including one for a representative of Indigenous peoples and one for racialized workers. These affirmative action Vice Presidencies are elected at the bi-annual Convention by Caucuses made up of delegates who self-identity with that group, allowing marginalized workers to have more control over who represents them.

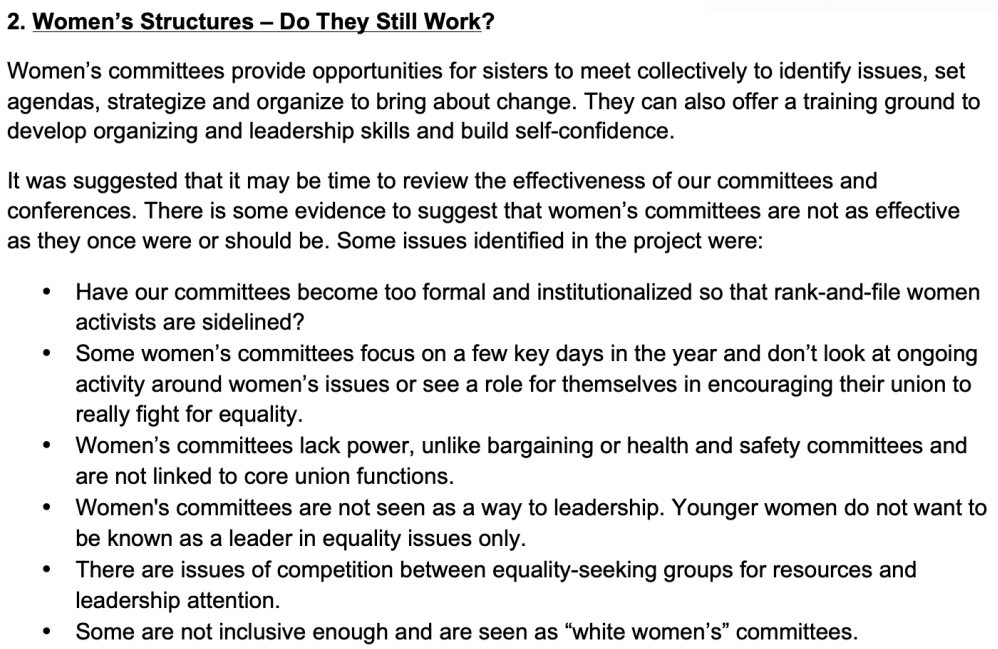
To further support the inclusion and representation of racialized and women workers in the OFL, the federation created standing committees for women and racialized workers that coordinate the work of Ontario's labor movement around ongoing policy concerns and equity issues. These committees include Women's Rights; First Nations, Métis, Inuit Circle; Workers of Colour; and Women's Committees.

It is not clear how effective these standing committees were for facilitating the OFL's adoption of objectives related racial equity, but I did find evidence that the OFL undermined the power and autonomy of women's committees in the mid-2010s, suggesting the OFL wanted to

suppress the power of at least one standing committee. Notably, at the OFL's first Women's Leadership Summit in 2013, which was meant to provide an opportunity for women unionists to come together and influence the federation, participants asked questions that pointed to the limits on the autonomy and power of Women's Committees in the OFL. Questions like, "have our committees become too formal and institutionalized?" and "women's committees lack power, unlike bargaining or health and safety committees and are not linked to core union functions" (Ontario Federation of Labor, 2013). These questions demanded solutions that would have required a further dismantlement of hierarchy, centralization, and bureaucracy in the OFL while directly potentially challenging the localization of power in the OFL's executive bodies.

Figure 8.1 OFL Women's Leadership Summit proceedings excerpt, 2013

Image 1



2. Women's Structures – Do They Still Work?

Women's committees provide opportunities for sisters to meet collectively to identify issues, set agendas, strategize and organize to bring about change. They can also offer a training ground to develop organizing and leadership skills and build self-confidence.

It was suggested that it may be time to review the effectiveness of our committees and conferences. There is some evidence to suggest that women's committees are not as effective as they once were or should be. Some issues identified in the project were:

- Have our committees become too formal and institutionalized so that rank-and-file women activists are sidelined?
- Some women's committees focus on a few key days in the year and don't look at ongoing activity around women's issues or see a role for themselves in encouraging their union to really fight for equality.
- Women's committees lack power, unlike bargaining or health and safety committees and are not linked to core union functions.
- Women's committees are not seen as a way to leadership. Younger women do not want to be known as a leader in equality issues only.
- There are issues of competition between equality-seeking groups for resources and leadership attention.
- Some are not inclusive enough and are seen as "white women's" committees.

Source: (Ontario Federation of Labor, 2013).

Caption: An excerpt from a summary of the OFL Women's Leadership Summit where delegates discussed how to make the OFL a more welcoming and empowering environment for women and a better vehicle for women's issues.

Unfortunately, reports from subsequent Women's Leadership Summits do not answer these specific questions, and there is also no evidence of organizational change continuing to be discussed at all. Instead, subsequent Summits focused on transforming the individual rather than the organization, providing women conference attendees with tactical advice about how to run local campaigns seemingly developed by a more senior Executive body. This points to a reaffirmation of hierarchy within the OFL, rather than its dismantlement, and may also indicate one reason as to why the OFL's participation in the OCBCC declined over time after peaking in the 1980s and 1990s.

Like the OFL, CUPE has also struggled to eliminate racism and sexism within the organization. As of 2024, CUPE had two representatives within the OCBCC. This included a white woman who acted as an Executive Officer and sat on the Provincial Council as a representative of CUPE and a racialized non-binary person who was a Board Member and sat on the Provincial Council as a representative of CUPE Local 2484, which represents over 600 child care workers employed across multiple workplaces in the province. Although the representative of CUPE Local 2484 is directly accountable to rank-and-file child care workers who make up the members of this local, the other CUPE representative's mandate and likelihood of advocating for issues related to racial equity within the OCBCC would reflect how these issues tend to be taken up by CUPE Ontario.

For Ontario CUPE members, there are two main executive bodies that operate at the national and provincial levels that determine the union's objectives and function. As of 2024, of the twenty-six-members who sat on CUPE Ontario's Executive Board, 65 percent were white and 26 percent were racialized women. The CUPE Ontario Executive acts as the political voice for its Ontario members, advocating and campaigning at the provincial level for legislative, policy, and political change intended to benefit CUPE members and the larger community. CUPE Ontario does not provide any direct support to locals, focusing instead on provincial lobbying, union education, and policy development. Hence, participation in the OCBCC would be in the direct purview of CUPE Ontario.

As of 2024, of the twenty-three members who sat on CUPE National's executive board, 82 percent were white and 13 percent were racialized women. While CUPE Ontario acts as the political arm of the union, CUPE National provides locals with support and assistance, including with Grievance Arbitrations, disability and accommodations, human rights, legal support, local elections, and education. CUPE National also supports and advises locals when they are bargaining or planning to strike, including child care locals.

Refer to the following chart for a breakdown of executive composition by gender and race.

Table 8.3 Racial and Gender Composition of CUPE Ontario and National Executives, 2024

Executive Body	White Man	White Woman	Racialized Man	Racialized Woman	Racialized Non-Binary Person	Indigenous Man	Indigenous Woman
CUPE Ontario Executive Committee (26)	5	12	2	5	0	0	2
CUPE National Executive	12	7	1	1	0	0	2

Committee (23)							
Total	17	19	3	6	0	0	4

Notably, CUPE Ontario's executives are significantly more racially diverse than CUPE National's executive. One reason for this is because CUPE Ontario holds seven affirmative action spots, including one each for Indigenous workers and racialized workers. CUPE National's Executive is also less racially diverse because it is made up of officers who hold high-ranking positions within the regional branches of CUPE. Although racialized workers have made inroads into their unions, they are still less likely to occupy the highest executive positions and are more likely to occupy affirmative action executive positions. This means they are less likely to represent their regional branch within CUPE National's executive.

Within CUPE Ontario, the Social Services Co-ordinating Committee provides another avenue for diverse and underrepresented workers employed in the social services to influence CUPE Ontario's political strategy. These workers are employed with municipal children's Aid; community agencies including libraries, city halls, long-term care, community care access centers, social housing projects, the Humane Society, as well as in parks and recreational facilities; and in child care. Most of these workers are women, and many would be racialized, especially those employed in the caring sectors. This includes child care where 28 percent of workers are racialized, compared to 21 percent of workers in other sectors (Uppal & Savage, 2021). This also includes in long-term care where more than a third of nurse aides, orderlies, and patient service associates are immigrants compared to less than a quarter of workers in all other occupations (Turcotte & Savage, 2020, June 22).

OCBCC staffers also sit on the Social Services Co-ordinating Committee as CUPE members as part of Local 1281, which represents workers in small, non-profit, and social-justice-

focused workplaces since 1974 (Melanie Scott, CUPE union executive, 2021). This adds another point of integration between CUPE and the OCBCC.

According to Melanie Scott (2021), a CUPE union executive, the committee's mandate is given by CUPE members during the annual Social Services conference and CUPE Ontario's annual conference. At these conferences, rank-and-file members are given the opportunity to vote on the committee's objectives, strategies, and overall mandate. Rank-and-file members can vote down motions they disagree with, although they cannot directly set the agenda for the committee, which is problematic, especially if the Social Service Coordinating Committee is dominated by white women. The committee then drafts an action plan during those conventions based on the will of the membership. Unfortunately, I could not verify the racial composition of this committee, but if dominated by white women, this is another point within CUPE's organizational structure that may contribute to the reproduction of silences around race and racism in the OCBCC's campaigning.

Denying rank-and-file members the ability to directly influence the political agenda of the union is especially problematic recognizing that CUPE members still need to possess certain types of social and cultural capital to influence the union. For example, if a member wants to initiate a campaign, they may need to navigate and influence multiple Executive bodies because CUPE uses a cost matching formula that spreads the costs of a political campaign across the Social Services Committee, CUPE Ontario, and CUPE National. The complicated nature of this process privileges people who have more experience being in positions of power and/or navigating complex hierarchical and bureaucratic environments, namely, white men with more experience navigating such homophilic networks.

