Tax, Time and Territory:
The Development of Early Childhood Education and Child Care in Canada and Great Britain

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the evolution of Britain’s and Canada’s early childhood education and child care (ECEC) sectors, especially the growing number of policy initiatives adopted in both countries over the past thirty years. I contend that policy coalitions in both countries have been able to promote gradual but nevertheless important policy changes by grafting new purposes onto inherited institutions. The result of these incremental changes has been ECEC systems that often appear incoherent and disjointed.

The dissertation also explores how Canada and Great Britain have increasingly followed distinct trajectories. In particular, I demonstrate that while a growing proportion of ECEC services are provided by the commercial sector in Britain, Canada has instead increasingly relied on the non-profit sector to deliver such services. I contend in this dissertation that differences between the two cases are the result of distinct policy coalitions that have emerged in both countries. I make the case that the character of these coalitions and their capacity to promote, institutionalize, protect and further their policy preferences are the result of, first, the sequence of policy development and, second, the territorial organization of the welfare state in both countries. In short, as a result of the federal nature of Canada, Canadian child care activists were able to ensure the early institutionalization of a regulatory framework that constrained the expansion of for-profit services. By the time Britain adopted a national framework, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, on the other hand, the for-profit sector had already established a strong presence.

Covering more than one hundred twenty five years of policy development in both countries, this dissertation draws both on extensive archival research and on interviews with policy-makers and ECEC activists.
Acknowledgments

An old friend once told me that a Ph.D. was a soul-destroying machine. That I managed to complete this dissertation with my soul relatively intact is a testament to the tremendous support I received over the years from professors, friends and family members.

I must first acknowledge the extraordinary patience, dedication and especially humanity of my supervisor Richard Simeon. He never stopped believing that this dissertation would one day be completed, even when I gave him every reason to believe otherwise. Richard often mentioned that he knew very little about the policy sector I was working on, yet he provided immensely insightful suggestions throughout the writing of this dissertation. He was also extremely generous in editing my occasionally awkward English. I feel privileged to have been one of Richard’s last graduate students, and I hope that one day I will be as good a mentor to my students as he was to me.

The other members of my dissertation committee also showed the same level of dedication and support. Linda White’s passion for early childhood education policy is contagious and her knowledge of the sector simply extraordinary. I have learned so much from her and I am looking forward to many more years of debate with her about the best way to encourage the expansion of child care services in Canada. Rod Haddow provided crucial suggestions at a key moment that have made this dissertation significantly better. As for Joe Wong, he continuously encouraged me to be ambitious, while often reminding me that, at the end, everything was going to be OK. Phil Triadafilopoulos and Keith Banting also made the dissertation defence a wonderful experience.

At the University of Toronto, besides my dissertation committee, I have learned much about what being a good (and decent) academic means from David Cameron, Neil Nevitte and Graham White. The staff of the Department of Political Science is simply extraordinary and helped me in too many ways to mention here. I especially want to thank Joan Kallis for constantly making my life easier.

I have benefited over the years from the support of many members of the broader academic community. Since my undergraduate days at McGill University, Alain-G Gagnon has been an extraordinary mentor. Over the course of writing this dissertation, he provided me a second academic home at the Université du Québec à Montréal when I was
in Montreal and much appreciated research contracts when I ran out of scholarship money (scholarship money for which I thank the Fonds québécois de recherche sur la société et la culture, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the University of Toronto Vivienne Poy Chancellor’s Fellowship in the Humanities and Social Sciences). I also want to thank Jane Jenson, Rianne Mahon and Nicola McEwen for their much-appreciated encouragement over the years, as well as Martha Friendly and Pamela Calder, who introduced me to many members of the child care community and have been immensely generous with their time.

I often joke that it would be hard to find a Montrealer who loves Toronto as much as me. This is largely the by-product of all the amazing friends I have made in the PhD program. I want to thank for their friendship over the years Antoine Bilodeau, Reuven Shlozberg, Marc Hanvelt, Sophie Bourgault, Jan Erk, Sébastien Dallaire, Mary Liston, Sarah Hartley, Genevieve Fuji Johnson, Kristin Good, Ruben Zaiotti, Juan Marsiaj, Erica Fredericksen, Joërg Wittenbrink, Stephen Trott, Jim Farney, Bill Flanick, Vincent Pouliot, Sebastian Baglioni, Vuk Radmilovic, Mike Painter-Main, Deb Thompson, T.R. Schlatter, and the one and only Victor Gomez, fellow member of the CHASS crew. Josh Hjartarson has not only been a supportive colleague with whom I had the amazing pleasure of teaching a course, but a partner in crime since my first year at the University of Toronto. I have gone through the ups and downs of the PhD at the same time as Martin Papillon. He has the dubious record of being the only person to have heard and, in most cases, provided generous suggestions on one of the too many projects I had at one point “settled” on. I could not be happier to now be his colleague at the University of Ottawa. As for Jennifer Wallner and Steve White, they have been the most amazing friends a slightly neurotic PhD student could ever dream of. They are also extraordinary scholars with whom I have had great discussions, mostly over a beer, that have reminded me at times why I wanted to do a PhD in the first place. I feel privileged to have been able to count on their support over the years.

Many friends have also made sure that I would remember that there was a whole world outside academia. Olivier De Champlain and Karine Morneau have been there every step of the way, and I am grateful for all the big and small things they have done for me over the years. Marc-Antoine Fleury provided comic relief both when we were
roommates in Toronto and in subsequent years. In Boston, New York and Toronto, my old McGill friends Alethea Au, Karim Bardeesy, Arjun Koshal and Rachel Pulfer provided much-appreciated occasions to escape from the dissertation, constant encouragement and the occasional reality check. Meghan Warby not only supplied much of the musical soundtrack to which this dissertation was written (including a number of great “motivational” mix-CDs), she provided an extraordinary level of support for which I will be forever grateful. My sister Marie-Claude made sure, over the last few years, in her words, that I would stop dressing like a teenager. I appreciate the clothes, but even more her encouragement at key moments in the course of my PhD.

Finally, it is with a great sense of relief and joy that I can now thank my amazing parents Madeleine and Gilles Turgeon. This dissertation was in so many ways inspired by them. It is about my mother’s strong conviction that women have a right to have both children and a fulfilling career. It is about my father’s belief that the state has a role to play in making sure that kids who, like him, are from some of Canada’s poorest neighbourhoods, have every opportunity to succeed in life. They have gone far and beyond what one might expect of supporting parents. They have always encouraged my interest in politics. They have also provided financial assistance so that I could concentrate on finishing writing this dissertation. But more importantly, when I came to believe at one point that I would not complete my PhD, they refused to let me give up and never lost hope that I would finish this project. C’est donc avec beaucoup d’amour et de gratitude que je leur dédie cette thèse.
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### Abbreviations

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ECEC</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education and Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>LICO</td>
<td>Low Income Cut-Offs</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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**Great Britain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMA</td>
<td>Association of Metropolitan Authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCSF</td>
<td>Department of Children, Schools and Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Department of Education and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>DfEE</td>
<td>Department for Education and Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoH</td>
<td>Department of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHSS</td>
<td>Department of Health and Social Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>EYCDP</td>
<td>Early Years Childcare Development Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>EYDP</td>
<td>Early Years Development Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>EYF</td>
<td>Early Years Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>GLC</td>
<td>Greater London Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPPR</td>
<td>Institute for Public Policy Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEA</td>
<td>Local Education Authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMA</td>
<td>London Metropolitan Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>National Archives of Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCS</td>
<td>National Childcare Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCMA</td>
<td>National Childminders Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDNA</td>
<td>National Day Nursery Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUT</td>
<td>National Union of Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFSTED</td>
<td>Office for Standards in Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td>Pre-School Learning Alliance</td>
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<td>PPA</td>
<td>Pre-School Playgroups Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>Public Record Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMA</td>
<td>Working Mother’s Association</td>
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<td>WNC</td>
<td>Workplace Nurseries Campaign</td>
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**Canada**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADCO</td>
<td>Association of Day Care Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AECEO</td>
<td>Association of Early Childhood Education in Ontario</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Canada Assistance Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCAAA</td>
<td>Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCEC</td>
<td>Child Care Expense Deduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCCF</td>
<td>Canadian Child Care Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCMA</td>
<td>Child Care Management Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDCAA</td>
<td>Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHST</td>
<td>Canada Health and Social Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSD</td>
<td>Canadian Council on Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWC</td>
<td>Canadian Welfare Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUPE</td>
<td>Canadian Union of Public Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECDA</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIP</td>
<td>Local Initiative Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td>National Archives of Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACWS</td>
<td>National Action Committee on the Status of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCBCC</td>
<td>Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCBDC</td>
<td>Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFL</td>
<td>Ontario Federation of Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OWW</td>
<td>Ontario Working Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWW</td>
<td>Saskatchewan Working Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUFA</td>
<td>Social Union Framework Agreement</td>
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In his 2004 Joseph Rowntree Centenary Lecture, then-British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown argued that Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services were becoming one of the highest priorities for his government: “not just the biggest gap in provision and next frontier for us to cross, but one of the single most important investments the welfare state can make.”\(^1\) Brown’s focus on investing in children, a dominant theme of New Labour since its election in 1997, also found echo in political and policy circles on the other side of the Atlantic. Paul Martin, first as finance minister and then as Prime Minister, started to increasingly focus on ECEC as the “single best investment we can make in their future and in ours.”\(^2\)

This dissertation looks at how policy-makers in Canada and Great Britain have responded to the challenge of “investing” in children. This challenge is the result of both the transformation of the traditional family structure as well as a scientific discourse that stresses the benefit of early childhood education. Consequently, government spending on ECEC services has significantly increased in most countries of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and so has the number of children who have access to regulated ECEC spaces. Policy-makers have adopted, both in Canada and Great Britain, an important number of initiatives that seems at odds with the image of contemporary welfare states as “immovable objects.”\(^3\)

The expansion of ECEC services has occurred unevenly across countries, including among liberal welfare states like Canada and Great Britain that are said to rely on a market approach to the delivery of services. While Britain’s ECEC system has expanded at an extraordinary pace over the last ten years, Canada is now the OECD member that spends the smallest proportion of its GDP on ECEC services (Table 1.1). In

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comparison to other Anglo-Saxon welfare states, the rate of access to licensed child care services is especially low in Canada (Table 1.2). However, the lower rate of access to regulated services is a reflection of the fact that Canada has avoided the path adopted by many other Anglo-Saxon countries, which is a rapid expansion of for-profit services made possible by a low-paid workforce and/or the public financing of such services. In fact, rather than declining, the proportion of services provided by the not-for-profit sector has gradually increased in Canada over the past forty years.

The trajectory of both countries challenges some of the theoretical approaches that have come to dominate the study of the welfare state over the last decade. First, the extraordinary number of initiatives adopted in both countries over the last twenty years challenges the focus on stability associated with the dominant welfare regime approach. Second, the growing differences between the two countries also defy the perspective of some welfare state specialists who argue that, under the pressure of globalization, Anglo-Saxon welfare states are more likely to experience some form of retrenchment that reinforces their liberal character and contributes to their convergence.

This dissertation explores the evolution of two liberal welfare states that have not converged over time: Britain and Canada. What factors account for Canada’s and Britain’s growing policy divergence? Why has Canada not followed the market approach to the expansion of child care services adopted by other Anglo-Saxon countries? In this dissertation, I argue that the grafting of new purposes onto distinct inherited institutions is leading both to important changes in contemporary welfare states and to increasing variations among ECEC production regimes. This latter concept, developed in chapter two, allows researchers to go beyond a sole focus on the number of regulated ECEC places, incorporating often neglected dimensions in the comparative study of child care such as the mix of providers and the social control of the state over the sector. Variations in such production regimes are largely the result of distinct policy coalitions that have emerged in both countries. I make the case that the character of these coalitions and their capacity to promote, institutionalize, protect and further their policy preferences are the result of the sequence of policy development and the territorial organization of the welfare state in both countries.
Table 1.1 Public Expenditures on ECEC services, Selected OECD Countries, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Public Expenditure as Percentage of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Canada, centralized regulations in most Canadian provinces *preceded* the expansion of services to respond to the needs of working parents, limiting the expansion of the commercial sector. In Britain, on the other hand, national regulations were put in place *after* a significant expansion of parental and commercial child care services. Differences in the timing of the introduction of regulations are, on the other hand, very due to the territorial organization of the state. In the post-war period, the federal nature of Canada provided child care activists venues in which they could promote the more generous implementation of welfare programs and the establishment of regulations over child care, both making Canada an early innovator in the provision of ECEC services.

These regulations had two significant feedback effects on the adoption of subsequent policies. First, the “provincialization” of child care services meant that provinces protective of their autonomy occupied the policy field, making it difficult at a later date for the federal government to use its greater fiscal capacity to intervene in the policy sector. Second, the political strength of the non-profit child care sector in many provinces meant that the national debate in Canada often largely revolved around the impact of commercial child care providers on both the quality of child care and the working conditions of child care workers.

This dissertation stresses that there was nothing inevitable about the Canadian story, as the for-profit sector was providing a majority of child care services in the late 1960s. However, over a long period of time, the Canadian child care movement was able to slowly, but gradually promote important policy changes that transformed the ECEC
landscape. They did so first by establishing contacts with organizations, such as labour unions and NDP provincial parties, which provided them with the necessary financial and political resources to advocate important reforms. Second, in many province they were able to promote the institutionalization of child care either as a high quality service for children of poor working parents or, later, as an educational service that should be provided by early childhood educators and exclude the for-profit sector as much as possible.

Table 1.2 Access Rate to Licensed Child Care, Selected OECD Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>% of children under the age of three</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (Flanders)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>53.8a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>38.6a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


a) Based on OECD data on child care, plus children under three in preschool programs. For Belgium (Flanders), 19.6%; France, 11.6%. These data are from, Janneke Plantenga and Melissa Siegel. *European Childcare Strategies*. Position Paper for the European Conference on Childcare in a Changing World. Groningen, the Netherlands, 21-23 October 2004. Available at: www.childcareinachangingworld.nl/position_paper.html

b) Data for Canada are for children between 0 and 5 years old.
In Britain, the lack of central government policies over ECEC for most of the post-war period, combined with the fiscal and political weakness of British cities, meant that a process of privatization of ECEC services occurred. Both the for-profit and “parental” sectors expanded to compensate for the limited development of publicly financed or provided services. Moreover, attempts by feminist child care activists to institutionalize a community-based model of child care services at the local and metropolitan level were largely unsuccessful, a reflection of the centre’s fiscal control over local governments and its capacity to block local experiments.

When the New Labour government was elected in 1997 on a platform to massively invest in ECEC services, it benefited from the lack of institutionalized ECEC policies to roll out an unparalleled number of reforms. At the same time, because of existing private provisions, New Labour’s dominant approach was not one of radical transformation of Britain’s ECEC system. Rather, the development of ECEC services was characterized by the policy conversion of existing institutions (such as playgroups), and policy layering as new policies built on the limited, but nonetheless important policy innovations of the previous Conservative government.

As such, this dissertation investigates how the sequence of policy development and its intersection with the institutional structure of the state influenced the politics of ECEC development in Canada and Great Britain. In the first section of this introductory chapter, I argue that the contrasting experiences of Canada and Great Britain are especially important in light of some contemporary debates in political science about institutional continuity and change. In the second section, I briefly introduce the theoretical framework used in the dissertation to account for such variation. I first make the case that the study of the welfare state ought to bring in the mobilizing capacity of the third sector, which attaches solutions to policy problems. I then draw on the historical institutionalist literature to account for the variations in the policy preferences of actors and their capacity to promote policy change. Finally, I present the methodological approach used in the dissertation before concluding with a chapter outline.
Continuity and Change in Contemporary Welfare States

This thesis is part of a continuing debate in political science about the impact of globalization and post-industrialism on the institutional underpinnings of contemporary societies. This debate has been especially present in the study of contemporary welfare states. The post-war welfare state, feminist scholars have argued, was built on the assumption that men would earn a “family wage” and that women would be available as such to provide care for their children and elderly relatives, limiting the necessity for the state to invest in those sectors. As such, public investment focused primarily on protecting the male breadwinner from the risks associated with his participation to the labour market through income transfer programs such as unemployment insurance, pensions or sick leave benefits. Post-industrial changes, including the end of well-paid manufacturing jobs, the growing labour force participation of women and the transformation of the family structure, have increased demands for an expansion of ECEC services to an unprecedented level.

While most analysts agree on the importance of these changes, recent debates have focused on the types of changes they are likely to promote. On the one hand, path dependent theorists have argued that differences among regimes are bound to persist because of the costs of reversing institutional arrangements. Such inherited institutions are also said to constrain potential policy responses to post-industrial pressures because of their impact on state capacity, advocacy coalitions, and societal ideologies. As such, both the design and purpose of institutions are said to be resistant to significant change.

4 See Jane Lewis, “Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes,” *Journal of European Social Policy* 2, no. 3 (1992): 159-173; and Diane Sainsbury, ed. *Gender and Welfare State Regimes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). These authors have insisted that countries vary significantly in the extent to which they promote a stronger or a weaker version of the male breadwinner model. They also showed the uniqueness of the Scandinavian model, which promotes a dual breadwinner model.


such a perspective that has led some analysts of Britain’s ECEC system to state that, far from constituting a significant departure from past policy practice, New Labour’s child care strategy largely pursues the preceding Conservative government’s liberal approach.⁸

While stressing the resilience of contemporary welfare states, proponents of the path dependency approach have also argued that liberal welfare regimes are more vulnerable to episodes of welfare retrenchment (reinforcing their dependency on the market) and are more likely to converge over time.⁹ In the ECEC sector, for example, Morgan has argued that “with the increasing importance of market provision, child care policy in these countries is growing more similar, and that the liberal model of social provision will be with these countries for years to come.”¹⁰

In contrast to the focus on stability associated with the path dependency approach, students of “critical junctures” have stressed the possibility of radical institutional change brought by significant “paradigm shifts”. For example, in his well-known study of social learning and the transition from Keynesianism to neo-liberalism in Great Britain, Peter Hall argues that “third-order changes” are profound institutional changes made possible by a deep ideational reorientation.¹¹ Recent discussions of the advent of a New Welfare Model, of which ECEC is a central element, similarly stress that “level of benefits, policy instruments, and overarching goals have all changed.”¹² According to this perspective, thus, both the purpose and design of institutions have experienced radical, path-breaking change.

The trajectories of Canada and Great Britain do not correspond to either of these two theoretical approaches. Policy changes have been especially important in Great Britain, where children between three and five years old are now entitled to a publicly-

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⁹ See Duane Swank, Global Capital, Political Institutions, and Policy Change (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).


funded half-day place in preschool education. As a result, between 1996/97 and 2007/08, spending on ECEC services increased fivefold. While Canada as a whole has not experienced the same growth in spending as Britain, some provinces have adopted (Quebec), or announced their intention of adopting (Ontario) ECEC programs that intend to provide universal coverage. As such, in both countries, reforms have been adopted that have moved them away from the liberal norm of targeted services. At the same time, there has been a certain element of continuity in the delivery of these services. In Canada, despite fears of an imminent invasion of “big-box” child care operators, the proportion of child care services provided by the non-profit sector has continued to increase. As for Britain, the entitlement to early childhood education has not led to the disappearance of parental playgroups or private nursery schools, but has rather been built on such inherited institutions. Finally, despite the claim of growing convergence among liberal welfare states, important differences remain and in some cases have been accentuated. For example, a continuously decreasing proportion of child care services is provided by the for-profit sector in Canada, while commercial providers now sponsor 55 per cent of all registered places and 70 per cent of full-day care spaces for children under the age of five in Great Britain.

Ito Peng and Joseph Wong have argued that the incapacity of both sets of literature to account for the recent evolution of social policy institutions is the result of an implicit assumption that institutional development in both form and function concur. In other words, “changes in institutional design assume corresponding changes in purposes, just as persistence in institutional form presumes continuities in purpose and intended

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14 In 1997, the Quebec government extended full-time kindergarten to all five-year-old and the provision of child care at an out-of-pocket price of $5 per day to all four-year-olds (now 7$). The $5 policy was extended to all three-year-olds in 1998, two-years old in 1999, and children under two in 2000. In the fall of 2007, the McGuinty government in Ontario announced that it would introduce full-day kindergarten for all four- and five-year-olds in 2010. See Rob Ferguson, “‘Equalizer’ for Poor Families,” *Toronto Star* (28 November, 2007): A21.

15 As will be discussed later, data for ECEC are usually provided by the British government only for England, or England and Wales. Data are respectively from Martha Friendly et al., *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006* (Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2007), 206; and Robert Kinnaird, *2006 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey: Full Day Care Providers* (London: Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007), 41.
outcomes.” Similarly, Robert Goodin and Martin Rein have argued that welfare scholars have too often tended to automatically associate what they call the regime aspect of welfare states (social democratic, conservative or liberal), or who benefits, with a specific pillar (the state, the family, or the market), or who provides the services. They argue that, in today’s increasingly fluid policy world, there is plenty of room for ‘mixing and matching’ of different regimes and pillars: “empirical pragmatism teaches us that the combination of regimes and pillars in public policy is different, both over the lifecourse and across functional domains, within any given regime. (…) [T]here is no single model to fit the variety of functional domains and stages of the lifecourse in modern capitalist economies.”

Rather than a growing convergence among liberal welfare states, we should thus expect a growing divergence as policy actors attach different inherited institutions to distinct new institutional purposes. This is especially important in a policy sector like ECEC that can be seen as a constituting a potential solution to a number of policy problems, including labour market shortages; gender, class and racial inequalities; low birth rates, and the reconciliation of work and family life. Despite appearing to be a modern preoccupation, ECEC has a long history that in certain countries, including Great Britain, goes as far back as the 19th century. Over time, a number of institutions have emerged, including kindergartens, nursery schools, day nurseries, community nurseries, parental playgroups, and a vast market of regulated or unregulated childminders. A number of purposes have and can be attached to such institutions. Therefore, (inherited) institutions are not only constraints on policy-makers; they are also strategic resources they can use in response to new opportunities and challenges. As argued more than three

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16 Peng and Wong, “Institutions and Institutional Purpose,” 64.
18 Although it did not play such a role in Canada and Great Britain, ECEC has also been used as a nation-building tool in many European countries, especially those where they were significant Church-State conflicts. On that topic, see Kimberley J. Morgan, “Forging the Frontiers Between State, Church, and Family: Religious Cleavages and the Origins of Early Childhood Education and Care Policies in France, Sweden, and Germany”, Politics and Society 30, no. 1 (2002): 113-48.
decades ago by Hugh Heclo, “[p]olicy invariably builds on policy, either in moving forward with what has been inherited, or amending it, or repudiating it.”

The perspective presented in this section is consistent with a growing body of literature associated with “evolutionary theory”. According to such an approach, “change can only occur where the ‘changes’ that are imposed exhibit certain types of continuity with the environment and past choices.” I present in chapter three some of the processes by which policy-makers can adopt non-radical, yet transformative changes, including institutional layering and conversion. However, such processes of institutional change are not simply or mechanically driven by macro-historical factors such as the shift to a post-industrial economy, globalization and/or the international diffusion of policy ideas (although those factors have certainly encouraged the development of ECEC services). Policy and institutional adaptations are very much the result of strategic choices by policy actors linking inherited institutions to new institutional purposes. In the next section, I argue that it is especially important to look at the advocacy role of policy actors rarely present in the mainstream welfare state literature (i.e. the third sector) to understand the process of welfare state adaptation. At the same time, we cannot neglect the policy legacies and institutional structures that influence their policy preferences and their capacity to ensure the institutionalization of those preferences.

**Explaining the Evolution of ECEC Services: a Theoretical Framework**

Over the last two decades, comparative scholars have increasingly moved away from parsimonious generalizations, be they in the study of democratization, the formation of political parties or public policy development. Rather, in accounting for social and political phenomenon, they have increasingly stressed complex causation, multiple causal paths, or multi-causality. These different perspectives often share a the recognition that the standard regression model is not the most effective way of studying the causes of observed

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differences, since these often developed independently over time within each nation. Recent analyses of institutional change have also made the case that it is necessary to take into consideration a number of factors to account for the complex processes through which institutions change over time.

This thesis builds on such multi-causal and largely inductive approach to the study of institutional change. However, as argued by Joseph Wong, taking an inductive approach does not mean that everything is, or should be, analytic fair game. From the outset, it is essential to outline the key elements that will guide this study’s inductive causal reasoning. Using a similar approach, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyn Huber Stephens and John D. Stephens argue that outlining the “theoretical framework in self-conscious detail should in fact make it easier to identify possible blind spots in the subsequent analyses.” This analytical framework is briefly presented next (and in greater detail in chapter three). It focuses both on the political role of the third sector, as well as the constraining/empowering impact of past policy decisions and political institutions associated with historical institutionalism.

Bringing the Third Sector In (and Mobilization Back In)

Following feminist critiques of welfare state theory, students of social policies have added the family to the market-state dichotomy. However, another important “space” has been neglected: the third sector. Indeed, Jane Jenson and Denis Saint-Martin have argued that analysts should move from the analysis of the welfare triangle (state, market, family) to the analysis of welfare diamonds (state, market, family and the third sector).

The third sector, following Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheir’s structural/functional

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definition, refers to a collection of organizations that are a) organized, i.e., institutionalised to some extent; b) private, i.e., institutionally separated from government; c) non-profit-distributing, i.e., not returning any profits generated to their owners or directors; d) self-governing, i.e. equipped to control their own activities; e) voluntary, i.e., involving some meaningful degree of voluntary participation.27

A growing body of literature has recognized the key role of the third sector in the production of social services. Indeed, according to Costanzo Ranci, this sector “constitutes the main official channel for the distribution of social care services in Europe.”28 However, a focus on the production role of the third sector fails to put front and centre other roles related to the formation of project and discourse.29 In fact, according to Deena White, “like exchange within the market, and authority within the state, the mobilisation and organisation of interests, values and beliefs is a defining constant within the associational sector.”30

The literature on “the New Politics of the Welfare State” associated with the work of Paul Pierson has done much to bring back the political activities of such associations to the forefront of the study of the welfare state.31 However, as I argue in Chapter 3, this literature has almost exclusively focused on the role of organizations representing service providers and beneficiaries in protecting existing programs and institutions, reflecting in part Pierson’s assertion that such organizations did not “built the welfare state, but the welfare state contributed mightily to the development of these groups.”32 But according to

Adalbert Evers, this sector is not only shaped by public policies; it also is a proactive factor influencing public discourse and social realities.\textsuperscript{33} Third sector associations can promote policy changes in two ways. First, by introducing new “policy images”, that is by redefining a policy issue (for example by redefining child care as an issue related to child poverty or the employment of women), activists can attract the support of new actors, potentially changing the political coalitions on which institutions rest. Second, by shifting an issue from the jurisdiction of a venue (whether a level of government or a branch of the legislature) supporting the status quo to one supporting their agenda, activists can promote important policy changes.\textsuperscript{34}

As intimated in the previous section, the welfare regime literature has increasingly been marked by a focus on stability and resiliency in the face of important structural changes. As argued by Rodney Haddow, even if the welfare state literature is “rooted in an originating theory of agency”, it has increasingly neglected the role of agents in mature welfare states, anticipating that “existing structures will continue to function in the future as they do now or that they will change only in ways that reflect tendencies already inherent within them.”\textsuperscript{35} Focusing on the political role of the associational sector in mature welfare state not only provides a tool to understand policy change, it also put agency and mobilization back in the study of the welfare state, since political parties and corporatist organizations present in early studies of welfare state expansion are also associations. Nevertheless, at a time in which political parties and electoral politics seem in decline as mechanisms of political mobilization and interest mediation, it is essential to broaden our focus to the development of new strategic coalitions between a range of associations, often linking activists, professionals and beneficiaries that mobilize outside of the state, but in relation to it.

\textsuperscript{34} On the role of “policy image” and “policy venue” in policy change, see Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, \textit{Agendas and Instability in American Politics} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
Explaining Variations: Sequence and Policy Feedbacks

While stressing the role of these associations is essential to understand episodes of policy change, it tells us little about the direction of change they might prefer. Nor do we learn about the continuing differences between cases. To understand such variations, it is necessary to look at the sequence of policy development. This dissertation demonstrates that the organisation and mobilisation of interest groups and their choice of allies at the outset of policy development, as well as the early institutionalization of their policy preferences, can have long-lasting consequences, restraining the range of options available to policy-makers and activists over time. Policies adopted in the wake of critical junctures are crucial because they contribute to processes of policy feedback, which means that once a path is taken, other viable alternatives become increasingly remote, “as all relevant actors adjust their strategies to accommodate the prevailing patterns.”

This dissertation focuses especially on three types of feedback: societal, ideational, and territorial, all of which affect the nature of policy coalitions and their capacity to pursue policy change.

The first important effect is what I refer to as “societal feedback”. It involves what is often referred to as “first mover advantage”, which is when a set of actors is able to first achieve a position of influence. This early and privileged position might allow them to “overwhelm their opponents and fill the political space” opened up by a subsequent key event. As such, a production regime does not emerge as a full-blown liberal or social-democratic regime in which a single group of actors is clearly dominant from the start. Rather, a regime is produced and reproduced over time through the strategic action of policy coalitions pursuing their interests. Nonetheless, their capacity to get there first provides them with an undeniable advantage when subsequent windows of opportunity for policy change arise.

Policy advocates are not only driven by economic or political considerations, but also by “ideals of care”, that is what they believe to be the best appropriate care for children. Such distinct “ideals of care” include whether ECEC services should be

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37 Pralle, “Timing and Sequence in Agenda-Setting,” 989.
educational or custodial; whether they should be provided in the school setting or in the community; by professionals or parents; by the public, private or voluntary sectors. “Ideals of care” embedded in early policy decisions (often as a result of the mobilization of activists) can have long-lasting effects, independent of the changing power of groups promoting such approach. Another type of ideational feedback is related to the appropriate venue (federal or provincial, central or local) to make decisions concerning ECEC services. Early policy decisions might lead activists to believe that one level of government is more likely to contribute to the maintenance or the further advancement of their preferred policy option.

Finally, public policies also have territorial feedback effects, as policies can empower certain levels of government over others. Once a level of government in a federal state occupies a policy sector, it can have long-lasting policy consequences. Policies adopted by subnational authorities constrain the options available to the central tiers, as they in effect possess a veto over policy changed imposed from above. Policy changes are even more difficult in the cases of shared-cost programs. These programs are those in which the central government pays a proportion of a service provided by subnational entities as long as certain conditions are respected (such as client eligibility or the types of providers entitled to public financing). The presence of two levels of government dictating the conditions under which services are provided allows advocacy coalitions to adopt a “veto strategy”: they can mobilize at one level of government to block change at another level that would threaten their interest or preferred policy option. The territorial effects of policy not only constrain policy-makers; they also influence the strategy and preferences of advocacy coalitions. As argued by Sven Steinmo, where political authority is concentrated, specialized interest groups have less leverage and are more likely to make broader demands that can attract the support of a number of groups.

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Methodology

Case selection

Many studies of ECEC policy have tended to consist of comparisons between countries with significant cultural, political and economic variation, typically involving a comparison between one social-democratic and one liberal welfare state, or a conservative and a social-democratic welfare state. As such, these studies might have overestimated the importance of explanations discovered in case studies of extreme variation, although one might make the argument that they have provided important hypotheses to be tested in other cases. On the other hand, if, to use Giovani Sartori’s well-know formulation, “comparing is controlling”, the numerous similarities between Canada and Britain provide a semi-controlled environment that helps rule out alternative explanations for the variations observed.

As “most similar systems”, Britain and Canada have in common many socio-economic and political characteristics that have been found to influence policy outcomes. First, both countries share a common British cultural and political heritage, including a parliamentary system and a first-past-the-post political system. The political configuration of both countries is similar, as both have had a relative high level of right party incumbency (especially in the 1980s), although both countries have been devoid of the right-wing Christian-democratic parties that Morgan has found to be inimical to the development of child care services in continental Europe. While the UK has had a more

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powerful Labour Party at the national level than Canada, the left New Democratic Party and the Parti Québécois have played a key role in the development of provincial social policies.\textsuperscript{47} Second, in both countries, the feminist movement has had an active presence on the political scene, despite the limited representation of women in Parliament. Third, both are multinational states with important national minorities (the Scots and Welsh in Britain, the Québécois in Canada). As a result, in both countries, social policies have been perceived as key nation-building instruments.\textsuperscript{48} Finally, contrary to the case of Australia, where the central government largely took responsibility for the expansion of child care services in the post-war period, responsibility over the development of such services in Canada and Great Britain was largely left to subnational authorities (provinces in the former and local authorities in the latter).\textsuperscript{49} Responsibility for ECEC services was decentralized because they were associated with the “low politics” of social services and education, unlike in Australia, where child care policy became part of the country’s national economic strategy. In both countries, whereas the “high politics” of defence, foreign affairs and macro-economic management was seen as responsibility of the central government, “low politics” was the responsibility of subnational entities, especially local governments in Great Britain and provinces in Canada.\textsuperscript{50}

Despite these similarities, the two cases vary in one central aspect: the timing of the introduction of regulations and funding programs related to ECEC services for working parents and their children. In Canada, centralized regulations in most provinces and the establishment of a shared-cost child care program \textit{preceded} the significant increase in the labour force participation of women, while in Britain it largely came \textit{after} such increase, despite a very long history of early childhood education.

\textsuperscript{47} As demonstrated by Antonia Maioni, the federal NDP has also played a key role in the promotion of the welfare state at the federal level, especially when minority governments were in power. See Antonia Maioni, \textit{Parting at Crossroads: the Emergence of Health Insurance in the United States and Canada} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

\textsuperscript{48} On this topic, see Nicola McEwen, \textit{Nationalism and the State: Welfare and Identity in Scotland and Quebec} (Brussels: P.I.E – Peter Land, 2006).


\textsuperscript{50} On the notions of “high politics” and “low politics” in British history, see Jim Bulpitt, \textit{Territory and Power in the United Kingdom: An Interpretation} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983).
Differences in the introduction of a regulatory regime were closely intertwined with both countries’ territorial system, as Britain lacked the example of sub-national experimentation that was evident in Canada. For most of the twentieth century Britain was, following Rokkan and Urwin’s well-known concept, a union state rather than a classic unitary state. Britain’s union state involved the survival of some “pre-union rights and institutional infrastructures which preserve some degree of regional autonomy.” Indeed, as shown in Chapter 6, Britain’s welfare state allowed some regional variation in the implementation of ECEC policies across the UK. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by James Mitchell, the Treasury in effect restricted the capacity of regional institutions, such as the Scottish Office and the Welsh Office, to vary from “common standards”. In fact, for most of the post-war period, the main subnational actors in the organization and delivery of a range of social services were local governments. The absence of any subnational institutions for England, combined with the limited capacity of regional offices to act as a vector of democratic expression made Britain, especially after Thatcher’s reform of the local government’s system, one of the most centralized political systems in Europe. While the recent devolution of powers to the re-established Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly might encourage some regional innovation, policy divergence is constrained by (a) the continuous power of the Treasury over taxation; and (b) the legacy of previous policy decisions of Westminster.

As for Canada, its federal system is one of the most decentralized in the world, both from a policy and fiscal point of view. Provinces have a long history of acting as laboratories of innovation, from Saskatchewan’s health care program to Quebec’s recent policies targeted at reconciling work and family life. Such a high level of decentralization makes it difficult to generalize about the Canadian child care system, as there is not one

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54 According to Scott Greer, significant divergence has already occurred in the health sector. See Scott L. Greer, Territorial Politics and Health Policy: UK Health Policy in Comparative Perspective (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).
child care regime, but several.\textsuperscript{55} This problem is not unique to child care, as similar variation can also be found in relation to social assistance regimes.\textsuperscript{56} These differences reflect in many ways the varying strength of allies at the provincial level. In provinces with a high level of mobilized labour unions and left political parties (Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and to a certain extent British Columbia), the provincialization of child care \textit{over time} has contributed to the development of policies restricting the expansion of commercial child care providers. At the same time, these provincial experiments placed a significant constraint on the ability of the federal government to implement national policies.

This dissertation explores the development of ECEC services in Canada outside Quebec, and especially in Ontario. There are mainly two reasons for such an approach. First, the focus of this dissertation is on the transformation of liberal welfare states. As demonstrated by a growing body of literature, Quebec’s approach to family policy, including child care services, has more in common with the social-democratic approach.\textsuperscript{57} Second, and more importantly, central to this dissertation is the mobilizing activities of advocacy coalitions and how they influence the terms of political debate. As reported in a number of interviews with child care activists and politicians, the child care lobby in Quebec is essentially detached from the rest of Canada. It not only includes different players, it has been driven by different values and interests. While not neglecting how changes and events occurring in Quebec have affected the dynamic of ECEC development in Canada, the dissertation focuses mainly on the mobilization of ECEC activists outside of Quebec.

The dissertation focuses especially on events that unfolded in the province of Ontario, or that were the result of the mobilization of Ontario activists. There are two main reasons why I focus on Ontario, besides the obvious difficulty of presenting the distinct evolution of ECEC services in Canada’s ten provinces. First, Ontario was an early

innovator in the development of ECEC services and inspired other provincial governments over time. Second, as I demonstrate in chapter six, the orientations of the Canadian child care movement were largely set by Ontario activists.

Sources and Data

This dissertation draws on the methodological tools developed by comparative historical institutionalists. Since historical institutionalists take time seriously as an explanatory variable, they specify sequences and trace transformations and processes of varying scale and temporality. Likewise, as argued by Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol, historical institutionalists “analyze macro contexts and hypothesize about the combined effects of institutions and processes rather than examining just one institution or process at a time.”58 Such a strategy has been described by Andrew Bennet and Alexander George as “process induction”, which “involves the inductive observation of apparent causal mechanisms and heuristic rendering of these mechanisms as potential hypotheses for future testing.”59

As the dissertation traces the evolution of ECEC policies and the mobilization of child care activists since the 19th century, it relies extensively and primarily on archival documents. Archival research in Britain was conducted at the Public Record Office (PRO) in London, the Scottish National Archives (SNA) in Edinburgh, and the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). I also had the privilege of having access to the personal archives of Pamela Calder, one of the founders of the National Childcare Campaign. Canadian archival research was conducted at the National Archives of Canada (NAC) in Ottawa and the Women’s Movement Archives at the University of Ottawa.

Besides archival documents, I also relied on a number of published documents, including:

- Hansard records of the British and Canadian House of Commons, as well as the Ontario Parliament;


• Reports of inter-departmental committees, commissions (such as the Royal Commission on the Status of Women), and different task forces;
• Statistical and annual reports of relevant ministries and agencies;
• Non-government stakeholder reports;
• Bills, acts and regulations
• Secondary historical accounts
• Newspapers and specialized magazines targeted to ECEC advocates and workers.

Thirty-five interviews were conducted in Britain and Canada in order to account both for more recent developments and also to provide a finer understanding of the policy decisions of policy-makers (21 in Britain and 14 in Canada). Interviews were conducted with academic and think tank experts; bureaucrats at both the national and the subnational level (provincial in Canada, mainly local authorities in Britain); former politicians and advisers; activists and labour union representatives. Susan Prentice of the University of Manitoba generously provided the transcripts of ten interviews conducted by a number of child care researchers as part of an oral history of the child care movement sponsored by the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC).

These documents and interviews allow me to present a “structured policy narrative”; that is, a narrative that weaves the “complexity of different processes of different speeds and different levels coexisting in the policy path” into a coherent story. The structured aspect of this narrative is made possible by outlining the “institutions, structures and processes that are embodied in a given historical setting; identify the possibilities and constraints that these structures create for agents within those settings; and construct explanations of outcomes that link the causal properties of those structures to the processes of development that are found in the historical record.”

Chapter Outline

Chapter two explores the post-industrial changes experienced by Canada and Great Britain, and how such changes have led to the development of significantly distinct production regimes -- the dissertation’s dependent variable. Chapter three presents the theoretical framework guiding this dissertation. I first make the case that the unique

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character of social care services must be taken into consideration by welfare scholars. I especially argue that coalitions of service providers, ECEC activists as well as more traditional allies such as unions and political parties can play a key policy role, linking inherited institutions with new purposes. However, I argue that the willingness and capacity of advocacy coalitions to establish such linkages is largely influenced by the sequence of policy development and the institutional setting in which policy actors are involved.

Chapter four goes back in time to explore some of the important historical developments that would influence the territorial and administrative policy-making process in the post-war period. It demonstrates that the development of early childhood education programs in Britain was a direct consequence of the rapid industrialization and urbanization of the country during the 19th century. As for Canada, the combination of late industrialization and a large rural population limited the development of early childhood education program prior to the 1960s. Much like in the Scandinavian countries, Canada entered the post-war period without a significantly institutionalized pre-school sector for children under the age of five. As such, this chapter explores some institutional and policy legacies that would have a significant impact on the politics of ECEC services in the post-1960s period.

Finally, chapters five and six explore post-war developments in Britain and Canada. Each of these chapters demonstrates how early decisions or non-decisions around child care affected the mobilization strategy of child care activists and the development of private services. I focus on how the sequence of policy development later constrained the capacity of the national government to ensure the expansion of ECEC services, as new ideas about the potential benefit of ECEC to solve employment, educational and poverty problems gained prominence again on the policy agenda.
CHAPTER 2

The Production of ECEC Services in Canada and Great Britain

The welfare state, as it gradually emerged and developed in the 20th century, had one main objective: to protect the male breadwinner from the risks associated with his participation to the labour market. Through a range of income transfers, whether in the form of unemployment, pension or sick leave benefits, the welfare state protected the breadwinner against the risk of being unable to extract an income from the labour market. This welfare state could not have developed without the unpaid work of women who cared for children and elderly relatives. As such, it was especially adapted to societies with stable family structures and a clear division of labour between men and women. However, since the 1960s, social and economic changes have challenged the relevance of a welfare state that focused primarily on the male breadwinner. The growing labour force participation of women and changes to the traditional, two-parent family structure have created a “crisis of care”, contributing to a significant increase in demand for social care services whether from the state or the market.

