WHO IS THE "WE" OF THE CCAAC? MOBILIZING INSIGHTS INTO THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDCARE MOVEMENT ACTOR'S COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

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LARGER PROJECT

- This study is part of a larger SSHRC funded project examining the role of professionalism in the Canadian childcare advocacy movement on the national level and in 3 provinces: Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

- Social movements are a distinct social process, consisting of the *mechanisms* [italics added] through which actors engage in collective action" (della Porta and Diani, 2006, p.20).
- Collective identity: "...the shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences and solidarity" (Taylor & Whitter, 1999, p.170).
- Shared sense of belonging and "common purpose" goes beyond any one event or campaign – collective identity persists over time and across contexts. (della Porta & Diani, 2009, p.21)

WHY THE CCAAC?

- Leader in Canadian childcare advocacy addressing the larger system issues
- Focus specifically on advocacy for national childcare policy (i.e., "publicly funded, inclusive, quality, non-profit child care system")
- Arose out of Winnipeg conference 30 years ago
- Would seemingly have less restrictions on its actions and demands than national workforce sector organization

CCAAC MEMBERS AND VISIBILITY

- Socially and politically committed actors engaged in a hegemonic/ideological struggle challenging Canada' current conceptualization of childcare as a private, market-based commodity
- Individuals and organizations
- Today CCAAC's public visibility is largely limited to a website that has only very recently become active (in anticipation of the 2015 election)

WHY 2005 AND 2008?

2005 – high point	2008 – low point
•Childcare a priority issue for the leading Liberal government	•Childcare was not on the national policy agenda
•Early Learning and Childcare Foundations program had been initiated	•Conservative government had cancelled ELCC Foundations program and replaced with UCCB
•Bilateral agreements between the federal and provincial government were in the process of being signed	•Funding to all national childcare SMOs had been cut
•CCAAC had paid, central leader and project funding	•CCAAC largely defunded and working in partnership with other groups

OVERARCHING QUESTION

- How has the CCAAC constructed its collective identity during a high point and low point in Canadian childcare advocacy?
  - What has held the movement together and propelled it to keep moving during a high and low time?
  - What can we learn from this in our current socio-political climate – especially with an election on the horizon?

METHODOLOGY: CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

- A critical "perspective, position or attitude" (Van Dijk, 2009, p.62)
- Bridges language studies with social, political and the natural sciences
- Characterizes "scholars rather than their methods" in that CDA researchers are "socio-politically committed to social equality and justice" (Van Dijk, 2009, p.63).

DATA COLLECTION

- Publically available media releases published by the CCAAC in 2005 and 2008
- Chose media releases because they most clearly represent how the group wishes to represent or identify itself to a broad audience

2005	2008
Total 25 media releases listed on website	Total 6 media releases listed on website
9 links functional	4 links functional

CDA ANALYTICAL APPROACH

3 Levels of analysis (Fairclough, 2010)

Text	Discourse	Sociocultural
What collective identities are constructed and how?	Who is involved in practices around the the text and in what role? What genre, style and mode does the text insatiate?	What social factors impact on the text and discourse practice?

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

1. CCAAC's collective identity appears to shift from an insider (2005) to an outsider location (2008) in relation to the federal government
2. Shift in who represented CCAAC's CI – from ED in 2005 to membership base and allies (Code Blue) in 2008
3. In contrast to the cautious and future-oriented (i.e., "will") language used in 2005, language was laden with values and emotions (i.e., "must") reflecting a changed externally communicated collective identity in 2008

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN GOING FORWARD?

- Collective identity is a key resource for childcare movement organizations – how do we best draw strength from this seemingly intangible resource?
- Conscious decisions about who to include and how to approach advocacy
- Counter-intuitively, this analysis highlight an overall diffused approach to collective identity construction and communication during a high time in the childcare movement

QUESTIONS FOR CHILDCARE ADVOCATES TO CONSIDER…

o Do we mould our externally communicated collective voice to connect with other like-minded individuals and groups or do we remain explicitly (and exclusively) committed to the core, often most controversial principles?

o To what degree can we mould representations of ourselves without compromising our core motivations for the work we do?

o Must the externally communicated CI be the same as the CI from which we draw our strength?

FULL REFERENCE

o Richardson, B. & Langford, R. (2015). A shifting collective identity: A critical discourse analysis of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada's public messaging in 2005 and 2008. *Critical Discourse Studies, 12*(1), 78-96.