Mary Anderson (2021), who served as a CUPE Executive for a child care local in the 1990s and 2010s, reflected that she was able to secure access to multi-level funding to distribute to child care workers in 2020 during the pandemic because she possessed the right social and cultural capital. According to Anderson, she received pushback from CUPE National's executive in 2020 after she proposed issuing funding to financially struggling child care workers. In response to CUPE National's resistance, Anderson initiated an internal campaign against a policy that barred CUPE locals from disbursing funds to members. This garnered support from other child care locals whose members were financially struggling during the pandemic. Anderson also threatened to start a letter writing campaign demanding a special convention to adjudicate this issue. As a result, Anderson secured funding for child care workers who were underemployed when centers shut down during the pandemic, successfully combatting initial resistance from CUPE National.

Anderson reflected that her long involvement in the union allowed her to rebuff CUPE National's resistance. This experience gave her an uncommon sense of confidence and familiarity navigating complicated union structures and Executive resistance that most members do not have:

> You'd have to understand that that's the way it's done. And they don't do a really good job of explaining that. I learned that through being on the committees and being involved, but I don't think the average member or even the average Executive member would know how they could access funds to do that. And how, if you felt that there was a little bit of pushback, how do you get around the pushback? And that sometimes happens, and depending on how much pushback the union wants to give you, it's also an issue, right (Anderson, 2021)?

CUPE's opaque organizational practices and procedures disproportionately disadvantage women, especially racialized women, who have less experience navigating complex and often confounding levels of administration.

Other pathways to influence CUPE, including becoming a paid staffer, are also barred to racialized women. This is because of CUPE's reliance on the gender- and race-blind requirement that members volunteer with the union before they are eligible to be considered for staff roles. Lauren Mitchell (2021), an RECE and CUPE Executive member of a child care local in the 2010s, notes that unions track members' activity record to identify individuals for further union training and education:

> Because a lot of the bylaws of union locals will say you have to be X amount active to go to any of these things [conferences, trainings], and you have to be able to report back to us. We don't want to waste our money sending somebody who's not going to understand or get it or use it. So, the more heavily involved you are, the more opportunities you have. It's open to everybody, but you've got to be a person who shows up (Mitchell, 2021).

Investing in active members is a strategic use of limited financial resources, but it also disadvantages women, especially racialized women, who may be balancing more paid and unpaid care demands and do not have the time or energy to volunteer with CUPE.

Those workers selected for paid staff roles are more likely to be or be like white men with fewer care burdens and potentially employed in less strenuous white-collar work during the day. For example, Mary Anderson (2021), who served as a CUPE Executive for a child care local in the 1990s and 2010s, reflected that her ability to ascend within CUPE was dependent on

being young and childless at the time, allowing her to have the time and energy to prove herself worthy of further investment by the union.

The barriers that have prevented women, especially racialized women, from influencing and accessing CUPE Executives may have directly contributed to CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan's hesitation to support more militant action against Premier Harris' proposed cuts to the child care sector in 1995. Recall that Ryan hesitated despite strong calls for a child care center walkout being made by rank-and-file child care workers from CUPE 2484. Evidence that CUPE did not facilitate or publicly support a sector-wide walkout during the pandemic, allowing a child care center from Waterloo to act independently of union support, suggests that child care workers have limited influence on CUPE executive bodies.

CUPE and the OFL have neglected to sufficiently uproot entrenched race and gender-blind practices partially because of the decline of feminist organizing in Canada. Some of these groups, including Organized Working Women (OWW), which was active throughout the 1970s and 1980s, brought unionized women together to use the power and resources of trade unions to promote equality for women within the labor movement, at work, and in the broader world. These groups often promoted a more democratic and inclusive form of unionism, including the importance of autonomous committees, consensus-building, and decentralized organizational practices, which also benefitted other marginalized workers, including racialized women.

But as some of these groups declined, for instance, OWW concluded their activities in the early 1990s, they no longer brought these ideas into trade unions. This included ideas about how to make unions more welcoming and accessible spaces for women and other marginalized workers. This much was stated by Cheryl Davis (2021), Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, who noted that "the pressure on unions that was created by union women

organizing outside, and then through Organized Working Women, while learning how to organize within – is what changed the unions. That does not exist anymore. There are no powerful union structures and organizations that carry on that role."

As racialized feminists, including Indigenous women, continue to campaign for self-determination, and against police violence and racism within the school system, they may not engage with trade unions as many white feminists did throughout the 1980s. This may have to do with longstanding racism within trade unions discouraging closer partnerships between anti-racist advocacy groups and unions (Fernandez & Silver, 2017; Greene & Kirton, 2006; Gupta, 2006). It may also reflect the racial segregation of the labor market, since racialized women are less likely to be unionized than white women and will have less opportunity to bring their demands into unions (31.4 percent compared to 23.4 percent) (Reitz & Verma, 2004).

As unions remains "Old Boys Clubs" because of entrenched sexism and racism, child care workers are often given low regard by fellow unionists. Some RECEs reported that their "femaleness" and "racialization" flag them as less important than white men working in higher status occupations. Here, Maria Hernandez, a racialized RECE, expressed her view that child care workers are not given respect within CUPE:

> Even within the union movement, it's really difficult for people to see us as anything than just child care workers. Although we have gotten support from many other workers in different jurisdictions, I think, even within the labor movement, we are at the bottom. We are at the bottom of the ladder, you know, in terms of how we are viewed within the labor movement. I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that we were mostly women. And now I see a lot of women of color are also coming into the field as well (Hernandez, 2021).

Being at the "bottom of the ladder" may explain why child care workers have less competitive and representative collective agreements than white men working in higher status occupations. Historically, CUPE child care workers did not have a pension plan like other CUPE workers did. It was only when child care workers publicly spoke on the floor at CUPE National Conventions, reminding everyone that child care workers lacked a pension plan. Only when this issue was publicized did CUPE Executive move to establish a multisector pension plan[28] that now provides 53 percent of unionized child care workers with a pension plan and 22 percent with a defined benefit pension plan (Mary Anderson, CUPE Executive for a child care local in the 1990s and 2010s 2021).

Even at the local level, child care workers may be overlooked in their unions if they are part of bargaining units that represent more than one type of worker (Erika Bakker, RECE, 2021). For example, OPSEU, which represents post-secondary support staff, including child care workers and janitors, negotiated a collective agreement in 2019 that did not address wage parity across support staff to the detriment of child care workers. In this case, the contract did not guarantee that the wages of child care field liaisons', who teach child care students in early learning settings, match faculty wages, despite field liaisons also acting as educators, just in an alternative setting (OPSEU/SEFPO, 2019).The lack of wage parity between in-class instructors, who are more likely to be white and/or male, and child care field liaisons, who are more likely to be racialized women, points to the ongoing devaluation of social reproduction and its supposed incommensurability with other activities and their related knowledges when taught in a classroom setting.

[28] It is not clear when CUPE created the MSPP, but a recent publication from 2015 suggested it was still being developed (Gananathan, 2015).

Another surprising oversight was noted by Bethany Wright, an RECE, who mentioned that child care workers working in northern Ontario were expected to wear closed toe shoes for years because they were part of a union that included construction workers and other heavy industrial workers, which is a heavily dominated white male profession (2021).

> I remember [when] I worked at this child care center a few years ago, and there were all these rules, like we weren't allowed to wear certain shoes because it was regarding being safe for working in the trades. We weren't allowed to wear certain clothes, which was about safety. But for [child care workers], it didn't matter. It was like we had to wear close toed shoes. They just lumped us in there and didn't even give you an exemption. Oh, like the people who are working in child care you can wear open toed shoes because that has nothing to do with us. But they just didn't care. They're like, whatever. So, for however many years you had to wear closed-toed shoes just because that was a rural part of the union. It was just like, oh my goodness, in the summer my feet would be so sweaty. It was a whole thing (Wright, 2021).

That it took years for this policy to change suggests that union executive had little engagement or communication with rank-and-file child care workers who could have easily noted that this health and safety requirement was inappropriate in child care settings where heavy shoes give the wearer less maneuverability and may even pose a danger when working around small children.

By not adequately representing child care workers during collective bargaining, unions create more political work for the OCBCC. But as more unions that represent child care workers bargain for competitive wages, paid sick days, a pension, and paid programming time, however, they will create momentum for larger political change by raising expectations for child care

workers across the sector, and forcing all employers to improve wages and working conditions to retain workers who will otherwise seek better employment elsewhere.

8.3 Summary

From its inception, the coalition was dominated by white workers and activists, indicating why the OCBCC's campaigns ignored or neglected issues of race and racism throughout the 1980s. As of 2024, the OCBCC continued to be dominated by white women because of organization's reliance on an organizational model that prioritized the representation of union staffers and Executive Directors of non-profit child care centers. Funding cuts imposed on non-profits by neoliberal and anti-feminist federal governments retrenched this organizational model and ensured the OCBCC had less resources to support equitable representation within its executive bodies. As a consequence of the decline of feminist organizing in Canada, both CUPE and the OFL also struggled to uproot race and gender-blind practices and policies that prevented child care workers from influencing and accessing their Executives. As a result, these unions remain "Old Boys Clubs" for child care workers, even as they continue to participate in the OCBCC, treating child care workers as second-class unionists by ignoring their demands during collective bargaining.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

In this final chapter, I discuss this project's findings in relation to the three inter-related objectives set out in the introductory chapter including how the OCBCC advanced a transformative vision of child care that serves all families and workers whether and how and to what degree, the organizational structures of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL reproduced gendered and racialized inequities prevalent in wider Canadian society; analyze the preceding two foci vis-à-vis major political, economic, and social shifts from the 1980s to 2024 to understand the OCBCC as it functions in dialectical relation with capitalism more generally and neoliberalism in particular.