In this chapter, I show that Canada and Great Britain have responded to this crisis of care by developing significantly different ECEC production regimes, the dependent variable of this dissertation. As such, this chapter heeds Richard Simeon’s advice that social scientists should first clearly spell out the ways in which cases vary on the dependent variable in order to clarify what is to be explained. But before exploring each country’s ECEC production regime, I present the changes in Britain and Canada that have contributed to a crisis of care.

Post-Industrial Pressures and the Crisis of Care in Canada and Great Britain

As mentioned in the introduction, the welfare state was first built on the foundation of the nuclear family and the male breadwinner model. Men were expected to earn a ‘family wage’, allowing women to stay at home to take care of children and elderly relatives. This model was made possible in Canada and Britain by cultural and religious

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norms that often presented single mothers as deviant, and a scientific discourse that stressed the danger for children of ‘maternal deprivation’ resulting from the employment of mothers. However, this model has increasingly been in crisis. Indicators of family instability have soared in Canada and Britain. Moreover, the male breadwinner model has been challenged as undesirable by a mobilized women’s movement, and become less of an economic option for increasingly cash-strapped families.

Canada and the United Kingdom have experienced a tremendous increase in women’s labour force participation. In Canada, the proportion of women over 15 in employment increased from 42 per cent in 1976 to 58 per cent in 2004. In the UK, the employment rate (of women between 16 and 59) increased from 56.3 per cent in 1971 to 70.1 per cent in 2006. The rise in female labour force participation has contributed to the development of what Jane Lewis has called the “adult-worker model”, in which it is assumed that all adults are in the labour market. In Canada, the proportion of dual-earner families has doubled from 33 per cent of all two-spouse families in 1967 to 66 per cent in 2003, while the UK has experienced a similar increase from 43 per cent in 1974 to 60 per cent in 2003.


63 In Canada for example, until the early 1980s, the labour force participation of women in two-parent families was lower than the one of single parent families. The situation has now changed significantly, so that in 2004, 68 per cent of female single parents with children under the age of 16 were working, compared with 73 per cent for their counterparts in two-parent families. The difference is especially significant for women who have children under the age of three, as 46 per cent of female single parents were employed, compared with 67 per cent of those with a spouse. Data reported in Statistics Canada, Women in Canada, 5th ed. Catalogue no. 89-503-XPE (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2006), 106-7.

64 Ibid, 119.

65 It should be noted that in comparison to the UK, women are more likely to be in full-time employment in Canada. In the UK, part-time employment for women corresponded to 38.8 per cent of total employment (one of the highest in OECD countries), in comparison to 31.9 per cent in Canada. Data are from OECD, Employment Outlook, 2007 (Paris: OECD: 2007), 261


The increased participation of women in the labour market and the decline of the male breadwinner model have numerous causes. First, greater access to higher education as well as legislation limiting discrimination in the workplace have opened up new opportunities for women. The proportion of women in universities has increased drastically. In Canada, in 2001/2002, 57 per cent of all full-time university students were female, up from 37 per cent in 1972/73.\(^{68}\) For the UK, the proportion of undergraduate students who were women in 2000/01 was 55 per cent, up from 33 per cent in 1970/71.\(^{69}\)

Second, social values have changed significantly over the past thirty years. According to the *World Values Survey*, 75.3 per cent of Canadians and 70.4 per cent of Britons agree or strongly agree with the proposition that husband and wife should both contribute to income.\(^{70}\) Moreover, 77.5 per cent of Canadians and 73 per cent of Britons agree or agree strongly that a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.\(^{71}\)

Finally, increasing women’s labour force participation is the result of changes to the labour market, especially the decline of unionized, high-paid manufacturing jobs and the rise of more unstable, service-sector employment. Data in both countries show that dual-earner couples with children are less likely to experience poverty than families that pursue the traditional breadwinner model. In 2003, according to Statistics Canada, 3 per cent of dual-earner families had revenues below the Low Income Cut-Offs (LICOs). It is estimated that if women’s earnings were deducted from the income of these families, the number of families below the LICOs would rise to 9 per cent.\(^{72}\) In the UK, while only 3 per cent of households in which all adult members were in employment were in the bottom quintile in terms of disposable household income in 2005-06, the proportion was 16 per cent for couples in which only one individual was working full-time.\(^{73}\)

The transformation of the household structure is the second important element of the family revolution associated with the post-1960 period. The model of the nuclear

\(^{71}\) World Values Survey, Question D056 Canada (2000) and Britain (1999).
family, with parents in a long-lasting relationship, is less and less the widespread norm. Of special importance has been the rise of lone-parent families. The proportion of lone-parent families in Great Britain has more than tripled between 1972 and 2006, from 7 per cent of all families with children to 24 per cent.\textsuperscript{74} In Canada, the number of lone parent families has doubled from 10 per cent of families with children in 1970 to 20 per cent in 2001.\textsuperscript{75}

The growth in lone-parent families is the product of a number of factors. Especially important has been the rise in divorce. In Canada, there were 54.8 divorces per 100,000 population in 1968, in comparison to 223.7 in 2003 (with a peak of 310.5 in 1988).\textsuperscript{76} The divorce rate in the UK was 2.1 per 1,000 married couples in 1961 and 13 in 1999.\textsuperscript{77} However, a growing proportion of lone parents are in fact single, never-married women (from 15 per cent of lone parents in Canada in 1986 to 29 per cent in 2001), reflecting a rise in the number of births occurring outside marriage.\textsuperscript{78} In the UK, between 1980 and 2005, the number of such births has increased from 12 per cent of all births to 43 per cent, while in Canada Statistics Canada reported an increase from 13 per cent of all births in 1980 to 30 per cent in 1994.\textsuperscript{79} Social values have reflected such changes, as the proportion of respondents to the World Values Survey who disapprove of a woman’s choice to raise a child as a single parent has declined from 48.8 per cent in 1981 to 38.3 per cent in 1999 in Great Britain, and from 49 per cent to 42.9 per cent in Canada between 1982 and 2000.\textsuperscript{80} It is important to stress that neither women’s growing participation in the labour market, nor changes to the family structure, are in themselves social risks. Indeed, higher female labour force participation is essential to increase the tax base of the welfare state while reducing the household risk of falling into poverty.\textsuperscript{81} Nevertheless, these changes contribute to the emergence of new social problems that the welfare state was and is still in many cases ill equipped to address.

\textsuperscript{74} National Statistics, Social Trends 37 (London: HMSO, 2007), 16.
\textsuperscript{75} Statistics Canada, Women in Canada, 11
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, 48.
\textsuperscript{78} Statistics Canada, Women in Canada, 38
\textsuperscript{80} World Values Survey, Question D023 Britain (1981 and 1999) and Canada (1982 and 2000).
Among them is the difficulty of reconciling work and family life. The growing participation of women in the labour market has led many parents to make difficult choices in terms of the number of children they desire and the career sacrifices they are willing to make. As recently argued by the OECD, “as long as there are people constrained in their choices about work/family balance, the result may be both too few babies and too little employment and/or unsatisfactory careers.” Indeed, the average days lost from work due to personal or family reasons in Canada has grown substantially since the 1970s, from 1.9 for employed women in 1976 to 9.7 in 2004, and from 0.7 to 1.6 for men over the same period.

Also at risk are the children of lone parents, who constitute a growing proportion of the population. Numerous studies have shown that the experience of poverty during childhood, which is more likely to happen to children living in single parent households, damages child development. A recent British study shows that the children of lone parents are less likely to still be in school at 17, and are also less likely to have achieved the British Qualifications at level 2 or higher. Such risks have led policy-makers, at both the national and international levels, to stress the importance of early childhood education and child care as an investment in a child’s future. In Canada, for example, the McCain-Mustard report, funded by the Ontario’s Children Secretariat, outlines how early child development programs “can vastly improve outcomes for children behaviour’s, learning and health in later life.”

In light of recent policy initiatives designed to address some of these emerging risks, a number of scholars have announced the arrival of the social investment state, the duty state or the employment-first welfare state. These different iterations all stress the

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83 Statistics Canada, Women in Canada, 123.
84 National Statistics, Focus on Families: 2007 (London: HMSO, 2007), 39. Level 2 is obtained when high school students (between 14 and 16) pass at least 4 courses with a grade between A and C.
85 Margaret McCain and Fraser Mustard, Reversing the Real Brain Drain: Early Years Study (Toronto: Ontario’s Children Bureau, 1999), 7.
importance of measures favouring full participation in the labour market as a way of avoiding poverty and social exclusion. It is worth quoting here at length an OECD document presenting the potential risks associated with social exclusion:

The “socially excluded”, the “outsiders”, the “underclass”, “benefits dependency”, the “new poor”: under a variety of labels, there is concern in many OECD countries that there is a section of the community that faces extraordinary barriers to full participation in the labour market and society. The results are well known: benefit dependency leads, sooner or later, to financial deprivation. Access to public services may be denied because of lack of address or employment record. Households are no longer in control of their own destiny. Health status may be damaged by poor diet and living conditions. Upon reaching retirement, lack of contributions to employment-based public pension schemes leads to continued reliance on welfare benefits. Children grow up without examples of the normal status of work in society, increasing the risk that disadvantage is transmitted across generations. In some countries, deprived areas or even regions become detached from the modern economy, becoming unable to take advantage of any improvements in the macroeconomic environment.87

In order to fight social exclusion, according to the OECD, policy makers must develop “employment-oriented social policies”, which it defines as an “emphasis on making social protection compatible with employment through the giving of support to those in employment as well as those without jobs.” Anthony Giddens, one of the strongest proponents of a renewed, “social investment welfare state”, argues that such a commitment entails “investment in human capital wherever possible, rather than direct provision of economic maintenance,”88 whereas the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, strongly influenced by Giddens, similarly argued that “the best defence against social exclusion is having a job, and the best way to get a job is to have a good education, with the right training and experience”.89 Investing in human capital means channelling resources to a range of human and social services, among them training for social assistance recipients, continuing education programs, and ECEC services that allow parents to reconcile work and family life.

88 Giddens, The Third Way, 117.
89 Tony Blair in the foreword to: Social Exclusion Unit, Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in Education (London: Social Exclusion Unit, 1997), 6.
Defining ECEC Services

ECEC can be broadly defined as the services for the care and education of children from birth to compulsory school age. Historically, education and child care services have operated separately, with different principles regarding admission, funding, hours of operation, staffing and regulation. They have been developed and managed by different bureaucracies with different philosophies, goals, and standard operating procedures.

Child care has usually been viewed as a social service. In societies where the employment of women was frowned upon, it was a service of last resort for poorer families incapable of living on a single salary. It was also seen as providing the opportunity to teach poor women how to take good care of their children. Child care became the responsibility of Departments of Welfare, Social Services and/or Health. With the extraordinary growth in female labour force participation in the post-1960 period, child care has increasingly become, in the eyes of policy-makers, a service allowing both parents to work. Child care workers, historically, have poorer working conditions in terms of salary, working day and training than preschool teachers. Because of its association with the labour market, public attitudes towards child care are different from those towards preschool education, and are often influenced, especially in liberal welfare states, by classical economic theory. Public intervention is often only justified in cases of market failure, when the market is unable to provide adequate services, in areas of deprivation for example. Moreover, in order to let the market work according to the laws of demand and supply, user fees tend to be requested.90

Early childhood education, on the other hand, has usually been perceived as a developmental service that facilitates a child’s subsequent educational experience. Seen as potentially benefiting all children, it has more easily gained public support than child care in countries, such as Germany and Italy, which have historically opposed publicly financed child care services for working mothers.91 As an educational service, it has also not been perceived as interfering in family life to the same extent as child care programs.

Typically the responsibility of Departments of Education, it has historically operated on a part-time and term basis, and has usually been made available for free. Professionals in the sector have also tended to benefit from better working conditions. The preschool movement has long been associated with the middle-class and its desire to improve the educational achievements and opportunities of its children.

Nevertheless, recent developments have thrown into question the tendency to study separately these two policy sectors. The first development is in academic scholarship. A growing number of scholars have shown that some of the pioneers of early childhood education such as Froebel, Owen and Montessori believed the two sectors to be intrinsically linked, recognizing the need to support families and to ensure that children would be receiving both high quality education and care. Lenira Haddad points to the work of the Brazilian historian of early childhood education, Moyses Kulhman, who showed through an analysis of international exhibitions held between 1850 and 1920 that crèches, salles d’asile, and nursery schools were institutions linked variously to education, health or welfare that were held up as symbols of progress and modernity. Haddad argues that it is essentially in the immediate post-war period, at the height of the Cold War, that the distinction between child care and preschool education was more firmly institutionalized. During that period, in a range of countries, universal child care became associated with communism, and perceived as an undue interference in the life of the “democratic family”, where mothers were not forced to go to work and could devote themselves to the care of their children. On the other hand, early childhood education, with its part-time schedule, was a model of western (and middle-class) moderation.

Even at the height of the institutionalized distinction between child care and early childhood education, though, both sectors never existed in isolation to each other. In countries such as France and Belgium, for example, the longer hours of preschools (8:30A.M. to 4:30 P.M. in most cases in France, 8:30 A.M. – 3:30 P.M. in Belgium, with

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one day or afternoon free per week) and the presence of after-school programs facilitated the employment of mothers. In England, on the other hand, despite the institutional division between the two sectors, nursery education was very much perceived as a form of child care.94

Recent policy changes in many OECD countries are also challenging the historical distinction between early childhood education and child care. In an article entitled Farewell to Childcare?, Peter Moss argues that a new conception of ECEC services is emerging in many countries. Moving from a “childcare discourse” to a new “pedagogical discourse”, OECD countries are in effect adopting a more holistic, less fragmented approach to ECEC services. According to Moss:

These services, it is recognised, do provide care for children while their parents are at work: this function is an almost taken-for-granted requirement in a modern society where parental employment is normative. But they have broader purposes, meeting a wide range of child, parent and community needs, and are for all children and families, irrespective of whether or not parents are in paid work. Rather than a substitute home (or indeed an enclosure for applying technologies to children to achieve predetermined outcomes, another common understanding of services today), they can be viewed as a children’s space that has many possibilities and is multi-faceted.95

In practice, the growing integration of child care and early education can be seen in three processes of reform. First, countries and regions as diverse as New Zealand, Brazil, Spain, Great Britain, Quebec and the Scandinavian countries have integrated all their services for children under six in one ministry, in most cases the Ministry of Education, in order to reflect the growing pedagogical focus.96 Second, the integration of these two services has meant a growing tendency among policy-makers to devise programs that allow children and their parents to combine, sometimes under one roof, attendance to half-day preschool programs with more traditional child care services, what is often referred to as ‘wrap-around’ care. Third, consistent with the historical development of preschool

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96 Ibid, p. 76. Such integration did not occur as much in continental Europe, in part because the Ministry of Education was already predominantly involved in the delivery of ECEC services, especially in France and Belgium. In all countries mentioned above, the integration was made in the Ministry of Education, with the exception of Denmark and Finland where the Ministry of Welfare remains the leading actor. In Quebec, ECEC became the responsibility of the Ministry of Education at first, although a Ministry of the Family was later created and made responsible for the expansion of the system. In the UK, the Department for Education and Skills was renamed in 2007 the Department for Children, Schools and Families.
education in continental Europe, the pedagogical focus has meant a discourse promoting universal provision, as all children, independent of the status of their parents, can benefit from early childhood education. Despite their best efforts, policy-makers continue to face tremendous obstacles in the successful integration of these sectors.\textsuperscript{97}

The analysis of ECEC services, like other social care services, has proved especially difficult to academics. They tend to involve numerous levels of government, different providers of services and the potential use of multiple policy instruments. In the remainder of this chapter, I develop a framework for the comparative analysis of the production of ECEC services.

**The Production of ECEC Services in Comparative Perspective**

This dissertation builds on Mary Daly and Jane Lewis’ concept of social care. Daly and Jane define social care as “the activities and relations involved in meeting the physical and emotional requirements of dependent adults and children, and the normative, economic and social frameworks within which these are assigned and carried out.”\textsuperscript{98} Feminist scholars have pointed to the ways in which care emerged from women’s place and relationship within the family unit, characterized by personal ties of obligation, commitment, trust and loyalty, but also oppression. As such, feminist scholarship challenged the assumption that caring was inherently natural to women, interpreting it instead as a consequence of patriarchal power structures.\textsuperscript{99}

Daly and Lewis identify three dimensions of the concept that deserve special attention. The first is care as labour, which implicitly begs a comparison with other types of work as well as a focus on the conditions under which care is carried out. It leads to questions about whether care is paid or unpaid, formal or informal, and the role of the welfare state in establishing these boundaries. The second is the ethical dimension of obligation and responsibility. It places the spotlight on the societal relations of care and the state’s role in weakening or strengthening existing norms about care. The third aspect


is care as an activity with both financial and emotional costs, and brings questions as to how such a burden is shared among individuals, families and the state.

The study of social care has been historically hindered by the lack of reliable data. Although the OECD has tried, with varying results, to develop comparative indicators over the last decade, researchers must often rely on a variety of sources, all with potentially different definitions of social care services. For example, in an attempt to provide a comprehensive picture of ECEC services in North American and Western European countries, Kimberly Morgan relies on six different sources.\textsuperscript{100} Michaela Schunk provides an accurate description of the difficulties associated with the comparative investigation of social care:

Not only does the availability of data vary greatly between and within countries, but also patterns of service provision may critically differ between regions and localities within countries. Overall, empirical knowledge on services and their availability, quality and costs is very limited. Even when national experts have been able to produce data, they are extremely difficult to compare because the classification and categories used in different countries are closely tied into health and welfare structures. Nevertheless, most studies treat any data on service provision levels at its face value and rank countries accordingly.\textsuperscript{101}

Nonetheless, scholars have increasingly focused on a number of evolving ‘boundaries’ that characterize social care systems: between paid and unpaid work; formal and informal care; cash and services; among services provided by the market, the state or the non-profit sector; and finally between care for children and care for the elderly. As argued by Daly and Lewis, because of such potentially changing boundaries, social care has “an inherent dynamic that makes it suitable for studying change.”\textsuperscript{102} Such changes can be studied both at a macro and micro level, the first focusing on shifts in the distribution of care among sectors, while the second perspective focuses on changes in the distribution of care among individuals and families, and alterations in the conditions under which care is undertaken and received.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{102} Daly and Lewis, “The Concept of Social Care,” 288.
\textsuperscript{103} Idem.
The changing boundaries identified by Daly and Lewis represent different modes of production of social services or what I call here different “production regimes”. I draw here on Jane Jenson’s concept of “citizenship regimes”, which she defines as the “institutional arrangements, rules, norms and understanding that guide concurrent policy decisions and problem definition by states and non-state political actors.”104 We can identify three dimensions of any ECEC “production regime”: 1) the availability of services; 2) the allocation of resources 3) the delivery structure and regulation of services.

**Public Responsibility and Availability of Services**

As argued by Michael Hill, the key questions to be asked when comparatively investigating the development of social services are *Who Pays*, and *Who Provides*.105 But in many ways, the first question to look at is *Who Benefits*, or who is entitled to benefits. In a pure market system or in a “familialistic” system, consumers are in the first case free to buy in the market services they want, while in the second responsibility for such provision is seen as resting with the family. In both cases, state intervention is not perceived as necessary or legitimate. In a pure “public” system, the state provides universally accessible public services. Citizens have no option to buy services in the market, nor do they receive cash benefits allowing them to buy such services. These are ideal-types, and most countries are located in between these ideal-types.

In most countries, a needs or means test is performed to determine first the eligibility of a family to care services, and then the proportion of the cost that will be covered by the state. In order to measure the level of generosity of a state’s contribution, researchers can rely first on the number of children who have access to publicly-provided or financed child care services. In the case of early childhood education and care, it is important to recognize that certain countries provide entitlements to a half day service, while countries such as France, Belgium and Scandinavian countries provide full day programs, or programs that combine educational and care services. So while in certain cases Scandinavian countries might have a slightly lower proportion of children in...

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preschool programs for children of a same age, the Scandinavian system is in effect more generous and more expensive. In most cases, the lower proportion reflects not so much a lower level of services, but parental decisions not to send their children to preschool programs. As such, the overall public priority given to ECEC services can also be measured by OECD data on public spending as a proportion of the GDP. Again though, it is important to recognize that the OECD is dependent on different definitions of ECEC in certain countries and how spending is accounted for.

The extent to which care services are seen as a responsibility of the state has significant implications. First, the presence of services delivered universally, especially child care services, allow women of all social classes to have access to paid work, and provide them with the capacity to form and maintain an autonomous household. Analysts have shown a positive correlation, in some countries, between women’s labour market participation and the availability of affordable child care services. In a study of female labour force participation in Britain, Chevalier and Viitanen found that a lack of child care facilities limited the participation of women in the labour force. Perhaps more interestingly, they found that an increase in the demand for child care generates either an increase in price or the creation of queue but has no effect on the supply. Their study demonstrates the importance of government intervention in either creating new child care places or in reducing the cost for users, and the limits of a free market approach to child care.

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107 It must be recognized that such a correlation does not hold for all countries. Although in countries like Ireland and Switzerland, child care costs are a clear impediment to paid work, in other the tax-benefit system is more important in accounting for labour force participation. In France, for example, tax and benefits make paid work for lone parents financially unattractive. Finally, in other countries, such as Britain, a combination of both factors has had a negative impact on lone parents’ labour force participation. For a review of such findings, see Herwig Immervoll and David Barber, *Can Parents Afford to Work? Childcare Costs, Tax-Benefit Policies and Work Incentive* OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, no. 31 (Paris : OECD, 2005). Available at: [http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/58/23/35862266.pdf](http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/58/23/35862266.pdf) [Last accessed July 26, 2009]

Second, some studies have suggested that the public provision of child care has a positive influence on fertility.\textsuperscript{109} Considering that many developed countries, such as Italy, Germany and Spain, face the potential of a demographic crisis, such findings are potentially of great importance. Although other studies have questioned the link between the public provision of child care and rate of fertility\textsuperscript{110}, it is clear that child care has an important impact on the capacity of individuals to reconcile work and family life, a growing concern not only of citizens (and voters), but also of international organizations.\textsuperscript{111}

Third, the availability of social care benefits can have an impact on social solidarity. Means-tested benefits have the potential to create a stigma for beneficiaries. Stigmas can be internal and external.\textsuperscript{112} In the first case, stigma is created because the welfare program lowers the self-esteem of the recipient. In the second case, stigma is created by the society at large, creating tensions between recipients and the members of a community that bear the tax burden of financing the program. On the other hand, the targeting of benefits in a situation of permanent austerity means that limited resources can be channelled to those with the greatest need, while avoiding leakages to people with adequate resources or limited need for such services.\textsuperscript{113}

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Financing and Costs

There are multiple ways by which resources can be financed and allocated to ensure the development of social care services. At one end, the state relies on general taxation revenue to pay for the full cost of services. At the other end, individuals must pay for their own required services in the market, without any form of public support. A half-way option, usually used in social care systems with regard to long-term care but also in France with regard to family policies, consists of social insurance. In most countries, a mix of state funding and user fees is used to finance social care services.

The allocation of resources can also significantly vary: between public services, subsidies to providers, demand-side subsidies or cash allowances. Publicly delivered services refer to services that are provided by public sector bodies, with or without user fees. Supply-side subsidies refer to all funding that is directed to the providers of services, whether care allowances for carers, tax benefits or deductions to service providers, and also public subsidies to private providers in the form of operating, quality-enhancement grants, wage-enhancement, and capital-enhancement grants. Demand-side financing refers to funding that is directly channelled to the recipient of care (or his/her parents in the case of child care). These include cash allowances, tax deductions or tax credits, and vouchers for the purchase of services. Central to this model is the idea that, with the right financial support and incentives, demand for social care services can be redirected towards private supply, contributing to the growth of a genuine market of private services.

International organizations such as the OECD have tended, especially with regards to child care, to favour supply-side funding. This model is said to provide greater stability to the providers of care, while the government possesses greater control over the planning, size and location of services as well as over training, curriculum, quality evaluation and data collection. Moreover, through grants that are conditional, wages and regulations can be standardized across the board, leading to a better-trained and paid workforce. Finally, the supply-side approach is much easier to administer and the infrastructure of training,

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evaluation and monitoring is made at a scale that is cost effective. Demand-side subsidies, on the other hand, have tended to be favoured by proponents of “choice” and advocates of a free market. For recipients, the demand-side approach is said to provide greater choice as they can use the subsidy to buy the services that are the most convenient to them. On the other hand, demand-side subsidies are difficult and costly to operate since thousands of individual subsidy claims must be filled in. Evidence shows that it creates planning and sustainability problems for providers who cannot count on steady and guaranteed revenues. Moreover, monitoring and assessment of how such money is used is especially difficult.

The choice between services on the one hand, and care allowances, on the other, has also been the object of vigorous debates among feminists. Kimberly Morgan and Kathrin Zippel argue that care leaves and allowances tend to reinforce the traditional division of care work in the home by institutionalizing temporary homemaking as the norm for many women, with potential negative impact for their earnings and long-term employment trajectories.\(^\text{116}\) On the other hand, services are more expensive for the state and their provision may exhibit significant regional and local variations. As such, a universal right to child care for example might be easier to arrange through cash payments than through the public provision of social services, although recipients may use these payments for purposes other than the welfare of their children.\(^\text{117}\) Payment for care, when targeted at the carer, also recognize citizens’ “right to care”, which can be considered essential to an inclusive model of citizenship that provides rights not only to workers but also to carers.\(^\text{118}\) Finally, Johanna Anttonen and Jorma Sipila have argued that while the paid employment strategy associated with the delivery of services improves the economic position of women more than allowances, quality care calls for a personal relationship and consumes a great deal of time, none of which can be easily achieved within organisations based on paid work.\(^\text{119}\)

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119 Anttonen and Sipila, “Comparative Approaches to Social Care,” 131.
Delivery Structure and Regulations

The delivery structure of social services is often referred to as the welfare mix. The welfare mix refers to the diversity of social agents providing social services. In the economic world, the public-private (for-profit) dichotomy tends to be dominant. Yet, in the social policy sector, the mix of providers is larger. Four settings must be distinguished.¹²⁰

**Household and Home:** Refers to the delivery of care by family members. Often referred to in the literature as informal care. Based on complex feelings of obligations, reciprocity or love.

**Voluntary Organizations:** Refers to the delivery of services by religiously or community-based organizations. Volunteers or employees under contract with a non-profit organization deliver care. Such organizations may or might not be supported financially and regulated in their activities by the state.

**The Market:** Refers to the provision of services in exchange for money. Services are based on contracts and as such can take place between strangers. Inequalities of income are likely to lead to different degrees of quality and quantity of care services.

**The State:** Refers to the provision of public services by an authority with a statutory duty, usually local governments or school boards. Carers are employees of the state and elected politicians are, in theory, held accountable for the adequate provision of care.

As argued by Monique Kremer, the delivery of child care services has been neglected in the literature, although it has been central to recent policy debates. “Care ideals”, she contends, “account for why some policy choices can be and have been made, and others have not or cannot.”¹²¹ Care ideals refer to what is considered to be appropriate care for children. As such, although labour market considerations are often crucial to the

development of ECEC policies, debates over the appropriate agent of delivery can have a tremendous impact on the evolution of ECEC services.

Although social care is still overwhelmingly delivered informally by family members, it is increasingly going public, meaning that it is increasingly removed from the entirely private domestic economy of the household towards a greater overlap with the formal economy of the market, the voluntary sector and the state.\footnote{Anneli Anttonen, Jorma Sipilä and John Baldock, “Patterns of Social Care in Five Industrial Societies: Explaining Diversity,” in \textit{The Young, the Old, and the State: Social Care Systems in Five Industrial Nations}, eds. Anneli Anttonen, John Baldock and Jorma Sipilä (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2003), 172.} However, without proper regulations, the growing mix of providers has the potential to create significant differences in terms of citizenship rights. The market can, on the one hand, provide undue advantage to more wealthy citizens when it allows them to have faster access to services. On the other hand, without proper regulation, commercial providers may deliver inadequate care in their quest for profitability. Voluntary organizations, on the other hand, have the potential to promote active participation of citizens in their community. Contrary to public services, though, market and voluntary organizations are not accountable to citizens but to their shareholders and to their members. Finally, since care workers are overwhelmingly women, regulations related to the wages and education of ECEC workers have an impact on the gendered distribution of income.

Table 2.1 summarizes the different indicators that allow the production of social care systems to be compared, ensuring a significant possible range of variance of the dependent variable both over time and across space.\footnote{Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, \textit{Designing Social Inquiry} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 108.} The next section presents the ways in which Canada and Great Britain’s productions regimes- the dependent variable of this dissertation- vary.
Table 2.1 Production of ECEC Services – Comparative Indicators

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<td></td>
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<td>• Child care worker compensation as a share of average female hourly wage.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Britain’s and Canada’s Production Regimes Compared

Over the last decade, Britain and Canada have both been criticized at times by international organisations for their comparative lack of investment in ECEC services. In a 2001 OECD report, Canada and Great Britain were among the countries with the most underdeveloped child care systems for children under the age of three. Britain has also been denounced by the European Union for its lack of provision for single parents, a key objective of the EU social agenda. Canada, on the other hand, was ranked last among selected OECD countries in terms of spending on ECEC according to a recent update of the 2001 Starting Strong study. The limited provision of services is not the only dimension that differentiates Canada and Britain from the system in place in Scandinavian countries, which are often presented as leaders in services for children under the age of five. They also share a difficult integration of the education and care dimensions of ECEC, significant territorial variations in the availability of services, and a mix of service providers. Nevertheless, despite these broad similarities, the ECEC production regimes of both countries vary along important dimensions.

124 Data for Great Britain reported to international organizations usually only cover England and Wales. Unless specified otherwise, data presented in this section are also only for these two entities.
Types of Services

Canada and Great Britain have significantly different ECEC systems for children under the age of five. As such, before exploring variations in the provision of services, it is important to present the types of regulated services available in each country.

In Great Britain, children under the age of five have access to five different types of services: day nurseries, nursery schools and nursery classes, playgroups, childminders and children’s centres. Day nurseries are child care services for the children of working-parents or for children with special needs. The former are more likely to be cared for in private day nurseries, the latter in local authority day nurseries. Historically, one of the most frequent child care options for working parents tended to be childminders, who are private individuals caring for other people’s children in their own home. They need to register with local authorities and are subject to inspection to see whether they respect minimal health and safety standards. Increasing standards have contributed to a decline in the number of registered childminders over the past decade.

Nursery schools are institutions of pre-primary education that are physically separated from elementary schools. Because of a lower number of young children or because of limited resources, many local authorities have preferred historically not to build separate institutions, and rather to create nursery classes that catered to three- and four-year-olds in specially equipped and staffed classes in elementary schools. It is also common in Britain for elementary schools to receive four-year-olds who will be turning five during the school year (what are referred to as “rising fives”) in what are called reception classes, which combine play and more formal education. Although public nursery schools and classes were originally providing full day services, children now tend to attend for half a day during the school year. Started in the 1960s as a reaction to the slow growth of public nursery schools, private nursery schools charge fees and must register with local authorities.

Another ECEC service that emerged in the 1960s in reaction to the shortage of nursery education places is playgroups. Under the responsibility of non-profit parental groups, they were originally developed to provide children with social and play

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experiences for a limited number of hours for certain days of the week. Largely middle-class organizations, they tended to charge a small fee and required parents to participate on a rotational basis in the playgroup activities. Their mission has changed since the introduction of New Labour’s child care strategy. Playgroups have become institutions of early childhood education as they are now eligible to receive government funding for three- and four-year-olds as long as they provide the early years curriculum.

Finally, in 2003, the Blair government created a new form of ECEC services: children’s centres. Children’s centres are the result of previous pilot projects that provided day care, especially in areas of social deprivation, such as Early Excellence Centres, Sure Start Projects that offered child care, and Neighbourhood Nurseries. Children’s centres must provide full day care integrated with early education, in addition to child and family health services, family support and outreach to parents, a base for childminder networks, links with Jobcentre Plus (the UK employment service), and Children’s Information Services. Most of these centres have been developed from pre-existing providers, such as nursery schools, and only in a small number of cases were the centres entirely new.

The Canadian ECEC sector is more straightforwardly divided between child care and preschool services than the British one. Child care centres are the formal option for parents working regular, day-time hours.\(^\text{129}\) Child care is available on a full-time basis, and in some cases on a part-time basis. Also targeted to working parents is regulated family child care, provided in a caregiver’s home, for children between 0 and 12. Caregivers are individually licensed or must be part of a family child care agency, according to provincial/territorial regulations and may care for five to eight children. Quebec has amalgamated its former child care system and family child care agencies into Centres de la petite enfance (CPE). CPE are non-profit organizations that may care for up to 80 children in individual centres, for a total maximum of 240 children, and up to 250 children in family child care. The maximum number of children that a CPE may care for is 350.

The main form of early childhood education in Canada remains kindergartens for five-year-olds, which are publicly-provided at no cost to parents. Attendance in

\(^{129}\) This section draws on Jane Beach et al. *Working for Change: Canada’s Child Care Workforce* (Ottawa: Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2004); and Martha Friendly et al. *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006* (Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2007).
kindergarten is compulsory in three provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and British Columbia) and provided on a full-day basis in three provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec), while in Ontario kindergarten may be full day, with the decision left to school boards. Ontario is the only province in which almost all school boards provide kindergarten programs to four-year-olds. In almost all provinces, kindergarten is part of the education system.\textsuperscript{130} As shown next, the provision of early childhood education programs is more developed in Great Britain than in Canada.

\textit{Provision of Services}

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, for most of the post-war period, Great Britain lagged most other Anglo-Saxon countries in terms of the availability of child care services for children under the age of three. Nevertheless, the country has an important tradition of nursery education for three and four-year-olds. New Labour has largely built on this tradition. As of January 2006, 98 per cent of eligible three- and four-year-olds were benefiting from some form of free early childhood education.\textsuperscript{131} Every child is entitled to 2.5 hours of free nursery education per day, for a total of 12.5 hours per week for 38 weeks. Preschool education is significantly less developed in Canada. Kindergartens are the main early childhood education service, usually available on a part-time basis. Although not compulsory in most provinces, they are attended by most five-year-olds (between 95 per cent and 98 per cent). Ontario is the only province that provides significant educational services for children under the age of five, as 84 per cent of four-year-olds attend junior kindergarten. Quebec, Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan also provide kindergarten programs for some three- and four-year-olds that are deemed to be at risk.\textsuperscript{132} As a result of the lower offer of services for early education programs in

\textsuperscript{130} In PEI, kindergarten is regulated under child care legislation and delivered by child care centres and stand-alone programs. The Department of Education is responsible for funding and curriculum. In Alberta, kindergarten may be delivered by the school system or by private early childhood service operators. Information reported in Gillian Doherty, Martha Friendly and Jane Beach, \textit{OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care: Canadian Background Report} (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2003), 25.

\textsuperscript{131} Department for Education and Skills, \textit{Provision for Children Under Five Years of Age in England: January 2006 (provisional)}, SFR 17/2006 (London: Department for Education and Skills, 27 April 2006). Available at: \url{http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000652/SFR17-2006.pdf} [Last accessed July 26, 2009]. It is important to note that the United Kingdom is one of only a few OECD countries in which children start elementary school when turning five years old.

Canadian schools, the number of students enrolled in preschool program as a proportion of overall enrolment in elementary schools (based on full-time equivalent) is one of the lowest among OECD countries at 4.9 per cent, compared with 6.2 per cent for Great Britain.\footnote{OECD, \textit{Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2006} (Paris: OECD, 2006), 189.}

Great Britain is not the laggard it once was with regards to the availability of child care services. In 2006, there was one registered early years place for every three children under the age of five, although not all of them were full-time places.\footnote{Daycare Trust, ‘Childcare Today: A Progress Report of the Government’s Ten Year Childcare Strategy,’ available at http://www.daycaretrust.org.uk/mod/fileman/files/Childcare_Today_Nov_2006.doc [Last accessed: February 19, 2007].} The proportion of Canadian children under the age of five who have access to regulated child care spaces in 2006 was 19.3 per cent, or one in five. Provincial variations are significant, ranging from 8.1 per cent of children under the age of five in Saskatchewan to 42.4 per cent in Prince Edward Island (see table 2.2.). Regional variations are also significant in England, with the highest regional proportion (44 for every 100 children) in the South East and the lowest (22) in inner London.\footnote{National Audit Office, \textit{Early Years: Progress in Developing High Quality Childcare} (London: The Stationnery Office, 2004), 25.}

In both countries, it must be stressed, the dominant form of child care remains informal care, whether from one parent or from relatives, especially grand-parents. An important difference though between the two countries is the number of care arrangements parents must juggle. In Canada, for those children who are not in parental care, 70 per cent rely on only one provider.\footnote{Tracey Bushnick, \textit{Child Care in Canada}, Catalogue no. 89-599-MIE, (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2006), 94.} In England and Wales, working parents must often combine a child half-day entitlement to early childhood education in one setting with more traditional custodial care. As a result, a study conducted for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) found that 42 per cent of surveyed families who had used child care in the previous week used more than one provider, with significant stress for parents who have to make arrangements to carry their children from one place to another.\footnote{Caroline Bryson, Anne Kazimiriski and Helen Southwood, \textit{Childcare and Early Years Provision: A Study of Parents’ Use, Views and Experience}. DfES Research Report RR723 (London: Department for Education and Skills, 2006), 6. Available at: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR723.pdf [Last accessed July 26, 2009].} Moreover, since the provision of nursery education is only available during the school year, parents...
must find access to a different child care provider during summer holidays. As a result, Great Britain has seen the emergence of a very large number of “Holiday Clubs”.  

Table 2.2 Regulated Child Care Spaces by Province/Territory / Percentage of Children with Access to a Regulated Child Care Space, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>Centre-based full and part-time child day care for 0-5</th>
<th>School-age child care</th>
<th>Regulated family child care</th>
<th>Total regulated spaces 0-12</th>
<th>Provincial share of regulated spaces (%)</th>
<th>Children 0-12 for whom there is a regulated space (%)</th>
<th>Children 0-5 for whom there is a regulated space (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>4,769</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>5,642</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>3,352</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4,051</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>12,823</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>12,982</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>12,893</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>13,163</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>111,094</td>
<td>161,428</td>
<td>89,011</td>
<td>361,533</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>138,979</td>
<td>71,148</td>
<td>19,748</td>
<td>229,875</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>15,356</td>
<td>6,511</td>
<td>4,117</td>
<td>25,984</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>5,410</td>
<td>907</td>
<td>2,395</td>
<td>8,712</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>40,812</td>
<td>18,070</td>
<td>6,775</td>
<td>66,288</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>39,779</td>
<td>25,183</td>
<td>14,228</td>
<td>79,190</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Territories</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>1,525</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon Territory</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>387,562</td>
<td>285,731</td>
<td>137,636</td>
<td>811,262</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Financing and Costs

Over the last decade, spending on child care and the early years has increased tremendously in Britain, reflecting New Labour’s growing commitment to the policy sector. From a little over £1 billion in 1996/7, spending has increased to around £5.5

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138 According to a recent study, over half UK parents report a lack of affordable, quality child care during the summer holiday. Reported in Rebecca Smithers, “Parents Struggle to Find or Afford Summer Childcare,” The Guardian (July 11, 2007): 12.
billion in 2007/8. Such spending corresponds to approximately 0.5 per cent of the British GDP, up from 0.2 per cent a decade earlier. Canada, on the other hand, spends a paltry 0.25 per cent of its GDP on ECEC programs. It is important to note the significant differences between the province of Quebec, which allocates 0.8 per cent of its GDP, and the rest of Canada. The Quebec approach to the financing of ECEC services has become so distinct that both academics and international organizations are now often investigating the province’s ECEC system independently from the one in place in the rest of Canada.\(^\text{139}\)

The bulk of ECEC spending in Great Britain takes the form of a £2.9 billion supply-side funding to the providers of the entitlement to free early childhood education for three and four-year-olds. Most of the funding of child care for working parents takes the form of a tax credit targeted at poor families, which was projected to amount to £1.1 billion in 2007/8. The tax credit can potentially cover a significant proportion of their formal child care costs (80 per cent of £175 per week for families with one child and of £300 per week for those with two children or more). Most families are not entitled to the full 80 per cent credit, since the tax credit limits the proportion of costs that they are entitled to support as their income increases. For 2005-6, the average assistance with child care costs was £45.45 per week. The take-up ratio of the credit has been fairly low. Some research suggests that a meagre 15 per cent of eligible couples and 24 per cent of lone parent families received the credit and 20 per cent of low income parents still pay all costs themselves.\(^\text{140}\) Overall, research suggests coverage as low as three percent of all families.\(^\text{141}\)

Canada provides financial assistance to help cover the cost of child care to a greater number of families than in Britain. Adopted in 1972, the child care expense deduction, which helps parents offset costs by deducting child care expenses from their taxable income, was for most of the last thirty years the main source of federal child care

\(^\text{139}\) For example, in the OECD report Babies and Bosses IV, the Quebec system is compared along the British, Finish and Swedish systems. See OECD, Babies and Bosses IV (Paris: OECD, 2005). On Quebec’s unique model, see Jane Jenson, “Against the Current: Child Care and Family Policy in Quebec,” in Child Care Policy at the Crossroads: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring, eds. Sonya Michel and Rianne Mahon (New York: Routledge, 2002), 309-32.


financial help for the vast majority of Canadians. The deduction is up to $7,000 for children under seven and $4,000 for children between seven and fourteen. In 2005-6, foregone taxes were $545 million, and the deduction was claimed by 1,099,240 tax filers.\textsuperscript{142} Since 2006-7, the main source of spending is the newly adopted universal child care benefit, which costs $2.4 billion annually and has been made available to around 1.5 million families with children. Provincial governments’ ECEC spending, estimated at $2.64 billion in 2005/6, has for its main objective reducing the cost of child care for low income parents. In many provinces, subsidies mean that parents incur no fees. In Ontario for example, assuming an average daily child care fee of $43, families with a net income of less than $20,000 do not have any fees to pay, while families with a net income of $30,000 and $40,000 would pay respectively $4 and $8.\textsuperscript{143} Quebec is unique in Canada in subsidising the cost of child care for all parents, so that they pay no more than 7$ a day.