I also consider how this project addressed research gaps in the coalition-building literature including offering an understanding of how neoliberalism impacts coalitions over time; how organizational processes and practices that undermine inclusive coalition-building should be analyzed as race-blind and gender-blind in their function; and why reforms are needed to support the inclusion of marginalized people in the OCBCC and its union affiliates. I conclude by discussing options for future research.

9.1 Questions Answered

This project asked a number of questions in relation to these objectives, including: since 1981, did the OCBCC's objectives change and become more or less inclusive over time?; What, if any, conflicts emerged between the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL and what consequences did this have for the OCBCC's advocacy work?; What strategies did the OCBCC rely on in its advocacy work, and did these change over time?; How did the OCBCC's, the OFL's, and CUPE's organizational structures support or hinder the inclusion and participation of child care workers and racialized parents?; And what role did neoliberalism and other significant economic,

social, and political shifts, including changing provincial and federal governments and recessions, have in shaping the work of the OCBCC and any resulting changes in child care provisioning in Ontario?

In answering these questions, I discovered three major findings, which are as follows.

9.1.1 The OCBCC's Inconsistent Commitment to an Inclusive Public Child Care System

Even though the OCBCC often campaigned for reforms to support racialized households and child care workers, who are a highly feminized and racially diverse workforce, between 1981 and 2022, I found that the OCBCC's commitment to the establishment of an inclusive public child care system was inconsistent.

When the OCBCC campaigned around demands that would benefit these groups, they tended to appear race and gender blind, even though their demands would have ameliorated inequitable outcomes for racialized households and child care workers as a highly feminized and racially diverse profession. Such campaigns include those that sought to increase direct funding to non-profit and public child care operators; exclude commercial operators from accessing public funding; and preserve and expand child care subsidies for low-income families, all of which benefitted racialized low-income households who could not afford to purchase marketized forms of child care. Campaigns to improve the wages and working conditions of child care staff also sought to reverse the devaluation of social reproduction work and the supposed naturalness of women, especially racialized women, doing this work for low wages and little respect.

The OCBCC's early commitment to pursuing these aforementioned reforms in its quest of establishing a public child care system was influenced by post-war Keynesian welfare expansion. Up until the 1980s, the legitimacy of Keynesian ideas and discourses, namely, an interventionist state that supported citizens in need as good political commonsense, legitimized

public child care expansion. CAP also promised to be a viable federal funding vehicle for creating a national child care system when it was introduced in 1966.

And yet, Keynesianism has always emboldened whiteness in its vision of universalism, eclipsing the needs of racialized peoples and immigrants. Indeed, in the OCBCC's pursuit of a public child care system, the voices and needs of racialized households and racialized child care workers were not integrated into the campaigns themselves. This was apparent in the OCBCC's exclusion of temporary migrant child care workers who were and are relegated to perform the most exploitative forms of marketized child care. Other exclusions include the siloing of race from class in the 1980s and the stark absence of any major demands made around anti-racist and culturally appropriate child care provisioning. In neglecting to campaign around these issues, the OCBCC lost opportunities to support the social reproduction of racialized households who have been forced to accept racist and Eurocentric forms of child care in the absence of culturally appropriate programming if and when they could afford to access child care at all.

Beyond policy discourse, another reason the OCBCC ignored race and racism in the 1980s was because of the OCBCC's domination by white women. This was facilitated by the organizational structure of the OCBCC and its reliance on three executive bodies that prioritized the representation of high-ranking members of organizations, including high-ranking union staffers and Executive Directors of non-profit child care centers, both of whom are more likely to be white than rank-and-file child care workers and parents who are more likely to be racially diverse.

The representation of organizational representatives over unaffiliated individual workers and parents became entrenched in the coalition because of more austere funding conditions imposed by the anti-feminist federal governments of Mulroney and Harper. Because the coalition

had less funding from government, it relied more heavily on funding from its organizational affiliates whose representation in the OCBCC was perhaps prioritized over that of individuals as a result. Less funding also meant the OCBCC could no longer reimburse travel expenses for rural and northern executive members, further exacerbating the exclusion of people, especially Indigenous people, more likely to live in child care deserts than those living in urban centers.

As organizational representatives dominated the coalition, they occasionally attempted to promote self-interested objectives that could be at odds with the needs of racialized households and child care workers, resulting in conflict within the executive. Notably, in the 1980s, non-profit child care operator affiliates opposed the unionization of the sector and the provision of extended day care by the schoolboards. In the 2000s, teachers' union affiliates also opposed school boards' taking on extended day care. While the OCBCC resolved internal conflict amongst its affiliates to support the unionization of child care workers in the 1980s, more than twenty years would pass before the OCBCC would support the direct provision of extended day care by schoolboards. In doing so, child care workers lost the opportunity to be employed directly by the school board, rather than a non-profit contractor, losing a chance for better compensation and improved working conditions.

This conflict between OCBCC affiliates that pushed the OCBCC away from supporting inclusive and progressive reform demonstrates how neoliberal and fiscally minded "Third Way" governments disciplined non-profit centers and teachers' unions to act out of self-interest instead of in solidarity with child care workers. The rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s forced non-profit centers to worry about how unionization would raise labor costs and how educational integration would result in lost revenue for centers pessimistic about the possibility of improved direct operational funding from government in the future. Likewise, in the 2000s, teachers' unions

opposed educational integration to protect their members' jobs and authority in the classroom out of concern for Premier McGuinty's fiscally minded "Third Way" government replacing teachers with lower-cost RECEs.

9.1.2 The OCBCC is the Polite Face of the Child Care Movement

I have demonstrated that the OCBCC's campaigning strategy was influenced by the federal government's attacks on feminism and changing neoliberal discourses that displaced feminist and human rights discourses.

As federal governments, including those of Prime Ministers Mulroney and Harper, defunded women's and feminist groups, the discursive terrain shifted against feminists as well. Beginning in the 1980s, Prime Minister Mulroney cast feminists as disreputable "special interest" groups while drawing on a neoconservative discourse to center the importance of the traditional family to justify neoliberal reform. The government's attack on feminism forced the OCBCC to adapt by avoiding direct references to feminism and gender equity in its campaigns and public communications between 1981 and 1995. Instead, the OCBCC adopted gender neutral language that focused on families' need for child care to participate in the labor market. This was contrasted with the position taken by CUPE and the OFL, both of which continued to adopt a feminist framing to promote a public child care system, possibly reflecting the ongoing influence of feminists within trade unions during this period.

In the 2000s, the OCBCC continued to avoid feminism and feminist framings, instead leveraging elements of an economistic child development discourse introduced under Premier McGuinty's government. Premier McGuinty used this discourse to justify the provincial government's creation of FDELK to increase children's value as future workers. This was in response to the low academic performance of Ontario children and the need for highly skilled

workers in Ontario. McGuinty's use of the child development discourse demonstrated that his government's focus was using child care as a policy vehicle to support the economy, rather than as a public good for women as a form of gender equity and for children for the sake of human flourishing.

As of 2020, the OCBCC continued to emphasize how a public child care system could support GDP growth and increase tax revenues while avoiding references to gender equity. This was despite Prime Minister Trudeau's government mixing feminist and economistic discourses to justify the need for $10-per-day child care. In doing so, the OCBCC attempted to work across party lines, including with right-wing folksy populist Premier Ford, who resisted signing a bilateral agreement with the federal government to establish $10-per-day child care in the province.

The OCBCC's adaptability to governments' discursive framing suggests the coalition wanted to present itself as a friendlier partner willing to work with government, rather than an antagonistic force, which unions were more likely to present as. This friendlier positioning reflects how the governments' anti-feminist attacks in the 1980s and reliance on neoliberal inflected discourses successfully disciplined the OCBCC to adapt to an increasingly economistic discursive environment. In doing so, the OCBCC may have contributed to weakening child care's relationship with gender equity in the public sphere and child care's importance to supporting household's social reproduction irrespective of how child care can be used to support the economy.

The OCBCC's orientation towards encouraging, rather than antagonizing, government, also dictated how the coalition conducted its campaigns. From 1981 to 2022, the coalition typically relied on non-disruptive extra-parliamentary campaigns that educated and mobilized the

public without disrupting service provision in the child care sector. These tactics involved creating petitions, hosting parades, staging rallies, organizing MPP visits, and hosting public forums to engage the public and pressure the government.

These campaigns were typically designed to be accessible to parents and child care workers who did not consider themselves to be activists. Stroller brigades and cookie campaigns made participation seem less intimidating. Parents' participation sent a powerful message to elected officials that their disregard for child care could cost them at the ballot box during the next election. Yet, the accessibility of the OCBCC's campaigns favored the participation of white middle-class parents who did not fear deportation and had flexibility in their schedules to participate in a rally happening mid-day on a weekday. In doing so, the OCBCC relied on race-blind organizing practices, not considering the barriers to participation for racialized and migrant parents and workers.

The OCBCC may have relied on non-disruptive campaigning to avoid alienating parents inconvenienced by center closures. Without parents' support, the OCBCC had limited leverage to pressure neoliberal governments. The pandemic also may have aggravated the OCBCC's concerns over alienating the coalition from the public, not wanting to unintentionally portray the child care movement as self-interested while other frontline workers were expected to make sacrifices. One consequence of this was that even when Waterloo child care workers threatened a walkout in protest of being required to work without prioritized access to vaccines during the pandemic, the OCBCC and CUPE did not publicly support this walkout or try to facilitate a wider action across child care centers.

A notable exception to the coalition's tendency to avoid disruptive campaigning was in 1995 when the OCBCC facilitated a province-wide walkout against Premier Harris' proposed cut

of 68,000 child care subsidies. The OCBCC's combativeness was facilitated by a wider culture of militancy fostered by other unions and grassroots organizations who were protesting, rallying, and striking in the thousands against Premier Harris' proposed deep cuts to social services and the public sector. Notably, the OCBCC's objective for the walkouts was to preserve child care subsidies for households, rather than to protest child care workers' poor wages and working conditions, suggesting the coalition continued to prioritize parents to avoid alienating them against the child care movement.

In mostly relying on non-disruptive action over the past forty years, the OCBCC and CUPE did not leverage what could have been a more effective tactic to oppose austerity and improve the wages and working conditions of child care workers. Labor withdrawal is powerful because it is disruptive. Hence, it is easier for governments to suppress child care workers' wages to manage costs and push through neoliberal reform that degrades quality and accessibility in the sector if they are not concerned about sector-wide service disruptions as is more common in the public education system.

Rank-and-file child care workers had limited opportunity to influence the OCBCC to support strike action to improve wages and working conditions in the sector because of the OCBCC's reliance on three directive bodies that prioritize the representation of union staffers and Executive Directors of non-profit child care centers. Rank-and-file child care workers also had limited opportunity to push their unions to facilitate a strike across centers because the OFL had already reduced the autonomy of its women's committee and CUPE did not permit rank-and-file child care workers to directly influence the agenda of its Social Service Co-ordinating Committee. Gender- and race-blind policies and practices, including requiring workers to

possess the right social and cultural capital, also prevented child care workers from accessing or influencing their executives.

9.1.3 The OCBCC Supported the Long-Term Transformation of Child Care

Even as the immediate effectiveness of the OCBCC's campaigns varied, the long-term impact of the OCBCC supported significant public child care expansion under the "Third Way" governments of Premier McGuinty and Prime Minister Martin and under Prime Minister Trudeau who adopted a renewed Keynesianism.

Often, the coalition's campaigns were not immediately successful as neoliberal federal and provincial governments, especially those of Prime Minister Mulroney, Premier Harris, Prime Minister Harper, and Premier Ford, sought to defund, deregulate, and marketize the child care sector. Recall the campaigns that failed to prevent Premier Peterson from expanding commercial child care in 1987; failed to prevent Prime Minister Mulroney from cutting $4 billion in funding for social services; failed to prevent Premier Harris from making deep cuts to social services; failed to prevent Prime Minister Harper from cancelling Prime Minister Martin's proposed national child care system; and failed to prevent Premier Ford from deregulating unlicensed home-based care and making commercial operators eligible for public funds within $10-per-day child care.

These failed campaigns were often undermined by hostile governments who weaponized neoconservative and "right to choose" discourses to justify dismantling public child care as being in the public's best interest. For example, Prime Minister Mulroney, Prime Minister Harper, and Premier Harris used a neoconservative discourse to suggest that funding a public child care system imperiled the existence of the traditional nuclear family. Simultaneously, these governments, including that of Premier Ford, drew upon a "right to choose" discourse to suggest

that replacing direct support for child care centers and families (e.g., subsidies) with tax credits would give families more choice over what kind of child care they could purchase, including unlicensed and commercial child care.

Provincial governments' ability to dismantle child care was directly facilitated by federal decentralization which reduced conditions on federal funding. Decentralization was initiated by Prime Minister Mulroney, who failed to pass Bill C-144, and then Prime Minister Chretien, who succeeded in replacing the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) with the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). The CHST removed conditions on diminishing federal funding, giving the provinces more freedom to spend federal funds as they wished, including Premier Harris who expediently funneled funds away from public child care. This more decentralized federalism established a precedent for future governments, likely making it more difficult for Prime Minister Trudeau to enforce stricter conditions on federal funding provided through The Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreements with the provinces and territories when establishing $10-per-day child care across the country. Notably, although CWELCC stipulated that expansion be 'primarily' public and non-profit, Trudeau's government refrained from demanding that federal money be used exclusively to support public and non-profit providers.

As a result, Premier Ford successfully negotiated the right to use federal funds to support commercial operators under $10-per-day child care despite the federal government's stated intention of reserving funds for public and non-profit expansion.

As federal and provincial governments advanced neoliberal reform in contradiction to the OCBCC's demands, racialized households and child care workers were disproportionately affected. Diminished funding for child care subsidies and expanded support for tax credits

redistributed funds away from low-income families, more likely to be racialized, and towards higher income families who could afford marketized forms of care. The replacement of one form of universalism, The Family Allowance, with another, the UCCB, also shifted funds away from single-parent households, more likely to be headed by Black women, and towards traditional nuclear families. The deregulation of child care, including raising ratios in unlicensed care, impacted families more likely to rely on unlicensed care, including racialized households living in child care deserts and unable to afford licensed child care. Support for commercial child care also expanded the number of lower-quality providers in the province which provide lower wages and poorer working conditions for child care workers as a highly feminized and racially diverse profession. While not explicitly coded as racist, the consequences of these race-blind policies were racist.

These reforms also entrenched capitalism's historic reliance on women to provide child care as a form of unpaid and undervalued labor in the home. Defunding public child care shifted more of the burden for this work back onto women despite the increasing need and desire women had to participate in the workforce. Suppressing the wages of child care workers also continued the long devaluation of child care under capitalism despite its essential value to capitalism through the (re)production of the workforce.

When the OCBCC's campaigns were immediately successful, some additional factors may have played a role. For example, the OCBCC successfully prevented the implementation of Bill C-144 under Prime Minister Mulroney because the coalition made the Bill an election issue before the 1987 federal election. The OCBCC also capitalized on a wider atmosphere of disruptive militancy in the mid-1990s that intensified pressure on Premier Harris' government which was forced to continue providing wage enhancements for child care workers and cancel a

host of other neoliberal reforms captured in the Ecker Reform. Finally, in the context of a COVID-19 pandemic, Premier Ford was forced to concede to the OCBCC's demand that his government provide a wage enhancement for child care workers to ensure frontline and emergency workers had access to child care.

The arch of history is also long and recent progressive government intervention into the sector should not be considered apart from the OCBCC, which diligently raised the possibility of a public child care system in the public sphere and created political legitimacy for a public child care system by underscoring its economic benefits over the past forty years. Hence, even as child care was defunded, deregulated, and marketized by neoliberal governments, the OCBCC contributed to "Third Way" and Keynesian oriented governments deciding to significantly expand public child care provisioning, resulting in Premier McGuinty introducing FDELK in Ontario in 2011; Prime Minister Martin attempting to establish a national child care system in 2005; and Prime Minister Trudeau beginning to establish $10-per-day child care across the country in 2021.

Albeit these governments expanded child care to primarily support the economy rather than to support gender equity or human rights. Recall that Premier McGuinty justified FDELK as a vehicle to improve children's human capital as future workers while continuing to suppress social assistance rates, including for impoverished households with children. In the absence of expansive and universal welfare provisioning, including sufficient social assistance, low-income racialized households continued to struggle to support the development of their children, despite the establishment of FDELK, pointing to the limits of "Third Way" welfare reform.

Furthermore, consider how Prime Minister Trudeau used $10-per-day child care to facilitate women's re-entrance into the workforce during and after a pandemic-induced "she-

cession" while his government neglected to provide funding earmarked for child care workers' compensation and dictate provinces take a more direct role in child care space planning and implementation to transform child care into a public good like the education system is. As a result, racialized low-income households disproportionately struggled to access child care as child care supply remained insufficient, especially in low-income communities. Child care workers were also expected to labor for low wages in poor working conditions, even as child care became more affordable for some families. This points to the limited recognition child care continues to have under capitalism where its value is reduced to its ability to support economic growth.

9.2 Lessons Learned: Addressing Research Gaps

The findings from this project also provided larger lessons about coalition-building more generally. One objective I had for this project was to situate the operations and organizational structures of the OCBCC, CUPE, and the OFL in relation to neoliberalism. The coalition-building literature typically explores how coalitions are established in relation to macroeconomic and political shifts without necessarily analyzing how these same conditions continue to impact the function of such coalitions over time.

The other research gap I wanted to explore during this project was how coalition function and breakdown can be understood in relation to race-blind racism and gender-blind sexism operating in and through coalition organizational structures. Existing literature demonstrates that unions that rely on more hierarchical, bureaucratic, and centralized forms of organizing tend to sideline and sabotage the demands of more marginalized workers and community members within the coalition. The literature does not analyze these organizational practices and policies

from an intersectional perspective, not considering them as racist and sexist in their operation and outcomes as I do.

9.2.1 Neoliberalism Disciplined the OCBCC

I discovered that neoliberalism as a practice and a discourse disciplined the OCBCC and its affiliates, impacting their objectives, strategy, and organizational structures. This undermined the coalition's ability to advance objectives in support of an inclusive child care system at times.

Neoliberal and neoconservative discourses shaped how the OCBCC campaigned around child care, disciplining the coalition to emphasize the economic benefits of child care instead of its importance to gender equity. Neoliberal discourses also did not need to occur within a wider political or social context of overt anti-feminist hostility to discipline the OCBCC against adopting a feminist framing. For example, even as Prime Minister Trudeau's government adopted a feminist framing to justify $10-per-day child care, the OCBCC continued to emphasize the economic benefits of child care to work with Premier Ford whose government, while not explicitly anti-feminist, were overtly neoliberal.

This suggests that the OCBCC tactically aligned itself with the ideological sensibilities of sitting governments, choosing to present itself as a friendly partner of government rather than an antagonistic force. This may point to the consequences of operating a coalition around women's issues after feminist organizing declined in Canada in the 1980s. Although tactical, the OCBCC's decision to adapt to new and shifting neoliberal discursive environments ensured that the coalition inadvertently contributed to weakening the connection between a public child care system and gender equity and human rights.

Notably, CUPE and the OFL continued to use feminist discourses within their campaigns and direct appeals to government. This suggests that the disciplinary power of neoliberal

discourses was also dependent on other factors. These factors may include an organization's source(s) of funding; the affiliations of the organization's members (e.g., trade union women who were also members of Organized Working Women); the organization's allies; the organization's reputation in the public sphere; and the organization's relationship with and access to political opportunity structures.