New Labour in Great Britain has also tried to provide incentives for employers to finance child care for their employees. Since April 2005, employers can offer staff up to £50 per week (£55 since 2006) of support towards the costs of child care, free of tax and National Insurance Contributions. The savings can be quite substantial: £962.28 per annum for a 22 per cent taxpayer and £1195.56 for a 40 per cent taxpayer.\textsuperscript{144} However, child care vouchers are primarily offered through salary sacrifice, which is when an employee receives child care support alongside a legal reduction in salary. Only 2.5 per cent of organizations in the UK offer employer-supported child care, but since these organizations are overwhelmingly among the biggest employers in the country, an estimated 36 per cent of employees are covered through such a scheme.\textsuperscript{145} In Canada, while some corporations provide on-site day care services and reference services, rare are those that directly provide financial help with the cost of child care.

Despite the use of tax instruments and, in the case of Britain, employers’ contribution to child care costs, both countries have among the highest percentage of

\textsuperscript{143} Reported in Friendly et al., Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006 (Toronto: Childcare and Resource and Research Unit, 2007), 92.
\textsuperscript{144} Information found on: http://www.childcare-vouchers.net/benefits/parent.aspx (Last accessed February 9, 2008).
\textsuperscript{145} The 95 per cent confidence interval for this estimate is 33 per cent – 44 percent. Ibid., 1.
parental contributions to the overall cost of child care among OECD countries. Including early childhood education, which is free in the UK, the average parental contribution to the overall cost of ECEC services for children under the age of five is around 45 per cent in Britain, 50 per cent in Canada, and 19 per cent in Quebec.\textsuperscript{146} When only services for children under the age of three are taken into consideration, the cost of child care is more expensive in Britain than in Canada. According to the OECD, average child care fees in an accredited child care provider in Canada correspond to 21.3 per cent of a worker’s average weekly wage, compared to 24.7 per cent in Great Britain.\textsuperscript{147} In short, the main difference between the two countries in terms of spending largely resides in Britain’s higher investment in early childhood education for all three- and four-year-olds.

\textit{Delivery Structure and Regulations}

While Scandinavian countries and Great Britain were characterized in the post-war period by their commitment to publicly funded and delivered programs, the latter ECEC system has increasingly been characterized by a significant mix of service providers. This is especially the case in the preschool sector. In 2006, of the 96 per cent of three-year-olds who were enrolled in preschool programs, 38 per cent were in public nursery schools or in nursery classes of primary schools, what are referred to in Britain as maintained nursery and primary schools; 54 per cent were in commercial or playgroup early years programs, while 3 per cent were taking up places at independent (private) schools with nursery classes.\textsuperscript{148} Among four-year-olds, 62 per cent were in reception classes of elementary schools, while the rest were in nursery education. Of those remaining 38 per cent, 79 per cent were in maintained nursery schools or classes, 17 per cent in the private or voluntary sector and 3 per cent in independent schools. In Canada, on the other hand, preschool kindergarten programs are in almost all provinces delivered through the (overwhelmingly)


\textsuperscript{147} OECD, \textit{Starting Strong II}, 151. It is important to note that these data are for 2004, prior to the adoption of Canada’s universal child care benefit. The OECD also found that higher income earners pay significantly more in the UK than Canada, but lower-income earners less.

public elementary school system, with the exception of Alberta and PEI where private child care centres can deliver the kindergarten program.

Perhaps the most important variation between the two countries is in relation to the role of the commercial, for-profit sector in the delivery of registered child care services. In England and Wales, the proportion of local authority provided day nurseries has decreased from 56 per cent of all-day nursery places in 1980 to less than 6 per cent by 2000 (Table 2.3.). It is estimated that 70 per cent of full day care services are under the auspice of for-profit entities (table 2.4.).\(^{149}\) A legacy of the parental playgroup movement, sessional child care services tend to be dominated by the non-profit sector. In recent years, local authorities have renewed their involvement in child care through children’s centres and holiday clubs, although they compete in these sectors with both the private and non-profit sectors. Contrary to the situation in France and even Quebec, schools in the UK provide limited child care services. Even in sectors where one would expect them to play a key role, such as after school clubs, they provide less than 10 per cent of places.

In Canada, the commercial sector does not have a large presence in comparison to other Anglo-Saxon countries. In 2006, 79 per cent of regulated child care spaces were under the auspice of non-profit providers (see table 2.5.). While the number of commercial providers has significantly increased over the last two decades in the UK and in Australia, which historically had developed its child care system through the not-for-profit sector\(^ {150}\), the share of commercial providers has in fact declined in Canada. The overall number of commercial spaces in Canada has fallen over time from 75 per cent of regulated spaces in 1968, to 40 per cent in 1982, and 21 per cent in 2006 (see Figure 2.1.).\(^ {151}\) The Atlantic Provinces are the only ones that have experienced a slight increase in the proportion of commercial spaces over the same period. In provinces as different as Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, the proportion of commercial spaces has decreased since 1980 (see Figure 2.2.).

\(^ {149}\) Data are from Robert Kinnaird, *2006 Childcare and Early Years Providers Surveys: Full Day Care Providers* (London: Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007), 37.


Table 2.3 Public Provision of Child care Services, England and Wales, 1980-2000\textsuperscript{152}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutions (0-4)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Day Care (0-4)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschools</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Child care workers in Canada tend to have low wages, minimum benefits and high turnover rate. Yet, from a comparative perspective, the situation of a child care worker in Canada is better than in the United Kingdom. In 2006, the average hourly wage of a full day care program supervisor in the UK (£7.00) corresponded to 68.3 per cent of the average UK female hourly wage (£10.24), while the wage of a caregiver corresponded to 54.7 per cent.\textsuperscript{153} In comparison, using British Columbia as a reference point, the hourly wage of a program supervisor in 2006 ($16.00) corresponded to 87 per cent of the province’s female average hourly wage ($18.32), while a caregiver was earning $12.58, 68.8 per cent of the female average.\textsuperscript{154} These differences can be explained by the higher level of training of child care workers in Canada. In 1998, the last year for which data are available, a survey focusing on child care centre staff found that 70.8 per cent of the staff had a 2-year post-secondary credential or more in ECEC. Overall, 80 per cent had a 1-year or more ECEC credentials.\textsuperscript{155} In 2002/3, as a base of comparison, 57 per cent had a least a specialized, level 3 degree as nursery assistants in England and Wales, and 76 per cent had some kind of qualifications in working with children.\textsuperscript{156}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item There is no way to make a distinction between for-profit and non-profit entities according to these data, although the overwhelming proportion of non public day nurseries are for-profit. Perhaps controversially, although important to this dissertation, is the fact that Bahle classifies playgroups as a form of family day care. Some analysts might argue that they are not much different from half-day child care spaces run by nonprofit groups in Canada. We would argue otherwise for two reasons: 1) the fact that playgroup workers were mainly parents, an overwhelmingly proportion of which had no formal qualifications; and 2) since playgroups have been more fully incorporated in the British ECEC system, their number has significantly declined.
\item Data are from Kinnaird, Nicholson and Jordan, 2006 Child Care and Early Years Providers Survey, 41.
\item Data on the wage of child care workers in BC are from Friendly et al, \textit{Early Childhood Education and Care}, 153. Data on the province average wage are available at \url{http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/labr69a.htm} [last accessed February 19, 2008]
\item Beach et al., \textit{Working for Change}, 104.
\item Department for Education and Skills, 2002/03 Childcare and Early Years Workforc Surveys: Day Nurseries and other Full-day Care Provision (Nottingham: DfES Publication Centre, 2004), 35. Available at: \url{http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/Archive/Polls/day-nurseries-and-other-full-day-care-provision.pdf} [Last accessed July 26, 2009]
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Table 2.4. Number of Registered Places by Ownership, England and Wales, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership Type</th>
<th>Full Day Care</th>
<th>Full Day Care in children’s centres</th>
<th>Sessional</th>
<th>After school clubs</th>
<th>Holiday clubs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of places</td>
<td>544,000</td>
<td>37,700</td>
<td>278,300</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>263,900</td>
<td>1,346,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% (No.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private, Voluntary and Independent</td>
<td>88 (477,900)</td>
<td>40 (14,300)</td>
<td>95 (265,700)</td>
<td>77 (200,500)</td>
<td>69% (181,200)</td>
<td>84 (942,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>70 (379,400)</td>
<td>19 (7,000)</td>
<td>30 (83,000)</td>
<td>35 (90,100)</td>
<td>37 (97,500)</td>
<td>49 (595,200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>18 (99,700)</td>
<td>20 (7,400)</td>
<td>66 (183,500)</td>
<td>43 (110,700)</td>
<td>32 (83,600)</td>
<td>35 (423,900)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained</td>
<td>10 (54,300)</td>
<td>58 (21,900)</td>
<td>5 (12,800)</td>
<td>22 (56,300)</td>
<td>27 (71,200)</td>
<td>14 (159,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority</td>
<td>6 (30,600)</td>
<td>50 (18,800)</td>
<td>3 (9,600)</td>
<td>12 (31,400)</td>
<td>32 (56,700)</td>
<td>10 (119,900)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/College</td>
<td>4 (24,000)</td>
<td>9 (3,300)</td>
<td>1 (3,200)</td>
<td>10 (25,300)</td>
<td>5 (14,500)</td>
<td>5 (58,100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3 (14,500)</td>
<td>4 (1,700)</td>
<td>* (700)</td>
<td>1 (3,500)</td>
<td>5 (12,400)</td>
<td>2 (27,600)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In short, Britain’s ECEC production regime relies extensively on a low-skill, low-paid staff working in the for-profit sector. At the same time, regulated ECEC services are significantly more available in Britain than in Canada. In the latter case, regulated ECEC services are available for a very small proportion of working parents. Nevertheless, ECEC educators in most Canadian provinces have more training, and are paid at a higher rate than in Britain. Among liberal welfare states, Canada is unique for the fact that the proportion of commercial child care services has declined as the proportion of working mothers increased over the last thirty years.
Table 2.5  Sponsorship of Regulated Centre-Based Programs by Provinces and Territories, Canada, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>Not-for-profit and publicly-operated</th>
<th>For-Profit</th>
<th>Percent not-for-profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>1,676</td>
<td>3,718</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>2,034</td>
<td>2,605</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>6,924</td>
<td>5,899</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>236,001</td>
<td>36,521</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>161,233</td>
<td>48,894</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>20,559</td>
<td>1,308</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>6,292</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>99.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td>30,145</td>
<td>28,748</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Territories</td>
<td>1,173</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nunavut</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon Territory</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>467,737</td>
<td>128,044</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Martha Friendly et al. *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006* (Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2007), 206

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the context of this study and a framework to explore states’ responses to the crisis of care associated with the transition to a post-industrial society. I have argued that social care services pose special challenges to students of the welfare state. More specifically, I have argued that a focus on spending on ECEC services is only one (imperfect) way to comparatively analyse this policy sector. The most important debates around ECEC services tend not to be around spending, but rather around the ideal forms of care and delivery mechanisms, or what I have called different production regimes.

I have explored the significant differences between the production regimes in place in Britain and Canada, differences that are summarized in Table 2.6. Britain’s ECEC system is characterized by an extraordinary degree of fragmentation of services and a mix of providers. Perhaps more surprisingly for a country that developed in the post-war period a unique system of publicly-provided services and programs, Britain is now, with
Australia, the industrial country with the highest proportion of for-profit child care providers. In Canada, on the other hand, early childhood education tends to be delivered in elementary public schools, while the vast majority of formal child care services are delivered by the non-profit sector. Important differences are also notable in relation to the child care workforce in both countries. Although the situation is gradually changing, the British workforce is historically less educated, and less well paid than the Canadian one. Nevertheless, over the last decade, Britain has doubled its investment in ECEC services, guaranteeing a place in early childhood education for all three- and four-year-olds. Canada, on the other hand, is with Australia the OECD country with the smallest proportion of children having access to school-based early childhood education services.

The concept of ‘production regime’ explored in this chapter, inspired by the work of scholars such as Lewis, Daly, Alber and Morgan, shows the considerable progress made in outlining the ways in which social care systems, a historically neglected dimension of the welfare state, may vary. Nevertheless, as argued by Birgit Pfau-Effinger, there are still important deficits regarding the development of a cross-national explanatory framework that can account for variations across countries such as Canada and Great Britain.\footnote{On the lack of relevant comparative explanations for the evolution/development of social care policies, see Birgit Pfau-Effinger, “Development Paths of Care Arrangements in the Framework of Family Values and Welfare Values,” in \textit{Care and Social Integration in European Societies}, eds. Birgit Pfau-Effinger and Birgit Geissler (Bristol: Polity Press, 2005), 22.} The development of such an explanatory framework is the challenge of the next chapter.
Figure 2.1. Regulated Centre-Based Spaces, % For-Profit, Canada, 1968-2006


Figure 2.2. Regulated Centre-Based Spaces, % For-Profit, Selected Provinces, Canada, 1980-2006

Table 2.6. Indicators of ECEC Production Regimes in Great Britain and Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension 1: Availability of Services</th>
<th>Great Britain</th>
<th>Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of children under three years of age in regulated child care</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19.3% (for children between 0-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of children over three years of age in preschool programs</td>
<td>100% of four-year-olds 98% of three-year-olds</td>
<td>95% to 98% of five-year-olds 84% of four-year-olds in Ontario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enrolled in preschool programs as proportion of overall enrolment in elementary education (based on full-time equivalents)</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension 2: Financing and Costs</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of GDP spent on ECEC services</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources for low-income families (child care)</td>
<td>Tax credits (decrease as family income rises)</td>
<td>Means-tested subsidies and universal child care benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources for middle-class families (child care)</td>
<td>Employer-issued vouchers for a certain number of employees</td>
<td>Tax deduction and universal child care benefit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension 3: Delivery Structure and Regulation</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% for-profit regulated child care Spaces</td>
<td>54.6% (70% for full day care)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care worker compensation as a share of average female hourly wage (centre-based)</td>
<td>68.3% (supervisor) 54.7% (caregiver)</td>
<td>87% (supervisor) 68.8% (caregiver)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% staff with ECEC post-secondary credentials (2 years in Canada, and Level 3 in the UK)</td>
<td>52% (2003)</td>
<td>70.8% (1998)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 3
Theorizing Social Care Services

In the previous chapter, I contended that social care services pose special challenges not only to policy-makers, but also to students of the welfare state. I argued that comparative scholars must go beyond a simple focus on spending to investigate the differences in each country’s production regime. In this section, I maintain that social care services are qualitatively different from income transfers, a difference that must be central to any theoretical explanation of variations between and within welfare regimes. More specifically, the development of licensed child care services requires more than simply sending a cheque in the mail. It requires a significant workforce and involves debates about what Monique Kremer has called the “ideals of care”, that is who should provide care to young children. As such, legislations regulating ECEC services and the ECEC labour market influence the types of services available and the supply of such services.

This dissertation largely provides an inductively generated argument to account for the development of ECEC services in Canada and Great Britain. As argued in the introduction, this does not mean that anything is analytical fair game. A framework must be presented to guide such analytical reasoning. As Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol argue, optimally, “assertions of causality should be borne out not just by a correlation between two variables but also by a theoretical account showing why this linkage should exist and by evidence suggesting support for the theorized linkage.”¹⁵⁸ The theoretical framework that I present in this chapter to explain the observed variations between Canada and Great Britain that I presented in the previous chapter draws on the historical institutionalist framework.

in liberal market economies (LMEs) and coordinated market economies (CMEs). Second, in order to understand variations among LMEs, I argue that students of social care services need to pay less attention to the political organization of the class cleavage in the party system and more attention to the political activities of coalitions that bring together service producers, client groups, and social activists who try to influence legislation regulating ECEC services. I argue that the capacity of these actors to link new policy images to inherited institutions largely accounts for important episodes of policy change. In the second section of this chapter, drawing on the historical institutionalist literature, I make the case that the policy preferences of these coalitions and their capacity to promote, institutionalize, and protect their preferences over time is the result of the sequence of policy development as well as the institutional organization of policy-making.

**Social Care Services, Welfare Regimes and Labour Markets: A Review**

It has become commonplace to argue that social services generally, and social care services more specifically, were neglected in early comparative studies of the welfare state, especially in Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s seminal *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. However, over the past decade, a number of regime scholars have added social care services to their analyses. In fact, according to Esping-Andersen, the development of personal social services as a result of post-industrial changes increasingly influences levels of employment as well as social and gender inequality. This growing attention to social services has led to a series of new findings and debates. First, regime scholars have increasingly made the case that it is a high level of spending on social care services that principally distinguishes the social-democratic welfare model from its conservative counterpart. While acknowledging the higher level of spending on social care services in Scandinavian countries, an alternative body of literature has argued that

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when services are included in the analysis of welfare states, they do not cluster in a way that corresponds to Esping-Andersen’s three regimes approach.\textsuperscript{162} Such findings have led some analysts to argue that welfare regimes do not exist, and are in fact a mere “illusion”.\textsuperscript{163}

In a provocative article, Carsten Jensen has challenged both the traditional regime approach to social policies as well as its critics. Jensen argues that when health care services are excluded, expenditures on social care services do conform to Esping-Andersen’s regime typology.\textsuperscript{164} However, Jensen maintains that “it would be highly questionable to assume that levels of transfers and welfare services are driven by identical underlying causal mechanisms, at least directly. Instead the specific nature of the welfare services must be appreciated.”\textsuperscript{165} Drawing on insights from the feminist literature, he states that while the main objective of income transfers remains decommodification (the absence of individual dependence on the market), the main objective of social care services is defamilialization (the absence of individual dependence on the family by facilitating access to the labour market). While high level of income transfers can be explained by the relative strength of the labour movement and the extent of social democratic dominance, he argues that “conformity of social care services to welfare regimes is due to the saliency of the underlying ideological dimensions of familialism and statism.”\textsuperscript{166}

In short, in conservative welfare states, limited public investment during the golden age of welfare state development was the result of an ideological opposition to policies that could undermine the traditional family. In liberal welfare states, it was the result of opposition to any public programs that would lead to higher levels of taxation. Despite the growing labour force participation of women in both conservative and liberal


\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 153.

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 160.
welfare regimes since the 1970s, Jensen argues, “institutional trajectories have kept the welfare regimes fixed on the existing policy paths (…)”.\(^{167}\)

Jensen’s approach is especially suited to explaining variations in spending among welfare regimes. However, public spending on child care services is only one mechanism encouraging defamilialization. Another alternative is for parents, and especially working mothers, to be able to buy child care services in the market. For example, as shown in Tables 1.1. and 1.2., despite a comparatively low level of public spending on ECEC services, children in an Anglo-Saxon country like the United States have significantly higher access to licensed child care services than do children in many European countries such as Germany and Austria. As such, understanding the mechanisms that contribute to the expansion of private forms of provision is especially important for students of the welfare state.\(^{168}\)

In the case of social care services, in order to understand the spread of private forms of provision, it is essential to take into consideration another unique character of social care services: the necessity of employing a large workforce to provide care to children and the elderly. Kimberly Morgan has provided one of the rare analyses that, drawing on the Varieties of Capitalism approach (VoC), takes into consideration the link between the social care workforce and the expansion of ECEC services.\(^{169}\) According to the VoC approach, labour market structures associated with the production of goods and services vary significantly between the Coordinated Market Economies of Continental Europe (CMEs) and the Liberal Market Economies (LMEs) of Anglo-Saxon countries.\(^{170}\)

According to Morgan, such differences have a key influence on the organization of human services. In short, in CMEs, the high level of vocational education, high skill levels, and the unions that defend such model are said to produce higher wages and higher


child care costs, making child care services unaffordable to parents without generous public subsidies. As a result, states that want to encourage the employment of mothers must allocate significant public resources. On the other hand, in LMEs such as the United States, a low-skill and low-wage workforce has enabled a private market to develop, letting the state off the hook from having to heavily subsidize these programs through an increase in taxation. Moreover, educational and child care services in Anglo-Saxon countries have tended historically to be the responsibility of municipalities whose main source of revenue was the property tax, a highly visible and unpopular tax. Since increases in the property tax have tended to lead to taxpayers’ revolts, local authorities have strong incentives to favour the development of low-cost private services. As Morgan argues, “decisions in the political arena drive the supply and allocation of child care in much of Western Europe, while markets make these determinations in the United States.”

Therefore, in the absence of extensive public subsidies, low-skill, low-paid workers are what make possible the existence of such private services. Morgan’s analysis is a significant contribution to the literature on social care services, allowing us to understand the spread of private provision in liberal welfare regimes as the by-product of policies regulating the ECEC labour market.

**Bringing Mobilization Back In**

There are two important limits with the VoC approach, limits that Morgan herself recognises. First, although wages are the most important element in the overall cost of child care services, they are certainly not the only one. Other factors include staff-to-child ratios and regulations regarding the types of settings in which care can be provided to children, as well as subsidies to parents and private providers that, although minimal in comparison to European investments, can nevertheless further reduce the cost of buying

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172 Morgan, “The ‘Production’ of Child Care,” 244. (Underlined in the text).

173 Esping-Andersen similarly notes in his Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies that the emphasis on regulation by markets in liberal welfare states encourages the expansion of low-wage service sector jobs. See Esping-Andersen, Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies, 126.
certain types of child care services on the market. A perhaps more important limit to the VoC perspective is that while such an approach tells us why Canada might have less regulated child care services than Great Britain (the higher wage of its child care workforce), it has very little to say about the origins of such a difference. As Rodney Haddow has argued, the VoC approach lacks an account of why production regimes diverged historically or how human agency contributed to these differences. Recognizing such limits to the VoC literature, Morgan has argued that the differences between the higher proportion of public, centre-based care in Sweden and the increasingly tax credit financed system of family day care in France (two countries that have encouraged the employment of mothers) can be explained by stronger public sector unions in the former case that had the capacity to resist the transition to more individualized forms of care.

Morgan’s treatment of the growing difference between the Swedish and French cases is consistent with the literature on the “new politics of the welfare state.” The new politics approach has made the case that professional associations that have developed in the wake of the expansion of the welfare state can use institutional resources to block the adoption of policies that might challenge their privileged position. The new politics approach is especially important to understand why ECEC activists in Canada were capable of preventing the growing expansion of for-profit services. Nevertheless, the new politics approach has almost exclusively focused on resiliency and continuity. It has neglected the role of professionals and beneficiary groups in promoting policy change in the first place. Material interest is not the only

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175 Morgan, “The ’Production’ of Child Care,” 256-8.
factor driving the third sector’s activism (although those interests matter). ECEC activists are also driven by “ideals of care”, that is what they believe to be the appropriate forms of care for children. In fact, not only the new politics approach, but also most of the welfare literature has long neglected the political role of the third sector, focusing instead on traditional economic actors (businesses and unions) to explain welfare expansion. However, there is a long tradition of the third sector’s influence on welfare state development. As Adalbert Evers has argued:

If the evolution of welfare provision involved a sequential order at all then it was of third-sector initiatives pushed forward by local or national social movements that usually came first. They pioneered concepts of the collective good and notions of social rights. Afterwards, in a second phase (…) these nuclei of social welfare were taken up by public policy and integrated into more general social contracts or state welfare.\(^{178}\)

A focus on the political activities of the third sector is essential to understand policy change, be they path dependent changes or simply significant departures from regime ideal-types. Peter Graefe, drawing on the work of Jacob Torfing, argues that such a focus on the advocacy role of the third sector entails considering how social forces intervene to re-articulate institutions in order to make new trajectories possible, and how they work to deepen the coherence of new paths, and prevent the old ones from kicking back in.\(^{179}\) Third sector associations can promote policy and institutional changes in two ways. First, by introducing new “policy images”, that is by redefining a policy issue (for example by redefining child care as an issue related to child poverty or the employment of women), activists can attract the support of new actors, potentially changing the political coalitions on which institutions rest. Second, by shifting an issue from the jurisdiction of a venue (whether a level of government or a branch of the legislature) supporting the status quo to one supporting their agenda, activists can promote important policy changes.\(^{180}\)

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\(^{180}\) On the role of “policy image” and “policy venue” in policy change, see Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, Agendas and Instability in American Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
While actors influence institutions, those institutions also influence the preferences of actors and their capacity to promote policy change. As Frantz Sharpf argues, “actors respond differently to external threats, constraints, and opportunities because they may differ in their intrinsic perceptions and preferences but also because their perceptions and preferences are very much shaped by the specific institutional setting within which they interact.” It is these institutional factors, as well as the sequence of policy development that can account for the growing variation between Britain and Canada.

**The Organization of Policy-Making: Administrative and Territorial Dimensions**

As argued previously, social services require more than simply sending a cheque in the mail. Not only do they challenge the capacity of the state to act, but they also challenge its ability to deliver services throughout its territory, what I refer to here as *territorial capacity*. As Daniel Wincott argues, social care services leave “a much larger territorial footprint than is necessary for policies delivering transfers,” begging “a question about the capacity of states, particularly large states, to deliver such policies across space.” Historically, social policy scholars have neglected the inherently territorial aspect of the welfare state. As Paul Pierson and Stephen Leibfried argue, “comparative analyses have usually subordinated institutional and territorial aspects of social policy development to issues of class conflict and compromise, because the former have been less pressing in the centralized systems that provided the prototypical models of policy evolution (Sweden and Great Britain, for example).” “There are good reasons to think,” they continue, “that if policy designs and systems of decision-making are multiteried, this institutional fact and its territorial dimension will be important.” Even in unitary countries, the development of social services is typically multiteried, involving central and local governments. To territorial politics I add a second dimension, the administrative organization of decision-making at each level of government, which determines whether

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decisions regarding ECEC for *specific* age groups involve more than one department with
different regulations and interests, allowing for the potential fragmentation of services
among numerous providers. It is to this dimension that I first turn.

*Administrative Structure of the State*

Much of the historical institutionalist literature, which focuses on macro-structural
variables such as federalism, the presence of bi-cameral national institutions, and the
policy capacity of the bureaucracy, has neglected the division of responsibility for social
policies, especially social services, between different departments and agencies. The
division of administrative responsibilities can affect the development of social policies in
two ways. First, as I explore in greater detail in the next section in relation to federalism,
such fragmentation can lead on a day-to-day basis to a process of blame avoidance that
can block the adoption of any reform. Second, the fragmentation of responsibility means
that developments in one department might constrain progress in another. As Hugh Heclo
argued more than thirty years ago:

> Rather, our difficulties have developed out of the successive logic of policy development:
> well before generally accepted aims in one policy area are achieved, serious difficulties
> are generated for the achievement of other, widely-supported aims in proximate policy
> areas. In these circumstances, balancing benefit adequacy and economic cost within any
> given program *may be less important than reconciling interactions with a variety of
disparate policy spheres*. Coordination may not be impossible in the long run, but it is
evident that policymakers in all countries have so far found it very difficult to make the
various pieces fit together.”\(^{184}\)

Alana Gildnier has provided an interesting portrait of the impact of such
administrative fragmentation. Investigating changes in Ontario’s rehabilitation health
policies, she argues that the gradual privatization of health and social services occurs
when “decision-making institutions that have developed separately come to overlap in a
highly disjointed way at the intersection of a new or emerging problem area.”\(^{185}\) Such
privatization occurred despite a lack of explicit governmental commitment, she argues,
because “the fragmentation in decision-making for rehabilitation health in Ontario created
a dynamic in which impacts became patterned and sequenced over time as decisions in

\(^{185}\) Alina Gildiner, “The Organization of Decision-Making and the Dynamics of Policy Drift,” *Social Policy
one arena affected subsequent decisions in other arenas that acted independently.” Administrative fragmentation, as such, is central to what Jacob Hacker, drawing on Heclo, has described as policy drift, which is a process of change promoted by the lack of adaptation of past institutions to emerging problems. Such lack of adaptation is central to the privatization of social risks and, in the case of social and health services, to the growing presence of private providers.  

Administrative fragmentation is of great help in accounting for the differences between the Canadian and British ECEC systems. There is evidence that the fragmentation of responsibility between the Department of Education and the Department of Health in Britain has at times led to episodes of blame avoidance. Nevertheless, such division of responsibility between ministries is not unique to Britain and does not seem to have impeded the expansion of public services in continental Europe, where such administrative divisions are also frequent. What is unique about the British case is the fact that services for the same age group (0-5) were divided between two departments, while in most other countries services for children under the age of five were either the responsibility of one department (such as social services in Scandinavia and most Canadian provinces) or were divided according to age groups in continental European countries (usually children under the age of three were the responsibility of Departments of Social Services and children between three to six years of age were the responsibility of Departments of Education). The lack of centralization of departmental authority over one age group in Britain contributed not only to episodes of blame avoidance, but also to the emergence of a range of providers under different regulatory regimes. The unintended impact of such administrative fragmentation would, at a later date, limit the policy options that Whitehall could implement, although it also meant that it would face a considerably more fragmented ECEC lobby than the one in place in Canada.

187 Although not using these exact terms, Vicky Randall documented a number of such cases, especially in the immediate post-war period. See Randall, The Politics of Child Daycare in Britain, 56-9.
**Territorial Politics**

Much of the literature on territorial politics has focused on the negative impact of federalism on the development of the welfare state.\(^\text{189}\) According to Francis Castles, “one might point to the federalism/social policy linkage as one of the very few areas of unanimity in the literature, with writers from all the main competing explanatory paradigms arguing that federal institutions are inimical to high levels of *social* spending.”\(^\text{190}\) For Stephen Brooks, “few claims about federalism have been as widely accepted in recent years as the argument that decentralization is conservative in terms of either the motives of those who support it, or its distributional consequences, or both.”\(^\text{191}\)

Scholars have provided a number of explanations for the negative impact of federalism.\(^\text{192}\) First is the extreme difficulty in enacting any form of national legislation as there are simply more institutional and political hurdles in a federation. Subnational entities act as veto points that can block the expansion of services. In the words of Ellen Immergult, “institutional veto points comprised barriers to legislative action that served as useful tools for the interest groups that wished to block legislation.”\(^\text{193}\) Second, competition between levels of government to attract investment combined with the mobility of the population and corporations is said to exert pressures on subnational entities to keep taxes low and as such to limit social expenditures – the so-called “rush to the bottom.” Moreover, wealthier regions or provinces are likely to hold to their resources

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\(^{190}\) Francis G. Castles, *Comparing Public Policy: Patterns of Post-War Transformation* (Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 1999), 82.


and to be unwilling to share them with others, reinforcing the unequal distribution of resources and further entrenching the need to attract investments. Third, in cases where more “collaborative” institutional forms are in place, federalism is said to lead to what Fritz Sharpf has called the joint-decision trap. The reality of negotiations involving multiple actors seeking a compromise gives rise to suboptimal, lowest common denominator results. Over time, the difficulty of revising such accords or policies can potentially contribute to the maintenance of sub-optimal outcomes because of substantial policy rigidities. Fourth, the division of responsibility between two levels of government is likely to lead to a process of blame avoidance, as policy-makers avoid taking responsibility for the lack of policy development in a specific policy sector. Finally, the constitutional division of powers and the usual attribution of jurisdictions over social welfare to subnational entities mean that programs that often require the greater fiscal capacity of upper levels of government will be dealt with by lower levels of government with fewer resources, making their universal expansion unlikely.

Although many of these effects of federalism have played a role in the development of Canada’s ECEC system, especially problems involving the joint-decision trap and subnational vetoes, this perspective cannot account for the fact that for most of the post-war period Canada’s child care system was significantly more developed than the system in place in unitary Britain. There are two main problems with the literature on federalism and social policy. The first is that it tends to mistakenly equate stability with conservatism. While veto points make changes more difficult, they do not necessarily produce specifically conservative policy outcomes. In some cases, federalism might contribute to the maintenance of progressive policies in the face of pressures for more conservative change. Indeed, a growing body of literature has demonstrated that federations were less likely to experience significant episodes of welfare state retrenchment than were unitary countries. In some cases, such as Germany, the structure

198 Paul Pierson and R. Kent Weaver, “Imposing Losses in Pension Policy,” in Do Institutions Matter? Government Capabilities in the United States and Abroad, eds. R. Kent Weaver and Bart Rockman
of the federation has even been said to have contributed to an expansion of the welfare state by providing incentives for politicians to claim credit for new spending programs, while at the same time allowing them to avoid blame for corresponding increases in taxation or public debt.\textsuperscript{199} Even more important for this dissertation is the fact that a simple distinction between unitary and federal countries is problematic as a proxy for decentralization in relation to social services.\textsuperscript{200} In fact, for most of the post-war period, control over the regulation and delivery of social services was significantly more decentralized in Britain than it was in Canada. In Britain it was the responsibility of local governments, while in Canada, responsibility for social services was gradually centralized at the provincial level in the post-war era.

As such, I share Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones’ rejection of the “conservative bias” too often attached to federalism:

Our view of federalism is that it carries no bias. Indeed, every venue is biased. It is this bias that offers opportunities for change. Even the whole complex of institutions that comprise federalism may well be biased in the sense that more (or more important) venues are more easily captured by, say, business interests. But the very existence of multiple venues means that cracks are likely to appear somewhere, and these can be exploited by political activists.\textsuperscript{201}

Indeed, federalism provides social activists with an extraordinary opportunity for \textit{venue shopping}.\textsuperscript{202} Venue shopping refers to the actions of policy entrepreneurs who focus their efforts on the institutional setting that they feel provides them with the best opportunity to realise the adoption of their agenda. In a multitiered system, social activists whose efforts to implement policy changes at the national level are frustrated can try to

\textsuperscript{200} I am grateful to Peter Graeffe for pointing out that important fact to me a number of years ago.
\textsuperscript{201} Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones, \textit{Agendas and Instability in American Politics} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 32.
gain support for their agenda at the subnational level.203 This capacity to “venue shop” is said to explain in part the capacity of activists to promote innovative policies in some countries and not in others. For example, Erik Albaek, Christoffer Green-Pedersen and Lars Beer Nielsen have found that tobacco consumption had been the focus of more policy initiatives in the United States than in Denmark, due in part to the fact that the former is a country with multiple political venues.204

This is not to suggest that local governments cannot be venues used by social activists.205 Indeed, as shown in Chapter five, especially during the attempted return to municipal socialism in the early 1980s, local governments in Britain have been hotbeds of policy innovation around ECEC services. Similarly, in Canada, the city of Toronto has played a key role in developing a social-democratic vision of child care as an alternative to the federal and provincial liberal welfare approach.206 Nevertheless, most of these innovations could not be sustained over time because of local governments’ lack of fiscal capacity and the ability of upper levels of government to abolish progressive local authorities, such as the Greater London Council (GLC) in Britain. In fact, in most countries, including Canada and most of Europe, the expansion of the welfare state has involved greater responsibility for upper echelons of the state that have access to more elastic fiscal resources.207 Therefore, the choice of a territorial venue can have an important impact, promoting certain coalitions over others, and potentially certain

203 As Baumgartner and Jones argue, “there are no immutable rules that spell out which institutions in society must be charged with making which decisions.” In Agendas and Instability in American Politics, 31.
207 Only in Scandinavia, where metropolitan consolidation partly eliminated the potential of a race to the bottom and where the extensive fiscal capacity of local authorities allowed them to sustain policy innovations, did local governments significantly contribute to the expansion of the welfare state. According to Sellers and Lidström, “pre-existing local government infrastructures laid the foundations for welfare administration throughout most of Scandinavia. These local capacities have helped make the Social Democratic welfare state possible, and have helped assured its continued survival.” Jeffrey M. Sellers and Anders Lidström, “Decentralization, Local Government, and the Welfare State,” Governance 20, no. 4 (2007): 625.
solutions over others, as a given venue might have greater or lesser legislative and fiscal resources.

A key weakness of the territorial politics literature, as well as the venue shopping literature, is its lack of consideration of the impact of the early institutionalization of policy solutions at specific levels of the state. As Sarah Pralle argues, while multiple venues allow the promotion of new policies, who gets there first especially matters since groups can ensure the institutionalization of policies that favour their interests and occupy the political space in a way that might prevent subsequent policy challenges. One might therefore ask whether, over time, successful or unsuccessful cases of venue shopping are likely to constrain the types of policies that can be adopted. To answer that question, it is essential to turn from the largely static model of politics explored in this section to the ways in which historical developments shaped by timing, sequence, and the self-reinforcing consequences of both public and private institutional developments influence the politics of child care services.

**Timing Matters: Policy Sequence, Policy Feedback and Policy Change**

*Sequencing and Policy Feedback*

As I argued in the previous section, the territorial and administrative organization of the state allows interest groups to promote their agenda in multiple venues. The capacity of actors to ensure the “institutionalization” of their preferred policy solutions to a problem is essential in the long-term, according to the literature on sequencing and policy feedback. The sequencing argument is based on the assumption that “actors compete to occupy limited political space, and that once groups occupy this space they are often difficult to dislodge.” The beginning of such a sequence is often referred to as a “critical juncture”, which set a country along a particular trajectory or path that is then

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difficult, if not impossible to reverse.\textsuperscript{211} This early juncture is crucial according to historical institutionalists because it contributes to “policy feedback effects”, which means that once a path is taken, once viable alternatives become increasingly remote, “all relevant actors adjust their strategies to accommodate the prevailing patterns.”\textsuperscript{212} Three types of feedback effects can be identified from the literature: societal, territorial and ideational.

Societal feedback effects refer to the empowerment of groups with a stake in the maintenance of a given policy. These groups are likely to protect the policy against attacks and push for its extension, contributing to policy sustainability over time. As Pierson suggests, once they reach a certain size, these groups become politically powerful and policy-makers will feel pressure to avoid any reforms that might alienate them.\textsuperscript{213} Among the main groups are benefit recipients, such as the elderly defending public pensions against government cuts.\textsuperscript{214} Also important, especially in the social services and health care sectors, are provider groups that might oppose any policy reforms that could compromise their privileged position. As shown in chapter six, the early preference given in Canada’s financing of ECEC services to non-profit organizations led these groups to oppose policy reforms that could have led to a rapid expansion of commercial providers. The absence of public policies, or non-decisions, might also have feedback effects when it contributes to the expansion of private service providers, as in the case of the development of British parental playgroups and employer vouchers explored in chapter five. As Daniel Béland and Jacob Hacker argue, ‘by fostering vested interests, shaping public expectations, and embedding institutions, the spread of private provision (usually in response to indirect state encouragement) may constrain the scope for government programs even if conditions are otherwise permissive.”\textsuperscript{215} In short, societal feedback effects involve what is often referred to as “first mover advantage”, that is when “some set


\textsuperscript{212} Kathleen Thelen, \textit{How Institutions Evolve: The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 27.

\textsuperscript{213} Pierson, \textit{Politics in Time}, 73.

\textsuperscript{214} The work of Andrea Louise Campbell on seniors’ activism in the US provides perhaps one of the best illustrations of such a process. See Andrea Louise Campbell, \textit{How Policies Make Citizens: Senior Political Activism and the American Welfare State} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

of actors achieves a position of influence first, and are able to use that position to consolidate their hold on a particular ‘political space’. As a result of such early presence, Pierson continues, “challengers at a later date will often be severely disadvantaged, even though similar actors (parties, interest organizations, social movements) may fare quite well in other contexts where they happen to arrive first.”

Although rarely mentioned in much of the policy feedback literature, most public policies also have a territorial feedback effect, which means that policies empower certain levels of government over others. Such feedback is very similar to Pierson and Leibfried’s concept of pre-emptive policy space:

From a multitiered system, the enactment of policies at a decentralized level may constrain the options available to authorities in the central tier. Once adopted, policies go through a gradual process of institutionalization. Established programs generate sunk costs and networks of political interests that diminish the prospects of radical reform. The possibility of policy pre-emption suggests that an important source of variation among multitiered systems arises from the timing of interventions by constituent members and central authorities.

A rare application of the concept of pre-empted policy space can be found in Christopher Howard’s study of the development of workers’ compensation policies at the state level in the United States. These state programs were seen as progressive at the time, as workers’ compensation was the first social insurance program to gain widespread acceptance in the US and became one of the foundations of the American welfare state. Over time though, when national policy-makers thought of reforming workers’ compensation policies in order to provide equal and more generous treatment throughout the United States, they faced opposition from state bureaucracies and from third party providers operating within each states. In the words of Howard, “it is perhaps precisely because opponents could rely on two different lines of attack, substantive and jurisdictional, that workers’ compensation has resisted federalization, much less nationalization.”

Howard, though conscious of avoiding any overtly deterministic argument, does recognize that “there was nothing inevitable about this history,” as

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219 Ibid, p. 47.
widely shared perceptions of a “crisis” in workers compensation could have given rise to a strong push for national involvement.” The federal government, though, purposely decided not to pursue a national agenda on workers’ compensation in order not to undermine policy reforms in other policy sectors. As Howard argues, “arguments about path dependence in policy-making must be sensitive to the ways in which actors’ preferences and goals can be shaped by the trajectory of two or more policy paths.”