As neoliberal discourses justified and shaped government policy, the repercussions of austerity further undermined the OCBCC's ability to advance progressive and inclusive reform. Austerity produced a conservatizing effect on some of the OCBCC's affiliates who focused on their immediate self-preservation over advancing progressive reform, confirming a main finding from the literature that affiliates can act out of self-interest instead of communal interest. This project also advanced our understanding of how and why this happens. Namely, coalition affiliates' likelihood of acting out of self-interest is exacerbated under advancing neoliberal reform if this threatens an organization's financial survival.

As austerity produced conservativism amongst coalition affiliates, it also undermined the ability of these organizations to reform themselves to be more inclusive. Defunding meant fewer resources were redistributed towards equity. The coalition also became more reliant on funding from its affiliates in the absence of direct government support, even as some of these affiliates, namely unions, similarly struggled with inclusion. This demonstrates how political and economic shifts under neoliberalism produced meso- and micro-level shifts within the coalition.

These findings demonstrate that as coalitions are formed in response to neoliberalism, neoliberal discourse and reform, as intertwined practices, undermined coalition-building. This is significant knowing that advancing neoliberal reform may continue to impact coalition-building to the detriment of those most marginalized within the coalition and under capitalism.

9.2.2 Race- and Gender-Blind Organizations Impact Coalition-Building

This project confirmed that the OCBCC and its union affiliates failed to fully represent the demands of racialized households and child care workers because of race-blind racist and gender-blind sexist organizational policies and practices. These policies and practices prevented women, especially racialized women, from accessing positions of power and influence within the OCBCC and their unions, preventing them from influencing the mandates and objectives of these organizations in relation to the campaigning work of the OCBCC.

These organizational practices and policies were not explicitly coded as racist or sexist. Rather, they were racist and sexist because they resulted in advantage accruing to white middle-class women who controlled the coalition through their executive positions as high-ranking union staffers or Executive Directors of child care non-profit centers. Hence, their domination of the OCBCC reflected and mirrored white workers' domination within the labor market more generally.

Other organizational policies adopted by unions served the standard white male worker who is expected to be unburdened of domestic obligations and assumed to possess certain white and male coded cultural and social capital. Women, especially racialized women, were disadvantaged because unpaid care obligations restricted their ability to engage with their unions outside of work hours. Such women were also less likely to share the same cultural and social capital as white male executive members, creating another barrier that prevented them from accessing and influencing their unions' participation in the OCBCC.

I also discovered that non-union coalition affiliates do not necessarily use more inclusive organizational practices than unions, contrasting with the literature's focus on unions as more conservative affiliates compared to community group affiliates. Within the OCBCC, non-profit

operators were historically more conservative affiliates than trade unions, as evidenced when they occasionally attempted to advance their own interests through the coalition at the expense of child care workers.

Despite non-profit child care operator affiliates employing child care workers, such affiliates were unlikely to represent these workers' needs within the coalition because of the hierarchical structure of non-profit child care centers, which were not designed to be democratic advocacy organizations, but service providers run by an Executive Directors and a parent-run Board of Directors. Because unions and non-profit organizations dominated executive committees within the OCBCC, unions became the progressive opposition to non-profits by default because unions' mandate to represent workers' interests, even as unions' struggled to sufficiently prioritize child care workers.

9.2.3 Organizational Reform is Needed to Support Inclusivity

Recognizing that gender- and race-blind practices and policies contributed to the exclusion of women, especially racialized women, in the OCBCC and its union affiliates, organizational reform is needed to ensure coalition-building is more inclusive in the future.

I sourced some of these reforms directly from my interview participants, including child care workers. Others, I deduced from the implications of this research. Unlike solutions that would require extensive time and resources, and are best suited as longer-term goals (e.g., consensus-based feminist organizational models), most of these recommendations will require fewer resources to fully implement.

First, the OCBCC needs to facilitate the participation of racialized and Indigenous child care workers and parents in the executive bodies of the OCBCC. This will ensure that racialized child care workers and parents are directly informing the mandate, day-to-day objectives, and

strategy of the coalition. To do this, the coalition should consider creating equity spots for racialized and Indigenous child care workers and parents within the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, and Provincial Council. Equity spots would be mandatory. If unfilled, the OCBCC would be required to actively recruit for such spots.

The OCBCC should also allocate additional resources to ensure equity Executive members can fully participate in the OCBCC. For example, Equity Executive members may need financial support to travel to OCBCC meetings. Such members may also want to receive additional training in the areas of leadership, political activism strategy, and/or running a non-profit organization if they do not have prior experience in an executive level position. Recognizing that racialized child care workers and parents may be more likely to be low-income and working precariously at more than one job, the OCBCC should also consider a stipend for Equity Executive members. This is to ensure that participation in the OCBCC does not require these Executive members to forsake needed income.

Child care workers will continue to be underrepresented in the union because many are not unionized at all. Cheryl Davis (2021), Executive member of a child care advocacy organization, suggested that unions need to prioritize unionizing child care centers to ensure more child care workers benefit from union protections and collective bargaining rights. This is especially important for workers employed by commercial centers where wages are lower and working conditions poorer than in non-profit and public child care centers.

Unions, including CUPE and the OFL, should also campaign the provincial government to extend sectoral bargaining to child care workers, recognizing the difficulties of unionizing individual child care centers and the limited leverage such workers have for extracting meaningful concessions out of individual employers. In doing so, unions can negotiate with

government and employers to establish a sectoral baseline around compensation, including a wage grid, pensions, benefits, and personal days. This sectoral agreement would not establish a limit on the collective agreements of locals, ensuring that locals still had sufficient autonomy to bargain for a more comprehensive and competitive agreement.

To further enable the participation of child care workers in their unions and the OCBCC, unions should provide paid time off, or per diems. Per diems would be used during the waged workday to allow frontline child care workers to attend both union and OCBCC meetings that are hosted during regular work hours. This would mitigate some of the barriers faced by child care workers who provide unpaid care work in the home after their paid work day and, as a result, cannot participate in their union or the OCBCC if meetings are scheduled in the evening.

Racialized child care workers should be prioritized for per diems and unions should consider waiving the requirement that child care workers demonstrate a certain level of unpaid volunteer activity before being eligible for per diems. According to Lauren Mitchell (2021), an RECE and CUPE Executive member of a child care local in the 2010s, unions could either directly provide these per diems or negotiate language in their collective agreements that requires employers contribute to a per diem fund. Without prioritizing paid time off for rank-and-file child care workers, union and OCBCC meetings will continue to be dominated by Executive Directors of non-profit child care centers who can more easily manage their work schedules and high-ranking paid union staffers (Mary Anderson, who served as a CUPE Executive for a child care local in the 1990s and 2010s, 2021).

Finally, the OCBCC and unions should host meetings online or use a hybrid format. During the pandemic, RECEs and child care workers without RECE credentials had more access to professional development opportunities because training and workshops were provided online

instead of in-person. Amanda Roberts (2021), an RECE working in a remote part of Ontario, explains how she was able to access online professional development opportunities during the pandemic that she previously would have not been able to as an RECE located in a northern community located an hour from a larger township where such trainings tended to occur.

> And I realized this with the pandemic, it was like, oh my gosh, I have access to learning, I have access to professional development. I was so excited to learn because it's never usually been something I can go to. My company offers professional development, but I get off at five and I can't get there till six. Those things are either offered in the middle of the day or they're offered at the end of the day so I can never go to them because it doesn't work for our geographic location. I can't drive an hour away just to go to a 45-minute seminar (Roberts, 2021).

In addition to making meetings more accessible to geographically remote child care workers and parents, online meetings can be used to accommodate people with unpaid care responsibilities. It is typically much easier to attend a meeting on Zoom while continuing to care for children and elderly relatives at home, rather than try to find a caregiver so you can attend a meeting in-person. Transitioning more meetings online or using a hybrid format may also allow the OCBCC to balance inclusivity with budgetary restrictions by providing a lower-cost option to flying in geographically isolated workers living in remote northern areas as funding remains scarce.

If unions, including CUPE, do not reform their organizational structures to be more inclusive of child care workers, especially within executive-level bodies, child care workers may seek alternatives to CUPE and other larger unions. child care workers at one Ontario center have

already decided to affiliate with the International Workers of the World (IWW), which currently only represents 8000 workers across North America. Their decision to unionize with IWW was based on their respect for IWW's commitment to grassroots and democratic organizing as noted by Samantha Nelson, an RECE:

> We actively chose to go with IWW [International Workers of the World] instead of CUPE. We felt we were already in a position where we had been left out of the decision-making for so long and the IWW was [operating] right from the bottom. We went to training sessions with them where we learned how to bring people in one by one and we organized it from the bottom up. So, we developed our own union and we've basically had one hundred percent membership in our center. We sign permanent, full-time employees, and we also signed part time and contract employees, which I believe is different than CUPE is doing. I don't think that temporary employees are a part of that organizing. And we went through the process of certifying with the Ontario Labor Relations Board, but we're pretty confident it is going to go through, and we will be the first certified union with the IWW in Canada in like the last 125 years (Nelson, 2021).

While the IWW provides more opportunities for rank-and-file child care worker engagement, there can be disadvantages to organizing with a smaller union, including access to fewer financial and organizational resources, and fewer in-house staff who have sector expertise. Despite these weaknesses, the IWW organizing model provides an alternative to more traditional forms of unionism for child care workers used to being left out of decision-making in more traditional union spaces.

Although needed, these recommendations may cause tension within the coalition. Some coalition affiliates, including Executive Directors of non-profits, may withdraw from the coalition if it does not adequately serve their interests because of the inclusion of more rank-and-file child care workers. As a result, some groups may withdraw, taking their financial contributions with them. The implications for the longevity of the coalition if this were to happen is unclear and trade unions may need to increase their financial contributions to ensure the OCBCC's survival.