Howard’s narrative of the development of workers’ compensation policies shares much in common with the development of Canada’s ECEC system. As shown in chapter six, Canada’s federal government also faced the dual opposition of provincial governments and organizations representing child care providers to some of its initiatives at various times, especially during the 1980s. Priorities in other policy sectors, especially in relation to the national unity file, also limited the capacity of the federal government to develop national initiatives that could have contributed to a rapid expansion of regulated child care spaces. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that the Canadian story was not the inevitable result of the country’s federal structure. What mattered was the effect of the timing of intervention of each level of government. In fact, Australia, another Anglo-Saxon federation, had an ECEC system similar to that of Canada up to the mid-1980s, with a predominance of community child care providers. In contrast to Canada though, Australia encouraged a dramatic expansion of the commercial sector in the late 1980s. The main difference between the two countries was that the federal government in Australia had been the first to occupy the child care policy sector, by-passing state governments, by directly financing community groups. As such, the federal government could easily implement its reform agenda, not facing vetoes from state government bureaucracies. Territorial feedback effect not only constrain policy-makers, they also influence the strategies and preferences of advocacy coalitions. As Sven Steinmo argues, where political authority is concentrated, specialized interest groups have less leverage

220 Idem.
221 Idem.
222 The federal government was especially worried that intervention in provincial jurisdictions would fuel the Quebec secessionist movement.
224 Moreover, in Australia, unlike in Canada, the labour movement was not as closely linked to the child care movement.
and are more likely to make broader demands that can attract the support of a number of groups.\footnote{225}

As mentioned previously, ideas do matter in policy development. Ideas embedded in early policy decisions can have long-lasting effects, independent of the changing power of groups promoting these policies, and as such, a number of scholars have emphasized the normative or ideational dimension of policy feedback. As Judith Goldstein argues, “ideas do not influence behaviour simply at one moment in time. Once a set of beliefs has become encased in institutions, these ideas can influence policy even after the interests of their creators have changed.”\footnote{226} Ideas are especially likely to have a path dependent impact when pursued by cohesive societal networks or coalitions. According to Grace Skogstad, “an important feedback effect of a policy instrument is whether it promotes solidarity and communal behaviour as opposed to organizational fragmentation and particularism among affected citizens. These policy instruments that create incentives for solidarity among societal groups and for cohesive societal networks to form around policy ideas and policies are more likely to fortify a policy paradigm.”\footnote{227} In certain countries, defining characteristics of certain policies, for example the exclusion of for-profit corporations from Canada’s publicly financed health care system, have become nothing less than defining features of the political community. Similarly, any discussion of allowing a more significant presence of multinational daycare corporations in Canada has been met by widespread outcry and significant opposition to which policy-makers have had to respond. Because of strong values developed over time in a policy sector, certain options are more likely to be rejected.

The presence of important feedback effects does not mean that once adopted, these policies will contribute to freezing the social policy landscape such that actors with competing claims will stop playing the political game. As mentioned in the introduction, a production regime does not emerge fully formed. It is rather produced and reproduced

\footnote{225 Sven Steinmo, “Political Institutions and Tax Policy in United States, Sweden and Britain,” \textit{World Politics} 41, no. 4 (1989): 512-3.}


over time through the constant mobilization of interest groups wishing not only to maintain their dominant institutional position, but also to advance the ideas they promote and defend in the public sphere. As such, sequence and positive feedbacks arguments do not rest on the assumption that policy changes are impossible, but rather that they are *path dependent.*\(^{228}\) Path dependency refers generally to the notion that previous policy decisions limit the range of options available in light of existing institutionalized patterns of interaction between actors. What matters then is to explore the kinds of policy change that a path dependent process is likely to encourage.

*Path Dependency and Policy Change*

Policy and institutional changes are not simply driven, almost mechanically, by macro-historical factors such as the shift to a post-industrial economy, globalization and/or the international diffusion of policy ideas. Although, as I argued in the previous chapter, those factors have certainly encouraged the development of ECEC services. As Martin Papillon has forcefully argued, policy and institutional adaptations are very much the result of strategic choice by policy actors.\(^{229}\) Agency does indeed matter, as actors introduced new policy images or change policy venues. Drawing on the Baumgartner and Jones’ punctuated equilibrium model, Carsten Daujberg and Jacob Studssgaard have shown that the radical modification of agricultural policies in Sweden and New Zealand was partly the result of both changes in discourse and venue, as the issue moved from a focus on farmers’ income under the leadership of Ministries of Agriculture, to one of

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\(^{228}\) Path dependency has increasingly become caricatured in some of the social policy literature has being synonymous with the absence of change, or analytically confused with Pierson’s “permanent austerity thesis”. Although I very much agree with their excellent analysis of the capacity of the third sector to promote policy change, I believe, for example, that Dobrowosky and Saint-Martin’s argument that their case studies demonstrate the limits of the path dependency approach is theoretically inaccurate. In fact, the policies that they document as being part of a path changing paradigm are either completely new to the British welfare state architecture (so no path existed prior to the adoption of these policies) or have significantly more elements of continuity than they acknowledge. See Alexandra Dobrowosky and Denis Saint-Martin, “Agency, Actors and Change in a Child-Focused Future: ‘Path Dependency’ Problematised,” *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 43, 1 (2005): 1-33.

\(^{229}\) Martin Papillon, *Federalism from Below?: The Emergence of Aboriginal Multilevel Governance in Canada: A Comparison of The James Bay Crees and Kahnawake Mohawks*, PhD Dissertation (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2008): 84. Although I share Papillon’s criticism of some of the rather functionalist explanations of institutional change, I disagree with his portrayal of Thelen’s approach as lacking in agency. After all, Thelen argues that “institutions are the object of ongoing contestation, and changes in the political coalitions on which institutions rest are what drive changes in the form institutions take and the functions they perform in politics and society.” Thelen, *How Institutions Evolve*, 31.
macroeconomic policies under the leadership of each country’s respective Ministry of Finance. They argue that these strategies led to the breakdown of the coalition on which these policies rested, and hence to radical changes. As Pierson argues, according to such a perspective, when an institutional equilibrium does give way, “any new equilibrium may be as likely as any other.” One might wonder, though, how such radical changes could happen despite the presence of policy legacies, major stakeholders, and veto players with interests of their own. In fact, Daugbjerg and Studsgaard’s notion of “radical reform” is misleading, as they recognize that in New Zealand reformers did not introduce a new dimension of controversy “but limited themselves to a change of balance in the existing ones.” As such, the punctuated equilibrium model tends to overestimate the capacity for radical, rapid departure in advanced industrial societies.

In the early 1990s, Margaret Weir had already presented the foundation of such a critique of the punctuated equilibrium model of policy change. She argued, that from the point of view of decision-makers, “policies that depend on reforming existing institutions or building new institutional capacity are less attractive than those that funnel distributive benefits through existing institutions, those that bypass institutions altogether, or those that rely on private activity, since they may be more easily launched.” More recently, Kathleen Thelen has similarly critiqued the punctuated equilibrium model, arguing that in most cases “elements of continuity and change are not separated into alternating sequences where one or the other (let alone “agency” or “structure”) dominates, but rather are often empirically closely intertwined.” While recognizing that radical, sharp and abrupt changes do occur occasionally, Wolfgang Streek and Kathleen Thelen argue that “it is not clear that this exhausts all the possibilities, nor even that it captures the most important ways that institutions evolve over time.”

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promote important institutional changes, three of which played a key role at different times in each case under study:

- **Policy drift**, which is when governments purposefully refuse to adapt existing institutions to changing conditions, contributing to the development of alternative, private services.

- **Policy or institutional layering**, which as a form of policy and institutional change is different from the type of radical change associated with punctuated equilibrium in that, first, there are no abolitions or replacements, but rather additions. As remarked by Eric Schickler, “new coalitions may design novel institutional arrangements but lack the support, or perhaps the inclination, to replace preexisting institutions established to pursue other ends.” As Renate Reiter demonstrated in her analysis of the evolution of family policies in federal Germany, layering is often a strategy used by policy actors in order to further what she calls the “regulation of innovation” without necessarily having to enter into a bargaining process with the major stakeholders of political interest in a certain policy field. In federations, but also in the social services policy sector, a classic case of policy layering is the establishment of tax expenditures which, because the ultimate decision as to “who provides” rests with the recipients of the tax credit, allows central governments to bypass negotiations with lower levels of government and also with service providers.

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Institutional or policy conversion, which occurs when “institutions are not so much amended or allowed to decay as they are redirected to new goals, functions or purposes. Such redirection may come about as a result of new environmental challenges, to which policy-makers respond by deploying existing institutional resources to new ends.” The classic example of “policy conversion” is perhaps the case of France’s Écoles Maternelles, which were first created as important tools of children’s socialization at a time of escalating conflicts between the Catholic Church and leaders of the Third Republic. In the post-war period though, faced with labour market shortages, the operating hours of these Écoles Maternelles were expanded and the offer of service was gradually universalized throughout the French territory. As shown in chapter five, a similar process occurred in Britain in the 1990s, as parental playgroups that were originally created as spaces of socialization for children and their parents were transformed into institutions of pre-school education.

As I argue in the next chapters, the processes of layering and conversion that occurred in both countries constituted a strategic response to territorial obstacles to the development of a national ECEC policy or to the development over time of a significantly fragmented mixed economy of services both in the child care and the preschool sectors. Both cases confirm Schickler’s argument that the process of institutional layering “results in institutions that appear more haphazard than the product of some overarching master plan,” and largely account for what many ECEC commentators have described as both countries’ seemingly incoherent and disjointed policy developments. As such, the occasionally strange mix between the regime and pillar dimensions of the welfare state that I presented in the introduction is largely the result of such cases of policy drift, policy

239 Streek and Thelen, Beyond Continuity, 26.
241 Shickler, Disjointed Pluralism, 15.
242 Despite the significant number of initiatives adopted by New Labour, the authors of an OECD review of Britain’s ECEC policies lamented the lack of a coordinated approach to ECEC as a result of “the continuing division between education and care, the complexity of funding arrangements, and the decentralisation of responsibilities.” OECD, Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in the United Kingdom (Paris: OECD, 2000), 41. Available at http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/52/32/2535034.pdf [Last Accessed July 26, 2009]
layering and policy conversion over time. Moreover, these processes are largely responsible for important changes that are, much like ECEC reforms under New Labour, what Skogstad has presented as non-radical, yet potentially transformative changes that fall between incremental adaptation and abrupt and radical processes of discontinuity. This dissertation shows that such processes unfolded over time in both Britain and Canada, albeit with different consequences as a result of distinct sequences of policy developments and distinct advocacy coalitions.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that policy coalitions can further policy changes by attaching new policy images to inherited institutions in policy venues that are favourable to their preferred policy solutions. I made the case that the policy preferences of these coalitions are the result of the sequence of policy developments as well as the institutional organization of policy-making. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the contrasting differences between Britain and Canada in relation to the key variables identified in this chapter. This dissertation does not merely focus on the cross-national differences between Canada and Great Britain. It also investigates the development of each country over time, generating the hypothesis that, in cases where subnational entities and private providers have first occupied the policy space, as in Canada and Britain, radical policy shifts such as those predicted by “punctuated equilibrium” models are unlikely, and that the ECEC systems are more likely to significantly change over time through processes of policy drift, layering and conversion.

The coming chapters document the gradual development of ECEC policies in Canada and Great Britain since the 19th century. They demonstrate the extent to which past policy legacies and the early strategic mobilization of ECEC activists influenced the development of contemporary ECEC policies. The next chapter explores the contrasting development of the two countries prior to the emergence of the post-war welfare state. In the following two chapters, I explore the more contemporary politics of child care in both Canada and Great Britain.

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<td>No (pre-1997)</td>
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<td>No</td>
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CHAPTER 4

Policy Legacies in Canada and Great Britain

In his brilliant trilogy on the major developments of the 19th century (revolution, empire, capitalism), the British historian Eric Hobsbawn introduced the notion of the “long 19th century” to refer to social, political and cultural processes that emerged with the French revolution and saw their dénouement with the outbreak of the First World War. In the social policy sector, one can also talk of a long 19th century that stretched from the emergence of voluntary relief efforts during the Victorian Age to the acceptance of state responsibility for the delivery of social services in the aftermath of the Second World War. Such early efforts were the result of the growing social ills brought by the dual process of industrialization and urbanization. While mothers were previously economically active through the household economy, a growing number of them were increasingly forced in the 19th century to join the world of shops and factories. The care of young children became an important concern for social reformers, philanthropists, and also the state.

This chapter explores institutional and policy legacies that, without fully determining the evolution of Canada’s and Britain’s ECEC systems, nonetheless constrained the options available to policy-makers and influenced the mobilization of interest groups in the post-war period. As argued by Peter Flora, the diversity among welfare states can be understood as the result of different timing in the creation of major institutions, time being defined here not in chronological but in developmental terms. This chapter reveals that the slower process of urbanization and industrialization experienced in Canada slowed the incorporation of educational services for children under the age of five into provincial educational systems, much as in Scandinavian countries. In Britain, contrary to Canada, the educational system was from the late 19th century seen as a policy instrument available to resolve a number of social and medical ills. As such, in the post-war period, Canada and Great Britain would face the development of ECEC services with different institutional and administrative constraints.

244 The three books are The Age of Revolution (1962), The Age of Capital (1975) and The Age of Empire (1987).
The first section of this chapter explores the longer story of the development of education and social services in Britain from the late 19th century to the end of the Second World War. The second section investigates the extremely uneven and rather limited development of services for children under the age of five over the same period in Canada. This chapter lays the historical foundations to understand subsequent developments in both countries. More precisely, it explores the historical source of important differences between Canada and Great Britain: the greater proportion of children under the age of five in pre-school programs as well as the administrative fragmentation of responsibility for ECEC services for children under the age of five.

**Policy Legacies in Great Britain**

“The towns have led the way in the great development of local services which the last century has witnessed,” wrote Harold Laski and his collaborators in their 1935 classic *A Century of Municipal Progress*.\(^{246}\) Outlining the significant changes in public health and education brought by England’s system of elected and professional local governments adopted in 1835, they approvingly quoted Sir Ernest Simon’s assertion that “the City council’s services mean the difference between savagery and civilization.”

No more apparent were these changes brought by local initiatives and services than in relation to the health, welfare and education of children. Indeed, in many ways, it is the “discovery” of child poverty that provided the impetus to the explosion of voluntary and local initiatives around public health and education in the second half of the 19th century.\(^{247}\) Over the period covered by Laski’s book, infant mortality was reduced by three-quarters and infectious diseases such as small-pox, that killed thousands of children every year, were by then the cause of less than one in a million deaths.\(^{248}\) Between 1871 and 1902, the total number of schools in England and Wales went from 8,798 to 20,153.\(^{249}\) Growing expenditure and emphasis on education preceded the adoption of the 1870


\(^{248}\) Laski et al. *A Century of Municipal Progress*, 15.

\(^{249}\) Figure quoted in Bernard Harris, *The Origins of the British Welfare State in England and Wales, 1800-1945* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 146.
Education Act, which set up School Boards responsible for the provision of schools where they were needed. Government spending on public education had, in fact, increased from £10,642 in 1840 to £894,561 in 1870, the year of the adoption of the Education Act.\textsuperscript{250}

The origin of early childhood education in Great Britain can be traced to the establishment in New Lanark, in 1816, of the first infant school by Robert Owen and the subsequent creation, in 1824, of the London Infant School Society, directed by Samuel Wilderspin. Whereas Owen, largely ahead of his time, had emphasized the importance of play, Wilderspin and his supporters focused more on religious and moral instruction. Relying on philanthropic donations, Wilderspin opened up more than 150 infant schools for children under the age of seven during the 1820s.\textsuperscript{251}

Between 1860 and 1900, Great Britain experienced a tremendous rise in the number of children under the age of five in schools, from 19.8 to 43.1 per cent of children between three and five years old. Most of these children were not in separate infant schools, but rather in infant classes of elementary schools. The adoption of the Revised Code in 1862 has been credited for the rapid expansion of children under the age of five at school. The Revised Code introduced “payment by results”, a system whereby a school’s governmental grant and teacher’s salary depended on how well pupils above six years of age performed in the annual examination conducted by Her Majesty’s Inspectors.\textsuperscript{252} The annual examination focused on the three Rs: reading, ‘riting (writing) and ‘rithmetic (arithmetic). Under that scheme, children under seven were not examined, but the grant in respect to them, which was half that for children above six, was based on average attendance.

The expansion of early education was so fast that by the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century England was a leader in early childhood education. Whereas 43.1 per cent of children between the age of three and five in England and Wales were in schools, the proportion of children between the age of three and six in Belgium’s Écoles Gardiennes was 30 per

\textsuperscript{250} Ibid., 141.
\textsuperscript{252} This summary is based on Brendan A. Rapple, “Payment by Results: An Example of Assessment in Elementary Education from Nineteenth Century Britain,” \textit{Education Policy Analysis Archives} 2, no. 1 (web based journal). Available at: http://escholarship.bc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=library_pubs [Last accessed July 26, 2009]
cent; the percentage of children between the age of two and six in France’s Écoles Maternelles was 25 per cent; and the percentage of German children between the age of two and six in Kinderbewahranstalt and Kindergarten varied from a low of 2.67 per cent in Berlin to a high of 11.53 per cent in Düsserdorf.\(^{253}\)

If Britain was indeed a leader in the provision of education for children under six, it lagged other countries with regard to the care of children between 0 and 3. In 1904, with a population of 4.5 million habitants, London had 55 crèches accommodating 1,693 children under age three, for an average of one space for every 2,500 children. In the rest of England, only 19 crèches were in operation.\(^{254}\) In comparison, with a population of 2.75 million habitants, Paris had during the same period 66 crèches accommodating 2,491 children under the age of three, for a ratio of one place for every 1,000 children. More importantly, there were 322 crèches outside the capital. Such differences reflected in part a lower level of demand. In 1901, only 36 per cent of women in England were employed, compared with 48 per cent of French women and 45.9 per cent of German women (in 1907).\(^{255}\)

Costs probably proved a more significant impediment to the expansion of day nurseries. Laura Collins estimates that the weekly child care cost for a place in a day nursery was around 2-3 shillings, compared with 9 pennies for the employment of a young girl, a common practice in industrial regions, and 2-3 pennies for a place in infant schools.\(^{256}\) Such high cost reflects the fact that day nurseries did not receive any subsidies from public authorities, as local governments were often required to obtain explicit authorization from the central government before setting new programs and engaging in new forms of spending. Thus, with the exception of four nurseries opened by the London School Board, day nurseries were financed through philanthropic donations and parental contributions. Lacking the support of public authorities, few day nurseries were able to stay open for a significant period of time. The situation in England was in significant


\(^{254}\) Ibid., 153-4.


contrast to France, where local authorities, using their greater legislative autonomy, played a significant role in setting up crèches and ensuring their long-term financing. In cities where local centre-left and centrist politicians prevailed in France, “there were more and more public goods and services for social and philanthropic purposes, free or below costs, to confirm the commune as the pillar of republican democracy.”

Nevertheless, at the end of the 19th century, there is significant evidence that despite the limited development of day nurseries, the system of preschool education was largely successful in providing a needed service for working mothers. In 1902, school boards were abolished and replaced by Local Education Authorities that were integrated with the newly formed structure of local government. Under the new regulations, three-year-olds, reflecting existing customs, could not be refused admittance to elementary schools. The high level of preschool provision and its popularity at the turn of the century meant, in the words of Jack Tizard and his collaborators, that “England seemed well on the way to providing a voluntary but freely available educational service for all young children from the age of three if the parents chose to avail themselves of it.”

Missed Opportunity: The Decline of the Under Fives in the English Educational System

In the early twentieth century, public anxieties emerged about the quality of the education provided to children under the age of five and the contribution of schools (or lack thereof) to the health of children. These concerns were not unique to England, as they were also expressed in France with respect to the écoles maternelles. The first concern was the result of the growing popularity among educationalists of the developmental pedagogy associated with Froebel and its focus on play rather than instruction. These ideas became increasingly popular in Britain following the creation in 1874 of the Froebel Society, the National Froebel Union in 1887, the Froebel Educational Institute in 1895,

and the opening of a small number of kindergartens for children of the middle class.\textsuperscript{260} The second preoccupation emerged from anxieties about the health of the English population in the wake of the Boer War. Studies at that time found that 60 per cent of the men who had offered to enlist had been rejected, suffering from ailments that often developed in early childhood.\textsuperscript{261} Although the ignorance of mothers was mostly blamed for this situation, a growing number of doctors expressed concerns that, due to unhygienic conditions, young children were put at risk by going to school.

Responding to these growing concerns, the Board of Education mandated six women inspectors to conduct an inquiry on the admission of young children to elementary schools. Their report, released in 1905, condemned the early education system. It argued that children between the ages of three and five “gained no profit intellectually from school instruction, and that the mechanical teaching which they so often received dulled their imagination and weakened their power of independent observation.” Arguing that “the better parents should be discouraged from sending their children before five”, the report also stated “that a new form of school is necessary for poor children, nursery schools rather than schools of instruction.”\textsuperscript{262} The reaction of the Board of Education to this report was immediate. First, it gave complete discretion to newly formed Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to decide whether or not to exclude younger infants from their schools. Secondly, it set up a consultative committee on the school attendance of children below the age of five. The terms of the Committee give a good indication of the Board of Education’s intention:

\begin{quote}
To consider and advise the Board of Education in regard to the desirability, or otherwise, both on educational and other grounds, of discouraging the attendance at school of children under (say) five years, on the assumption that, in the event of the change being found generally desirable, the moneys now payable by the Board in the shape of grants in respect of the attendance of such children, should still be payable to Local Education Authorities, in greater relief of their expenditure in educating children over five years of age.\textsuperscript{263}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{260} The Froebel Society was dedicated to the promotion of Froebel’s idea, the Union provided (part-time) courses and diplomas, while the Institute was a college for the training of teachers in Froebel’s method. Tessa Blackstone, \textit{A Fair Start: The Provision of Pre-School Education} (London: Allen Lane, 1971), 25.
\textsuperscript{262} Quoted in Blackstone, \textit{A Fair Start: The Provision of Pre-School Education}, 29.
The Committee accepted the view of the inspectors that “the best training for children between three and five years of age is that which they get from their mother in their own homes.” Yet, the report of the Committee, extremely progressive for the time, also argued that the absence of public provision would lead to a significant number of children being left on their own, or to the care of a “professional minder” that is “almost always unsatisfactory.” The committee concluded that “in view of the present conditions of home life in England, especially in many parts of the large town, it is necessary that some public authority should provide opportunities for the suitable training and education of great numbers of little children, whose parents should be encouraged by every available means to make use of such opportunity.”

It also proposed the creation of nursery schools, attached to elementary schools, which would replace formal lessons in reading, writing, and arithmetic by a focus on “freedom of movement, constant change of occupation, frequent visits to the playground, and opportunities for sleep (…) .”

The Board of Education accepted the Committee’s recommendation of discouraging the attendance of younger children under the age of five and removed grants aid to local authorities who accepted them, but did not provide additional funds for the development of a new system of nursery schools for underprivileged children. The result was a rapid decline in the number of children under the age of five attending school. For Randall, the culprit was the widely accepted view or norm, shared by feminists, trade unionists and politicians alike, that mothers of young children should stay at home to look after them. Yet, if such a view can explain the limited development of day nurseries for working mothers of children under the age of three, it is not necessarily the case that it would limit the development of preschool programs, whose main objectives go beyond the simple care of children while their mothers are at work. Indeed, over the next decades, countries that tended to promote the male breadwinner model, such as Italy and Belgium, would combine high attendance to preschool programs with limited child care spaces.

265 Ibid., 58.
268 Although Belgium is now often presented as a country with high level of child care services, as late as 1944, only 62 crèches were in operation, serving 2,600 children. In Belgium, like in England, the
Indeed, the report of the Board of Education on the school attendance of children below the age of five provides ample evidence of the extent of support for early childhood education in England. For example, commissioners investigated the behaviour of local education authorities during the period between 1905 and 1908 when they were given the opportunity to exclude children between the age of three and five from elementary schools. It found that of the 322 LEAs that had supplied information to the committee, 290 had wholly or partially retained younger child in schools. More precisely, the Committee found that 154 admitted all children between three and five years of age, 136 excluded some children because of a lack of accommodation or staff, and only 32 had decided to fully exclude children under the age of five.\textsuperscript{269} Although the Committee recognized that in many LEAs children under the age of five had been retained simply because the Authority gained financially from such a policy or because such a policy had become traditional, it nonetheless stated “that it safe to say that the majority of the Authorities favour the retention of younger infants at schools.”\textsuperscript{270}

The abrupt decline of children under the age of five in the school system was the result of the growing imbalance between new demands imposed unilaterally by the Board of Education and the desire of the Exchequer to limit spending.\textsuperscript{271} With the abolition of the system of “payment by results” in 1898, education was increasingly financed through the imposition of local rates. Moreover, in the 1900s and 1910s, the Board of Education had imposed on LEAs an increased number of duties without increasing available grants: school meals in 1906, medical inspection in 1907, the youth employment service in 1911 and special facilities for epileptic and defective children in 1913.\textsuperscript{272} As a result, the percentage of the total cost of elementary education borne by the central government had gradually fallen from 64.9 per cent in 1900 to 50.1 per cent in 1908, and to 45.3 per cent

\hspace{1cm} predominant view at the time was that young children should be at home with their mothers. Yet, contrary to the situation in England, Belgium still managed to develop a well-attended preschool system. See Michel Vanderbroeck, “The Persistent Gap between Education and Care: a ‘History of the Present’ Research on Belgian Child Care Provision and Policy,” \textit{Paedagogica Historica} 42, no. 3 (2006): 363-83.


\textsuperscript{270} Ibid., 47.

\textsuperscript{271} At a meeting with the President of the Board of Education, a deputation from the National Education Association demanding both an end to the expulsion of children under the age of five from elementary schools and some relief towards heavy local burdens, was told to address their demands to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. “Mr Runciman and Educational Reforms,” \textit{The Times} (June 11, 1909): 10.

\textsuperscript{272} Christine Bellamy, \textit{Administering Central-Local Relations, 1871-1919} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 64-5.
in 1914. In the city of London, which had a history of taking full advantage of permissive Acts, which gave the authorization but did not mandate LEAs to provide certain services, the contribution of the state to the education system had declined to 27 per cent by 1914.\textsuperscript{273} The tragedy of an educational system financed through a visible and inelastic property tax was not lost on the editorial board of the \textit{Times Educational Supplement}, even when the state adopted a grant to aid the poorest LEAs:

Of all the burden that falls upon the British ratepayer, that at which he kicks the most is, as a rule, his education rate. (...) It is a “last straw,” imposed for purposes new to the present generation, which he has not yet learned to value as the American values education, and at which he grumbles exceedingly. It must, however, be admitted that the great and inexcusable variation of the education rate in different localities is an anomaly that justifies irritation.

And reflecting on the proposal of financing the educational system through tax instead of by rates, the editorial states that:

It is true, of course, that he would pay all the same, but from a different pocket, by taxes instead of by rates; and the relieve might therefore seem fictitious. But the history of “passive resistance” and of the Non-conformist conscience shows that many people bear without murmur charges upon the tax-paying pocket which they fiercely resent when levied through the rates, and account must be taken of this curious idiosyncrasy of human nature.\textsuperscript{274}

By increasing the number of compulsory duties on LEAs, by decreasing its financial participation to the overall cost of education and relying increasingly on local rates, and making it an official policy that children under the age of five should not be in school, the State gave little opportunity for LEAs to either continue accepting children under the age of five in elementary schools or to create the nursery school system proposed by the 1908 Committee. Indeed, during the 1900s, local politicians increasingly complained about the political cost they were paying because of the increased duties on local authorities that had to be paid by local rates. The National Association of Education Committees voted a resolution in 1909 declaring that new charges were “making educational administration so exceedingly unpopular that it would be impossible to

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\footnote{G.P. McHugh, \textit{Local Administration in English Elementary Education: 1833 to 1930} (London: Councils and Education Press, 1935), 29.}
\footnote{“Education Rates and Local Authorities,” \textit{Times Educational Supplement} (September 5, 1911): 119.}
\end{footnotes}
continue such administration effectively unless in the early future a largely increased proportion of the expenditure was provided from Imperial sources.”

The whole field of education was in fact in a state of flux due to the fiscal crisis. Herbert Fischer, who joined the government of David Lloyd George as President of the Board of Education after World War I, presented in his autobiography a vivid portrait of the obstacles to the development of public education in Britain in the early 1920s:

Finance, indeed, was at the heart of the problem. The cause which had been arresting educational progress in the country was lack of financial support. The engine was reasonably well built, but there was a lack of petrol. Too great a proportion of the burden was borne by the rates, too small a proportion by the taxes. There had been underspending in education, and the time had come when the country should know this.

ECEC in the Inter-War Period

Wars have been crucial periods in the development of social policies. Because of the need for women’s manpower, they have also led to shifts in gender relations and to the development of programs for working mothers. Indeed, during the First World War, many day nurseries were set up to allow women to work in the munitions factories. With grants from the Board of Education, 174 officially sponsored nurseries were in operation by 1919. Reflecting the national feeling of greater solidarity, the first legislation concerning nursery provisions was adopted towards the end of the war. First, the 1918 Maternity and Child Welfare Act allowed local welfare authorities to establish day nurseries and to grant-aid voluntary nurseries. Taking the children of working mothers at any age under the age of five, they were to be staffed by nurses and their main preoccupation was to be the preservation of children’s health.

Second, the 1918 Education Act empowered LEAs to establish nursery schools and/or classes and to provide grants to voluntary schools. These schools were to have broadly educational objectives and take children between two and five years old. For Tizard and his collaborators, such a division was unfortunate, as it gave rise to distinct sets of professional interests (the medical and nursing profession, and the educationalists).

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278 Tizard et al., All our Children, 69.
This distinction was also reflected in the formation of interest groups; the National Society of Day Nurseries was advocating more day nurseries, while the Nursery School Association was lobbying for an expansion of nursery schools. Yet, although such divided institutionalization has often been viewed as having contributed to the slow expansion of child care in England, it existed throughout Europe for most of the twentieth century.

The 1918 Education Act not only allowed LEAs to establish nursery schools and nursery classes, which Fisher viewed as the part of the Act that aroused the most enthusiasm, but also significantly changed the intergovernmental and fiscal system under which education programs could be made available. Fischer’s Education Act enacted a system of percentage grants in aid of approved local expenditures. Following the adoption of that Act, LEAs in principal could not receive more than two-thirds or less than 50 per cent of their approved net expenditures. Fischer believed that such a system would encourage progressive LEAs to be more generous in the provision of educational services, while fostering innovation. Yet, since local expenditures had to be centrally approved, the system meant in effect a greater degree of centralization in the hands of the Board of Education. It also meant that education would increasingly be financed by the central government and would have to compete with other government priorities and the efforts of the Treasury to control spending. As argued by D.W. Thoms, “the percentage grant (…) helped to activate the forces which encouraged the Treasury to establish its own authority over the Board of Education financial policy, and in turn ensure that the Board itself kept a careful watch on local education authority plans.”

For one of the successors of Fischer as President of the Board of Education, Lord Eustace Percy, this period also started a tradition of treating the field of education as the field “where economies in public expenditure could most easily be effected when the public purse-string had to be tightened.”

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the Exchequer in the 1920s, Winston Churchill, he recalls that his “imagination would have been caught by the use of taxpayer’s money to build and staff some great national institution; but he could see no political or national advantage in the making of grants in aid of municipal institutions, from which the municipalities would reap most of the credit (…).”

In light of the rapid expansion of government spending, the Board issued in 1921 Circular 1190, which stated that, as a consequence of the need for national economy, proposals for the establishment of new nursery schools could not be entertained. Moreover, the Conservative government set up in 1922 a Select Committee on National Expenditure, the Geddes Committee, which denounced the percentage grant system as a “money-spending device” and proposed to exclude all children below six from schools. Showing the unique British distinction between local ratepayers and national taxpayers, the report denounced the fact that taxpayers had to shoulder a “proportion of the burden which would have been borne by the ratepayer if the grant system had not been modified between 1917 and 1919.”

After negative reactions of LEAs, the Board never implemented the proposal of the Geddes report to exclude children under six. Instead, it adopted a system of fixed grants by refusing most demands of LEAs for extra expenditure, allowing applications for nursery schools only in exceptional cases. Moreover, Circular 1371 adopted in 1926 considerably reduced the grant for children under the age of five. The result was declining incentives for LEAs to develop nursery classes. By 1929, despite the initial post-war optimism, there were only 28 nursery schools, providing accommodation to 1,564 children.

It would be erroneous, though, to argue that this period was one of progressive local governments facing an intransigent and conservative Board of Education. In fact, especially in rural areas, many LEAs opposed the expansion of nursery education, in certain cases on moral grounds. Nevertheless, the most common source of local opposition

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285 Ibid., 96.
to nursery schools continued to come from politicians’ wariness about the impact of a potential expansion on local rates. Such anxieties resulted in part from the National Economy Bill of 1931, which had again transferred from taxes to rates a high proportion of the cost of education, ending in effect the minimum grant of 50 per cent.\(^{289}\)

Pre-school expansion did occur during this period, especially through the development of nursery classes. The decline in the school population throughout the 1930s resulted in empty classrooms that could be used for children under the age of five. Provision could be made more quickly and cheaply by the adaptation of existing accommodations. In fact, a reversal of the continuous decline of children under the age of five in elementary schools witnessed in the previous two decades occurred in the 1930s. The proportion of children between three and five years of age increased from 13 per cent of children in 1930 to around 16 per cent towards the end of the decade. For partisans of separate nursery schools, progress remained minimal.

In 1939, there were 56 nursery schools provided by LEAs and 58 provided by voluntary bodies, accommodating 8,864 children.\(^{290}\) Overall, only 26 out of 316 LEAs had established nursery schools, mostly in the industrial towns of the north, reflecting the Board’s focus on areas with poor housing and a poor health record.\(^{291}\) Despite such disappointing results, support for nursery education had attracted so many new supporters over the previous two decades that Phoebe Cusden could optimistically declare in 1938 that “there are indications that the progress of nursery education in this country will, during the next few years, proceed much more rapidly than has hitherto been the case.”\(^{292}\)

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\(^{289}\) “A Forward Policy,” *Times Educational Supplement* (January 11, 1936): 13. The article reports that in London alone, the additional charge on rates in 1933-34 as a result of the change in policy was £1,192,345.


\(^{291}\) Blackstone, *A Fair Start*, 57.

\(^{292}\) Cusden, *The English Nursery School*, xv.
adoption of the Maternity and Child Welfare Act in 1918, the open hostility of the Ministry of Health and a significant segment of the medical profession towards day nurseries for children under the age of three had led to the closure of a number of them. From 174 day nurseries in 1919, the number had declined to 104 in 1938. The 1933 report of the Committee on Local Expenditure had in fact pointed to day nurseries as a sector where economies could be made.293

At the outset of the Second World War, the Ministry of Labour became increasingly worried that the limited provision of day nurseries constituted a serious hindrance to the contribution of women to the war effort. The division of responsibility between the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health was seen as being partly responsible for such slow development. Finally, in 1941, following intensive pressures from the Ministry of Labour, the Board and the Ministry of Health published a joint circular setting up the basis of a considerable expansion of day nurseries, or what came to be known as the war nurseries. Although the Board of Education had expressed considerable interest in organizing such expansion, as it had no experience in dealing with children under age two, it reluctantly agreed to let the Ministry of Health supervise the expansion of war nurseries. Costs were to be financed entirely by the Ministry of Health.

Proponents of nursery schools opposed the leadership of the Ministry of Health. Lady Allen of Hurtwood, the chairwoman of the Nursery School Association, denounced the Ministry’s medical approach to the care of children and its simplistic view of children as “bundles of tummies and throats that were breeding grounds for germs.”294 Many proponents of nursery education were especially upset that the Board relinquished its responsibility over nursery schools, as they believed that the war nurseries would become the main provision for children under the age of five in the post-war period. These worries were not unfounded, as there are clear indications that the Ministry of Health challenged throughout the war the demand for nurseries, opposed many Local Authority plans on the grounds that the premises and staffing would lead to epidemics, and viewed such nurseries

as only a temporary measure. Interviews conducted by a public opinion research institute, Mass Observations, also found that the desire to avoid spending was one of the greatest concerns of the Ministry.

Nonetheless, the continuous pressure of the Ministry Labour and the “changing attitude of local authorities under the warming influence of a 100 percent grant” contributed in the following years to a rapid expansion of war nurseries. In 1944, there were 1,450 full-time war nurseries, 109 part-time war nurseries, 62 nursery schools and 784 nursery classes, accommodating more than 106,000 young children in England and Wales, in addition to the 102,940 children under the age of five in the ordinary reception classes of public elementary schools. Yet, despite the popularity of public nurseries, Summerfield estimates that only one-third of children of women war workers were in nurseries, leaving the rest to be cared for under private minding arrangements.

Despite the initial fears of the supporters of nursery education, the war nurseries did not diminish the general enthusiasm for educational services for children under the age of five. The Nursery School Association developed rapidly throughout the war – from twenty-six branches with three and half thousand members to eighty-five branches with nine thousand members. Moreover, nursery schools previously administered by voluntary societies were taken over by the state. In light of the growing pressures to integrate nursery education in the public elementary school system, a White Paper on educational reconstruction proposed for the first time a large-scale expansion of nursery school provision:

It is now considered that the self-contained nursery school, which form a transition from home to school, is the most suitable type of provision for children under five. Such schools are needed in all districts, as even when children come from good homes they can derive much benefit, both educational and physical, from attendance at nursery school. Moreover they are of great value to mothers who go out to work, and also to those who

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298 Ibid, 190-91.
need relief from the burden of household duties combined with the care of young family.\textsuperscript{301}

Such a proposal was integrated in the 1944 Education Act, seen as the road map to the development of education in the postwar period:

A local education authority shall have regard (…) to the need for securing that provision is made for pupils who have not attained the age of five years by the provision of nursery schools or, where the authority consider the provision of such schools to be inexpedient by the provision of nursery classes in other schools.\textsuperscript{302}

Once again, hopes were high that England, building on an extraordinary wave of solidarity brought on by the war effort, would finally develop the universal system of nursery education long dreamed by its supporters. Forty years after the almost complete exclusion of children under the age of five from its educational system, England seemed finally to reconsider the mistakes of the past. Moreover, a joint Circular issued in December 1945 by the Department of Health and the Department of Education stressed the need for the development, both short and long term, of a comprehensive nursery service for the care of children under the age of five.\textsuperscript{303}

But rapidly, as the country became preoccupied by the reconstruction challenge, most of the war nurseries were divided between the Department of Health (responsible for day nurseries) and the Department of Education (responsible for nursery schools). The maintenance of this distinction and the continuing role of the Department of Health was widely denounced by supporters of nursery education, who believed that the Department of Health had historically only very reluctantly authorized local authorities to develop day nurseries. Moreover, the responsibility for the provision of day nurseries was transferred back to local authorities and, with the halving of the grant from the Treasury, provision again had to be paid from the rates. As shown in the next section, this dependency on the property tax also retarded the development of ECEC services in Canada.

\textsuperscript{302} Education Act, 1944, reproduced in van der Eyken, \textit{Education, the Child and Society: A Documentary History}, 397.
Policy Legacies in Canada

Canada was in many ways a late “urbanizer” and a late “industrializer”, and the history of the development of ECEC prior to the Second World War is considerably less eventful than the British one. Canada’s first experience with early childhood education was the result of the importation of the British infant school to its soil. In 1829, a group of women from Montreal’s English-Speaking community opened a school that emulated the model developed by the British and Colonial Infant School Society.\(^{304}\) Although infant schools periodically opened over the next decades, their existence was often cut short by a lack of financial support. More common in Quebec during that period were *salles d’asile*, opened up by religious congregations which, following the example set by the clergy in France, initiated children between three and seven to proper social behavior, religious education and the basics of the three Rs.\(^{305}\) The early development of services in the French-Canadian community was the by-product of the significantly higher labour force participation of French-speaking women at the time.\(^{306}\) In Quebec, the *salles d’asile* were seen as educational institutions and as such were financed by provincial grants, charitable donations and 25 cent monthly fees.

By the early 20\(^{th}\) century though, with the development of a public educational system, the *salles d’asiles* gradually closed. Canada, much like Britain, experienced an extremely rapid development of its educational system throughout the 19\(^{th}\) century. Between 1841 and 1871, the number of children registered in “publicly controlled day schools” rose fivefold, from 160,000 to 800,000.\(^{307}\) In Ontario, it was not uncommon for children under six, especially in rural areas, to attend school with their older siblings. Yet, as Ontario was an early innovator in the development of a centralized curriculum, school reformers believed that class overcrowding was an impediment to the implementation of


\(^{305}\) See Micheline Lalonde-Graton, *Des salles d’asile aux centres de la petite enfance: la petite histoire des services de garde au Québec* (Sainte-Foy : Presses de l’Université du Québec, 2002).


their reforms. Kindergartens came to be seen as a solution to the problem.\textsuperscript{308} The objective of kindergartens, which was being promoted by Ontario’s New Education Movement, was “not solely to open wider horizons for under-privileged children, but also to channel these youngsters into socially desirable patterns of behavior.”\textsuperscript{309}

A first public kindergarten opened in Toronto in 1883, and Ontario became in 1887 one of the first jurisdictions in the world to make kindergartens part of the public school system.\textsuperscript{310} Kindergartens admitted children between five and seven years old, although children as young as three years old sometimes attended, in most cases on a part-time basis. But due to their popularity and the financial strains they put on a still-expanding educational system, Toronto School Board’s Management Committee quickly recommended that children under four years of age be excluded.\textsuperscript{311} Still, by 1911, around 200 kindergarten classrooms in the province (half of them in Toronto) accommodated more than 20,000 youngsters.\textsuperscript{312} Kindergartens opened in a number of cities throughout Ontario and in a number of other provinces in the subsequent two decades. Yet, attracting schoolteachers to rural areas turned out to be difficult, especially in the West, where provinces often had to hire teachers from Eastern Canada and the United States. The expansion of kindergartens outside the urban centres of central Canada was very slow over the next decades.

The method of financing education, much like in Britain, could in part be blamed for this slow development. In the mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century, as the debate over the creation of a public educational system in Ontario was raging, different options were explored, from leaving individuals and charities to pay directly for the cost of education, to provincial financing of a unified public system. The option chosen was to locally raise and distribute revenues through the creation of an educational rate and local school boards. It was believed that local rate on education, to be paid by all property owners, would contribute

\textsuperscript{308} Julie Mathien, “Children, Families, and Institutions in Late 19\textsuperscript{th} and Early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Ontario,” MA Thesis (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001), 34.
\textsuperscript{309} Robert M. Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 56.
\textsuperscript{310} Martha Friendly, Child Care Policy in Canada: Putting the Pieces Together (Don Mills, ON: Addison-Wesley Publishers, 1994), 125.
\textsuperscript{311} Mathien, “Children, Families, and Institutions,” 42
\textsuperscript{312} Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 56.
to the participation of the wealthy in the development of schools and to declining social class antagonisms. Over time, most provinces followed the Ontario model.

While the wealthy indeed participated in the development of local educational systems through their involvement in school boards, it also allowed them to diffuse their (conservative) ideas about the proper relationship between mothers and children. More importantly, the reliance on the rate had significant negative consequences for the expansion of kindergarten, as taxpayer revolts often contributed to the elimination of programs perceived as frivolous, especially during harsh economic times. Although the municipal rate increased at a significantly higher pace than the educational rate in the first decades of the twentieth century, municipalities often blamed school boards for the rise of local taxation. As argued by a legislative law clerk in 1933, “the danger is that the taxpayer is being educated to believe that it is school expenditures and those alone which are weighing him down.”

While the first two decades of the 20th century had witnessed the slow, but gradual expansion of kindergartens through most Canadian provinces, the economic crisis of the 1930s and cuts in educational budgets under the pressures of local ratepayers constituted a huge setback for the proponents of kindergarten education. For example, while the Quebec government adopted legislation authorizing the establishment of écoles maternelles in the Catholic public school system in 1912, almost no public maternelles opened until the second half of the 1960s. With the exception of Regina, all kindergartens disappeared in Western Canada in the second half of the 1920s and would not reach their earlier numbers until the 1960s.

The limited availability of pre-school services meant that the children of working mothers were often left unsupervised. By the end of the 19th century, there were only four day nurseries in Canada to take care of these children (two in Toronto, one in Montreal, and one in Hamilton). According to Larry Prochner, “most cities in Canada did not have the correct combination of population and number of poor wage-earning mothers to

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314 Quoted in Stamp, The Schools of Ontario, 145.
315 By the early 1960s, only 2 per cent of Quebec children were in public kindergartens. Jocelyne Morin, La Maternelle: Histoire, Fondements, Pratiques (Montreal: Gaëtan Morin Éditeur, 2002), 34-5.
316 Prochner, “A History of Early Education and Child Care in Canada,” 33. Prochner points out that in 1948 only one per cent of five years old in British Columbia were in preschool education.
provide the basis for a day nursery.” Nonetheless, with the increasing rate of industrialization and urbanization, demands for day care increased and day nurseries opened in the first two decades of the 20th century in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Halifax and Edmonton. The purpose of these nurseries was to take care of children whose mothers had to engage in paid labour for their families to survive, especially single mothers. They were open for eleven or twelve hours a day, and provided also an employment service for mothers, finding them positions as domestic workers.

Such services for working mothers were at odds with a culture that increasingly promoted domesticity. In the first two decades of the century, women’s organizations such as the National Council of Women pushed provincial governments to adopt policies that would promote the “domestic ideology”, especially by supporting single women who were, through no fault of their own, raising children alone. Mothers’ Allowances were introduced in seven of Canada’s nine provinces. While they helped to alleviate poverty, they also reduced the necessity for mothers to work. By 1931, only a tenth of the females who went out to work were married. These social and policy changes slowed the expansion of day nurseries. By the early 1930s, there were only 20 day nurseries in all of Canada, serving from 2,500 to 2,600 children. Costs, much like in Britain, seemed also to have been an impediment to the development of nurseries. Receiving only limited and often non-recurrent government funding, day nurseries had to rely on contributions from wealthy donors and from users. While the fees were usually 5 or 10 cents, by 1932 some centres charged as much as 25 cents a day to women earning around $1.00 a day.

Developments within the field of child care also contributed to the transformation of the objectives of child care. Under the influence of the Mental Health Hygiene movement, the objective of child care went from caring for the health and moral well-being of the children of working mothers to providing “an environment that matched children’s ages and stages of development as well as supported positive mental health.

317 Ibid., 41.
320 Ibid., 28-9.
322 Ibid., 139.
development.”^323 For proponents of the Mental Health Hygiene movement, who had contributed to the foundation of the St. George’s School for Child Study at the University of Toronto (later renamed the Institute for Child Study), the preschool age was seen as having been by-passed in the state’s provision of services for children. They believed that the nursery school was to remedy this problem by extending “downward the developmental safeguard that were available to children attending grade school.”^324 As the school system was not available to receive children under the age of five, it was existing day nurseries that were targeted to implement the nursery schools program. Contrary to day nurseries, the nursery schools required specialized skills to teach a curriculum that changed according to the children’s age. Moreover, infants under two years old were seen as too young to benefit from such education.

Under the influence of the Institute’s publications and the key role played by educators formed by the Institute, day nurseries in Canada would gradually exclude children under two years of age and reduce their opening hours, making them increasingly inhospitable to working mothers. A report of the Montreal Day Nursery made it clear that it was not their responsibility to help working mothers: “We are fully aware that economic and other problems often keep the mother out of the home for part or all of the day…. If day nursery care is not the answer to this need, and we feel that it is not, then the community must look elsewhere for the solution.”^325 Although the precepts of nursery education were universal in that every child could benefit from such education, the introduction of the service through charitable philanthropy meant that it had entered public policy as a welfare matter, rather than as a right-based service like education. Nevertheless, World War II would bring child care back in the orbit of labour market policies.

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^324 Varga, Constructing the Child: A History of Canadian Day Care, 45.

^325 Ibid., 93-4.
In Canada, as in Britain and the United States, the Second World War generated a tremendous demand to move women into the labour force to replace men serving abroad and to contribute to the war effort. Between 1939 and 1944, the number of women in paid employment increased from 200,000 to 1,000,000. The growing participation of women in the labour market led many local social welfare councils to pressure authorities to provide more day nursery services. In July 1942, the federal government adopted the *Wartime Day Nurseries Act*. The Act provided that the federal government would share 50 per cent of the cost of day nurseries with any provincial governments if 75 per cent of parents were employed in work related to the war effort. Ontario and Quebec were the only provinces that signed agreements with the federal government. Most of the day nurseries opened up in Ontario, as the Catholic Church in Quebec denounced nurseries as a form of abandonment of children.\(^{326}\) Indeed, the conservative government of Maurice Duplessis would end the financing of these nurseries at the end of the war.\(^{327}\) As for other provinces, they usually did not have enough women working in the war industry to fulfil the 75 per cent rule.

As soon as the federal government had established wartime nurseries, it was already planning their closure. Inspired by maternalist ideas, a subcommittee of the General Advisory Committee on Reconstruction released a report on the Post-War Problems of Women. The committee argued that “the right to choose what occupation she will follow must be conceded as a right to which every citizen is entitled.”\(^{328}\) At the same time, the committee promoted a model in which mothers stay at home to care for their children while being active in their community, arguing that “any government which desires to build a true democracy, of which such homes are the foundation, must do

\(^{326}\) Twenty nurseries were opened up in Ontario and six in Quebec, only two of which were for francophone children. Prochner, “A History of Early Education and Child Care in Canada,” 51, 54; and Friendly, *Child Care Policy in Canada*, 130-1.

\(^{327}\) As argued by Rianne Mahon the fact that day nurseries in Quebec were perceived as catering to a religious and linguistic minority made it difficult for activists in the province to convince the provincial government to maintain its financial support in the post-war period. Rianne Mahon, “The Never-Ending Story: The Struggle for Universal Child Care Policy in the 1970s,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (December 2000): 589.

everything in its power to create conditions under which such homes can be successfully maintained.”

One of the proposed recommendations to ease the burden of the homemaker was for wartime nurseries to be replaced by nursery schools, offering half-day services that would “make it possible for mothers to complete their household responsibilities and free them to be with their children for the remainder of the day.”

The report insisted that such nurseries would not substitute the home but supplement it, providing educational advantages difficult to arrange in a single home.

The federal government never followed the recommendations contained in the report. Despite the mobilization of Ontario parents and professionals pressuring the federal government to maintain the financing of day nurseries, the latter announced that, effective 30 June 1946, all subsidies provided to the Ontario government through the federal-provincial program would end. The federal government’s withdrawal from the child care sector was influenced both by the belief that it was a private matter and that it was a provincial responsibility.

Much like Britain, responsibility for child care would be left to subnational entities. However, Canadian provinces had considerably more legislative, bureaucratic and fiscal capacity than British cities.

**Conclusion: Comparing Policy Legacies in Canada and Great Britain**

Neither Canada nor Britain experienced in the 19th century civil war, forced repression of cultural minorities (with the important exception of Aboriginals in Canada), and the church-state conflicts that have often contributed to the creation of national educational systems with the objective of transforming *Peasants into Frenchmen*. As demonstrated by Kimberly Morgan, such conflicts, especially with respect to church and state relations, were often central to the development of early childhood programs and the creation of a strong *national* educational bureaucracy in countries like France, Italy and Belgium. Clearly outlined as a provincial responsibility in the Canadian constitution

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329 Ibid., 10.
330 Ibid., 14.
(and one where federal government intervention was especially seen as worrisome in light of linguistic and religious differences), the educational system never played a key national role in Canada.

Both Britain and Canada also developed very limited day nurseries for working mothers. In both cases, under the leadership of educationalists and social workers, the focus of day nurseries had gradually been moved away from labour market considerations. Day nurseries were not a service for working mothers, but a developmental service for children. Yet, contrary to Britain where developmental services were provided through the school system, in Canada, nursery education was the responsibility of welfare services, making unlikely its universal expansion. Indeed, as both Canada and Britain entered the post-war period, preschool education was significantly more developed in the latter country, despite an important decline in the number of children under the age of five in schools in the period following the 1908 decision of the Board of Education to encourage their exclusion (figure 4.1.).

How can we account for this difference?

First, Canada had a significantly higher proportion of people living in rural areas, well into the 20th century, and a smaller number of cities over 100,000 people. While England and Wales had in 1901 36.3 per cent of their population living in towns of over 200,000 (including 18.1 per cent in towns of over 1 million habitants), only 9 per cent of the Canadian population was living at the same time in urban centres of more than 100,000. As a result, only in Halifax, Montreal, Regina and Toronto have there been preschool programs in public schools on a continuous basis since the 19th century. In smaller towns, especially in rural areas, it was usually seen as too difficult for very young children to walk to school. Moreover, the limited fiscal and technical capacities of small

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334 It must be stressed that such decline was not unique to Britain. Morgan reports that from a high of 37 per cent of children between three and six in 1900, the proportion in France had declined to a low of 18 per cent in the 1930s. At the same time, Britain never developed a separate system of early childhood education similar to France, as children were being educated in a variety of settings ranging from separate nursery schools to receptions classes of elementary schools. See Morgan, “Forging the Frontiers Between State, Church, and Family,” 121.

335 It was only in the 1921 census in Canada that the proportion of people living in urban areas became higher than the proportion of people living in rural areas.


rural districts restricted the expansion of preschool programs. As argued by Barbara Corbett, “kindergarten education was not feasible in rural areas where the only school was a one-room rural school attended by children from grades one to eight.”\(^{338}\) Not surprisingly, it is the most urbanized and industrialized province in Canada, Ontario, which quickly became a leader in the provision of both child care and early childhood education provision. Moreover, schools played a more important role in the development of a range of services in England and Wales. For example, while school meals were introduced in England and Wales in the early 20\(^{th}\) century, they were discussed for the first time in Ontario only in the late 1940s, and were rejected at the time as a communist ploy.\(^{339}\)

The slower development of Canada’s childhood educational system can also be attributed in part to an even higher reliance on the property tax than in Britain (Table 4.2.). Although the pioneer of education such as Egerton Ryerson had ensured the development of a public system that provided educational services to most children, those children in Canada often did not attend school until they were seven years old. Proposals to include children below that age were often rejected on the ground that they were too onerous to local ratepayers. Indeed, the expansion of kindergartens and also secondary schools became only possible through the gradual replacement of local taxation by provincial equalization grants (including in many cases an allowance for transportation costs), and the long, but gradual regionalization of school districts across Canada, which was often bitterly opposed by smaller rural districts.\(^{340}\)

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The lack of institutionalization of preschool services for the children under the age of five in Canada meant that the under five lobby would not be divided between proponents of day nurseries and nursery education to the same extent as in Britain. In fact, child care services were largely seen as a service whose main objective was the cognitive development of children. As such, Canada had more in common with Scandinavian countries, which were also late urbanizers, than with Britain. As for Britain, services for children the under the age of five were institutionally segregated, with day nurseries catering to children in need from a health point of view, and nursery schools, which although in theory targeted at all children, focusing on children at risk between the age of three and five. Interest groups were similarly divided between proponents of child care and proponents of nursery education, as were departmental responsibilities between the Department of Health and the Department of Education. This division of responsibility would play a major role in the post-war period as each department developed different sets of regulations for the care of children under the age of five.
Table 4.1 Public Expenditures on Education - Percentage Met by National or Provincial Governments, Canada/England and Wales, 1890-1941

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Canada*</th>
<th>England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890-91</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-01</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910-11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>49.5**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Canada includes the Yukon and Northwest Territories and excludes Newfoundland
** Data are for the year 1938-39


In the British case, the fragmentation would be acerbated by the decentralization of responsibilities to local governments with limited fiscal resources. Indeed, the territorial organization of the welfare state by the mid-1940s was an element that increasingly differentiated both countries, and was reflected especially in the reticence of both central governments to develop child care policies. In Great Britain, the territorial system was largely characterized by what Jim Bulpitt has called the dual polity. According to this thesis, the main objective of the centre was to divest itself from “low politics” (the social services left to local government) in order to concentrate on “high politics” (such as Keynesian macroeconomic management and defence). The central government largely adhered to what Bulpitt has labelled “territorial liberalism”, which opposed the intervention of the central state in peripheral affairs. Nevertheless, “territorial liberalism” was largely meaningless in a context of limited legislative and fiscal local autonomy. Cities were largely dependent on central government transfers and mandates imposed from above.

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In Canada, on the other hand, provinces had the legislative and fiscal powers to develop new programs, such as mothers’ allowances that many provinces had adopted during the inter-war period. While provinces could only raise revenue via direct taxation such as income and property taxes, the federal government was planning the expansion of welfare services through cost-shared mechanisms, which involved federal conditions that tended to be loose, “never entailing the kind of detailed supervision and control characteristics of “grant-in-aid” programs in the United States.”342 In short, provincial governments in Canada had the capacity to be laboratories of innovation for the types of programs promoted by the ECEC sector in the absence of federal intervention. As shown in the next chapter, local authorities in Britain never had the fiscal and legislative capacity to be the springboard for the development of high quality, public child care, contributing in the long run to the unparallel development of parental playgroups and for-profit day care services.

CHAPTER 5
The Development of ECEC Services in Great Britain

Introduction

The previous chapter showed that, by the end of the Second World War, Britain was committed to adopt a comprehensive public system of nursery education for children between three and five years old. This commitment was consistent with the extraordinary expansion of its welfare state. In the immediate post-war period, Britain had more in common with Sweden than with other “Anglo-Saxon” welfare states. As argued by Esping-Andersen, “both were built on universal, flat-rate benefit programmes, national health care, and a vocal political commitment to full employment.”343 Both countries also promoted a strong version of the male breadwinner model, the 1950s being referred to as the “decade of the housewife” in Sweden.344 In the coming decades, Sweden extended its commitment to universalism to child care, building the foundation of the system on the state pillar. Britain, on the other hand, relied instead on a mixed economy of welfare and a differential treatment of social classes. However, what Esping-Andersen presents as Britain’s stalled “social-democratization” does not entail a total lack of policy development. Over the last decade, the mobilization of the ECEC lobby has led to a number of policy initiatives. Nevertheless, the institutional structure of the British state and policy legacies limited the policy options deemed acceptable and feasible under New Labour’s commitment to “progressive universalism”.

What accounts for the lack of publicly provided or financed services for working parents for most of the post-war period in Britain? Why are so many private providers present in the early childhood education sector, despite the country’s unique and often envied public nursery school legacy? Why has the expansion of child care services for working parents been mainly the responsibility of the commercial sector? And why did Britain manage the unique feat of almost doubling its investment in ECEC over the last decade? This chapter answers these questions by tracing the development of ECEC

services from the immediate post-war period to the mid-2000s. The next chapter will conduct a similar analysis of the Canadian case.

The chapter reveals that the interplay of two factors accounts for the evolution of the ECEC sector in Britain: the sequence of policy development as the number of working mothers was increasing, and the territorial and administrative structures of the British state. In short, contrary to the case in many Canadian provinces, ECEC services expanded in Britain before the development of a unified, centralized regulatory regime. The lack of centralized regulations favoured the expansion of private providers, whether for-profit child care providers for children under the age of three, or parental playgroups for children between three and five years old. The lack of centralized regulations was the result of two institutional factors. The first was the fragmentation of responsibility between two departments with contradictory regulations concerning the registration of ECEC providers. The second was the decentralization of responsibility for ECEC services, for most of the post-war period, to local governments with limited fiscal and legislative capacity.

In the 1990s, because of the political and institutional weakness of local governments, the national government was able to take over the responsibility for ECEC services and impose a fast pace of reform. Nevertheless, when the centre decided under New Labour to develop national ECEC programs, its policy options were constrained by the presence of vocal and organized service providers that had previously emerged in the absence of national regulations and policies. As a result, New Labour’s strategy was largely one of layering and conversion rather than a radical transformation of the British ECEC sector. As such, this chapter explores how the sequence of policy development and its intersection with the institutional structure of the state influenced the politics of child care in Britain.

This chapter explores the sequence of policy development over three periods of time. The first section focuses on the period that is often referred to in the social policy literature as the “golden age” of welfare state development, which ranges from the immediate post-war period to the late 1970s. The second section explores the period from the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 to the election of New Labour in 1997, which was marked by a massive increase in the labour force participation of women but little policy change. Finally, the last section focuses on the comparatively late adoption under
New Labour of a centralized approach to the regulation and development of ECEC services.

ECEC during the “Golden Age of the Welfare State (1945-1979)

The development of the welfare state in Britain was made possible by an incredible period of economic growth. Between 1948 and 1973, the country’s GDP doubled in real terms, at an average annual rate of 2.8 per cent. Nevertheless, such statistics hide the significant economic problems it experienced. Over that period, Britain’s economic growth was half that of the European Economic Community (EEC). Moreover, in 1976, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed economic reforms on Britain in exchange for financial help to resolve the country’s budgetary crisis. Such economic woes hindered the ability of the state to address emerging social needs. First among these risks was the growing labour market participation of women. The growth in the number of working mothers occurred gradually despite repeated statements from policy-makers that the place of a woman was at home. For most of the post-war period, this perspective remained the official position of key actors, especially the Department of Health (DoH).

During the “golden age” of the welfare state, Britain’s ECEC system evolved through a process of policy drift. As mentioned in chapter three, policy drift occurs when institutions are not actively updated and adapted to changes in the socio-economic environment. This process is likely to encourage the growth of alternative institutional structures to compensate for state inactivity. However, changing socio-economic conditions contribute to policy drift only to the extent that political actors purposefully refuse to make the adjustment that would either a) adapt inherited institutions to new circumstances, and/or b) prevent the emergence of alternative institutions. As shown in this section, the administrative and territorial organization of ECEC services in Britain made possible such a process of policy drift in the field of nursery education. In the absence of state intervention to fulfill the promise contained in the 1944 Education Act of a public system of nursery schools and classes for children between three and five years

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old, a new institution, parental playgroups, emerged. The emergence of parental groups had lasting consequences.

Circular 8/60 and the Expansion of Parental Playgroups

As argued in the previous chapter, the “dual polity” approach to territorial politics dictated that the centre focused on the “high politics” of macroeconomic management and foreign affairs, while divesting itself of the “low politics” associated with social services and education. However, such autonomy was significantly constrained by the national government’s control of most taxation instruments. The only tax instrument local governments had at their disposal to finance a growing number of social and educational services was the extremely unpopular and inelastic property tax. As a result, local authorities depended on fiscal transfers from the centre. The transfers, which kept growing in the post-war period, increasingly came with instructions dictating the types of services to be expanded, and their pace. Nowhere was such a restrictive arrangement, which virtually rendered meaningless the autonomy of local governments, more evident than in relation to nursery education.

Throughout the 1950s, despite the promises of the 1944 Education Act to develop a public system of nursery education, the need for economy and the shortage of teachers in elementary schools led the Department of Education to authorize very few LEAs to open up new nursery schools or expand nursery classes. The culmination of that practice was Circular 8/60, issued in May 1960. The Circular required that local authorities economise by ensuring that the number of children under the age of five in nursery schools and classes remained at the 1957 level. The Circular was the result of financial pressure in the wake of the baby boom and the expansion of secondary education. According to the Circular, “no resources can at present be spared for the expansion of nursery education and in particular no teachers can be spared who might otherwise work in the provision of nursery education.”

Many local authorities objected to this constraint on their ability to plan for the expansion of nursery education. In a letter to the Department of Education, the London City Council criticized the government’s decision, arguing that “the present rigid limitation on the admission of children under five years of age is unnecessarily restrictive

and will inevitably discourage young teachers from training for nursery education and may prejudice the prospects of expanding nursery provision at a later date.\footnote{Letter to the Secretary of the Ministry of Education (July 15, 1960). LMA, ILEA/S/SB/07/001.} The effects of the circular were immediate, contributing to long waiting lists and a restriction of access to children at risk. A report of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) found that the average waiting list for a place in nursery school had on average 108 names on it, forcing LEAs to prioritize certain segments of the population. In 1964, 80 per cent of nursery schools and classes imposed priorities and only a very small number admitted the children of mothers who had to work.\footnote{“Queue for Nurseries,” \textit{Times Educational Supplement} (January 24, 1964): 170.}

The most important consequence of Circular 8/60 was the creation by middle-class parents, whose children did not have access to nursery schools, of parental playgroups. Parental playgroups were spaces of socialization, largely for children between three and five years old, which usually provided two half day sessions a week. They did not have their own facilities at first, and tended to be located in church halls, community centres, sport pavilions, and unused school classrooms. Moreover, parents, rather than trained professionals, were in charge of supervising children. Playgroups expanded rapidly, and as a result of their growing popularity, the Pre-school Playgroup Association (PPA) was created in 1962.

The expansion of playgroups was facilitated by the complete absence of legislative mechanisms regulating their activities, whether in relation to training or staff-to-child ratios\footnote{“Mushrooming Nurseries: Call for Registration,” \textit{Times Educational Supplement} (November 27, 1964): 982.} It was only in 1968, in the report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services (usually referred to as the Seebohm Report), that the regulation of playgroups was first raised. A majority of commissioners proposed that they be made the responsibility of the DoH, while a minority recommended that they be made the responsibility of the Department of Education. In 1968, the government decided to follow the advice of the Seebohm report, and placed playgroups under the authority of the DoH and the regulatory structure of the amended \textit{Nurseries and Childminders Regulation Act, 1948} (see next section for more details).\footnote{Jack Tizard, Peter Moss, Jane Perry. \textit{All Our Children: Pre-School Services in a Changing Society} (London: Temple Smith/New Society, 1976), 89.} While the Act required local authorities to
register any person or organization providing services to children, it left it to local authorities to impose requirements regarding appropriate training and staff-to-child ratios.

This decision meant that services for children between three and five years old would expand under two very distinct regulatory regimes, especially in relation to training qualifications. Throughout the 1960s, the training course for teachers, including nursery school teachers, was gradually extended from two to four years. On the other hand, the DoH did not have specific training requirements for playgroup workers, as their regulatory requirements largely focused on the quality of the physical environment in which children were being taken care of. Since the DoH did not express any interest in the training of playgroup workers, and since local authorities would not be empowered to provide training until the late 1980s, the PPA developed its own training infrastructure. The training for a playgroup worker was significantly less demanding than for a nursery school teacher, being limited to one class a week for a year.

What had become the Department of Education and Science (DES) could have objected to the lack of qualifications of playgroup workers and a potential overlap with nursery education, which was also targeted at children between three and five years old. Archival evidence though demonstrates that the department decided that the expansion of playgroups should not be discouraged, as it relaxed pressures for an expansion of nursery schools at a time when the DES had other priorities. Moreover, playgroups were viewed as a temporary alternative to nursery education, both by policy-makers and by members of the playgroup movement. In the early years of the organization, the PPA accepted that the state sector would eventually be charged with providing early education services to all three- and four-year-olds. As such, the PPA did not attract the enmity of groups representing nursery and elementary school teachers. Indeed, the PPA was originally part of the National Campaign for Nursery Education.

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352 Idem.
momentum in the aftermath of the Plowden report, which proposed a significant expansion of nursery education.

**Plowden and the Planned Expansion of Nursery Education**

In the 1960s, impetus for a more rapid expansion of nursery education came from a report of the Central Advisory Council for Education, *Children and their Primary Schools*, usually referred to as the Plowden Report. The report provided somewhat of a mixed message about the goal of nursery education. On the one hand, it stressed its benefit for all children as a preparation for primary school. On the other hand, it maintained that nursery education could be an important tool in Britain’s fight against poverty, a key concern of policy-makers during the 1960s.355 The result was different recommendations based on whether a child was from a disadvantaged home or not. The report concluded that, because of their socially disadvantaged situation, around 15 per cent of children should still have access to nursery education on a full-time basis. For other children, “since it is harmful to remove a child too suddenly or for too long from his mother, part-time attendance should be the normal pattern of nursery education.”356 The report also argued that the shortage of teachers in Britain made any move towards a universal service provided on a full-time basis unlikely.

Conscious that no resources had been allocated to nursery education following the Haddow Report of 1933 and the *Education Act* of 1944, Lady Plowden and seven other members of her Committee signed a minority report which, pointing to the example of countries as different as Sweden, Denmark, France, Poland, and the U.S.S.R., argued that parents who could afford it should be charged for nursery education:

> Our suggestion is advanced as much in the interests of children whose parents cannot afford to pay as it is to others. Without a parental contribution we fear that nursery education will not be extended at all and such children be not better off that they are today. Charging the richer will be a means of helping the poorer. Charging those with smaller families will be a means of helping those with larger families.357

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357 Ibid, 487-8. The minority report also stated that, at a time of economic uncertainty, it would be very difficult to either allocate existing resources to nursery education or to increase taxes: “What other sources of finance are there? We cannot be confident that, of the public money available for social services, less
In the immediate years after the publication of the Plowden report, as a result of the economic situation of Britain, priority was given to the expansion of services in the most deprived areas, which were known as Educational Priority Areas (EPA). This expansion was funded through the Urban Programme, which had been inspired by a similar initiative developed in the United States in the wake of the War on Poverty. For all other areas, Circular 8/60 remained in place. Nevertheless, local governments ingeniously used their administrative autonomy to respond to parental demands. First, many local authorities decided to augment the provision of services by increasing the number of part-time places, as two half children equalled one whole. Second, local authorities increasingly accepted four-year-olds in reception classes of elementary schools, as such bypassing the restriction on the expansion of nursery schools and classes. By the end of the decade, of the 220,000 children under the age of five in schools, only 24,000 of them were in separate nursery schools, reflecting the higher spending for a child in a separate nursery school (£151) than in a primary school (£74).

The actions of local authorities led many officials in the DES to question the maintenance of Circular 8/60. According to an interdepartmental report, such restrictions were increasingly embarrassing for the government:

The restrictions imposed by the Circular were justified by the shortage of teachers particularly for infants: many have remained in force mainly for limitations on expenditure. These limitations are real enough but the Circular is, nevertheless, an embarrassment both because it restrict local authorities’ discretion at a time when the government is proposing to give them greater responsibility in financial and other matters and because its provision are ignored by Authorities who find it possible to admit under 5’s to school in increasing numbers.

Archival documents also demonstrate that the Department felt increasingly pressured to change its position because of the lobbying effort of interest groups as different as the

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National Federation of Women’s Institutes, the National Union of Teachers, and the Association of Education Committees.\textsuperscript{361} Finally, DES officials worried that British membership in the European Economic Community was “likely to add to the demand for more nursery education” in light of the significant supply of early childhood education in countries such as France, Italy and Germany.\textsuperscript{362}

It took the election of the Conservative government of Edward Heath for the centre to respond to these increasing pressures. Under the leadership of the Minister of Education and Science, Margaret Thatcher, the DES released a White paper entitled \textit{Education: A Framework for Expansion}. The White paper proposed a ten-year major expansion of nursery education “for all children whose parents wished them to attend”, with priority given in the early stages to deprived areas, and without charges to parents.\textsuperscript{363} The White Paper estimated that 90 per cent of four-year-olds and 50 per cent of three-year-olds would be registered by their parents.

In order to finance the expansion of such services, the Department had first investigated the possibility of fixing a \textit{national} sliding fee, based on parental income, as proposed by the minority report of the Plowden committee. The option was rejected on the ground that a) local authorities would argue that it was an encroachment on their rights, while b) leaving it to local authorities to set up a specific amount would create wide divergence across the country.\textsuperscript{364} The financing of nursery education was constrained by Britain’s incapacity to reconcile the principle of local autonomy with the post-war focus on, or some would say obsession for, territorial equality.\textsuperscript{365}

The promised expansion of nursery education could only be financed through higher fiscal transfers from the centre. The government made £15 million a year available to local authorities to achieve the objective of the White Paper. LEAs were also asked to assess their needs in terms of the construction of new buildings.\textsuperscript{366} Nevertheless, within a

\textsuperscript{362} Idem.
\textsuperscript{366} Tizard, Moss, Perry. \textit{All Our Children}, 85.
year of the publication of the White Paper, it became clear that the government could not achieve its ten-year plan in light of the economic climate. In the words of Margaret Thatcher, “both the figures and more fundamentally the approach of a Framework for Expansion had been by-passed by events.”\textsuperscript{367} Indeed, in 1975-76, government funding for the nursery education building program was half that of the previous year.\textsuperscript{368} DES officials debated whether the best solution was to reduce the target level of provision for 1982, to adopt a new target date, or simply to acknowledge publicly that the target could not be achieved and to identify instead more narrow priorities.\textsuperscript{369} The latter option was adopted, and the 1977 DES Green Paper warned that limitations on resources would restrict the expansion of provision only to the most disadvantaged areas.\textsuperscript{370} Working parents would have to rely on the patchwork of unevenly regulated and largely unsubsidized child care services that had gradually emerged in the post-war period.

\textit{The Department of Health, Blame Avoidance and Child Care Services}

By the end of the Second World War, most war nurseries became the responsibility of the Department of Health. This decision was widely denounced by supporters of early years services who had believed that all war nurseries would become institutions of early childhood education under the authority of the Department of Education. This decision was also denounced by supporters of day nurseries for working mothers who believed that the DoH held extremely conservative views about the proper role of married women, and would gradually close a number of nurseries. These fears were not unfounded. The Department made it clear that it opposed care in day nurseries unless circumstances were exceptional. Circular 221/45 send to local authorities specified that:

\begin{quote}
The ministers concerned accept the view of the medical and other authority that, in the interest of the health and development of the child no less than for the benefit of the mothers, the proper place for the child under two is at home with his mother. They are also of the opinion that, under normal peacetime conditions, the right policy to pursue would be to discourage mothers of children under two from going out to work; to make provision between two and five by way of nursery schools and nursery classes; and to regard day
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{370} Randall, \textit{The Politics of Child Daycare in Britain}, 74.
nurseries and daily guardians as supplements to meet the special needs (…) of children whose mothers are constrained by individual circumstances to go out to work or whose home conditions are in themselves unsatisfactory from the health point of view, or whose mothers are incapable for some reasons of undertaking the full care of their children.\textsuperscript{371}

Despite the government’s official policy that working mothers should stay at home with their children, a number of private day nurseries and childminders emerged to respond to the needs of mothers who decided after the war to remain in the labour market. As a result, the state was pressured by women organizations, especially the National Council of Women of Great Britain, to regulate the work of childminders and private day nurseries that had been expending since the early 1940s. The result was the adoption of the 1948 \textit{Nurseries and Child Minders Regulation Act}, which required their registration with local authorities.\textsuperscript{372} The Act made it compulsory for local health authorities to keep registers “of premises in their area (…) where children are received for the day or a substantial part”, and “of persons in their areas who for reward receive into their homes children under the age of five.”\textsuperscript{373} However, it left to local authorities the power to impose requirements in connection with registration. As argued fifteen years after its adoption by the \textit{Times Educational Supplement}, the Act laid down few obligatory standards and “left the practical operation of its clauses to the needs of particular areas and the good sense of individual health officers.”\textsuperscript{374}

Local authorities were also empowered under the \textit{National Health Service Act} of 1952 to impose charges based on the actual cost of running the nurseries, after taken into account the means of the parents. Although a majority of parents who used public day nurseries were low-income workers and as such paid very little, the introduction of charges led to the withdrawal of some children whose parents needed to pay a substantial part of the cost. In the three years following the introduction of the charges, 259 nurseries were closed and the number of places was reduced by 10,000. From 899 in 1948, the overall number of public nurseries was reduced to 459 by 1963, a loss of 49 per cent.\textsuperscript{375} And as a result of the state’s inaction on the day nursery front, and the limited regulations

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{371} Cited in Tizard et al., \textit{All Our Children}, 73.
\textsuperscript{373} \textit{Nurseries and Child Minders Regulation Act}, 1948. Statute, 11 & 12, GEO. 6., Chapter 53
\textsuperscript{374} “Private Nursery Schools,” \textit{Times Educational Supplement} (February 9, 1962): 239.
\textsuperscript{375} Dr. Dorothy Egan, “The Future Role of the Local Health Authorities in the Day Care of Young Children,” paper presented at the Symposium of Medical Officers of Health (March 10, 1966). PRO MH 156/30.
\end{footnotesize}
in place, the number of registered private nurseries doubled over the same period, though from a low figure of 326, while the number of registered childminders more than tripled.\textsuperscript{376}

In the first half of the 1960s, the DoH refused most demands from local authorities to finance a greater number of places for working mothers. Whereas the expansion of nursery schools only occurred following the publication of the Plowden Report, similarly, new initiatives in the field of child care for children under the age of three had to wait the publication in 1968 of the report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services (usually referred to as the Seebohm Report). The commission lamented “that many children under five are being minded daily in conditions which not only endanger their health and safety but also impair their emotional and intellectual development.”\textsuperscript{377} The report first proposed that day care be made the responsibility of to be formed local social service departments, rather than local health authorities. Secondly, while the report focused especially on children at risk, it stressed that services for children under the age of five ought to be related to services to mothers, espousing a broader definition of entitlement to day care services that would also include isolated mothers and those with large families.

The reaction of the DoH came first in the form of Circular 37/68, which gave approval to a limited expansion of day nursery places, although as observed by Tizard and his collaborators, targeting a narrower segment of the population than the one proposed by the Seebohm Report.\textsuperscript{378} Overall, the Circular reaffirmed the Department’s belief that “the responsibility of local health authorities should continue to be limited to arranging for the day care of children who, from a health point of view or because of deprived or inadequate backgrounds, have special needs that cannot otherwise be met.”\textsuperscript{379} The second important change came with the creation in 1972 of local authority social service departments that

\textsuperscript{376} Randall, Politics of Child Daycare, 50.
\textsuperscript{377} Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services, Report of the Committee, 59.
\textsuperscript{378} Tizard et al., All our Children, 86-7. According to the circular, priority was to be given to children with only one parent; who need temporary day care on account of the mother’s illness; whose mothers are unable to look after them adequately because they are incapable of giving young children the care they need; for whom day care might prevent the breakdown of the mother or the break-up of the family; whose home conditions constitute a hazard to their health and welfare; whose health and welfare are seriously affected by a lack of opportunity to play with others.
\textsuperscript{379} Circular 37/68, “Day care facilities for children under five,” (October 19, 1968). A copy of the circular was found in the National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 29 vol. 3564, pt. 1.
had been proposed by the Seebhom report. The newly named Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) issued Circular 35/72, which required local authorities to devise ten-year development plans, the Department proposing a target of eight places per 1,000 children under the age of five (at a time when the national average was around six places per 1,000 children). At the same time, local authorities had difficulties in planning for expansion, as significant cuts in local authority social service budgets limited their capacity to expand day nurseries. In 1974/5, the capital program for local authority social services was cut by 20 per cent and the circular that accompanied these cuts mentioned that the ten-year target would likely not be reached.\footnote{380}

The limited development of public child care spaces was the result of a concerted action by the DoH. Archival records demonstrate the great length to which the department went to avoid any form of responsibility for the provision of child care services for working parents. For most of the 1960s, it resisted pressures to expand local authority day nursery provision, especially from the Ministry of Labour. In a letter to his colleague in the DoH, a high level official at the Ministry of Labour argued that the growing need for women’s labour in areas of low unemployment made it necessary to look at child care not “only from the angle of the child but also that of the need in the national interest to make it easier for mothers who wish to do so to take employment.”\footnote{381} The carefully planned response of the DoH argued both that local authorities neither possessed the mandate to provide services for the children of working parents nor sufficient resources to address such a need:

I expect it is already known to those concerned in the Ministry of Labour that we do not consider that the power of local authorities under Section 22 of the National Health Service Act, 1946, should be used to provide day nursery places except for children in special need for whom other arrangements cannot be made. (...) In recent years, we have discouraged local health authorities who proposed to provide new day nurseries primarily with the object of caring for the children of mothers who have chosen to go out to work. While so much in local health authority health and welfare services requires urgent development we would be reluctant to see local authority resources devoted to this particular purpose.\footnote{382}

\footnote{380}{Tizard et al., \textit{All our Children}, 89.} \footnote{381}{Letter from C.J. Mastow (Ministry of Labour) to J.P. Dodds (Ministry of Health) (September 2, 1964). PRO MH 156/30.} \footnote{382}{Letter from Mrs. D.M. O’Brien (Department of Health) to C.J. Maston (Ministry of Labour) (September 7, 1964). PRO MH 156/30.}
The DoH used the existence of nursery schools and a small number of workplace nurseries to justify its inaction and avoid blame. In the early 1960s, an internal department memo made the case that, pending decisions by the Department of Education on the expansion of nursery education, “it would seem sensible not to disturb the present arrangements under which some employers make arrangements for their own employees,” although very few employers had made such arrangements.\(^{383}\) More importantly, despite the growth in the number of working mothers in the 1970s, the DoH continued to promote the controversial thesis of the child psychologist John Bowlby.\(^{384}\) According to Bowlby’s thesis, which had first been published in the early 1950s, the separation of a child from his mother in the early years of his life was detrimental to his development. The DoH position on working mothers echoed this theory, as the department argued that it was guided by “the need for security and permanence in the care of young children and the principle that the basis of provision should be the needs of the children and not the needs of society.”\(^{385}\) In the 1970s, as demands increased for child care, the department promoted the cheaper alternative of childminders, who had created the National Childminders Association (NCA) to promote their interests.

While national organizations representing child care providers, such as the PPA and NCA, were created in the 1960s and the 1970s, no national organization was making the case for an expansion of child care services. And while the DoH and later the DHSS were careful to avoid blame for a lack of child care services for working parents, it must be stressed that it faced limited pressure for an expansion of public services from other departments.

\textit{Pressure Politics and Child Care}

The Ministry of Labour, which had promoted in the 1960s day nurseries as a solution to labour shortages, gradually lost enthusiasm for child care as Britain’s economic situation deteriorated. The only significant pressures on the DHSS to expand services


\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{384}} For a good overview of Bowlby’s maternal deprivation thesis and its used in British social policy circles, see Denise Riley, \textit{War in the Nursery} (London: Virago, 1983).

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{385}} Minutes of a meeting on future provision for pre-school children, Interdepartmental working party on needs of pre-school children (September 21, 1971); Minutes of a meeting on future provision for pre-school children, Interdepartmental working party on needs of pre-school children (November 2, 1971). NAS ED 11/885.}
came from the Department of the Environment (DoE). The department, which was responsible for local governments, lamented the fact that day nurseries were becoming “deprived ghettos”. The DoE argued that it was necessary to build attractive day nurseries, which would draw a better type of staff and would encourage mothers who could afford to pay to make use of them. Moreover, the DoE rejected the Bowlby-inspired argument of the DHSS that the right place for a young child was necessarily at home with its mother, arguing that research undertaken by the department showed that such children were often left without adult supervision. However, the DoE lacked support in its fight for greater access to public day nurseries. Discussions about child care services were especially secretive. The DoH and later the DHSS made the case that they should avoid publicity because the Treasury was averse to any activity which might promote expansion in local authority services. Perhaps more importantly, the DoE lacked the political support of a strong national organization, which could help mobilize public opinion behind an expansion of public child care. The existing child care organizations tended to be local, such as the London Nursery Campaign, and their main focus was the creation of community nurseries for working parents.

The trade union movement, which has played a key role in the promotion of child care services in Scandinavian countries, was largely indifferent to the issue. This indifference perhaps reflected the fact that as late as 1983, of 1,600 permanent trade union officials, only 90 were women. Only in the late 1970s did the main British labour organization, the Trade Union Congress (TUC), formally express its support for a comprehensive and universal child care system. Although stating its preference for public nurseries, TUC recognized that the lack of state activity might lead affiliated unions to press employers to provide nursery facilities.

388 Memo by Miss F.P. Boys on the interdepartmental review of current provision (December 8, 1965). PRO MH 156/54.
389 Most correspondence between the DoH and the labour movement found in the archives tended to be limited to the transmission by Trade Union Congress (TUC) officials of resolutions passed by its women’s committee in favour of greater public investment.
movement in Britain was powerful, in comparison to the Swedish labour movement, it was extremely decentralized, impeding the development of a coherent strategy around child care. While certain unions limited their involvement to vaguely supporting the objectives of the TUC charter, other unions also actively pressed their employers for more workplace nurseries. For example, the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATHFE) often used direct action such as sit-ins to promote the creation of nurseries for students and staffs in universities.