9.3 Future Directions

While I hope this project informs the coalition-building literature and what is known about the history of the child care movement in Canada, future research is still required. First, while most of the recommendations I provided are relatively modest, I did not fully account for the practicalities of implementing them. Ongoing power imbalances within the organizations of affiliates and the coalition itself, financial limitations, changing labor law, advancing austerity, and anti-feminist political attacks may all make even modest reform complicated. Hence, future research should further explore the barriers that may prevent the OCBCC and unions from reforming their organizational structures to make themselves more inclusive organizations. Researchers may also want to consider more transformative organizational reform, including consensus-based decision-making models, and the practicalities and limitations of implementing some of these models.

Future research may also want to further explore how the composition of coalitions impacts coalition-building. An unexpected result of this study was that trade unions tended to act as a more progressive force within the OCBCC compared to non-profit child care centers. This challenged the literature, which tends to focus on unions as more regressive and self-serving

affiliates in comparison to grassroots organizations. This suggests that researchers should not assume non-union actors will be more progressive within coalitions. The mandates and organizational structures of each respective coalition affiliate impact how affiliates will participate in the coalition.

Finally, as birth rates continue to stagnate or decline in developed countries, including Canada, future research should explore if and how government will respond to this crisis of social reproduction. How may Canada continue to rely on immigration to grow the country's population and/or how will governments be forced to further expand the welfare state to provide more comprehensive public child care to encourage population replacement. Of particular interest will be whether and to what extent governments will be forced to (re)value child care and child care workers under these conditions, and whether and to what extent racialized, immigrant, and Indigenous households will continue to be excluded from more comprehensive child care provisioning (e.g., extended day care, more easily accessible and better paid parental and maternity leave).

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Appendix A: Members of the Ontario Coalition for Better Day care (1982)

Note: I was unable to identify the names of those who represented these organizations within the coalition.

Position within the OCBCC	Organization Name	Type of Affiliate	Members Representing/Constituencies Served
Steering Council Member	Ontario Federation of Labor	Union	Trade union federation.
Steering Council Member	Ontario Teachers Federation	Professional Association	The Ontario Teachers' Federation is the professional body representing over 160,000 teachers in Ontario's publicly funded schools.
Steering Council Member	Action Daycare	Advocacy Group	Action Day care was founded in 1979 as an organization of parents, teachers, day care workers, representatives from community organizations, women's organizations, and trade unions. It believed that every child had the right to quality day care – paid for by the government – and that day care must become a universal service – although not compulsory – under provincial responsibility.
Steering Council Member	The Ontario Social Development Council	Non-profit	Founded in 1908, the Ontario Social Development Council is a province wide, charitable organization. The organization promotes policies and programs that alleviate poverty, support community development, contribute to individual empowerment, and enhance fundamental human rights, dignity and wellbeing.
Steering Council Member	The Association for Early Childhood Education, Ontario (currently known as the Association for Early Childhood Educators)	Professional Association	Provided certification for qualified child care workers and advocated for professional standards within the child care sector.
Coalition Member	Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario	Professional Association	The Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) was founded in 1918 to represent and promote the interests of women elementary school teachers in Ontario.

Coalition Member	Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association	Trade Union	The Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association is a trade union that represents teachers in publicly funded Roman Catholic schools in the Canadian province of Ontario
Coalition Member	Ontario Public School Men Teacher's Association	Professional Association	Professional association for male teachers in Ontario.
Coalition Member	Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)	Union	The Ontario Public Service Employees Union is a trade union representing public sector employees in the province of Ontario, Canada.
Coalition Member	the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation	Union	The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation is a Canadian trade union which represents public high school teachers, occasional teachers, teaching assistants, psychoeducational consultants, social workers, child and youth counsellors, speech-language pathologist, continuing education teachers, early childhood educators, instructions, and support staff from several Ontario universities.
Coalition Member	The Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers	Professional Association	The Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers created the voluntary, non-legislated, regulatory body, the Ontario College of Certified Social Workers in 1982, then led the campaign, in the 1980s and 1990s, to seek social work legislation.
Coalition Member	the Canadian Union for Public Employees	Union	CUPE represents workers in health care, emergency services, education, early learning and child care, municipalities, social services, libraries, utilities, transportation, airlines and more.
Coalition Member	Congress of Canadian Women	Advocacy Group	The Congress of Canadian Women was a feminist organization that was created in March 1950, merging several organizations, including the Housewives and Consumers Association.
Coalition Member	International Women's Day Committee	Advocacy Group	A socialist-feminist group that operated on the principle that mass action is the most effective instrument for change. The group believed that the oppression of women impacted every facet of people's lives and that the liberation of women would require fundamental changes in the structure of society. The group held bi-weekly meetings in Toronto from 1978 until 1987. In 1987, IWDC changed its name to Toronto Socialist Feminist Action (TSFA) (*International Women's Day Committee (IWDC)/Toronto Socialist Feminist Action (TFSA*), n.d.).

Coalition Member	National Action Committee on the Status of Women	Advocacy Group	The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) was a feminist organization that existed from 1971 to 2007 to pressure the Canadian government to implement the recommendations of the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada.
Coalition Member	Ontario Committee on the Status of Women	Advocacy Group	The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women was formed in 1971 to advocate for the implementation of the provincial aspects of the recommendations provided by the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.
Coalition Member	Ontario Federation of Students (currently known as the Canadian Federation of Students)	Advocacy Group	The Ontario Federation of Students was formed to provide students with an effective and united voice and create space and opportunity for students across the province to act together to create change on and off campus.
Coalition Member	Ontario Welfare Council (OWC)	Advocacy Group	Established in 1908, the OWC has advocated for anti-poverty and social development measures related to child care, housing, welfare reform, and social services.
Coalition Member	Ontario Association of Family Service Agencies	Advocacy Group	An advocate for regional Family Service Agencies in Ontario and the provision of community-based services. Date of establishment is unknown.

Source: (Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (formerly Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, n.d.; The Ontario Federation of Labour, 1990)

Appendix B: Members of The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (2023-2024)

Position within the OCBCC	Organization/Individual Name	Type	Members Representing/Constituencies Served
Executive Officer:Member-at-Large	Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) / Christina Gilligan	Union	CUPE is Canada's largest union, with 715,000 members across the country. CUPE represents workers in health care, emergency services, education, early learning and child care, municipalities, social services, libraries, utilities, transportation, airlines and more ('About us', n.d).
Executive Officer:President	Compass Early Learning and care / Sheila Olan-MacLean	Child Care Center	Child care center serving East-Central Ontario. With a budget of $20M, 500+ staff and 50+ home child care providers, Compass offers 42 high-quality licensed centers and over 50 licensed homes serving over 4,000 families. (Compass Early Learning & care, n.d.).
Executive Officer:Vice President	Creative Beginnings / Christa O'Connor	Child Care Center	Creative Beginnings child care Center is a licensed non-profit charitable organization committed to providing exceptional child care to the community and the diverse families we serve" (Creative Beginnings child care Center, n.d).
Executive Officer:Secretary	Service à l'enfance Aladin child care Services / Michel Laflamme	Child Care Center	Aladin child care Services' mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate environment for children aged six weeks to 12 years. (Service à l'enfance Aladin child care Services, n.d).
Executive Officer:Treasurer	Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, Ottawa	Individual Member	N/A

Board member	Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario / Shailja Jain	Advocacy Organization	"The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario has been the professional association for ECEs in Ontario for 71 years" (AECEO, n.d).
Board member	YWCA / Leah Wilson	Child Care Center	YWCA centers provide full-day child care, parenting programs, teen mother programs, and child-minding programs for women in education and training programs.
Board member	Early Years Professionals Rise UP T.O. / Lisa Johnston	Advocacy Organization	Representing RECEs and other child care workers.
Board member	Superior Children's Center / Jody Renaud	Child Care Center	Child care center serving Wawa in Northern Ontario.
Board member	Discovery Early Learning & Care / Tracy Saarikoski	Child Care Center	"Discovery Early Learning & care is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to providing children, families, and professionals with opportunities to learn through relationship building, collaboration, inquiry and play" (Discovery Early Learning and care, n.d).
Board member	L'association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario / Sylvie Charron	Child Care Center	A community for Francophone educators, parents, child care managers, and students.
Board member	Ontario Federation of Labor / Chandra Li Paul	Union	"The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) serves as an umbrella group for working people and their unions. From our inception in 1957, the OFL has grown to represent over one million Ontario workers belonging to more than 1,500 locals from 54 affiliated unions, making us Canada's largest labor federation." (The Ontario Federation of Labor, n.d.a, n.d.b).
Board Member	CUPE 2484 / Jessica Tomas	Union	A union that represents staff members at The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.
Board Member	Erin Filby, Toronto	Individual Member	N/A

Board Member	Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, Ottawa	Individual Member	N/A
Provincial council: Organization representative	Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario / Federico Caravjal	Union	“ETFO represents approximately 83,000 members that include public elementary teachers, occasional teachers, education support personnel, professional support personnel and designated early childhood educators.” (ETFO, n.d.).
Provincial council: Organization representative	Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association / Peter MacDonald	Union	“All teachers employed by a Catholic school board in Ontario to teach on a full-time, part-time, or occasional basis, or in a continuing education program, are automatically statutory members of the Association.” (Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association, n.d.).
Provincial council: Organization representative	Ontario Public Service Employees Union / Dianne Clarabut/ Luisa Quarta	Union	“OPSEU/SEFPO represents approximately 180,000 members across Ontario. They are full- and part-time workers, young and old. They trace their ancestry to all parts of the globe – as diverse a group as you could imagine. Our members work for the Ontario government, inside community colleges, for the LCBO, in the health care sector, and they are employed in a wide range of community agencies within the broader public sector” (OPSEU/SEFPO, n.d.a, n.d.b).
Provincial council: Organization representative	Ontario Federation of Labor / Chandra Li Paul	Union	“The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) serves as an umbrella group for working people and their unions. From our inception in 1957, the OFL has grown to represent over one million Ontario workers belonging to more than 1,500 locals from 54 affiliated unions, making us Canada’s largest labor federation.” (The Ontario Federation of Labor, n.d.a, n.d.b).
Provincial council: Organization representative	Unifor / Tracey Ramsey	Union	“Unifor is Canada’s largest private sector union, with more than 315,000 members across the country, working in every major sector of the Canadian economy.” (UNIFOR, n.d.a, n.d.b).