Local government associations, much like the DoE, did promote greater services for the children of working parents. In a document that prefigured by twenty years New Labour’s argument for an expansion of ECEC services, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) argued that “local authorities should be enabled to play a fuller part in developing day nurseries, nursery classes and playgroups associated with mothers’ place of work.” Such provisions, the AMA believed, would produce numerous economic benefits, including that “social support payments will be reduced and costly direct subvention to inadequate families will be lessened”, and that “there will be an earlier start to schooling, with early advantages in overcoming linguistic handicaps (…), with the longer-term benefit of a better educated and more adaptable workforce.”

Nevertheless, fiscal constraints experienced by local governments in the 1970s reduced their capacity to develop new initiatives. Whereas between 1972 and 1975 local expenditures and local grants increased respectively by 102 and 131 per cent, they increased in the last year of the Labour Government (1977-78) only by 6 and .01 per cent. Moreover, nation-wide protests in 1974 and 1975 against increased local rates reduced the capacity of local governments to raise revenues to finance local initiatives such as those proposed by the AMA.

Overall, child care debates in Britain were significantly different from those that occurred in Canada during that period. As shown in the next chapter, debates in the latter case often focused on whether ECEC services should be delivered by the public,

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394 Both the DES and the DHSS were well aware that local governments were significantly constrained in their capacity to innovate. “Joint DHSS/DES initiative on provision for the under-fives: ministers’ meeting on 6 December 1976.” PRO MH 152/379.
community or commercial sector, and on what should be the appropriate child to staff ratio. The focus of child care activists in Britain, on the other hand, was not on protecting existing child care legislation, but on “developing a new kind of model, with new kinds of people working in them,” an alternative to the social worker-controlled day nurseries and the educationalist-controlled nursery schools and nursery classes.\(^{396}\) It was about offering working women the option of full-time day care despite the strong promotion of the male breadwinner model from politicians. In the face of public inaction, child care activists proposed that such services be developed by the private sector, especially by community-run nurseries.

**Summary: Causes and Consequences of Policy Drift**

As a result of public inaction, a variety of providers emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. By 1980, in England and Wales, there were 28,437 places in public day nurseries, 22,017 in private day nurseries, 98,495 withchildminders and an astonishing 367,868 places with playgroups.\(^{397}\) Playgroups, originally seen as a temporary solution to the lack of educational services for children between three and five years of age, were becoming increasingly a permanent fixture. They were represented by a national organization and boasted a well-developed system of training. As for more formal pre-school services, in reaction to the limited resources available for the expansion of nursery schools, local authorities increasingly used their power to admit children under the age of five in reception classes of elementary schools, more than seventy years after the 1908 decision to exclude children from such classes.\(^{398}\)

While the *1944 Education Act* had proposed the development of a public system of nursery education for all three- and four-year-olds, this age group was increasingly served by a mix of parental playgroups, separate nursery schools and classes, and elementary schools. These providers all offered different kinds of services, accepted different number of children, and were staffed by workers with significantly different qualifications. These developments were the result of policy decisions that encouraged this process of policy

\(^{396}\) Interview A11.
drift. First was the decision, in the wake of the Seebhom report, to make the DoH responsible for the supervision of playgroups. While the DoH was previously largely responsible for the care of children under the age of three, and the DES for children between three and five years of age, the 1968 Act meant that services for the latter would be subject to different regulatory regimes and provided by staff with significantly different qualifications. Such a fragmentary regulatory regime allowed a rapid expansion of playgroups, which were not constrained by the same requirements as nursery schools. The second important factor was the combination of local political autonomy and limited local financial resources. While administrative discretion allowed local authorities to find ways of responding to parental demands for greater services despite the lack of national initiative, their limited financial resources led them to privilege cheaper options such as playgroups and reception classes rather than the more expensive nursery schools and classes promised by the 1944 Act.\(^\text{399}\)

The limited fiscal capacity of local governments also constrained their ability to develop child care services for working parents. Places in public day nurseries were almost all occupied by children from the priority groups. As argued by a former London child care activist, public day nurseries “were really an arm of social services, they weren’t in any sense nurseries for children. They were places of protection.”\(^\text{400}\) The lack of child care options limited the capacity of women to work full-time. Not surprisingly, by the early 1980s, 42 per cent of women active in the labour market worked part-time.\(^\text{401}\) Nevertheless, considering the limited number of private day nurseries in operation in Great Britain, it was not too late to develop public services to respond to the needs of a growing number of working women. Indeed, local authority associations expressed a desire to expand public services to working parents. But such expansion of public services

\(^\text{399}\) 27 per cent of playgroups were receiving some financial help from local authorities by the mid-1980s, two third of which were receiving less than £200 a year. Sue Mastel and Marjorie Dykins, “The Role of the Pre-School Playgroups Association in England and Wales After Twenty-Five Years,” *Early Child Development and Care* 27, no. 3 (1987): 400.

\(^\text{400}\) Interview A16.

\(^\text{401}\) Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain Since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 75. It is important to stress that the predominance of part-time work was not only a by-product of the limited availability of child care services. For employers, British legislations made it advantageous to employ part-time labour, since national insurance contributions were not paid below a specified earnings level, and employment protection legislations did not apply to those working less than sixteen hours a week.
ran contrary to the desire of the Conservative government, elected in 1979, to reduce the powers of local authorities for which it had a profound enmity.


Margaret Thatcher came to power animated by a desire to change the economic situation of Britain. She blamed Britain’s problems on the “hard Left’s power”, which she viewed has being entrenched in three institutions: the Labour Party, trade unions and local governments. While she blamed the first two for the poor productivity of the British economy, she viewed the latter as responsible for out-of-control social spending. One of her main objectives was indeed to “curb what were often the corrupt and wasteful activities of local government direct labour organizations.” At a time when most European countries were increasingly decentralizing responsibilities to regional and local governments, the 1980s was marked in Britain by an almost unique process of centralization, made possible by a lack of constitutional protection of local governments. If early years advocates had any expectations that a former Minister of Education would be a champion for ECEC services, they were sorely disappointed. Once in power, the Prime Minister did not show any inclination towards a public expansion of ECEC services. At the same time, throughout the 1980s, Britain experienced a dramatic expansion of the labour market participation of mothers of young children, from 24 per cent in 1983 to 41 per cent in 1989. The growing demand for child care services combined with the lack of state initiative meant that the child care sector witnessed a significant expansion of commercial providers during both Thatcher’s and Major’s stay in power. Nevertheless, important changes in central-local government relations during that period paved the way for important reforms under New Labour.

ECEC and the Growing Centralization of Power under Thatcher

Central government took few initiatives under Thatcher. Over that period, to use Gillian Pugh’s expression, ECEC was largely a sector in search of a policy. The period

403 Ibid, 39.
404 Randall, The Politics of Child Daycare, 82.
started with the adoption of the 1980 *Education Act*, which removed any obligation for local authorities to provide nursery education, emphasizing the discretionary nature of the service. The Act provided the justification for the closure of nursery classes and schools in certain local authorities controlled by the Conservatives.\(^{406}\) In most cases though, closure of nursery classes were the result of the central government’s budgetary policy. A government White Paper published in 1984 indeed acknowledged that spending on nursery education would be cut by 6.7 per cent by 1987, despite growing demands.\(^{407}\) As during previous periods of budgetary crisis, local authorities reacted by accepting a growing number of children in reception classes, despite the protestation of the British Association of Early Childhood Education, which believed such provision to be “nursery education on the cheap.”\(^{408}\)

While the Thatcher era witnessed little development, and in many ways some important setbacks with the adoption of the 1980 Education Act, it is striking how the promise of the 1972 White Paper remained on the agenda of decision-makers. The 1972 pledge to expand nursery education had become, even if it was never implemented, a path dependent or paradigmatic idea, as all proposed reforms were being judged in relation to it. A 1988 report of the Committee of the House of Commons on Education, Science and Arts reiterated “that it should be the objective of both central and local government to ensure the steady expansion of provision of nursery education until it is available to all 3- and 4-year-olds children whose parents desire it for them.”\(^{409}\) Similarly, the report of the Committee set up by the Conservative government in reaction to the House of Commons report, and chaired by the Minister of Education Angela Rumbold, stressed that while their mandate was confined to the quality of provision for children under the age of five, they “urge those making provision to recognize the extent to which demand outstrips supply,


\(^{409}\) *House of Commons Education, Science and Arts Committee, Education Provision for the Under Fives*, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1988), xvii. It also recommended that private nurseries should be regulated by a national accreditation scheme, that the responsibility for playgroups be transferred to the DES and that the practice of admitting three and four-year-olds to “inappropriate primary school settings” should be stop.
and to secure a continuing expansion of high quality services to meet children’s, and their parents’, need”\textsuperscript{410}

As for child care, the Thatcher government believed that it was the responsibility of families, rather than the state, to seek appropriate arrangements for the care of their children. The only program adopted under Thatcher to promote the expansion of services was the DHSS’s ‘Under-Fives’ initiative, a three-year pilot project that started in 1983. A signal of things to come, the initiative largely by-passed local governments, providing resources directly to voluntary organizations engaged in the delivery of services.

Because of the national government’s lack of interest in child care, a number of activists turned to local governments, which had increasingly become alternative centres of opposition to the Conservative government. Under the influence of municipal socialism and feminism, local authorities in cities such as London, Manchester and Liverpool adopted generous plans to expand child care services and nursery education. These plans were often devised by a new structure within certain local government, Women’s Committees, which also played a key role in funding local child care campaigns. They also promoted child care as more than a service for children in need. The Greater London Council, for example, argued that there should be “universal, good-standard state funded child care which is there for all children, just as we have state education for older children,” proposing to combine the traditional aims of nursery education with “other aspects of employment policy which seek to make it more possible for men and women to spend time with children at home, especially when they are small.”\textsuperscript{411} According to a London activist, the “GLC had a fairly formidable child care policy. It was possible to work with politicians on the GLC to promote child care. So there was quite a good atmosphere about the possibility of bringing about change.”\textsuperscript{412} Similarly, the Labour council in Liverpool proposed a plan in 1983 to provide a free and flexible system of pre-

\textsuperscript{410} Committee of Inquiry into the Quality of the Educational Experience Offered to 3- and 4-Year-Olds, \textit{Starting with Quality} (London: H.M.S.O., 1990), 1.
\textsuperscript{412} Interview A16.
school care for all parents of children under the age of five who want it, including the extension of nursery schools and classes to provide all-day care.413

These initiatives did not survive the Conservatives’ dual attack on the welfare state and local governments. The Conservatives’ answer to “out-of control” local governments was to curtail their capacity to raise revenues. The Rates Act, 1984 allowed the central government to limit the rates of authorities it believed to be overspending and overtaxing. As argued by Georges Jones, the Rates Act was nothing less than a constitutional change in the relation between central and local governments, as local authorities had possessed the right to determine the level of the local property tax since the sixteenth century.414 The result was especially felt in non-statutory services such as child care and nursery education. A number of local authorities were forced to close their day nurseries, leading in some cases parents to occupy the closing nurseries in protest.415 As a result of the squeeze on the budget of local authorities, the growth in the number of children on waiting lists for a place in a public day nursery was three times the growth in places available. Local authorities were forced to further limit places to children at risk.416 In light of the continued intransigence of many local authorities, the Conservative government adopted the Local Government Act, 1985. The act led to the abolition of councils and elections in the areas it felt the most unwilling to limit their spending: London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, and Newcastle upon Tyne.

The Conservative government’s attempt to control local governments was not limited to restrictions on their ability to spend. It also involved a significant centralization of political and administrative powers. A number of functions that had been the responsibility of local councils were transferred to newly formed quangos whose boards were appointed by the central government. Local quangos were gradually made responsible of issues ranging from training to urban regeneration. By the late 1990s, it was estimated that there were 5,000 local quangos in the UK with over 60,000 members, in

comparison to 500 unitary, district and country councils with 22,000 elected members.\textsuperscript{417} As shown in the next section, these quangos increasingly came to play a key role in the organization of child care services.

Nowhere was the attack against local governments more apparent than in education. Following the 1988 Education Reform Act, LEAs lost their power over the curriculum, their capacity to determine admission policy for schools, their day-to-day control over the management of schools and their capacity to determine a school’s income.\textsuperscript{418} In order to enforce the implementation of the government’s curriculum and new regulations that were adopted over time, the Conservative government also created the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

The child care sector also witnessed a growing attempt by the national government to impose standards on local governments. The 1989 Children Act, the first piece of children’s legislation since 1948, made it a statutory duty for local authorities to provide a range of services appropriate to the children in their area who are “in need”, including day care services (Part III, section 19). Moreover, the Act required local authorities to impose on a child care provider “such reasonable requirements on him as they consider appropriate in his case,” including the maximum number of children and the number of persons required to look after the children (Part X, section 73).\textsuperscript{419}

The growing regulatory requirements associated with the Children Act could have advantaged the public sector, which provided higher quality child care. Nevertheless, the lobbying efforts of the growing commercial sector, which had created the Private Day Nursery Association (PDNA), led to a relaxation of the requirements associated with the Act. First, the guidance to the Children Act published in 1991 encouraged local authorities to meet their statutory duty to provide services for children in need by using private providers of services.\textsuperscript{420} Second, in 1993, the Department of Health sent a circular to local authorities stating that a provider was to be registered unless there were grounds to


\textsuperscript{419} \textit{Children Act, 1989} (London: HMSO, 1989). In areas where local authorities had been abolished, responsibility was transferred to boroughs.

believe that the care provided was seriously inadequate.\footnote{421} The PDNA had argued that stricter regulations imposed by many local authorities were pushing the price of provision beyond the capacity of the local market and limiting the expansion of services.\footnote{422}

While the Thatcher revolution was an important moment in the history of Britain, few important reforms were adopted in the ECEC sector. As argued by Vicky Randall, it was hard to restructure nothing.\footnote{423} However, Thatcher’s reforms transformed Britain from a “unitary highly decentralised country” to a “unitary highly centralized country”.\footnote{424} These transformations had a profound impact on the mobilizing strategy of ECEC advocates.

Thatcher and the Transformation of the ECEC Sector

Throughout the 1970s, as shown previously, the child care lobby was fragmented and dispersed, active mainly at the local level and in individual trade unions. The advent of Thatcher and her reform program threatened the limited gains made in certain local authorities, while the growing presence of women in the labour market was making the child care issue more prominent on the public agenda.

At a conference of TUC affiliated unions on the topic of child care, Pamela Calder, who was active with NATHFE, proposed the creation of a National Childcare Campaign that would bring together all child care supporters who were active in their local communities and local unions. Following Calder’s suggestion, members of NATHFE’s Crèche Campaign joined members of the London Nursery Campaign to create the National Childcare Campaign (NCC).\footnote{425} The aim of the NCC, according to its constitution, was to “build up a mass national childcare campaign around the demand for comprehensive, flexible, free, and democratically controlled child care facilities funded by


\footnote{422}Ibid., 70. A former local authority child care manager and activist presents a different point of view: “I don’t think it was really because of the lobby from private day nurseries. What was happening were changes in the labour market. It became increasingly obvious that women a) had a right to work and b) where needed in the workforce. So that was the main cause for the relaxation of regulations”. Interview A16.


the state; thus recognising that child care provision is necessary to meet the needs of children and parents.”

Faced with an intransigent national government, the NCC focused especially on lobbying trade union organizations. For example, at the 1980 convention of the TUC, a delegation from the NCC urged union affiliates to implement the Union’s under-fives charter, to resist attempts to develop private facilities and to initiate a campaign for full unionization of child care workers.

Besides lobbying labour unions, the NCC’s initial focus was on opposing the government’s budgetary cuts to local authorities that were threatening day nurseries and its intention to rely on the expansion of voluntary services, policies set out in the DHSS’s Under-fives initiative. In a paper submitted to the Women’s Rights Study Group of the Labour Party, the NCC denounced this approach: “More recently, the encouragement given through both the DHSS and local social service departments to the voluntary sector and especially to self-help groups such as the PPA is based on the assumption that mothers will be closely involved with the facilities created.” The NCC was especially hostile to the PPA, viewing it as a bastion of traditionalist views about the family. More generally, it denounced what it perceived, and sometimes documented, as the “hostility of many staff in services to under-fives to working mothers, and to infringements of traditional family roles,” rejecting the argument “that a major and necessary service can be principally located in the voluntary sector.” Moreover, NCC activists, who rejected the social work approach of local authority social services departments, urged that “day nursery provision be taken out of social services, and placed under the jurisdiction of education authorities.”

Nevertheless, events beyond the control of the organization would lead it to reconsider its strong opposition to the DHSS initiative. The campaign was increasingly running out of money as a result of the growing fiscal constraints experienced by local

429 Personal Archives of Pamela Calder.
430 This section draws on two interviews with original founders of the NCC, Interview A11 and Interview A16. It also draws on the excellent overview on the creation of the NCC and the conflicts within the organization in Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, Contemporary Feminist Politics: Women and Power in Britain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 283-301.
governments that had funded the NCC. As a result, a growing number of members entertained the possibility of receiving a grant as part of the DHSS initiative. It would be used to conduct research on child care and to do consultancy work for local authorities and employers. They believed that such a grant would allow the NCC to become more professional. Those who opposed the grant argued that it would lead to the cooptation of the movement by the state and the abandonment of its goal of a publicly provided, universal child care system. Those who favoured a more professional organization won the argument, and in order to accept state grants, members constituted a charitable organization, the Daycare Trust.\footnote{According to one of the founding members of both organizations, the shift had a profound impact, moving the organization away from its radical past and towards a significantly more pragmatic approach to the development of child care services.} In order to accept state grants, members constituted a charitable organization, the Daycare Trust.\footnote{The NCC was not technically abolished, as it was to be the branch of the organization charged with advocacy.} According to one of the founding members of both organizations, the shift had a profound impact, moving the organization away from its radical past and towards a significantly more pragmatic approach to the development of child care services.\footnote{Interview A11.}

Many of the NCC’s founding members quit the organization and went on to be active in the Workplace Nursery Campaigns (WNC). In light of its members’ mistrust of the state, the WNC pressed for the development of a mixed economy of child care services that would mainly involve the expansion of workplace nurseries. Indeed, the organization’s membership was mainly composed of local branches of trade unions. Before the organisation folded in the mid-1990s, it played a key role in the promotion of employer supported child care. Another important organization that emerged in the 1980s was the Working Mothers’ Association (WMA), which was mainly composed of professional women pushing for greater choice for working mothers. As argued by Joni Lovendusky and Vicky Randall, it approached child care from the perspective of the mother as ‘consumer’, with one of its main demands the adoption of a child care tax deduction.\footnote{Lovenduski and Randall, \textit{Contemporary Feminist Politics: Women and Power in Britain}, 295.} Finally, besides these organizations pressuring for greater public investment, a number of organizations also defended the interest of child care providers, such as the Day Nursery Association (representing mainly public day nurseries), the PPA (representing playgroups), the Private Day Nursery Association, the National
Childminders Association, and Kid’s Club Network (an organization representing the growing number of after-school child care providers).

By the late 1980s, in light of the lack of public investment in ECEC services, many child care activists had grudgingly accepted that the expansion of services might not occur through massive state investment in public services. Nevertheless, they remained committed to the expansion of public nursery education and suspicious of the playgroup movement. Their efforts to expand ECEC services benefited from the replacement of Margaret Thatcher by John Major, who favoured greater public investment in ECEC. Perhaps more importantly, child care activists gained the support of an important new actor: the business community.

Business Pressures and Child Care

The Daycare Trust, the WNC and the WMA were not the only organizations making the case for child care services for working parents. In fact, one of the most important changes in the 1980s and early 1990s was that the growing interest of employers in child care.

At first, some employers helped their employees have access to child care services in order to compensate for the lack of public services. In the wake of TUC Child Care Charter, a number of corporations opened up workplace nurseries, but this development was hindered in 1984 by the decision of the Thatcher government to consider a place in a workplace nursery as a taxable benefit. A long battle ensued to end the practice, which brought together unions and employers. The campaign was largely successful and the government modified its policy in 1991 following the replacement of Margaret Thatcher by John Major.

An alternative adopted by some employers to expensive workplace nurseries was child care vouchers. A corporation, Luncheon Vouchers, had started them in the late 1980s, as a mean for employers to provide child care assistance to their employees without paying the National Insurance Contribution.\footnote{Paul Gosling, “Pressure Grows for Childcare Support – Taxation Relief,” \textit{Independent on Sunday} (April 14, 1991): 20.} Vouchers could be redeemed by child care providers, in some cases registered, in others not. The vouchers alternative was viewed as
more flexible for working parents, and more realistic for smaller enterprises. A number of companies were created to provide corporations with a voucher service for their employees, and many took advantage of the service. However, increasing unemployment in the early 1990s and the absence of tax exemptions limited their expansion.435 Still, a survey found that by the mid-1990s, 31 per cent of large British enterprises were providing their employees with some child care help, in most cases through vouchers.436 Their use was not limited to the private sector, as public unions also started to negotiate demands for wage supplements in the form of child care vouchers.437

Nevertheless, by the early 1990s, the most important role played by the business community was lobbying the Conservative government for greater public investment. According to the former director of one of the main national child care organizations, “employers drove many of the changes in the early to mid-1990s. (…) There were issues around skill shortages, but also attracting and retaining the best staff. If you look who is coming out of university now, women are leading the way. If you want to keep these women, you need a range of benefits, including child care.”438 Indeed, a survey conducted in 1990 found that 83 per cent of companies expected staffing shortages in the coming years.439 As a result, employers such as British Airways, British Gas, Shell UK and British Telecom created a forum, Employers for Childcare, and published a manifesto, *Good Childcare, Good Business*. The document stated that employers were wasting large sums of money on training employees who were unable to continue their careers once they were having children, and called on the government to increase child care funding, set a national framework for services, and lay down national standards.440

Growing pressures from the business community led to the development of a series of ad hoc child care initiatives. Most of these were devised outside the Department of Health, since it continued to argue that its role was to develop child care spaces for children at risk. The first important development was the adoption by the Department of

435 While they were not subject to national insurance contribution to be paid by employers, they were still considered to be a benefit in kind for employees.
438 Interview A10.
Social Security (DSS) of the Childcare Disregard on Family Credit targeted at lone-parent families. Under the childcare disregard scheme, lone parents could deduct up to £40 from their net weekly earnings before their benefits were calculated, as long as they worked 16 hours a week and their children were in formal child care. The Childcare Disregard was a response to a growing concern of policy-makers that some mothers were leaving paid employment at a time of increasing demand for female labour. This was viewed as the result of a declining number of public day nurseries that were charging minimal fees. The government estimated that around 150,000 families would take advantage of the disregard. However, in 1996, only 25,000 were receiving help, a reflection of the high cost of formal child care and its limited availability in many communities.\footnote{Data are respectively from Teresa Hunter, “Why the New Childcare Allowance Could Mean a Cut in Pay for Working Women,” \textit{The Guardian} (December 4, 1993): 36; and Liu, \textit{The Autonomous State of Childcare}, 63.} Finally, the Department of Employment, worried about a potential labour shortage, adopted a pump-priming initiative to favour the employment of mothers with children in school. The out-of-school child care initiative adopted in 1993 made available £45 million for a three-year period for the development of after-school and holiday places in the commercial and voluntary sector. Pursuing Thatcher’s policy of by-passing local governments, local quangos created by the Conservative government to promote local economic development, known as Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs), were made responsible for the implementation of the initiative.

While the business community had supported many of these reforms because of fears of labour shortages, the recession of the first half of the 1990s dampened the pressure on the government to expand services. Nevertheless, John Major had made education the priority of his administration, and was promoting greater investment in early childhood education.

\textit{Nursery Education under John Major}

In 1994, the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce released an influential report entitled \textit{Start Right}, which made the recommendation that “no child born after the year 2000 should be deprived of opportunity and support for effective early learning,” stressing in particular “that investment in good
early learning provides a worthwhile economic return.”

This document, by an organization close to the business community, was one of the first study explicitly making the case that early childhood education was an economic investment. The report of the Royal Society was in line with the new Prime Minister’s priority. John Major had put education at the top of his government’s agenda, believing that the improvement of Britain’s educational system was essential to the future of its economy.

Not all members of the Conservative cabinet shared the Prime Minister’s belief in the benefits of pre-school education. The Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Clarke, argued that nearly every other sector of education was a higher priority, and that any expansion should occur through a diversity of providers: “All-in provision for nursery education is not a realistic prospect. I think a variety- nursery schools for some, playgroups, nursery groups of one kind or another- is what is required.” As such, he reflected the opinion of his department, which John Major viewed, with the Treasury, as being especially opposed to the expansion of nursery education, at least for all three- and four-year-olds. A child care activist, who would later act as a consultant to New Labour, confirms that the Department of Education was especially reluctant in the 1990s to invest new resources in nursery education. While the Prime Minister mainly made the case for ECEC, he did share with his Secretary of State the belief that expansion should occur through a variety of providers.

How this ECEC initiative would be implemented was the object of much dissension within the Tory ranks. Debates centered especially around the proposal of different think tanks close to the Conservatives, such as the Adam Smith Institute, the Social Market Foundation and the Centre for Policy Studies, to fund universal nursery education through a voucher scheme. The proposed scheme would involve parents exchanging vouchers for their children’s pre-school education, whether in the private, public or voluntary sector. While Jonathan Aitken, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury,

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442 Sir Christopher Ball, Start Right: the Important of Early Learning (London: RSA, 1994), 77.
445 Interview A18.
advocated the measure in the cabinet, it was strongly opposed by the Department of Education, including the Education Secretary Gillian Shephard and the Minister of State for Education Eric Forth. The Department favoured instead a purchaser/provider scheme, by which both local authorities and voluntary and private providers could seek fund from local quangos for nursery expansion. Both options by-passed local authorities.

In July 1995, John Major, whose own adviser in the No. 10 policy unit favoured the voucher scheme, announced his government’s decision to adopt it. The scheme would first be tested in a number of areas in April 1996. Parents of four-year-olds were to receive vouchers worth £1,100 that they could use to pay for the cost of a place in a maintained nursery school or class, a reception class, or a private nursery. The plan also allowed parents to send their children to playgroups, although playgroups were to receive half what other providers were entitled, as their labour costs were estimated to be significantly lower. The government would finance the initiative using the £565 million taken from LEAs’ existing nursery school provision, £165 million of new money for expansion, and £20 million for administration and inspection.

The initiative was denounced by a wide variety of interest groups and advocates. The Labour Party’s critic David Blunkett argued that the scheme was a “con” and a “paper promise” which would do nothing to create new places. The NCA, which represented childminders who were excluded from the scheme, argued that it could damage the livelihood of 150,000 self-employed child care workers. The British Association of Early Childhood Education lamented that no money was made available for training and that the act contained no provisions on the qualifications of teachers outside the maintained sector. Criticisms came also from within the state. The Audit Commission, the local authorities’ watchdog, published a report entitled Counting to Five, which argued that the growing competition between the maintained and voluntary sectors might lead to a decreasing

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448 This section draws on chapter four and five of Liu, The Autonomous State of Childcare.
450 Most of the reactions, unless specified, are taken from “Nursery Vouchers,” Times Educational Supplement (July 14, 1995): 4-5.
degree of cooperation between the two.\textsuperscript{451} The report also pointed out that local authorities might react to a financial shortfall resulting from the voucher initiative by reducing their financial contribution to voluntary and private services. Private nurseries worried that a majority of parents would use the voucher to register their child in a reception class of an elementary school, believing that it would increase their child’s chance of being accepted in that school for the rest of his or her primary education.

Perhaps the most animosity to the act came from local authorities. The largely Labour-controlled AMA argued that the scheme would require a massive bureaucracy and could potentially lead to fraud and abuse, asking its members to boycott the government’s plan. Labour authorities were not alone in their opposition to the plan. Even the five Tory education authorities that were still in power in England were less than enthusiastic, believing that it would take away important resources from cash-strapped public nursery schools and classes.\textsuperscript{452} Nor did the scheme gain the support of public servants working in local communities. At a National Children’s Bureau conference organized in January 1996 for local authority service managers, only one delegate out of 350 expressed support for the voucher initiative.\textsuperscript{453} While the government had intended to test the scheme in 12 local authorities, only four accepted to participate in the pilot.

The lack of public support seriously threatened the survival of the initiative. Nevertheless, as argued by the former head of a pre-school organization, the Major government adopted a divide and conquer strategy made possible by the fragmentation of the ECEC lobby to ensure its implementation.\textsuperscript{454} It did so by actively courting the playgroup movement, which had the organizational capacity to deliver pre-school services to a significant number of three- and four-year-olds.

Over the previous decade, the playgroup movement had felt that its existence was being challenged by talk of expanding nursery education to all three- and four-year-olds. While in its early days the PPA presented playgroups as a temporary alternative to nursery education, as their numbers expanded, and as the organization became increasingly


\textsuperscript{454} Interview A03.
professionalized and started to establish a training infrastructure, it started to make more strongly the case that playgroups were “a permanent part of the scene, not a cheap substitute for nursery education but a valid alternative in their own right.” The movement felt especially threatened by the vocal antipathy of the Daycare Trust and elements of the Labour Party, who continued to view playgroups as conservative, pre-feminist organizations.

As a consequence, the pre-school movement felt the need to ensure its legitimacy and survival. First, it changed its name to the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) to highlight the potential benefit of the movement in light of the government’s planned expansion of early childhood education services. Second, it increasingly made the case that it was a cheaper alternative to other forms of ECEC services. In a controversial booklet published in 1994, which was strongly denounced by groups representing early childhood educators, it argued that:

A lot of daycare available elsewhere is expensive. Nursery schools and classes, because they are part-time, are able to offer only limited help. Playgroups are designed to be affordable and only the playgroup movement is large enough and is flexible enough to offer a solution to the country’s childcare crisis.

The announcement of the voucher initiative was viewed as an opportunity for playgroups to a) be recognized by the state as institutions of early childhood education, and b) obtain the resources necessary for their survival. According to a former member of the organization:

There was the view in the Labour Party in opposition that child care providers, and playgroups in particular, should refuse to accept vouchers. And the Daycare Trust, which was very much an organization of Labour, shared that view (…). The way I looked at it was that it would be impossible to convince playgroups not to accept vouchers. It is the equivalent of turkeys voting for Christmas. They were desperate for money. And also, by becoming part of the funding environment before Labour came to power, it would be a lot harder to exclude them. (…) It turned out to be right.

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456 Interview A14.
458 Interview A14.
Following the pilot project and the decision of the playgroup movement to participate in the voucher initiative, the program was rolled out nationally for four-year-olds in April 1997. As predicted by the Audit Commission, many parents, encouraged by education authorities afraid of losing out to playgroups and private nurseries, chose to put their children in reception classes. Twenty-five years after the publication of *Education: A Framework for Expansion*, a Conservative government had finally made good on the promise to provide early childhood education to all four-year-olds. Nevertheless, the government initiative was going national just as talks of an upcoming election were swirling.

**Summary: Causes and Consequences**

While the post-war period had been marked by an important expansion of parental playgroups for children between three and five years old, similarly, the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s were marked by a tremendous expansion of commercial child care services, especially for children under the age of three. In both cases, these services expanded as a result of the inactivity of the state. Under Margaret Thatcher, between 1980 and 1990, the number of private day nurseries increased by 170 per cent. Under John Major, between 1990 and 1997, the number of private day nurseries increased by 273 per cent, while the number of places in public day nurseries declined by 30 per cent.

Although the government did not directly finance such provision, the lack of centralized regulations facilitated the expansion of a range of providers. Local governments were constrained, both fiscally and legislatively, in their capacity to expand local public services. At the same time, faced with increasing parental demands for more services, they could not impose regulations that would have constrained the expansion of voluntary and commercial services. Finally, in the words of Vicky Randall, “the emphasis

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459 In exchange for its support, the PLA managed to overturn the original intention to pay playgroups half the grant allocated to other providers, by convincing the Under-Secretary of State for Education that it was the only organization with the resources necessary for the achievement of the voucher initiative. For a good discussion of the PLA campaign around the voucher initiative, see Liu, *The Autonomous State of Childcare*, 101-3.

in government child care policy statements on the importance of the private sector’s actual and potential contribution enhanced the respectability of these private organizations and helped legitimate a more prominent policy role for them.\footnote{Vicky Randall, “Child Care in Britain, or, How Do You Restructure Nothing?,” in Child Care Policy at the Crossroads: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring, eds. Sonya Michel and Rianne Mahon (New York: Routledge, 2002), 228.}

The sheer number of providers and organizations also allowed the Major government to adopt a divide and conquer strategy to pass its voucher initiative, and give the state imprimatur to a playgroup movement that had previously been seen as a temporary alternative to nursery schools and nursery classes.

Nevertheless, growing efforts were being made to ensure that the sector could speak with one voice and effectively lobby for more resources. This took the form of the Early Years Education Forum, which was created in the wake of the 1993 Education Act, which had made no reference to early childhood education. Hosted by the Early Childhood Unit of the National Children’s Bureau, under the leadership of Gillian Pugh, it played a central role in promoting greater state intervention. The leaders of the Forum had encouraged the participation of both the for-profit and non-profit sectors, believing, according to one of the founding member, that unity was necessary in order for the government to increase its financial commitment to ECEC.\footnote{Interview A03.}

Moreover, it later dropped the reference to education from its name, becoming the Early Years Forum (EYF), in order to reflect its commitment to an integrated approach to ECEC services.\footnote{Interview with an early member of the Forum. Interview A19.} Thus the Forum promoted quality ECEC services, but did not take any stand as to who should provide the service.

Over time, the Forum, which was composed of more than 40 organizations, was able to come up with a list of common demands: a long-term, adequately funded government strategy for developing early childhood services; nationally agreed standards across all services, including an appropriate curriculum; a common system of inspection; and teacher training, which would include child development.\footnote{Bruce Kemble, “Campaign to Boost Nursery Education,” The Evening Standard (June 1 1993): A18.} More importantly, the Forum developed close links with the Labour Party in opposition, advising MPs who were developing the party platform. These contacts in the 1990s between activists and what was
increasingly referred to as New Labour proved central to the development of ECEC in the post-1997 period, explored in the next section.

**Policy Layering and Policy Learning under New Labour, 1997-2006**

New Labour came to power in 1997 facing a significantly changing labour market and a growing poverty problem. In the decade preceding the election of Tony Blair, the proportion of working mothers with children under the age of five had increased to 51 per cent. By 2006, women were expected to account for 0.9 of the projected 1.2 million new workers in the labour force. Simultaneously, Britain was facing criticisms at home and abroad because of the growing problem of child poverty. In 1995, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child published an audit of children’s rights that stated that the British government was “failing children in nearly every aspect of their lives.” For Gordon Brown, who became responsible of the government’s domestic agenda, child poverty was a “scar on the soul of Britain.” The two issues, employment and child poverty, were in many ways problems in search of a solution. Early childhood education and care would be that solution.

Indeed, it is striking how child care would become for New Labour a cure to many of the country’s social ills. A government report published in 2002 presented child care as key to achieve some of the government’s main objectives, including improving educational outcomes of children, reducing poverty, and promoting gender equality. Moreover, New Labour’s policy approach has involved promoting a transition from the male breadwinner model to what Jane Lewis and Susan Giullari have referred to as the adult worker model. As for child care, for the first time in history, a former local government consultant stressed, child care was a national priority. And indeed, between

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470 Interview A04.
1996/97 and 2007/08, spending on ECEC has increased fivefold, from £1 billion to £5.5 billion.\(^{471}\) This section demonstrates how such changes, which occurred through a process of policy layering, were the result of a unique alliance between the Treasury and the child care lobby.

**New Labour’s National Childcare Strategy**

After close to twenty years of Conservative rule, the ECEC community viewed the election of Tony Blair’s New Labour as an opportunity for a radical transformation of the ECEC system. While in opposition, the Labour Party opposed some of the Conservatives’ initiatives that many in the ECEC community rejected, such as the voucher initiative. Moreover, many members of New Labour’s caucus and cabinet had strong connections with the child care community. David Blunkett, who was named Secretary of Education, had been a long advocate of nursery education as the leader of the Sheffield City Council; the Minister of Social Security, Harriett Harman, was a renowned feminist; the head of the Prime Minister’s policy unit David Miliband and his brother Ed Miliband, who played a similar role at the Treasury as adviser to Gordon Brown, where the sons of Marion Kozak, who had been director of the Daycare Trust; and Patricia Hewitt, who became Economic Secretary in 1998, had been the Director of the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), a think tank close to New Labour that had paid close attention to the child care issue.\(^{472}\) A number of activists interviewed pointed especially to the tireless promotion of ECEC by Margaret Hodge. Although Hodge was not part of the first New Labour cabinet, she was named junior minister in 1998, before inheriting the position of Minister for Universities in 2001 and Minister for Children in 2003.\(^{473}\)

While Labour was in opposition, Hodge had been made responsible for developing the party’s early years policy. A former council leader of the London Borough of Islington, she was well aware of the difficulties faced by local governments in developing early years services. Perhaps more importantly, she spent significant time consulting child

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\(^{472}\) In 1990, the IPPR had published a report proposing child care vouchers for all working parents. “Institute for Public Policy Research Wins on Child-Care Vouchers for Working Mothers,” *The Times* (July 10, 1990): [Factiva Document t000000020011128dm7a00e1s].

\(^{473}\) Interviews A03, A10, A11, A14, A18.
care activists, many of which were members of the Labour Party. On the eve of the 1997 election, New Labour’s election manifesto remained nonetheless vague as to the party’s intentions with regard to the early years. The only commitment of the party was nursery places for all four-year-olds:

Nursery vouchers have been proven not to work. They are costly and do not generate more quality nursery places. We will use the money saved by scrapping nursery vouchers to guarantee places for four year-olds. We will invite selected local authorities to pilot early excellence centres combining education and care for the under-fives. We will set targets for universal provision for three year-olds whose parents want it.

Following New Labour’s election, the new Minister of Education, David Blunkett, stated in the House of Commons that the government would end the voucher initiative. The Minister pointed out that “the bureaucratic and administrative costs of the voucher scheme are unacceptable, that the loss of places in the voluntary sector and the closure of providers are unacceptable (..).” Vouchers, he specified, “will be set aside in favour of a new start for early years education based on a partnership between the voluntary, private and education authority sectors, which will work together to draw up development plans at local level and to ensure that, instead of bureaucracy, we can provide free places for all four-year-olds and eventually for all three-year-olds.”

For the year 1997-98, LEAs were invited to submit Early Years Development Plans that were devised collaboratively by Early Years Development Partnerships (EYDPs) set outside the structure of local governments. Vouchers for parents were replaced by supply-side subsidies that took the form of the Nursery Education Grant (NEG) transferred to local governments to finance plans devised locally by EYDPs.

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477 As argued by a child care consultant, the government approach was really vouchers under another name, as it was still based on the idea of parental choice. Indeed, the government threatened local authorities to send back their local plan if they did not take into consideration the potential contribution of the voluntary and private sector when planning expansion. The value of each child in nursery education was set at £1,100, the same amount per child that had been allocated by the previous government under the voucher scheme. Interview A13. See also Randall, “Child Care in Britain, or, How Do You Restructure Nothing,” 235.
In 1998, a year after its election, the Blair government outlined its National Childcare Strategy (NCS), in a Green Paper entitled Meeting the Childcare Challenge.\textsuperscript{478} The document presented the government’s objectives as “better outcomes for children, including readiness to learn by the time they reach school and enjoyable, developmental activities out of school hours; and more parents with the chance to take up work, education or training because they have access to diverse, good quality child care.”\textsuperscript{479} The Green Paper contained most of the reforms that were adopted by New Labour in its first mandate. It presented changes envisioned in terms of the governance of ECEC services, the expansion of provision, and the quality of such provision.

With regard to the governance of ECEC services, one of New Labour’s first initiatives was to transfer responsibility over child care from the Department of Health to the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). This change reflected a growing emphasis on child care both as a service for working parents and one that promotes early learning. This transfer had been strongly promoted by the child care lobby. Second, the NCS was published in distinct versions for all the four historical nations of Britain (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), partly anticipating the process of devolution. Finally, drawing on the newly established EYDPs, the government announced the creation of Early Years Childcare Development Partnerships (EYCDP). The role of these partnerships was to allocate funds locally to a range of providers, for-profit or not-for-profit, in order to achieve the government’s objectives.

As for the provision of services, New Labour announced in the Green Paper its intention to provide all four-year-olds access to a part-time educational program (that is 12.5 hours per week for 33 weeks), and the desire of the government to eventually extend this entitlement to three-year-olds (which was achieved in 2003). Subsidies for the early years’ entitlement could be paid to “non-educational” care-givers as long as they also registered with Ofsted.\textsuperscript{480} Most of the funding for child care was targeted at out-of-school care. In fact, of the £435 million over five years announced for the development of a child

care infrastructure, £310 million was allocated to out-of-school child care facilities. Very little money was allocated at first to the development of places for children under the age of three. In 1998-99, Harker estimates that only £7.5 million was earmarked for this age group. The rest of the budget was allocated to the overall development of services, including efforts to improve the quality of care, and the creation of 25 Early Excellence Centres to serve as models for high quality practice integrating early childhood education and child care.\textsuperscript{481}

The government’s strategy to develop places for children under the age of five was instead intended to stimulate demand through the Childcare Tax Credit for low-income working families. It was targeted at families in which one family member worked a minimum of 16 hours a week. It paid up to 70 per cent of child care costs in a registered setting for a maximum of £135 a week for one child and £200 for families with more than two children. The impact of the tax credit has been limited. Besides the fact that paying 30 per cent of child care costs can be difficult for many families, the main problem of the tax credit is that it is based on the assumption that employment precedes child care. However, for many lone parents, employment depends on the availability of child care, which research has demonstrated is especially limited in England’s poorest neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{482} In 2001, as a result of the limited supply of regulated services in poor neighbourhoods, the government launched the £300 million Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative, which provides start-up money to the private, voluntary and/or statutory sectors to develop services in disadvantaged areas.

The lack of focus on children under the age of three reflected the fact that they were the object of a separate initiative, the government’s flagship program, Sure Start. According to one of its main architects, Norman Glass, Sure Start was part of the government’s policy to prevent social exclusion and was aimed at improving the life chances of younger children through better access to early education and play, health services for children and parents, family support and advice on nurturing.\textsuperscript{483} The program

\textsuperscript{481} Harker, “A National Childcare Strategy,” 462.
\textsuperscript{482} A National Audit Office study showed that there were eight child care places per 100 children of 0-14 in the 20 per cent most deprived wards in 2001, compared with about 13 places in other areas. National Audit Office, Early Years: Progress in Developing High Quality Childcare (London: HMSO, 2004), 31.
was to be based in the 20 per cent most deprived wards in England. All residents of these areas were entitled to services financed through Sure Start. According to a Treasury official involved in the development of Sure Start, this decision was motivated by the high level of investment required in each Sure Start local program and the desire to avoid the trap of a means-tested, welfare program that stigmatized the poor. The range of services available in each Sure Start area was decided by a local partnership that was set up outside the structure of local government. Originally, many of the programs did not provide child care services, and only started providing some when the objective shifted from intervening in the lives of poor children and improving parenting, to lifting families out of poverty by getting mothers back to work.

Finally, the government increasingly centralized responsibility for regulation, curriculum and training to improve, throughout Britain, the quality of ECEC services. In 1999, the government released a document entitled *Early Learning Goals*, which outlined the goals to be achieved by children between three and six years old. Also in 2001, the government published for the first time a set of explicit national standards, the *National Standards for under Eights - Day Care and Childminding*, with the main objective to “underpin a continuous improvement in quality in all settings.” In order to improve quality, Ofsted took over from local authorities the accreditation and regulation of all early childhood services. With regard to training, the government launched in 1999 a framework of Nationally Accredited Qualifications in Early Years Education, Childcare and Playwork. Despite the advice of the Daycare Trust, the training targets were set low, the basic requirement being that 50 per cent of workers in any given workplace possess a National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) level 2. Such limited education requirements, which have led many commentators to complain about the poor quality of

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484 Interview A08.
the workforce, was in part the by-product of the government’s estimate that more than 150,000 workers would be needed to ensure the implementation of the NCS.489

The pace of reform during New Labour’s first mandate was nothing less than frantic. It was the result of the support of an important institutional actor, which in the past had been an obstacle to the expansion of early years services: the Treasury.

*The Treasury and Policy Layering*

The Treasury’s leadership over the child care file originated in the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) that was set after New Labour came to power in 1997.490 As the custodian department of the Review process, the Treasury proposed, in collaboration with the 10 Downing Street Policy Unit, a cross-cutting review that focused on children’s services. Largely influenced by evidence from programs like Head Start and the Perry Pre-School Project in the United States, which demonstrated that early years programs could make a difference to children’s lives, the CSR directly led to the creation of Sure Start. More broadly, it promoted within the Treasury the view that early years services could be central to its economic agenda. According to two Treasury officials, this discussion gradually intersected with two other preoccupations of the department.491 First was the commitment to reduce poverty, especially child poverty, which had significantly increased during the Conservative era. Second was the government’s pledge to help lone parents overcome barriers to work.

The leadership of the Treasury was not only the result of its desire to use child care as a policy solution to a number of perceived socio-economic problems. According to a former government adviser, the Treasury felt that the early years were simply not a priority for the DfEE, and that it did not have the capacity to ensure the expansion of the system.492 Treasury officials also did not trust local governments, which explains why the

490 This presentation of the role of the Treasury draws first on an interview with one of the Treasury official involved in the creation of the Sure Start program. Interview A08. It also draws on the published account of Norman Glass, a Treasury official that is often credited with the creation of Sure Start. Glass, “Sure Start.” 257-64.
491 Interview A08 and A15.
492 Interview A18.
expansion of the system was to be the responsibility of EYCDPs. According to a former consultant to New Labour:

90 per cent [of the EYCDPs] was because of mistrust of local governments. In the first few years, there was a lot of local government bashing. Quite overtly: local governments can’t be trusted, they have no ideas, they are so slow, they have vested interests, all those kinds of things. The idea of early years partnerships was that they would take power outside of local governments.\textsuperscript{493}

In devising a new approach to child care, the Treasury benefited from the fact that, with the exception of the precedent government’s out-of-school care initiative, no national policy for child care really existed. In the words of a former Treasury official, child care was a “policy-free zone”:

It was a complete public-policy free zone. In the end, that is what made it so wonderful, because you were not offending anybody, in the sense that there wasn’t any policy, especially for naught to three-year-olds. (…) It does not mean that nothing was going on. There were all sorts of charities involved in this, that and the others, and some local authorities did a lot for that age group, while others did nothing at all.\textsuperscript{494}

Because of the lack of policies, the same official continues, the ECEC sector had nothing to lose, and was in many ways more supportive than critical once the government announced its national child care strategy and the Sure Start initiative:

They were delighted. They had nothing to lose. They couldn’t be any worse off than they were. I used to say about them that they had ten telltale signs of abuse. They had been treated so badly by the whole system: nobody cared about early years. It is extraordinary when you think back on it now.

In the words of a child care activist, “in the early days of the administration, to have an official from the Treasury coming out of his office to talk to you was a novelty in itself. (…) Many older activists loved the [government’s] proposal simply because it was proposing some spending.”\textsuperscript{495} Nevertheless, in the absence of national policies and as a result of the constraints on local governments’ ability to develop public services, the policy space had been “occupied” in Britain by private providers. Indeed, at first, New Labour criticized the previous government for having left to the market the development

\textsuperscript{493} Interview A13. Similar comments were also made by a former consultant to a local government association (Interview A04) and a former treasury official (Interview A08).
\textsuperscript{494} Interview A08. I underlined.
\textsuperscript{495} Interview A13.
of ECEC services. According to one of the first government documents on the matter, *Meeting the Childcare Challenge*, “this simply hasn’t worked. And the voluntary sector has been expected to provide, with little government support, most of these services for parents looking after their own children.”

As shown in the prior section, despite such criticisms, New Labour worked around the existing institutions, trying to improve quality and providing incentives for the market to expand in zones of high deprivation. It built on many of the reforms that had been enacted under the previous Conservative government. Playgroups, which Labour activists in the past had often derided as pre-feminist organizations, continued their transition to institutions of early childhood education. Not only did the commercial sector continued to expand, the system experienced an extraordinary consolidation, following a buying spree of multi-national corporations attracted by growing public investment, such as ABC Learning (Australia) and Bright Horizons Family Solutions (United States).

Asked why New Labour continued to encourage the expansion of playgroups and the commercial sector, despite its previous criticisms of the Conservative government’s approach, an official of the Department of Children, School and Families (DCSF) argues that “it was partly about building on what was already there. There was no need to create a new state sector in a world where there was a lively private sector and a long tradition of voluntary sector playgroups, especially for three- and four-year-olds.” According to the same official, only within the “semi-academic community” was there a debate about the types of providers, with a greater promotion of the maintained sector where services are seen as being of higher quality because of the presence of qualified teachers. Similarly, Margaret Hodge, then a Department for Education and Skills minister, argued during a presentation to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education and Employment in 2001 that the government “had tried to build on a strength out of that diversity to provide more choice and flexibility. We have just got to work from where we are at, rather that spending ‘zillions’ to create more public provision, as some academic commentators

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had wanted." According to an official from the Treasury, this approach was also influenced by previous reforms adopted by the Conservative government, which had started to focus on demand-side tax exemptions and parental choice:

We were starting from a relatively low maintained [child care] sector. Obviously, there wasn’t provision for everyone, but there was already a big private market. So the decision then was you either completely redesign the market and pump in loads and loads of money in the maintained sector, or you try to encourage the existing market to grow and try to reduce some of the externalities and imperfections that exist in the current market; so, trying to boost the quality of existing provisions in the market. I can see why they came down at the time on the side of keeping the existing provision, not least because it’s pretty difficult to try to completely override an existing private market. And also because to a certain extent, if we’ve got the tax credit system, which is based on parental choice, you are kind of already half way there in terms of supporting a private market anyway.

The government’s commitment to a mixed economy of ECEC services was facilitated by the absence, contrary to Canada, of a strong lobby opposing a greater presence of commercial providers. According to a child care campaigner, by the time New Labour came to power, the debate of the 1980s and early 1990s about the necessity of privileging the maintained sector had been “exhausted”, with most actors within the child care community accepting that the focus should be on improving and expanding existing services. Indeed, different officials interviewed for this dissertation pointed out that the main child care organization lobbying for greater public intervention, the Daycare Trust, remained largely agnostic as to who should provide early years services. Their focus, according to an official of the DCSF, is “really on representing parents, lobbying for child care and early learning.” Their main message to the government is “go faster, spend more, focus more on quality, make it more flexible.”

Moreover, the Daycare Trust worked closely with organizations representing service providers, even the PLA with which it historically had a difficult relation. According to a former member of the Daycare Trust, “in terms of moving things forward, one of the important things was that there was a coalition of interests, supporting the need for a national strategy and investment. So we worked closely with the NCMA (the

499 Interview A15.
500 Interview A13.
501 Interview A09.
National Childminding Association), PLA, Kid’s Club Network, etc.”

Indeed, the five major child care charities (National Day Nursery Association (NDNA), NCMA, PLA, Daycare Trust, 4Children) have created a coalition, the Childcare Forum, that pools resources when lobbying political actors, for example during party conferences. According to the senior policy analyst of one of these organizations, it is also common for the chief executives of each of these organizations to meet together with a minister, presenting a unified front. While they have different views about political strategies, especially how to interact with political parties, “they really have the same views about the key challenges facing the child care sector, i.e. sustainability, needing to increase the quality of the workforce, and obviously the need for more investment.”

Perhaps more importantly, some of the leaders of these associations would become even more directly involved in the process of streamlining and simplifying the number of programs that had been adopted during New Labour’s first mandate.

Policy Learning under New Labour

As argued in Chapter 3, layering allows policy actors to test new forms of problem solving without initially having to enter into a negotiation with major stakeholders of a policy field, such as local governments. As the same time, according to Reneta Reiter, a key function of policy layering is to “initialise social learning among the decisive actors in a certain policy field.” After a first mandate of frantic policy reforms, New Labour decided to revisit its ECEC policy in light of the successes and failure of its National Childcare Strategy. Such process of policy learning took the form of two important strategic reports that contributed to another round of reforms.

The first report, the Inter-Departmental Childcare Review’s Delivering for Children and Families released in 2002, concluded that while “there is a clear rationale for government intervention,” “there are too many uncoordinated programmes relating to childcare which have their own funding streams, planning and bidding processes and targets.” Moreover, the report argued, “the existence of similar but differently named and

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502 Interview A10.
503 Interview A12.
separately branded initiatives (Sure Start, Early Excellence Centres, Neighbourhood Nurseries) only serve to confuse the picture."  

In 2004, the Treasury published its own report, a ten-year strategy for child care, which documented similar problems. The report also stressed that the “availability of places is patchy, especially in disadvantaged and particularly rural areas, and there is no guarantee to parents that they will be able to find a suitable childcare place.”

The government’s response to the challenges identified in the two reports was to promote what it called “progressive universalism”, which is support for all families, but more for those who need it the most. The government’s ten-year child care plan focused on improving access and affordability of services. To improve accessibility, it decided to “rebrand” all Early Excellence Centres, Sure Start projects that offered child care and Neighbourhood Nurseries, as Sure Start Children’s Centres. The government announced its plan to open 3,500 Centres by 2010, one in each community. These centres’ objective is to integrate day care, education, family support, and health services under one roof. While many of these centres in the poorest neighbourhoods are stand-alone and publicly-operated, in other communities they will be based in schools and in some cases private nurseries. They also offer placement services for parents and support childminder networks. Finally, the government also announced important investments to allow schools and other providers of early childhood education to provide by 2010 “wrap-around-care” for all children aged three to fourteen from 8 A.M. to 6 P.M.

To improve the affordability of ECEC services, the government announced an increase in the entitlement to free early childhood education from thirty-three weeks to thirty-eight weeks, rising from 12.5 hours a week of free ECEC services in 2006 to 15 hours by 2010. The government’s long-term objective is for each child to be entitled to 20 hours a week of free ECEC services for 38 weeks a year. The government also modified the conditions under which a parent was entitled to the child care element of what was now called the Working Tax Credit. The maximum eligible child care cost was increased from £135 to £175 a week for one child and from £200 to £300 for two or more children.

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505 Strategy Unit, Delivering for Children and Families, 13.
507 Ibid., 4.
508 Wrap-around care refers to care provided before and after school hours. Such care is not free and parents must pay a small fee.
The maximum proportion of costs covered was raised from 70 per cent to 80 per cent. Moreover, building on the fact that by the early 2000s one in ten British employers, including some of the biggest ones, were providing help to their employees with child care costs through vouchers, the government announced a tax relief of £50 a week for all employer-approved registered child care. As for the governance of the child care sector, the government enacted in 2006 the Childcare Bill, which abolished EYCDPs and put local governments back in charge of organizing the allocation of resources in local communities. The Bill made it a duty for local authorities to secure, “so far as is reasonably practical”, sufficient child care to enable parents to work, or undertake training as a means to work. Therefore, the partnership approach was abandoned.

According to a former Treasury official, in the early 2000s, a departmental battle occurred between those who favoured a more social investment, targeted approach associated with the Sure Start program, and others who wanted to expand services as fast as possible in order to promote the employment of mothers. According to Norman Glass, one of the founders of the program, “Sure Start, originally a child-centred programme, became embroiled in the childcare agenda and the need to roll out as many childcare places to support maternal employment.” For Glass, the government’s strategy contradicted the Sure Start ethos: it was universal rather than targeted; with resources spread throughout the country rather than in zones of high deprivation; and it was going to be delivered by local governments rather than through partnerships. Such a transformation, he argued, resulted from the unique union of the child care lobby with treasury officials.

510 The voucher initiative continued the trend of increasing accessibility to child care by building on existing provision. According to a former governmental adviser, the expansion of vouchers in the previous decade and a half had contributed to the formation of a very vocal and influential (upper-class) constituency that was actively encouraging the government to make them free of tax. Moreover, she argues, the voucher industry was already in place and the government believed that it could be an easy way, considering the existing of such an infrastructure, to expand government support to the middle-class at a minimal cost. Interview A18. In reality, the voucher initiative has proven to be more popular and more costly than expected. See Simon Veevers, “Tax Changes Fuel Vouchers Boom,” Nursery World (April 24, 2003). Available online: http://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/714948/Tax-changes-fuel-vouchers-boom/ [Last accessed August 8, 2008].
Glass’ intervention against the government’s reform was extremely controversial.\textsuperscript{512} Members of the child care community interviewed argued that it was in fact the Sure Start approach that he favoured that was financially unsustainable over time because of the large amount of money per child that it involved.\textsuperscript{513} Glass’s explanation for the transformation of New Labour’s strategy is, nevertheless, accurate. Starting in the early 2000s, the government relied more and more on the advice of members of the child care lobby. 4Children’s director Ann Longfield was a member of the Interdepartmental Childcare Review that called for a new wave of reforms in 2002. The chairwoman of the Daycare Trust Liza Hakler played a prominent role in devising the Treasury’s ten years childcare plan in 2003-4. According to a former government adviser, the involvement of these high-profile activists was the result of a “massive lack of policy capacity” in the early years in the DfEE:

Before the 1997 election, when I first started to get involved, there were probably only a couple of people working on early years. Child care generally, and child care for school-aged children had, at first, in around 1993, half a person, and they were based in Sheffield. Then it grew to two people and never went about beyond three before 1997. They had no policy capacity at all. (…) That’s why when the Treasury was doing the Sure Start stuff, no one else had the capacity to even think about what might be. When Norman Glass did go out, he was the first policy person from government who could go out and have an intelligent conversation about options and models. The policy gap remained right until 2002. (…) Until then there was no one to discuss strategy in the DCSF, and it really was working against people who just had a straight operational brief and who were delivering programs.\textsuperscript{514}

For Glass, “the childcare lobby seem to wear T-shirts inscribed ‘I’d rather be living in Scandinavia.’”\textsuperscript{515} Indeed, child care activists were more likely to point to Scandinavian countries as inspiration, and tended to know very little about the child care system in place

\textsuperscript{513} That point was forcefully made by a former government adviser, who nevertheless credited Glass for his championing of the sector. Interview A13. It might be argued that he exaggerated the extent to which the process of reform was purely driven by the government’s employability agenda. In fact, in the 2004 report of the Treasury, it explicitly argued that “a policy that gives too much emphasis to helping parents to work could come at the expense of the needs of children, or of parents’ desire to spend more time with their families. This may create short-term economic gains, but at a social and economic cost in the future. (…) To be successful, the needs of children and families cannot be traded against the demands of the labour market, but must advanced together.” HM Treasury, Choice for Parents: the Best Start for Children, 5.
\textsuperscript{514} Interview A13.
\textsuperscript{515} Idem.
in other Anglo-Saxon countries. The fascination with Scandinavia was also shared by civil servants. Indeed, when asked what inspired Treasury officials in charge of the ten year strategy to propose the shift to universal provision of child care centres, a government adviser’s surprisingly short answer was “Sweden”. However, the pursuit of a strategy of “progressive universalism” was not a simple case of policy emulation. Strategic considerations also played a key role. According to a former child care consultant for a local government association, the argument was also made that the Children’s Centres’ approach would be more sustainable in the long term than Sure Start as it would be available to all parents, and not just groups in deprived areas with limited political clout. Similarly, a former Treasury official who opposed the universalisation of Children’s Centres argues that many of his colleagues strongly believed that any ECEC program needed to become “mainstream” in order to survive, while another Treasury official argued that it was politically seen as a winning formula for New Labour to stress the universal character of Children’s Centres.

As for the growing role of local governments, it increasingly became clear to policy-makers that EYCDPs with limited institutional resources were inadequate to ensure the government’s planned expansion of Children’s Centres. Indeed, asked why a government that had been suspicious of local governments would put them in charge of the implementation of ECEC reform, an adviser to New Labour provided the following answer:

“EYCPDs were fine (...) when it was small scale program. When it came to big great slab of money, which it did eventually, you can’t just give the money to anyone. You need to have proper accountability and the likes. And there was a sea change in 2000, 2001, when it became obvious that there weren’t any alternatives. Unless you were to set up a whole new infrastructure of strategic delivery, your only option was local governments.”

516 The exception was in relation to early childhood education services for three- and four-year-olds, where some activists mentioned the New Zealand case.
517 Interview A18.
518 Interview A04.
519 Interview A08 and Interview A15.
520 For a good analysis of the shortcomings of EYCDPs, see Adalbert Evers, Jane Lewis and Birgit Riedel, “Developing Child-Care Provision in England and Germany: Problems of Governance,” Journal of European Social Policy 15, no. 3 (2005): 195-209.
521 Interview A13.
According to a former consultant to a local government association, once the Treasury made the decision that child care would become a ‘universal’ system, it recognized that it could not be run from the centre.\textsuperscript{522} The increased responsibility of local governments, as astutely argued by Daniel Wincott, demonstrates that over time New Labour has been educated in what is required of “government as facilitator.”\textsuperscript{523} While local governments were back in charge of the organization of child care services on the ground, New Labour had, nevertheless, established the predominance of the centre in the child care sector.

\textit{Summary: Causes and Consequences of Policy Layering}

As a result of New Labour’s policies and new funding programs, the number of places in day nurseries has increased significantly. At the same time though, the number of places with childminders and playgroups have declined significantly. This decline had been the by-product, in part, of being low-paid jobs in the context of a tight labour market that provides potentially better-remunerated employment opportunities. The decrease in the number of childminders appears also to have been the result of tighter regulations.\textsuperscript{524} As for playgroups, they have increasingly suffered from a growing focus on all-day child care and the declining capacity of parents to act as volunteers. Indeed, the government has encouraged playgroups to become day nurseries. The most important changes though have been in the commercial sector. By 2007, of the top ten providers of nursery places in the UK, nine were listed on the stock exchange or owned by private equity groups.\textsuperscript{525} By the end of 2003, as a result of the public-financing of the commercial sector, Britain had the highest proportion of for-profit providers of any OECD country.\textsuperscript{526} However because of the combination of a lack of government financial support for the middle-class, the uneven support of employers, and increasing regulations, the average

\textsuperscript{522} Interview A04.
\textsuperscript{524} Claire Callender found that childminders were “more likely than other types of provider to be hindered by legislation and regulation.” See Claire Callender, \textit{Barriers to Childcare Provision} (London: DfEE, 2001). Available online at: \url{http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RB231.pdf} [Last accessed June 8, 2009]
\textsuperscript{526} Cohen et al., \textit{A New Deal for Young Children?}, 72.
British family spends significantly more on child care services than in other countries that heavily rely on the private sector such as Australia and the United States. While in the latter two countries parents pay approximately 15 per cent of their disposable income on child care, the figure in Britain is around 28 per cent. Moreover, the combination of higher standards and temporary pump-priming financing has meant that the child care market is unstable, with massive sustainability problems. For example, a 2004 report of the National Audit Office (NAO) found that, between 1999 and 2003, while 626,000 places had been created, 301,000 had closed over the same period. For Polly Toynbee, an astute observer of the British welfare state, these difficulties in ensuring the expansion of ECEC services were the logical consequence of a “Scandinavian dream built on the sands of American tax phobia.”

It would be a mistake, therefore, to see New Labour’s ECEC agenda as marking a radical rupture from the past. Indeed, according to a long-term academic specialist of ECEC and an occasional consultant of the DCSF, it is unclear whether New Labour policies constituted really a paradigm shift, since many of the government’s policies in effect followed the previous government’s approach, albeit on a greater scale. As shown in this section, New Labour adopted a strategy of policy layering, building on some of the initiatives of the previous government and developments in the market to expand child care services for working parents, while developing new initiatives to improve the existing system. As argued in Chapter 3, such a strategy of policy layering often leads to institutions and policies that can seem at time incoherent and disjointed. The process of policy layering and its impact in the British case was especially well presented by a former government adviser interviewed. When asked whether New Labour had changed the Conservative government’s largely market-driven approach to child care, she replied:

I am not even sure it has changed, really. (…) A real increase in return to work after birth occurred and that’s all led to a change in demands and lots of people plugged the gap and responded to that. The difference being that, alongside that, there is now a layer of greater state intervention if you like, which is around Children’s Centres. (…) That’s

527 Penn and Lloyd, “Special Report: For-Profit Childcare.”
528 National Audit Office, Early Years: Progress in Developing High Quality Childcare and Early Education Accessible to All (London: National Audit Office, 2004), 6.
529 Polly Toynbee, “Our children deserve the best, so we must be prepared to pay up,” The Guardian (April 7, 2006): 33.
530 Interview A01.
government having kind of a clunky way of going about it, saying: “Most of it’s going to be market driven, and we are just going to intervene to remove barriers to the market for most stuff. But actually, in areas of disadvantage, the market is not strong enough to respond or work as an independent market, and we think these are important because they improve outcomes for children, so we are going to intervene and make sure that they [nurseries] are there by providing money.” Now, there is a sort of constant grumble about how that affects other parts of the market, because you do have state intervention in some parts, maybe this is going to be available at a cheaper rate than the private nursery down the road, and why should there be government money here and not there. (...) So it’s not necessarily a change of approach. Most child care is still left to get on with itself.\(^{531}\)

As argued in Chapter 3, layering is a reaction to the existence of institutions that cannot easily be displaced. Indeed, in the British case, policy layering was a direct result of the existence of a large private sector and the presence of local governments that were seen at first as an impediment to the rapid expansion of ECEC services. At the same time, over time, incremental changes amounted to an important transformation of the British welfare state as for the first time in the country’s history ECEC had become a national priority.

### Conclusion

Over the last ten years, Britain has become the Anglo-Saxon country that dedicates the most resources to ECEC services, an extraordinary turnaround for a country that had promoted in the post-war period a strong version of the male breadwinner model. This chapter has explored the unique British road to greater investment in ECEC services. Contrary to other European countries, Britain relies extensively on private and non-profit organizations to provide early childhood education. As for child care services, it relies overwhelmingly on the commercial sector.

The lack of a clear, centralized framework to regulate services for children under the age of five in the 1960s, a time when the demand for such services were growing, led to a process of policy drift and the development of a mixed economy of ECEC services. The lack of a clear regulatory framework was the direct result of the departmental division of responsibility over ECEC services, as well as the maintenance of the concept of local autonomy. As the central government increasingly centralized responsibility for the governance of social and educational services, its policy options

\(^{531}\) Interview A13.
were significantly constrained by the existence of groups representing a range of service providers. However, the historical lack of national policies had forced these same interest groups to join forces in pressing for more government resources, thus avoiding debates about the best type of providers. As shown in the next chapter, in comparison to Britain, continuing conflicts between non-profit and commercial providers have had a significant impact on the evolution of Canada’s ECEC system.
CHAPTER 6
The Development of ECEC Services in Canada

Introduction

By the end of the Second World War, as demonstrated in chapter four, the Canadian federal government decided not to continue the financing of war nurseries despite the recommendations of the General Committee on Reconstruction. The political situation in Canada was less welcoming to the expansion of ECEC services than in Britain, where the government was, as shown in the previous chapter, committed to the adoption of a comprehensive system of early childhood education for all three- and four-year-olds. Canada, much like other late urbanizers and industrializers such as Sweden and Denmark, did not possess a tradition of school-based early childhood education. However, contrary to other Anglo-Saxon countries like Australia and Great Britain, it did not promote a strong male breadwinner model. As a result, child care would be on the Canadian policy agenda much sooner than in the former two countries.

This chapter answers a number of questions related to the evolution of Canada’s ECEC sector. What explains the limited expansion of regulated ECEC services in Canada despite the strength of the country’s ECEC lobby? What accounts for the relatively high level of services provided by the non-profit sector? Why Canada did not experience, contrary to most other Anglo-Saxon countries, a significant growth in the proportion of services delivered by commercial providers? Like in the precedent chapter, I focus on two factors to understand the evolution of the ECEC sector in Canada: the sequence of policy development and the territorial organization of the state. In short, I demonstrate that the early adoption of a regulatory framework in most provinces as well as a federal-provincial cost-sharing agreement that favoured the non-profit sector hindered the expansion of the for-profit sector. The early institutionalization of this ECEC production regime was the result of the venue shopping activity of ECEC activists first at the provincial level, and

\[532\] In both Australia and Great-Britain, prior to the 1980s, the promotion of the breadwinner model was in part the result of stronger labour unions who advocated a living wage for workers, one that would allow the male breadwinner to take care of his family. For a discussion of the strength of the male breadwinner model in Great Britain, see Jane Lewis, “Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes,” *Journal of European Social Policy* 2, no. 3 (1992): 159-73. For a discussion of the Australian case, see Bettina Cass, “Gender in Australia’s Restructuring Labor Market and Welfare State,” in *Women in a Restructuring Australia*, eds. Ann Edwards and Susan Magarey (St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1995), 38-59.
then at the federal level. The adoption of this regime had two significant, and ultimately constraining, feedback effects on the adoption of subsequent policies. First, the existence of a cost-shared intergovernmental agreement froze the ECEC policy landscape, impeding later attempts to rapidly expand the provision of publicly financed ECEC services. Second, the political strength of the non-profit child care sector, associated in many provinces with provincial labour unions, meant that the national debate in Canada tended to revolve around the potential impact of a greater presence of commercial child care providers on both the quality of services and the working conditions of ECEC workers.

However, this chapter stresses that there was nothing inevitable about the Canadian story. After all, as shown in Figure 2.1., at the end of the 1960s, the for-profit sector was providing an overwhelming majority of child care services. However, the Canadian child care movement was able to slowly, but gradually promote important policy changes that transformed the ECEC landscape. They did so first by establishing contacts with organizations, such as labour unions and NDP provincial parties, which provided them the necessary financial and political resources to promote important policy changes. Second, they were able to promote in many provinces the institutionalization of child care either as a high quality service for children of poor working parents or later as an educational service that should be provided by early childhood educators and exclude as much as possible the for-profit sector.

Much like in the British case explored previously, this chapter investigates how the sequence of policy development and its intersection with the institutional structure of the state influenced the politics of ECEC development in Canada. As mentioned in the introduction, Ontario activists played a central role in establishing the orientations of the Canadian child care movement. Thus, while focusing on both national and provincial policy developments, this chapter pays close attention to key events that have unfolded in Ontario or that were driven by Ontario activists.

This chapter explores the sequence of policy development over four time periods. The first section focuses on the post-war mobilization of activists that led to the creation of one of the first child care acts in North America and to the inclusion of child care services in a major intergovernmental agreement (the Canada Assistance Plan). The second and third section demonstrate how this shared-cost program impeded further policy
changes, as federal and provincial governments embarked on a game of blame avoidance (in the 1970s), and as child care activists used a veto strategy to block attempts to increase the financing of for-profit providers (in the 1980s). Finally, the last section shows how the abolition of CAP in the 1990s opened up opportunities for change in many Canadian provinces.


Unlike Britain, most national welfare programs in Canada were not adopted in the immediate post-war period, but later in the 1960s. An inhospitable federal-provincial climate in the 1940s and 1950s delayed the development of the Canadian welfare state. At the time, a number of provinces were led by parties strongly opposed to the intervention of the federal government in areas of provincial jurisdiction. The lack of federal initiatives does not mean that the child care landscape remained frozen. In fact, child care activists shopped for venues more hospitable to their demands and their objectives, finding relative success in implementing their policy preferences at the provincial level in Ontario, Canada’s largest province. Their success had long-lasting consequences. It made provinces the dominant public actor in the ECEC sector. It also led to the establishment of a regulatory framework that would later constrain the rapid expansion of for-profit child care services. Embedded in this regulatory framework was a view of child care as a service whose main objective was the development of the child, rather than the promotion of women’s labour force participation. However, the defining moment in the immediate post-war period was the adoption of the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). CAP, adopted as part of Canada’s own war against poverty, institutionalized child care as a welfare service.

*The End of Federal Intervention and the Ontario Precedent*

In the immediate post-war period, faced with the federal government’s refusal to pursue its financial commitment to child care, social activists in Ontario changed venue, mobilizing instead at the provincial level. A broad coalition formed around the need to preserve day nurseries. However, activists disagreed as to what should be their primary objective. The Day Nursery and Day Care Parents Association in Toronto focused on maintaining after-school child care programs and day nurseries for children under the age
of five as a way to help working mothers. But this Association, which came to be seen as a communist organization, lacked the institutional connections of more conservative groups representing welfare professionals. As a result of the influence of the latter, proponents of the maintenance of these nurseries focused on how they would contribute to the fight against juvenile delinquency.\footnote{533} In the wake of an unprecedented mobilization of parents, the Ontario government agreed to maintain a day nursery program. Municipalities became responsible for paying the part of the cost that had been previously covered by the federal government.\footnote{534} At the same time, specialists in early childhood education used their privileged position to limit the types of services that could be publicly financed. Dorothy Millichamp, who was both the Assistant Director of the Institute of Child Study and the head of the Ontario Division of Wartime Day Nurseries, had a considerable influence in shaping the province’s approach to child care. While involved in the fight to pursue the financing of day nurseries, she also opposed the attendance of children on a full-day basis. She argued that the long hours and the monotony of caring for children took tremendous effort, with people tending to get careless, putting children at risk.\footnote{535} Her preferred model was the attendance of children only for a portion of the day, in order to stimulate their intellectual development. The influence of the Institute was recognized in the Day Nurseries Act, 1946, which explicitly required that all-day nurseries conform to the standards and curriculum developed by the Institute of Child Study of the University of Toronto.

The Day Nurseries Act, 1946, was the first piece of legislation of its kind in North America, setting up the legislative mechanisms under which day care would be provided in the province. It was significantly more detailed than the Childminder and Nursery Act adopted in Britain in 1948. For example, it specified that each nursery had to have adequate facilities for the preparation of food, and that staff needed to have been properly trained in pre-school education and to be present in significant number to provide individual attention to each child. The legislation was also groundbreaking from a

\footnote{535} Donna Varga, Constructing the Child: A History of Canadian Day Care (Toronto: James Lorimier, 1997), 75.
territorial point of view. For the first time, the provincial government recognized that it was responsible for ensuring the well-being of children placed in day care facilities.\(^\text{536}\) It set standards that, for most of the post-war period, would be amongst the most restrictive in North America.\(^\text{537}\) The Day Nurseries Act stimulated the development of training courses, first at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and then in a number of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and universities. The Association of Early Childhood Education in Ontario (AECEO) was created to certify early childhood educators.\(^\text{538}\)

The provincial legislation set out rules that promoted relatively high quality, centre-based child care. The legislation introduced also the principle that provincial financing in Ontario was contingent on municipal financing. However, in most of the province, municipal aldermen remained opposed to a rise in the unpopular property tax to finance social services for citizens not considered to be in need. At a meeting of the City of Toronto’s welfare committee, for example, Ald. Frank Clifton insisted on the necessity of imposing a strict needs test, since he “wouldn’t want to spend a plugged nickel on those who are not entitled to the services.”\(^\text{539}\)

As argued by Patricia Schulz, because the government was doing two contradictory things, setting good standards but refusing to fund ECEC services adequately, the net effect of the legislation was to close down a number of centres. 16 of the 28 existing day nurseries in Ontario in 1946 did not survive the end of federal funding, while 42 school-age centres were closed, since most parents could not afford the fees.\(^\text{540}\) Publicly financed nurseries had long waiting lists and tended to privilege children from single-parent families. Reflecting the continuous power of the Institute of Child Study, between 1947 and 1967, new nurseries in receipt of public funds only provided half-day

\(^\text{536}\) Joan Harrison, “Day Care in Ontario,” University of Toronto Faculty of Law Review 74 (1976): 74.
\(^\text{537}\) For example, an article published in the Globe and Mail in the mid-1970s reported that child-to-staff ratio for infants was three-to-one in Ontario, compared to seven-to-one in Georgia. Reported in Linda McQuaig, “The Day-Care Businessman,” The Globe and Mail (July 25, 1974): W01.
Private day care centres emerged to fill the demand for full-day care, but they also had long waiting lists.\footnote{169} Despite the Ontario precedent, the regulation of child care services in most other provinces remained the responsibility of municipal authorities well into the 1960s. While local activists mobilized in many municipalities to set up control mechanisms, officials often refused to develop standards. They argued that they did not possess either the authority to pass such bylaws or the resources to implement them.\footnote{541} Indeed, the incapacity of municipalities to respond to the social service needs of many Canadians, including poor working mothers, was a growing concern of social activists and policy-makers.

The Provincialization of Social Services in Canada and the Canada Assistance Plan

At the end of the Second World War, despite the key role Canadian women played in the war effort, policy-makers and opinion leaders argued that their duty was to return home. This perspective was shared by women’s groups. While opposing discrimination against women in the workforce (i.e. women without children), the president of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) Laura Hardy argued that the role of a mother was to stay at home in order to train her children to be good Canadians and good Christians.\footnote{542} This position found much support among the Canadian population. In a survey conducted in 1960, 93 per cent of respondents stated that married women should concentrate on looking after their home, while five per cent supported a mother’s right to take a job.\footnote{543}

Despite these exhortations for women to focus on their household duties, the percentage of married women engaged in waged or salaried work increased from 4.1 per 541 In both 1947 and in 1967, there were 21 all-day programs in receipt of public funds. In 1947, there were 3 half-day programs in receipt of public funds, compared with 25 in 1967. See E.M. Stippleford, History of the Day Nurseries Branch: A Personal Record (Toronto: Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1976), 6.
545 Data reported in Monica Boyd, Canadian Attitudes toward Women: Thirty Years of Change (Ottawa: Women’s Bureau, Labour Canada, 1983), 46.
cent in 1941 to 22.9 per cent in 1963. Indeed, by the mid-1960s, the number of married women joining the labour market was outstripping the rate of entry of single women in Canada by more than four per cent. However, no organization made the case for greater public investment in ECEC services in the 1940s and 1950s. The cause was not taken by the newly created Women’s Bureau of the federal Department of Labour, which mainly focused on maternity leave and equal pay. It is only in the early 1960s that mobilization, inside and outside the State, started to occur in favour of greater public investment in child care services.

Playing a key role in this mobilization was the Family and Child Welfare Division of the Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) and its different local branches. The Council had been formed in the 1920s and was until the 1970s the leading non-governmental source of social policy innovation in Canada, reflecting the views of professionals in the social welfare field. Local welfare councils produced reports on the poor quality of informal care services available to (poor) working mothers in a number of Canadian cities, stressing especially how they endangered the development of a child. While important, these studies had limited success in influencing policy-makers. Much more influential was the work of the Public Welfare Division of the CWC, which in a document entitled *Social Security for Canada*, proposed “a federal Public Assistance Act which would… enable the Dominion government to share the aggregate costs to a province and to the municipalities in a province of providing financial assistance to all persons who are in need.”

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552 Quoted in Haddow, *Poverty Reform in Canada*, 27.
In its fight for greater federal investments in social welfare, the CWC benefited from the support of provinces that were looking for financial assistance from Ottawa. Over the previous decade, many provinces took over from municipalities the financing and administration of public assistance and welfare services, often following public commissions that had detailed the shortcomings of municipal welfare systems. In the early 1960s, Quebec’s Boucher inquiry on public assistance had denounced the attitude of municipalities towards the poor, while acknowledging that they had limited capacity to finance public assistance and social services.553 Similarly, New Brunswick Byrne’s Commission led the province to take responsibility over education, justice and social services in the early 1960s.554 As for Alberta, it had adopted three important pieces of welfare legislation (Social Allowance Act, 1961; Child Welfare Act, 1966; Preventive Social Service, 1966) and was pressing for federal cost-sharing.555 It is in that context that CAP was adopted in 1966.556 The preamble to the Plan reflected well its main objectives:

The Parliament of Canada, recognizing that the provision of adequate assistance to and in respect of persons in need and the prevention and removal of the causes of poverty and dependence on social assistance are the concern of all Canadians, is desirous of encouraging the further development and extension of assistance and welfare services programs throughout Canada by cost-sharing more fully with the provinces in the cost thereof.557

Included in the list of services whose costs could be shared between the two orders of government were rehabilitation services, casework, counselling, adoption services, homemaking services, community development and child care. Through CAP, child care costs for families in need or likely to become in need were to be shared by federal and provincial authorities on a 50-50 basis. The financing of services and programs previously under the responsibility of municipalities was not the sole preoccupation of policy-makers.

553 The Commission especially denounced the practice of certain municipalities who paid poor families to move to another city in order not to have to cover the cost of social assistance. Gouvernement du Quebec, Rapport du comité d’étude sur l’assistance publique (Boucher Commission) (Quebec, 1963), 154.
556 Rianne Mahon reports that federal officials, aware of the findings of these commissions, viewed one of the key roles of CAP as helping provinces to develop the capacity to support locally administered social services. Mahon, “The Never-Ending Story,” 597.
557 Preamble to the Canada Assistance Plan (I underlined). Available at: http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/cap_statute.htm [Last accessed July 26, 2009]
Federal officials also increasingly worried about the capacity of municipalities to provide services. Hence CAP also allowed funding to private agencies to be covered. 558

Child care costs could be shared under two provisions of CAP: the assistance and the welfare services provisions. Through the assistance provisions of the Plan, day care was one of the “prescribed welfare services” which could be purchased by a provincial agency for a person in need as determined though a needs test. All forms of care could be cost-shared under this provision. Through the welfare services provision, the federal government cost-shared the expenses of delivering child care services to persons in need or persons “who are likely to become person in need unless such services are provided” as determined by an income test. Among cost-shareable expenses were salaries, travel expenses, staff development costs and costs of research, consultation and evaluation. Funds were directly paid to a centre for a specific number of subsidized spaces that went to children of parents who met the provinces’ eligibility criteria. Such centres had to be licensed and not-for-profit.

It remains unclear as to why exactly child care was included in CAP. One hypothesis is that it was simply the by-product of the existence of a child care program in Ontario, since CAP had been designed to include those programs in which provinces were already involved. Indeed, Ontario requested that the province’s child welfare program be included in CAP. 559 The inclusion of child care in a welfare program (and by extension its administration by a welfare department) was also encouraged by the Women’s Bureau of the Department of Labour. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Bureau had started to document the child care arrangements of Canadian women. 560 Much more than the lack of publicly financed services, the Bureau tended to stress the meagre quality of the care arrangements made by poor working mothers. In a review of the care arrangements of the children of working women, it presented a negative portrait of the state of child care in Canada in comparison to its American neighbour. It stressed that, with the exception of

559 Ibid, 448. While having few memories of why child care was specifically included in CAP, a former federal official who was active during these years argues that the federal government was pressured to include existing provincial programs related to welfare. Email communication, B14. Mahon similarly argues that “it appears that child care was included in the welfare services eligible more as a by-product of negotiations between federal and provincial officials, and within the federal bureaucracy itself, than as a deliberate strategy.” Mahon, “The Never-Ending Story,” 596.
560 See Women’s Bureau (Department of Labour), Survey of Married Women Working for Pay in Eight Canadian Cities (Ottawa: Department of Labour, 1958).
Ontario, no province had in place a system of provincial grants to municipally-sponsored day nurseries. In the United States, on the other hand, the protection of the children of working mothers was an integral part of child welfare services. Moreover, federal child welfare funds were made available to state-licensed day-care services, which helped maintain high standards of care.\footnote{561} As a result of this focus on the quality of care arrangements, the Bureau had advised the National Employment Committee in 1965 that day care should be the responsibility of the Department of National Health and Welfare.\footnote{562}

The inclusion of child care services in CAP led most provinces to adopt legislation regulating child care providers. While only one province had a separate child care act when CAP was negotiated, by the late 1960s, only three provinces had no legislation in place regarding the regulation of child care services (Quebec, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick).\footnote{563} In these three cases, regulations were adopted over the next decade, confirming the provincial occupation of the field of jurisdiction. At the same time, CAP entrenched the view of child care as a welfare service.