Provincial council: Organization representative	Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Association/ Rosemary Judd-Archer	Union	"We are more than 60,000 members strong. We are more than teachers.We are educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, attendance counselors and many other education professionals." (OSSTF/FEESO, n.d.a, n.d.b).
Provincial council member: Organization representative	Canadian Federation of University Women / Margaret McGovern / Wendy Taylor	Advocacy Organization	CFUW is a non-partisan and self-funded advocacy organization that has 95 Clubs in every province across Canada which gives our members the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals who are dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls.
Provincial council member: Organization representative	Ontario Campaign 2000 / Mithilen Mathipalan	Advocacy Organization	"Since its inception, Campaign 2000 has grown to become a vibrant network of national, regional and local partner organizations that actively work on child/family issues from diverse perspectives. There are over 120 national, community and provincial partners actively involved in the work of Campaign 2000" (Campaign 2000, n.d.).
Provincial council member: Organization representative	Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario / Shailja Jain	Advocacy Organization	"The Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario has been the professional association for ECEs in Ontario for 71 years" (AECEO, n.d).
Provincial council member: Organization representative	Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) / Christina Gilligan	Union	CUPE is Canada's largest union, with 715,000 members across the country. CUPE represents workers in health care, emergency services, education, early learning and child care, municipalities, social services, libraries, utilities, transportation, airlines and more ('About us', n.d).
Provincial council member: Organization representative	YWCA / Leah Wilson	Child Care Center	YWCA centers provide full-day child care, parenting programs, teen mother programs, and child-minding programs for women in education and training programs.
Provincial council member: Regional representative –	Toronto Community for Better Child Care / Donna Spreitzer/Amy O'Neil	Advocacy Organization	"We are a member-based organization comprising early learning and child care centers, community groups and individuals from the Greater Toronto Area. Our members are Early childhood Educators (ECEs), Early Years professionals, child care center directors,

Greater Toronto Area			Toronto-based union locals and families" (Toronto Community for Better Child Care, n.d.).
Provincial council member: Regional representative – Greater Toronto Area	Early Years Professionals Rise UP T.O. / Lisa Johnston	Advocacy Organization	Representing RECEs and other child care workers.
Provincial Council Member: Regional Representative - Southwest	RisingOaks Early Learning Ontario / Lori Prospero	Child Care Center	Providing child care, extended day care, and camp care in the Waterloo region.
Provincial Council Member: Regional Representative - Southwest	Creative Beginnings / Christa O'Connor	Child Care Center	Creative Beginnings Child Care Center is a licensed non-profit charitable organization committed to providing exceptional child care to the community and the diverse families we serve" (Creative Beginnings Child Care Center, n.d).
Provincial council Member: Regional representative – Eastern and Southeast	Child Care Now / Rianne Mahon/Amanda Quance	Advocacy Organization	"We are supported by a broad membership base of individuals, families, child care programs, regional and pan-Canadian groups and organizations, and are overseen by a voluntary Board of Directors" (Child Care Now, n.d).
Provincial council Member: Regional representative – Eastern and Southeast	Service à l'enfance Aladin child care Services / Michel Laflamme	Child Care Center	Aladin child care Services' mission is to provide a safe and developmentally appropriate environment for children aged six weeks to 12 years. (Service à l'enfance Aladin child care Services, n.d).
Provincial council Member: Regional representative – Northwest	Thunder Bay ECE Unite! / Willow Lem	Advocacy Organization	"This group for likeminded individuals who reside in NWO involved in the child care sector such as parents, guardians, RECE, ECA or working in the scope of practice who want to make a change within our sector" (Thunder Bay ECE Unite, n.d).
Provincial council Member: Regional representative – Northwest	Superior Children's Center / Jody Renaud	Child Care Center	Child care center serving Wawa in Northern Ontario.

Provincial council Member: Regional representative – Northeast	Discovery Early Learning & Care / Tracy Saarikoski	Child Care Center	"Discovery Early Learning & care is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to providing children, families, and professionals with opportunities to learn through relationship building, collaboration, inquiry and play" (Discovery Early Learning and care, n.d).
Provincial council Member: Regional representative – Northeast	Vacancy		
Provincial council member: Regional representative - Central	First Adventure child Development Centers / Debbie Milne	Child Care Center	Providing child care in Belleville, Ontario.
Provincial council member: Regional representative - Central	Compass Early Learning and care / Sheila Olan-MacLean	Child Care Center	Child care center serving East-Central Ontario. With a budget of $20M, 500+ staff and 50+ home child care providers, Compass offers 42 high-quality licensed centers and over 50 licensed homes serving over 4,000 families. (Compass Early Learning & care, n.d.).
Provincial council member: Special Constituency - Francophone	L'association francophone à l'éducation des services à l'enfance de l'Ontario / Sylvie Charron	Child Care Center	A community for Francophone educators, parents, child care managers, and students.
Provincial council member: 2484 Representative	CUPE 2484 / Jessica Tomas	Union	A union that represents staff members at The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.
Individual Member	Athina Basiliadis, Ottawa (CUPE Local 2204)	Individual Member	Athina is a member of CUPE 2204, which represents over 300 workers employed in community-based child care and parent-staff co-operative programs in Eastern Ontario.
Individual Member	Tanice Donaldson, Windsor	Individual Member	N/A
Individual Member	Thơ Nguyen, Toronto	Individual Member	N/A

Individual Member	Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, Ottawa	Individual Member	N/A
Individual Member	Erin Filby, Toronto	Individual Member	N/A

Source: (The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, n.d.a)

Appendix C: The OCBCC Campaign Tracker

- 1981: After holding a series of public hearings on daycare throughout the province, the OCBCC crafted a proposal known as *Daycare Deadline 1990* that demanded the government a) provide child care as a public good, by immediately creating 10 000 subsidized daycare spaces, b) provide universally accessible daycare by 1990 and c) to create a government task force on daycare needs. The proposal provided the backbone for organizing and lobbying between 1981 and 1987.
- 1986: The OCBCC held its Fourth Annual Conference and Lobby at George Brown College where a workshop provided a step-by-step guide to unionizing your daycare center or home daycare providers, demonstrating the OCBCC's pro-union stance.
- 1987: The OCBCC and unions hosted public forums as part of a larger campaign known as the *Kids not Cash* campaign that failed to pressure Premier Peterson's government to make funding for non-profit daycare a priority after he supported the creation of 10,000 new child care spaces in the commercial sector.
- 1988: The OCBCC, CUPE, Child Care Now successfully campaigned to cancel Mulroney's Bill C-144 that would have removed binding standards for how the provinces and territories use federal funds towards child care.
- 1989: The OCBCC, NAC, and the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Workers transported donated cookies collected from daycare centers across Canada on a VIA Rail train to the office of Finance Minister, Michael Wilson. This campaign unsuccessfully

attempted to pressure Mulroney's federal government to reverse a planned cut of $4 billion earmarked for creating 200,000 subsidized child care spaces.

- 1992: The OCBCC, alongside the OFL and Parkdale Community Legal Services, sponsored a workshop featuring 150 female labor leaders to discuss establishing a central registry list for homeworkers and domestic workers and their employers as a preliminary step towards organizing in a union.
- 1995
    - June 26: Only 18 days after Harris was elected, child care workers, lesbian and gay rights activists, anti-poverty activists, social assistance recipients, and feminists, acting in coalition under the direction of NAC, protested across the province as part of the "Embarrass Harris" campaign, rallying more than two thousand people to kick off a summer of growing protests Harris' promised austerity agenda.
    - July 20: CUPE Local 2484 organized a walkout/protest attended by a thousand people at Queen's Park to protest against a planned $1 billion in cuts scheduled to be announced on July 21st by Finance Minister, Ernie Eves.
    - November 13: In response to the proposed elimination of direct daycare subsidies, which were to be replaced with vouchers, the Metro Coalition for Better Child Care, a local affiliate of the OCBCC, organized a hundred small rallies across Metro Toronto involving approximately 5,000 child care workers, parents, and children.
    - November 24: The OCBCC took the protest province-wide, resulting in 800 centers fully closed for the day, with 400 more partially closing, impacting 50,000

children. After the protests, Harris' government backed away from replacing direct daycare subsidies with vouchers.

- 1996: In response to the proposed Ecker Reform that would have cut workers' salaries by 25 percent, raised child-staff ratios and applied less stringent requirements for buildings that house day-care centers the OCBCC hosted a rally at Queen's Park that brought hundreds of rain-drenched parents and advocates to the steps of the Legislative Assembly. Fortunately, the rally exerted sufficient pressure that Harris' government cancelled the Ecker reform.
- 1999: In response to Chretien's government releasing a federal discussion paper that called for the creation of a multi-billion-dollar universal child care program, the OCBCC helped circulate orange postcards to thousands of children in Toronto. These postcards, sent to a Liberal cabinet retreat failed to convince the government to lift impoverished children out of poverty and create a universal child care system.
- 2001: The OCBCC and CUPE worked together to sponsor parades across thirty Ontario municipalities to protest child care workers' low wages in 2001. That same year, the coalition also hosted open workshops across Ontario, which formed the basis of a report that called for the development of a Quebec-style program providing affordable, high-quality regulated care, rather than the free-market voucher system the Harris government preferred.
- 2001: The OCBCC campaigned Harris to use flexible federal funds for public and non-profit child care expansion, hosting open workshops with families and workers across Ontario where they discussed how Ontario should spend the $844 million given to the province through the 2001-2006 Early childhood Development Initiative. Unfortunately,

the public forums had little effect on Harris, who spent none of Ontario's first installment of the $114 million total on child care.

- 2005: After Martin announced his government would spend $5 billion over 5 years to create a national early learning and child care system the OCBCC and the OFL pioneered the *Child Care Build It Right* campaign calling on Martin's federal government to issue the funding directly to centers, rather than as supplements or vouchers; put money into a capital fund so centers can expand; and provide wage increases for child care workers; and child care fees of no more than $10-per-day.
- 2005: In 2005, the OCBCC, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), and Child Care Now tried and failed to convince the Ontario public to re-elect Martin to protect the national child care agreements he recently established with the provinces and territories, by speaking to the media and producing media releases in hopes of saving the national child care plan.
- 2006: Upon the election of former Conservative Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, the OCBCC tried and failed to save the child care agreements Martin had made with the provinces and territories by mounting a campaign called, *Code Blue for Child Care*, collecting 100,000 signatures over the course of six weeks from parents. Harper replaced a national child care system with a $100 Universal Child Care Benefit (UC) given to all families regardless of income.
- 2014: The OCBCC, CUPE, the Canadian Labor Congress, the Canadian Child Care Federation, the Child Care Advocacy Association, and the Child Care Research and Resource Unit held a national conference on child care to create consensus and momentum around a national child care plan preceding the next federal election.

- 2015: On the heels of the 2014 conference, the OCBCC raised the profile of child care preceding the 2015 federal election, starting the twitter hashtag campaign #votechildcare 2015 and planning picnics at public parks across the province. This campaign may have influenced the platforms of federal leader candidates, including NDP party leader, Thomas Mulcair, who announced his party's eight-year plan to create 1 million child care spaces in the country that cost no more than $15-a-day, but would lose to Liberal Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau who called a national child care system "impractical and unfair" upon being elected to office.
- 2021:
    - April: The OCBCC, AECEO, and the Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care started a letter-writing campaign sent to Ontario mayors demanding that RECEs and child care providers be prioritized for voluntary COVID-19 vaccinations. This effort, seen to be ineffective by some RECEs, was followed by the threat of a walkout for two child care centers in Waterloo, effectively pushing Ford to quickly prioritize child care workers for vaccines.
    - July: The OCBCC and AECEO *Rise Up for Child Care* campaign asked parents and workers to call Premier Ford to sign a bilateral agreement with the federal government, which Ford eventually did on March 28th, 2022.
- 2022:
    - January: The OCBCC, the AECEO, and CUPE came together again to organize a day of action "phone blitz" that failed to push Ford's provincial government to reinstate PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing and COVID-19 case reporting in child care centers, after this was cancelled in December 2021.

        - The OCBCC and the AECEO collected and delivered 13,000 signatures to Queen's Park, successfully pushing Ford's government to make non-ECE child care staff eligible for a $2-per-hour wage enhancement during the pandemic.
    - March: The OCBCC and the AECEO shared the stories of ECEs to highlight the severity of the workforce crisis. The campaign demanded the Ford government ensure that a wage grid and decent work standards be incorporated into the federal-provincial agreement that would establish $10-per-day child care in the province. The OCBCC is still campaigning Ford to establish a wage grid and solve the workforce crisis.

Appendix D: Interview Guides

OCBCC Executive & Other Advocate Interview Guide

Introductory Question

1. In the past and currently, what is and has your role been in the child care advocacy movement?

Coalition Formation Questions

1. Can you tell me about the founding of the OCBCC?
2. What kinds of economic and political conditions, circumstances and events led to the need to form this child care coalition?
3. What kind of support do unions provide to the OCBCC?
4. What are the main objectives of the OCBCC and has this changed through time?

Coalition-Building Questions

1. What was collaboration like between unions and the other affiliates of the OCBCC?
2. How were decisions made by the OCBCC in determining the objectives and tactics of the coalition? Who made the decisions in determining the coalition's goals and strategies? Do you recall specific individuals involved in decision-making in these coalitions and their roles in their respective organizations and the coalitions themselves?

3. What role did the public play in shaping the coalition, including its objectives and strategies?
4. What strategies, campaigns or actions did the OCBCC rely on to engage the public and pressure politicians?
5. What was the public's reaction to the different strategies, campaigns or tactics used by the OCBCC, and how did they participate in the coalition?
6. Were there disagreements between unions organizers and community organizers, how were they resolved?
7. If there was conflict in the OCBCC, how did this impact the coalition's objectives and strategy? How was such conflict managed?

Coalition Consequences Questions

1. How successful was the OCBCC in changing public opinion and advancing legislative reform? What objectives were realized, and which objectives were not? Who gained and who did not (e.g., service providers/child care workers, child care recipients, organizations/unions etc.)?
2. What do you think contributed to the successes made by the OCBCC? When the OCBCC was ineffective, why do you think this was?
3. What needs did the coalitions prioritize? For instance, were there specific groups or sectors of workers that the coalition especially supported?

Magic Wand Question

1. If you had a magic wand, what do you think would be the ideal arrangements for how children could be raised in Ontario? How would this solution benefit both children, parents, and child care workers, including the workers you represent?

Misc.

1. Is there anything else I need to know to understand coalition building around child care advocacy? Is there any particular person or persons I should speak to, in your organization or in a community group you collaborated with?

Union Staffer Interview Guide

Introductory Question

1. In the past and currently, what is and has your role been in the child care advocacy movement?

Internal Union Dynamics

1. What is your union's interest in child care? What are the main objectives of your union regarding child care?
2. How does your union figure out what parents and child care workers need? Who does your union consult? Who makes the decision about what's important and worth fighting for?
3. If you could broaden the scope of your union's advocacy work done on behalf of child care and child care workers, are there any particular issues around child care advocacy, which are currently not a priority for the organization, that you'd like to advance?

Coalition Formation Questions

1. Can you tell me what the relationship is like between your union and the OCBCC?
2. How does your union contribute to decision-making within the OCBCC?
3. Were there were specific disagreements between your union and the OCBCC, how were they resolved?

4. How does your union support the OCBCC? Has this changed through time?
5. Can you remember any notable joint campaigns between your union and the OCBCC since the early 1990s? How did your union support the campaign in that case?
6. What strategies, campaigns, or actions did the OCBCC rely on?
7. What were these campaigns so important at the time?

Misc.

1. Is there anything else I need to know to understand coalition building around child care advocacy? Is there any particular person or persons I should speak to, in your organization or in a community group you collaborated with?

RECE Interview Guide

Introductory Question

2. In the past and currently, how have you been involved in early childhood education?

ECEC Sector

3. In your opinion, what does early childhood education need? For workers, parents, and children?
4. Are you unionized? What role have unions played in improving conditions for ECEs, parents and children?
5. If relevant: What troubles have you encountered trying to unionize the center?
6. What kind of opportunities are there to participate in your union? What has that been like?

Activism

1. What is your opinion on the organizations that are advocating for ECEs and the child care sector right now? Are they doing a good job?
2. Do you have opportunity to participate in the OCBCC, the AECEO, and others?
3. Would you have any recommendations for how these organizations and others could better push for change in the child care sector?

Magic Wand Question

1. If you had a magic wand, what do you think would be the ideal arrangements for how children could be raised in Ontario? How would this solution benefit both children, parents, and child care workers, including the workers you represent?

Misc.

1. Is there anything else I need to know about child care and child care activism advocacy that I should have asked about but I didn't?

Appendix E: REB Consent Form

YORK
UNIVERSITÉ
UNIVERSITY

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Certificate #:	**STU 2021-016**
Approval Period:	**02/04/21-02/04/22**

ETHICS APPROVAL

To: **Kaitlin Peters**
Graduate Student of Sociology
ktln.peters@gmail.com

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor, Research Ethics
(on behalf of Veronika Jamnik, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: Thursday, February 4, 2021

Title: **The Ontario Federation of Labour and Coalition-Building Praxis: Struggling Against the Exploitation of Unpaid Labour?**

Risk Level: ☒ Minimal Risk ☐ More than Minimal Risk

Level of Review: ☒ Delegated Review ☐ Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, **"The Ontario Federation of Labour and Coalition-Building Praxis: Struggling Against the Exploitation of Unpaid Labour?"** has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics (ore@yorku.ca) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, **"RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE".**

Please note that prior to commencing any research activities, researchers are advised to review the latest updates on research involving human participants at:
https://www.yorku.ca/research/researchers-faqs/

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email at: acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM
Sr. Manager and Policy Advisor,
Office of Research Ethics

RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE

Upon receipt of an ethics approval certificate, researchers are reminded that they are required to ensure that the following measures are undertaken so as to ensure on-going compliance with Senate and TCPS ethics guidelines:

1. **RENEWALS:** Research Ethics Approval certificates are subject to annual renewal. **Failure to renew an ethics approval certificate or (to notify ORE that no further research involving human participants will be undertaken) will result in the closure of the protocol.** No further research activities may be undertaken until such time as a new protocol has been reviewed and approved. **Further, it may result in suspension of research cost fund and access to research funds may be suspended/withheld**;

2. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments must be reviewed and approved **PRIOR** to undertaking/making the proposed amendments to an approved ethics protocol;

3. **END OF PROJECT**: ORE must be notified when a project is complete;

4. **ADVERSE EVENTS**: Adverse events must be reported to ORE as soon as possible;

5. **POST APPROVAL MONITORING:**
    a. More than minimal risk research may be subject to post approval monitoring as per TCPS guidelines;
    b. A spot sample of minimal risk research may similarly be subject to Post Approval Monitoring as per TCPS guidelines.

FORMS: As per the above, the following forms relating to on-going research ethics compliance are available on the Research website:

a. Renewal
b. Amendment
c. End of Project
d. Adverse Event