**Summary: Causes and Consequences**

While Canada adopted many generous social programs in the 1960s that would later challenge the view of the country as a typical liberal welfare state (especially the Medicare program), CAP institutionalized the view or the “policy image” of ECEC as a welfare program whose main objective was to provide good care to the children of poor Canadians, especially single mothers, who had to work. As argued by Freda Paltiel, a public servant who played a key role in the ECEC sector in the 1970s, child care never had its own “Saskatchewan precedent”. At the time of the creation of CAP, no province had in place a well-developed or universal child care system that could have served as a model for other provinces and for federal policy-makers, like the Saskatchewan health insurance program.\footnote{564} Indeed, archival evidence demonstrates that federal officials were

\footnote{561}{A good summary of the report can be found in “Day-Care Facilities Criticized,” *The Globe and Mail* (January 20, 1964): 13.}
\footnote{562}{Burt, “Organized Women’s Movement and the State,” 204.}
\footnote{563}{Canadian Council on Social Development, *Day Care*. (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1972): xii, 14-28.}
scrambling in the immediate period leading to the adoption of CAP to learn more about day care.\footnote{A 1965 Memorandum of the Child and Maternal Health Division stated that “a considerable amount research would be necessary to get an exact picture of the day care situation across the country,” NAC RG29, Acc. 1996-97/698, Box 50, pt. 1.} As for the one province that had established the foundations of a child care system, Ontario, the expansion of services had been impeded by constant fighting between municipal and provincial officials, mainly because of the cost of developing such services. Moreover, while the Day Nurseries Act imposed strict licensing rules that ensured that centre-based child care services would be provided by professionals, it also increased the cost of such services for working parents.

CAP not only institutionalized child care as a welfare service, it also marked a significant re-working of traditional governmental responsibilities for the provision and organization of social services. This re-organization entailed a greater role for the federal government in ensuring that Canadians had access to services wherever they lived. At the same time, reflecting the growing assertion of provincial powers in the 1960s, it left much autonomy to provinces in the governance of welfare programs.\footnote{As demonstrated by Gerard Boychuck in his study of social assistance programs in Canada. See Gerard Boychuck, Patchwork of Purpose: the Development of Provincial Social Assistance Regimes in Canada (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1998).} However, CAP was adopted at a unique collaborative moment in the history of Canada’s intergovernmental relations.\footnote{On that unique period, see Richard Simeon, Federal-Provincial Diplomacy: the Making of Recent Policy in Canada, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).} Already by the late 1960s, in the wake of the adoption of the Medicare program, provinces were grumbling about the growing presence of the federal government in areas of provincial jurisdiction. Such a change to the climate of federal-provincial relations had a significant impact on the capacity of ECEC activists to promote a system that would depart from welfare approach institutionalized by CAP.

**Working Mothers, Interest Groups and the Politics of Blame Avoidance (1970-80)**

As previously mentioned, unlike Britain, Canada never developed a strong breadwinner model.\footnote{This is not to suggest that there was not a discourse that promoted motherhood. However, in reality, the structure of the Canadian labour market, much like in the United States, encouraged a greater labour force participation of women than in Australia and the United Kingdom. On the promotion of nuclear families in}
country’s transition to “post-industrialism”, of which the labour force participation of a majority of women is a key factor, Bonoli found that Canada was the fourth OECD country after Sweden, Denmark and the United States to make the transition.\textsuperscript{569} As a result, the question of the labour force participation of women emerged on the Canadian policy agenda much sooner than in Britain. In 1967, the Pearson government announced the formation of a Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW). Under the umbrella of the Committee for the Equality of Women in Canada headed by Laura Sabia, the president of the Canadian Federation of University Women, feminists had pressed for the creation of a Commission similar to the one that been formed in the United States by President Kennedy.\textsuperscript{570} Of the nine topics the Commission was assigned, four dealt explicitly with women’s employment. Among them was “the present and potential role of women in the Canadian labour force, including the special problems of married women in employment and measures that might be taken under federal jurisdiction to help them.”\textsuperscript{571}

By the end of the 1960s, the general climate of federal-provincial relations was inimical to the development of new shared-cost social programs. In the wake of difficult negotiations around the Medicare program, the provinces had made clear their growing unease with cost-sharing programs. In 1969, recognizing this growing opposition, the federal government published a report on income security and social services that constituted a clear step back from the interventionism that had marked the social initiatives of the Pierson government. The document stated that while the Government of Canada had an interest in ensuring that Canadians had access to social services throughout the country, it did “not believe that it should be expressed by giving Parliament power to legislate or regulate in these fields.”\textsuperscript{572} While the document stated that “Parliament and the provincial legislatures ought to have equal powers to make general income support payment to persons,” it stressed that “the provincial legislatures ought to have exclusive

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jurisdiction over social services."\textsuperscript{573} This climate had a profound impact on how the federal government responded to the recommendations of the RCSW.

**Impetus for Change: the Royal Commission on the Status of Women**

In Great Britain, as previously shown, the impetus for change in the ECEC sector in the 1960s and 1970s came from the publication of two important reports: the Plowden report on elementary education and the Seebohm report on the organization of social services. In Canada, on the other hand, the impetus for change came with the publication of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW). Although child care was not part of the mandate of the Commission, Annis May Timpson reports that 58 per cent of the briefs presented to the Commission discussed child care.\textsuperscript{574} They tackled a number of issues such as the affordability of child care services, their location (in the community or in schools?), and their target (for all children or for those of single mothers who had to work?). Interestingly, most interventions about the most appropriate type of care focused on the importance of licensed, centre-based ECEC services. Organizations as different as the Catholic Women’s League, the Children’s Aid Society of Vancouver and the United Auto Workers recommended that child care services be offered by early childhood educators.\textsuperscript{575}

The RCSW report was extremely progressive for its time. It explicitly rejected the “maternal deprivation” thesis that was still dominant among policy-makers in Britain, arguing that “the time is past when society can refuse to provide community child services in the hope of dissuading mothers from leaving their children and going to work.”\textsuperscript{576} Although the report stated that family day care could be a practical supplement to centre-based care, it argued that “it would be inadvisable, however, to rely too heavily on care in a private home.”\textsuperscript{577} It also stated that CAP was an inadequate mechanism to finance day care services.

\textsuperscript{573} Ibid, 106. The content of the document, which covered the name of the Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, reflected not only the growing frustration expressed by the provinces, but also the Prime Minister’s belief in respecting provincial spheres of jurisdiction. In his previous life as an academic, Trudeau had in fact frequently denounced federal interventions in areas of provincial jurisdictions.


\textsuperscript{575} This is based on an index of briefs compiled by the RCSW sent to the University of Toronto Library (April 6, 1971).

\textsuperscript{576} RCSW, *Report*, 263.

\textsuperscript{577} Ibid., 266.
care services since it was limited to welfare measures, whereas day care had to be available to families who needed it and wished to use it.\footnote{Ibid., 270.}

The main recommendation of the Commission in relation to child care was “that the federal government immediately take steps to enter into agreement with the provinces leading to the adoption of a national Day-Care Act under which federal funds would be made available on a cost-sharing basis for the building and running of day-care centres meeting specified minimum standards.”\footnote{Ibid., 271.} Besides the call for a national child care act, the Commission also recommended the adoption of a child care allowance to be paid for each child under 16, and the creation in each province of a Child Care Board responsible for the establishment and supervision of day care centres and other child care programs.

While the Commission had the mandate to suggest measures to improve the status of women in sectors of federal jurisdiction, it was proposing federal intervention in policy sectors that had come to be viewed as the responsibility of provinces. Indeed, two commissioners from Quebec, Jacques Henripin and John Humphrey, argued that day care services were, according to the former, or ought to be, according to the latter, an extension of the school system, which is a provincial jurisdiction.\footnote{Ibid, 446. Double Check.} For Humphrey, it was unlikely “that provinces which say that Medicare was imposed on them (...) would welcome a new cost-sharing plan of such proportions as is being proposed by the Commission.”\footnote{Ibid, 446.}

The state of federal-provincial relations seems indeed to have played a key role during subsequent inter-departmental negotiations over how to respond to the recommendations of the RCSW.\footnote{Ibid.} Indeed, the Interdepartmental Ad Hoc Study Group on Child Care argued that a previous commitment of the Prime Minister to the provinces was a significant impediment to the development of a new national initiative:

It is recognized that, in light of the Prime Minister’s commitment to the provinces that the federal government would not bring in another “medicare” (i.e. introduce another shared-

\footnote{\textsuperscript{578} Ibid., 270.}  \footnote{\textsuperscript{579} Ibid., 271.}  \footnote{\textsuperscript{580} Ibid, 446. Double Check.}  \footnote{\textsuperscript{581} Ibid, 446. Humphrey also believed that two other aspects of Canada’s territorial infrastructure would complicate the development of a national child care system in the short term. He believed, first, that the solution to a rapid expansion of child care services passed by a transfer not so much of responsibility from the provinces to the federal government, but from municipalities to provinces since the latter had significantly more financial resources. Second, he argued that day care centres were not a realistic option in largely rural regions of the country.}  \footnote{\textsuperscript{582} The defining study of these negotiations can be found in Mahon, “The Never-Ending Story,” 602-14.}
cost program without prior consultation and some amount of agreement from the provinces), and the disagreement with the principle of shared-cost programs expressed by some of the provinces, such a program should only be introduced after thorough consultation with, and at least some agreement from the provinces.583

In its memo to the Cabinet, the Study Group rejected a new day care grant program since “it would constitute a new shared-cost program and consequently might be unacceptable to some provinces.” A National Day Care Act, which had been proposed by the RCSW, was also rejected on the ground that “it would regarded by some provinces as an infringement of provincial jurisdiction”, and “would not be consistent with the federal emphasis on selectivity that gives priority to the alleviation of poverty.”584

The government’s response to the RCSW fell short of the commission’s proposed reforms. First, rather than following the report’s proposal to establish a refundable child care credit, the government introduced the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED). The CCED allowed parents to deduct parts of their child care expenses from their taxable income, as long as they produced receipts. This policy, in effect, meant that while lower-income Canadians could benefit from public subsidies in day-care centres, middle and upper-class Canadians were expected to buy services, whether licensed or unlicensed, in the market. Second, the National Housing Act was amended in 1973 in order to allow the construction of day care centres in federally financed housing developments. Third, a Day Care Information Centre was established in order to counsel community groups who wanted to set up child care operations. Finally, the most consequential decision of the government was to amend CAP to include in the definition of shareable costs under the welfare services provision the cost of prescribed equipments, materials and other operational costs of not-for-profit centres. Overall, the limited reforms enacted by the Liberal government did have an important impact. Between 1973 and 1974, the number of day care spaces in Canada increased by 100 per cent.585

The reforms adopted by the Trudeau government reflected, it must be stressed, the dominant views of mainstream child care activists at the time. Indeed, in 1972, under the leadership of the CWC’s successor, the Canadian Council on Social Development

584 Memorandum to the Cabinet. New impetus for day care services under the Canada Assistance Plan (March 22, 1972), 3–4. NAC RG 29, vol. 3564, part 2.
585 Briefing Notes on Day Care (October 6, 1975). NAC RG 29 vol. 3564, part 5.
(CCSD), a first national conference on child care was held in Ottawa, bringing together professionals, activists and public officials. Participants recommended that CAP be amended to cover total operating costs, and the amortization of capital costs. They also stressed that day care should be seen as a community service, which allows and encourages the participation of parents. However, they rejected the call of other activists to make day care the responsibility of the public educational system on the ground that it was preferable to establish day care boards with representatives from health, education, social welfare and the users of services. Representatives of the Women’s Liberation movement in Toronto and the Italian Community Development Council, which represented the view of younger feminist activists, presented a minority report that advocated a publicly financed system of free universal day care services, as well as the adoption of a National Day Care Act. Both older and younger activists, however, shared a belief that child care should be “available to all who need it or want to use it, whatever their circumstances,” an important break from the previous era where child care was viewed, especially by welfare professionals, as a service for the children of poor working mothers.

In the coming years though, the remaining differences of orientation between the more traditional early childhood movement and community and feminist activists subsided gradually as both groups joined forces to fight provincial attempts to encourage the expansion of for-profit services, especially in Ontario.

**Working Mothers and the Provinces**

During the 1970s, while provinces opposed the development of new shared-cost programs with the federal government, they did not remain inactive in the child care sector. The Ontario government, for example, appointed in 1972 an inter-ministerial committee to review and analyze the report of the RCSW as it related to provincial

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586 A delegate from Quebec, Dr. Claude Blanchette, had opposed the adoption of resolutions, on the ground that “taking a vote at the national level regarding suggestions or conclusions would be tantamount to giving support to a federal initiative in a field (education) that lies entirely within provincial jurisdiction.” Reported in Canadian Council for Social Development, *Proceedings of the Canadian Conference on Day Care* (Ottawa: Canadian Council for Social Development, 1972), 35.

587 Ibid, 37.

588 Ibid, 40.

589 Ibid, 44. The main difference, as noted by Mahon, was that the older generation believed that important progress could be made through CAP. Mahon, “The Never-Ending Story,” 609.
jurisdiction. A key proposal of the committee was for a greater provincial role in child care. Accordingly, “the province would assume more responsibility for the planning and development of innovative day care programs, suited to various and contemporary needs, and it would ensure a wider delivery of services throughout Ontario.” In Ontario, the most industrialized Canadian province, labour market concerns were especially acute. The province had created the Ontario Women’s Bureau in 1960 (OWB), which became a central actor in the development of policies to promote gender equality in the workforce. In the early 1970s, the Bureau published a report that documented an acute need for more child care services. There were also pressures coming from civil society organizations to expand child care, at a time when the province was rethinking its approach to social services. In its presentation to the Task Force on Community and Social Services, the Ontario Welfare Council called for the development of a universal day care program with geared-to-income fees.

Debates also focused on who should be in charge of organizing and delivering ECEC services. The Ontario Committee on Government Productivity recommended that “responsibility for day-care centres and nursery programs should be transferred to the Ministry of Education,” and that schools play a greater role in the delivery of ECEC services. Opposition to the proposal came mainly from the educational sector, which worried about the possibility of early childhood educators taking the position of certified teacher. As such, the proposal was never implemented. The provision of public child care services was also rejected. Already in 1970, the Ontario Committee on government productivity had proposed “significant delegation of a substantial degree of responsibility

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595 Carson, “The Sooner the Better,” W01.
for program delivery to agencies outside the government.” Similarly, the report of the Task Force on Community and Social Services released in 1973 reiterated that public authorities should only be involved in the delivery of services as a last resort, and that their main role should be the planning and monitoring of services.

While the government was stressing the potential contribution of private organizations in the delivery of social services, the Bureau of Municipal Research, an organization close to the business community, complained that the rigid regulations of the Day Nurseries Act were compromising the capacity of child care entrepreneurs to offer needed services to working parents. Many of the for-profit providers complained of the regulatory obstacles to the erection of new day care centres. In order to promote changes to the Day Nurseries Act, they created the Association of Day Care Operators (ADCO). As a result of limited public investment in child care and the slow development of private alternatives, only a small fraction of parents had access to licensed child care services. The Ontario Labour Ministry’s Women’s Bureau estimated in 1974 that while the parents of up to 300,000 children wanted to have access to day care services, there were only around 40,000 children in private and public day-care centres.

Pressured both by parents and by private operators to expand access to services, the Conservative government proposed in 1974 a significant reform of the province’s child care system. The Secretary for Social Development, Margaret Birch, announced the doubling of the province’s spending on day care, from $14 million to $29 million. The most important aspect of the announcement was a reform of the province’s Day Nurseries Act. First, the government proposed to relax restrictions on child-to-staff ratios in day-care centres, as they were “unnecessarily small” and were adding “far more to the cost of these programs than they bring in tangible benefit.” Second, the government would allow, like in the UK, non-profit, parent-run centres to operate on their own without qualified staff. According to Margaret Birch:

597 Reported in Finkel, “Even the Little Children Cooperated,” 117.
In the social services, we have tended to assume that quality of service is inevitably dependent on professional qualifications. Applied to day care programs, this assumption has been carried to the extreme of acting as though parents were not competent to get together to provide care for their own children.600

Birch’s proposal seemed motivated by a desire to increase the supply of child care services while limiting costs, as she argued that 50 per cent more children would have access to child care services in some centres without increasing staff costs.601 Evidence also points to a significant lobbying effort by commercial operators to lessen standards, bringing a charge of undue influence both by opposition parties and by members of the ECEC community active in the non-profit sector.602 However, the changes proposed by Birch were significant, especially in light of recommendations made the previous year by a committee of the CCSD. For children between two and four years old, while the CCSD report recommended one staff member for nine children, the Birch reform would have allowed one staff member for fourteen children.603

Opposition to the reform was immediate, massive and well organized. Large demonstrations were staged, child care activists disrupted the Parliament’s Question Period as well as Ms. Birch’s public appearances, and numerous letters to the editors were sent.604 Opponents denounced especially the proposed use of volunteers in day care centres and the change to child-to-staff ratios, which they saw as a transition to a “custodial” approach to child care. The president of the AECEO, Charlotte Wooley, argued that the proposed reform would turn “day care into a business and remove any

600 Idem.
604 Including a scathing denunciation of the reform by Dorothy Millichamp, who was behind the adoption of the Day Nurseries Act. In a letter to the Globe and Mail, she stated: “This is unbelievable! Why should the quality of our day care be diminished when the need is greatest and many, many of our children are involved!” “Letters to the Editor”, The Globe and Mail (June 18, 1974): 6.
An ad hoc group, the Committee in Opposition to Revisions in the Day Nurseries Act (CORDNA), was formed to fight against the Birch report. In a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, they presented as such their opposition to the reform: “We oppose the hiring of untrained persons to give primary care to children (...), the elimination of kitchens from the nurseries will result in lowered nutritional standards and... the proposed new ratios of staff to children have damaging implications for the quality of care.”

Margaret Birch argued that objections to her reform were coming from “those who are involved in early childhood education” and who “have decided that day care must be based on educational opportunities by professional people.” According to the Secretary, while such an approach is acceptable, “it isn’t practical and if we’re to provide day care centres for the many hundreds of working mothers who need it at this time, then we have to be flexible.” She controversially argued that high staff-to-child ratios were “social services folklore” and that day care “is not a question of education.” The minister was not alone in denouncing child care activists’ opposition to more flexibility in the staffing of child care centres. The president of the Big Brothers of Metro Toronto, for example, who favoured a growing involvement of volunteers in child care centres, denounced the “creeping professionalism” of the child care community, arguing that to “some professionals no day care is preferable to the lowering of standards.”

While the opposition of ECEC professionals to the Birch reform was to be expected, more surprising was the mobilization of a number of community activists in Toronto who had been at odds with the more institutionalised early childhood education groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These younger activists had created parent-run day-care centres on university campuses (at the University of Toronto and at York University) that operated in violation of the Day Nurseries Act as many of the caregivers did not possess the necessary qualifications outlined by the Act, creating tensions with the

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608 Idem.
provincial and municipal day care bureaucracies.\textsuperscript{610} To explain why these community and feminist activists came to defend the maintenance of the Day Nurseries Act, an activist interviewed pointed to the fact that some of these activists had come to Canada from the United States where they had witnessed the rapid and, in their view, negative expansion of the commercial sector in the 1960s.\textsuperscript{611} As such, they believed that a strong regulatory framework was essential to prevent a similar expansion of for-profit services in Canada. Moreover, community activists had come to embrace the importance of professional qualifications. As previously mentioned, members of the Women’s Liberation movement in Toronto who were active in the creation of co-operative day care centres had also proposed in their minority report at the first national day care conference that day care be the responsibility of provincial departments of education, which had strict requirements related to the professional qualifications of educators.

In reaction to the protest of child care professionals and community activists, the government named an Advisory Council on Day Care. While the Council did not have any representatives from existing day care centres, it was headed by the president of the Toronto Social Planning Council and was composed of numerous specialists in early childhood education.\textsuperscript{612} The Council, which received submissions from organizations and held meetings with government officials and representatives of the ECEC sector, released two reports that were critical of the Birch proposal. In the first, the Council stated that the proposal would save the province and parents little,\textsuperscript{613} while in the second it recommended that existing staff-to-child ratios be maintained.\textsuperscript{614} In the wake of these reports, and bowing to popular pressures, the Conservative government withdrew its plan.

\textsuperscript{610} On the creation of a co-operative day care centre at the University of Toronto, see Wendy Atkin, “‘Babies of the World Unite’: The Early Day-Care Movement and Family Formation in the 1970s,” in \textit{Family Matters: Papers in Post-Confederation Canadian Family History}, eds. Lori Chambers and Edgar-André Montigny (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 1998), 57-70.

\textsuperscript{611} Interview B12. Two of the most important child care activists in the 1970s and 1980s, Martha Friendly and Laurel Rothman, were both Americans. Friendly had experience in the ECEC sector as she had participated to one of the first evaluations of the Head Start Program in Princeton (New Jersey), while Laurel Rothman was a social worker from Pittsburgh. For an interesting portrait of some of the first child care activists, see Laurel Monsebraaten, “The ‘Tiny Tot’ Brigade,” \textit{Toronto Star} (April 24, 2005): A06.


According to a child care activist, the mobilization around the proposed Birch report was perhaps one of the most important moments in the history of Canada’s child care movement, since it brought together groups that in other countries were often at odds: feminists, socialists, and early childhood professionals who tended to have conservative views about the employment of mothers.\footnote{Interview B01.} While these groups disagreed over certain preferred policy solutions, they shared a belief that child care should be a high quality service with an important educational component.

Ontario was not the only province in which civil society pressures contributed to the promotion of a not-for-profit system. The Day Care Regulations introduced in 1975 in Saskatchewan specified that centres offering child care service had to be non-profit organizations controlled by a parent board to be eligible for licensing. As a result, most private centres converted to parent-board sponsorship to qualify for grants.\footnote{Jean Nykyforuk, “An Historical Overview of Child Care in Saskatchewan,” in \textit{Canadian Child Care in Context: Perspectives from the Provinces and Territories}, ed. Alan R. Pence (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1992), 217.} In Manitoba, in the early 1980s, the NDP government also introduced programs to increase financial support to non-profit day care centres, such as the Manitoba Community Places Program.\footnote{Julie Frisesen et al., “An Historical Overview of Child Care in Manitoba,” in \textit{Canadian Child Care in Context: Perspectives from the Provinces and Territories}, ed. Alan R. Pence (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1992), 293.} Not all provinces followed the example of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In Alberta, a Conservative government committed “to make certain that a free market system determine the cost of day care,” meaning that higher municipal standards in place in Edmonton and Calgary would no longer be the norm, imposed drastic changes that opened up the door to a greater presence of the commercial sector.\footnote{On the reforms introduced in Alberta in the late 1970s, see Tom Langford, “From Social Movement to Marginalized Interest Groups: Advocating for Quality Child Care in Alberta,” in \textit{Changing Child Care: Five Decades of Child Care Advocacy and Policy in Canada}, ed. Susan Prentice (Halifax: Fernwood, 2001), 63-79.} First, it adopted portable daycare subsidies tenable at any licensed centre, including for-profit centres. Second, it reduced considerably child care standards. The staffing requirement became just one worker for every twenty children. However, controversies over the low quality of care forced the province to abandon this policy and restored staff-to-child ratios that were among the best in Canada.
Thus, in most provinces, standards did exist, restraining the unregulated expansion of for-profit child care services or parental playgroups as was the case in Great Britain. Considering the limited supply of affordable centre-based child care services, pressures increased throughout the decade for provincial and federal authorities to finance the development of non-profit services. With the advent to power of social-democratic NDP governments in British Columbia (in 1972) and in Manitoba (elected in 1969 but re-elected with a majority in 1973), provincial activists were poised to make important gains.

Child Care, Interest Groups and Intergovernmental Relations in the 1970s

In the wake of the RCSW, provinces were experimenting with new child care programs, the result, according to a memo of the Department of National Health and Welfare, of “numerous sit-in’s, demonstrations, and other types of pressures brought to bear on provincial and local governments.”619 In fact, in 1973-4 alone, the number of associations dedicated to the day care issue in Canada almost doubled, from 49 to 82.620 Most of the organizations were active at the local level, as their main objective was often to mobilize parents in order to help create neighbourhood day care centres.

Newly elected NDP governments in British Columbia and Manitoba announced their intention of expanding access to child care services. Changes were especially rapid in British Columbia. Allowable gross income exemptions levels were increased to make more parents eligible for subsidies, and the maximum subsidy was also increased. As a result, between 1972 and 1975, the number of licensed day care facilities in the province increased from 125 to 1,063.621 On the ground, provinces were in effect making child care more than a program simply targeted at the children of poor single mothers. According to a 1973 Memo of the Department of National Health and Welfare, British Columbia had already developed a universal access approach, meaning that almost all families were entitled to some form of subsidies if their income qualified. Manitoba was on the verge of

implementing a similar system, and political statements in other provinces indicated a climate favourable to a similar move.\(^{622}\)

Howard Clifford, who was an adviser to the Department of National Health and Welfare on the day care file, remembers that these initiatives “scared the heck out of Ottawa,” which believed that provinces were trying to go through the back door to get universal day care through CAP, although it was not the intention of the program.\(^{623}\)

Worried about the financial implications of the universal approach, the federal government introduced important modifications in 1974. According to new policy guidelines, “a subsidy will cease to be available to a family of four with two children in care whose family income exceeds the average income of a family of four in the province.”\(^{624}\) A year after the introduction of the policy guidelines, the Department of National Health and Welfare estimated that there would be approximately 30 per cent more day care spaces in the country if provinces had been able to proceed according to their own design.\(^{625}\)

Rapidly though, the federal government started to worry about the political implications of the introduction of the new policy guidelines:

Community interest in day care is becoming heightened and there appears to be developing a much more militant spirit expressed by various groups and associations. It should be noted that up until recently the credibility of the Federal Government has been relative high. Two or three years ago when day care groups were being given conflicting reports by some of the provincial and federal governments as to who was responsible for the lack of day care spaces, the day care groups concluded from their investigations that the federal legislation would permit much more the development of day care than what the provinces were prepared to do. However, more recently a number of provinces are wanting [sic] to go beyond the Federal Day Care Policy Guidelines and the day care groups are being informed of this fact. The Federal Government is now beginning to hear more criticisms directed towards its policies from various groups interested in the development of day care services. It is very likely that this type of criticism will mount very quickly during the next few months.\(^{626}\)

\(^{623}\) Interview with Howard Clifford (November 1, 2000), “Child Care Advocacy Policy Processes: History and Practice from World War II to Present.”
As part of federal-provincial discussions on a new Social Services Act, the federal government announced its intention to significantly expand access to publicly financed social services. The new legislation presented a number of potentially new cost-sharing options, ranging from universal availability at no cost, universal availability with the selective application of user charges, to income-testing and needs testing. In her own archival research, Mahon found indications that child care was one of the services that were intended to become universal in scope. However, both increasing federal efforts to rein in social spending, as well as difficult relations with Ontario and Quebec, by then governed by the sovereignist Parti Québécois, led to the withdrawal of the proposed reforms and the maintenance of CAP.

A key problem activists faced during that period was, therefore, one of blame avoidance. As argued by Larry Katz, “the municipal politicians would blame the provincial politicians. And the provincial politicians would blame the federal politicians. (...) [T]here was all this political, you know, shifting of responsibility and political wrangling.” The situation was facilitated by the lack of a strong ECEC lobby. As argued by Sue Colley, who was emerging as a leader of the burgeoning child care movement, “[the day care community] was capable of organizing some parents and disgruntled teachers to defend the quality of the services, but it was unable to mobilize enough support (...) to fight offensively for expansion.” Often lacking financial resources, it was not uncommon for ECEC groups to exist only for a number of years. In British Columbia, for example, the Child Care Federation formed in 1973 was dissolved in 1976. In Ontario, the Day Care Reform Action Alliance that had been created in the aftermath of the Birch report had ceased to exist by the end of the 1970s. Nevertheless, child care activists were planting the seeds of an alternative approach to child care. In Ontario, activists proposed once again that responsibility for child care services be transferred to provincial departments of education. They believed that this would put the commercial day care centres in the same position as private schools, and as such they

627 Haddow, Poverty Reform in Canada, 154.
628 As reported in a letter from the coordinator of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women to a representative of NACSW. Mahon, “The Never-Ending Story,” 613-4.
would no longer be able to receive public funds. Especially key was the role of Julie Mathien, who had been a key figure in the fight against the Birch reform, and had been charged by the Toronto school board to promote and manage the expansion of not-for-profit child care centres in schools.

In 1979, to remedy to the lack of mobilizing capacity of the child care sector, Toronto activists created Action Day Care. These activists believed that the only way to improve access to day care services was to organize politically around a demand for free, universal, quality day care. Conscious of the need to develop alliances with more powerful groups, Action Day Care worked to gain the support of the trade union movement, the women’s movement and the NDP. It is in the labour movement, though, that it found its closest ally. Quickly, Action Day Care established connections with labour activists who had created in Ontario an organization called Organizing Working Women, the main objective of which was to press for more women-friendly policies within the union movement. Their efforts would pay off, as the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) adopted a platform on day care proposing an “active campaign” in order to achieve a “system of universal, comprehensive childcare.” As shown in the next section, this alliance had a key impact on the orientation of the child care movement in the subsequent years and contributed to gradual, but ultimately major policy changes in the province of Ontario.

**Summary: Causes and Consequences**

Contrary to the case of Great Britain, the question of how to respond to the growing demand for child care services emerged in the early 1970s. However, two important obstacles impeded the expansion of centre-based child care services for working mothers. First, following a number of cost-sharing programs developed in the 1960s, Canadian provinces had lost their appetite for new national programs. There was little

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632 Ibid, 314.
room for changes to be imposed from above. Attempts were made, however, to expand services at the provincial level, with two provinces, Ontario and British Columbia, playing a key leadership role from two different perspectives. In Ontario, the Minister of Social Development Margaret Birch, preoccupied with the labour market participation of women, focused on promoting a rapid expansion of a variety of low-cost services (private and non-profit, delivered by professionals or volunteers). However, she faced considerable opposition from social work professionals, early childhood educators and an emerging sector representing community-based day care centres, which stressed the importance of quality child care and fought for the maintenance of the Day Nurseries Act. It was not only activists that promoted this view; public officials working in many welfare ministries also accepted it. A memorandum on the problems associated with the development of a universal ECEC system in Canada, for example, stated that “there are neither sufficient facilities nor trained staff to provide day care to all children who require it,” and that “anything less than quality day care is damaging to children.”

As for provincial attempts to increase access to publicly financed services, such as in British Columbia, they were constrained by the terms of CAP dictated by a federal government increasingly preoccupied by its fiscal situation. Nevertheless, the offer of services still increased rapidly throughout the decade. In most provinces, this expansion occurred in the non-profit sector following modifications to CAP. The proportion of for-profit services decreased from 47 per cent in 1973 to 40 per cent in 1980. Perhaps more importantly, as a result of attempts to lower child care standards in order to expand low-cost services, the decade saw the emergence of an embryonic child care coalition that included early childhood educators, feminists and community activists, and towards the end of the decade, trade unionists. As child care moved front and centre on the country’s policy agenda in the 1980s, this unique coalition, as shown next, had a considerable impact on the trajectory of ECEC services in Canada.

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“Kids Are Not For Profit”: the Debate over a National Child Care System, 1980-1995

Towards the end of the 1970s, child care activists became convinced that the expansion of child care services would only be possible if the federal government was to play a more active role. According to Larry Katz, a child care advocate working for the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), activists were also driven by their perception of how previous key social programs had been adopted in Canada:

We knew that ultimately for child care to become a universal service, accessible to people who needed it and wanted to use it, the funding mechanism would have to change. We looked at health care, we looked at Medicare and we looked at the history of universities and drew some analogies to that (...). So we knew (...) we had to deal with the federal government (...).

They also knew that in order to “deal” with the federal government, they needed to develop a national organization that could act as an interlocutor to federal officials. The past fights at the provincial level, and the alliances forged with labour unions, had a profound impact on the orientations of this national organization and influenced the terms of the national debate. Advocates also benefited from a change in political priorities. With the growing labour force participation of women, political parties increasingly tried to develop policies friendly to the growing number of working mothers. As a result, child care was becoming a more visible policy issue. In the words of a Globe and Mail journalist, “day care, long considered so marginal that it had been lumped in with welfare schemes, is becoming one of the important social issues of a decade dominated by baby boomers spawning a new generation,” moving from “obscure conferences and position papers to one of the top positions on the agenda of public debate.”

The Creation of a National Child Care Movement

In 1979, the Toronto Social Planning Council, in co-operation with the Canadian Council on Children and Youth and the CCSD, released a blueprint for day care (the

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637 Interview with Lynne Westlake (November 18, 2000), “Child Care Advocacy Policy Processes: History and Practice from World War II to Present.”
completion of the project was made possible by a grant from a foundation associated with Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children. The blueprint proposed the establishment of national standards related to competency-based staff qualifications, group size, and child-to-staff ratios. In 1980, the Canadian Commission for the International Year of the Child published a similar report that recommended the adoption of a national child care act in order to increase the quality of services in child care centres. Under this act, it was suggested, funds would be made available on a cost-sharing basis for the building and running of non-profit day-care centres meeting acceptable standards that would be nationally set. While child care activists were proposing a greater role for the federal government, they had a limited presence at the federal level. In fact, the day care movement in English-Canada was a fairly small one. Most child care advocacy associations, as shown in the previous section, were largely community-based or associated with the labour movement. Convinced that the lack of a national organization and the absence of a national dialogue were an impediment to further progress, Howard Clifford, who was a consultant to the Department of National Health and Welfare, convinced the CCSD to co-finance the organization in 1982 of a second national child care conference in Winnipeg.

Even before the start of the conference, important divisions were emerging within the child care community. In a letter to Monique Bégin, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Alberta’s Minister of Social Services and Community Health, Bob Bogle reminded the Minister of her commitment that the conference focus on “areas that unite the day care community”, and informed her that he instructed his officials to “leave the Conference if in fact it degenerates into name calling or a private sector bashing, as has been suggested by some concerned operators and parents.”

The worries of the Alberta government were not unfounded, considering that child care activists from the non-profit sector were significantly better organized than their

counterparts from the commercial sector. Ontario child care activists were especially well organized. A child care activist from Western Canada remembers that Ontario activists favouring the non-profit sector were much more sophisticated than representatives from other provinces. While the latter were often child care providers, Ontario activists had significant experience in the labour and the women’s movements. They knew how to organize members, drive an agenda and get resolutions adopted. Prior to the conference, individuals associated with Toronto’s Action Day Care created the Universal Access Caucus, whose objective was to press for a universal, national and free child care system at the Winnipeg Conference. One of these Ontario activists recalls the effort that went into ensuring that the conference would lead to a series of resolutions supporting the caucus’ positions:

[We had organized] extensively. (…) We also came out of left groups. So we had a history, a knowledge of how you organize in political parties, in political organizations for a position. We knew how to do that. So what happened is we first tried to get on the steering committee, but of course we failed (…). So we actually went [to the conference] with an alternative agenda. And the very first thing we did (…) was to move a resolution that the agenda be changed to reflect the agenda of the Universal Access Caucus. People voted for it! It was such an exciting event. (…) We basically took over the conference. (…) We met before, we met after the proceedings, before the evening, we met every day and we planned strategy. And more and more people joined this caucus because they got drawn to the dynamic of it. Whereas most people had come to this conference to figure out how you make play dough, and have these little workshops about programming, by the end of it everybody realized that this was just a huge political conference.

Not as well organized as the Universal Access Caucus, members of the for-profit sector argued that they were being “slammed” and “denied access to the floor.” During the conference, an anonymous handout distributed to the participants outlined the belief of many representatives of the for-profit sector that activists from the non-profit sector had managed to control the conference’s agenda:

Let us put aside procedural manipulations, biased plenary chairmen, oratorical gymnastics and divisive rhetoric and concentrate on the foremost issue of this conference: quality in programs for children, regardless of the type of operator or model of delivery.

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644 Interview B10. Another activist interviewed also stressed that Ontario activists worked hard during the 1982 conference to make sure that the position of a future national movement would be the same as the position of Ontario activists. Interview B12.

645 Interview B03.

646 “Day Care for Profit is Criticized,” *The Globe and Mail* (September 25, 1982): 16. The subheading to this *Globe and Mail* article was “Delegates Ignore Main Topic”.
At the end of the conference, some of these organizations introduced minority reports that denounced what they referred to as “cult” members, “with highly political and trade union ideologies who were well organized and had agendas and goals totally divorced from the improvement of the day care system.”

Tensions also arose between Quebec delegates and the majority from the rest of Canada. The majority defeated the resolution of the Quebec delegation urging that provincial governments, which had jurisdiction over day care, should retain it. Activists from the rest of Canada argued that regional disparities in day-care standards were hurting quality. At the time, according to an activist from Ontario, there had been very few contacts between activists from Quebec and those from the rest of Canada. According to another activist, in hindsight, they were not very sensitive to Quebec’s specificity:

You know, Françoise David was there. I remember her getting up and talking about how Quebec was different, and how you could not include Quebec in Canada. And I remember thinking: What is she talking about? I did not know anything about this at the time.

According to the same activist, they were also not very conscious of the political realities associated with the federal nature of Canada:

We had all these debates about policy and we knew nothing about it. We did not even know that the federal government didn’t have responsibility for this. (...) People did not understand (...). So we went to this conference and we had this whole platform and it was really oriented at the federal government (...). I would say we were quite naïve.

One of the conference’s main resolutions called for the enactment of a National Child Care Act that would include the “establishment of standards and regulations, provisions and funding, mechanisms for compliance and penalties for non-compliance. The regulations shall include standards for administration, health, safety, nutrition,

649 Interview B05.
650 Interview B01. Françoise David is a well-known Quebec feminist who would later become the President of the Fédération des Femmes du Québec (the Federation of Quebec’s women).
651 Idem.
training, physical requirements, ratios, developmental programming and parent representation on governing boards.” 652 Another resolution stated that “the Federal government immediately grant a federal child supplement of five dollars a day for every child enrolled in an approved and/or licensed non-profit child care program.”653 All the resolutions calling for public financing stressed that such funding should only be accessible to the non-profit sector.

Another important resolution adopted at the conference was that, for too long, “government underfunding and intransigence had gone uncontested by a strong, Canada-wide organization solidly rooted in the day-care community.”654 Local day care advocates, it was argued, had remained far too long isolated from their counterparts across the country. The conference delegates elected a 37-member steering committee to begin the process of establishing a national organization. In March 1983, the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association (CDCAA), which would later be renamed the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC), was created, with an 8-member executive representing Canada’s different regions. The main objective pursued by the CDCAA was “a Canada-wide system of child care services, regulated by the provinces/territories and operated on a non-profit basis (...) to meet the needs of those families wishing to use the services,” as well as the adoption of a Child Care Financing Act, that would lead to federal-provincial/territorial cost-sharing of 85 per cent of the actual cost of services, with parents assuming no more than 15 per cent of the total cost.655

The creation of the CDCAA occurred at the same time as more organized provincial advocacy coalitions were emerging. Indeed, the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care (OCBDC), later renamed the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC), was created in 1981 in the aftermath of provincial hearings organized by Action Day Care and the OFL. The original membership was composed of organizations associated with the labour movement (such as the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Ontario

653 Ibid, 7.
654 Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, The CDCAA Story (February 1984). Women’s Movement Archives (University of Ottawa), Box 19, File 1.
655 Canadian Day Care Advocacy Coalition, Values for Dollars: Avoiding False Solutions to Child Care Funding (Policy Paper released in 1986). Women’s Movement Archives (University of Ottawa), Box 19, File 1.
Federation of Labour, Ontario Public Service Employees Union), professional associations (numerous teachers’ federations) and women’s groups (Ontario Committee on the Status of Women, International Women’s Day Committee, Congress of Canadian Women). Other provincial organizations emerged around that time, including the B.C. Day Care Action Coalition in 1981 and the Saskatchewan Child Care Association in 1988.

Despite the support of women’s groups, the labour movement was very much, at least from an organizational standpoint, the driving force behind these child care coalitions. In part, this was a reflection of the fact that the English-Canadian feminist movement, whose main organization was the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NACSW), had focused its mobilizing effort at the federal level in the wake of the RCSW. However, as argued by Annis May Timpson, most of the debates around child care during the crucial 1970s had occurred at the provincial level, where provincial labour federations were especially well organized. The former head of a provincial child care organization also mentioned that NACSW was seen as an elitist organization, whose main objective was consciousness raising rather than activism. As such, it is much more on the resources of the labour movement than the feminist movement that child care activists would rely. During a visit to Canada, Marion Kozak, of Britain’s National Childcare Campaign, found especially surprising the key role played by the labour movement:

To a casual visitor like myself the commitment of trade-unionists is particularly remarkable (…). Nothing was more surprising to me than to find that the Ontario Federation of Labour (the provincial equivalent of the TUC) and unions like CUPE (equivalent of our NUPE) and the CPSA (our Civil Servants) designate officers responsible for childcare campaigning. The unions are involved in lobbying for free and universal day care, and also for better pay and working conditions for day care workers.

The difference between Britain and Canada was a reflection of the greater presence of women in Canadian labour unions. At a time when few women were represented in the British labour movement, a woman, Grace Hartman, was the national president of one of Canada’s most powerful unions, the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Hartman had

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656 Interview B12.
been a member of the RCSW when it proposed a national child care act.\footnote{Interview B01, and Interview with Larry Katz (November 20, 2000), “Child Care Advocacy Policy Processes: History and Practice from World War II to Present.”} One of the driving forces of the child care movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Pat Schulz, was also a committed trade unionist. Contrary to Britain, where many TUC-affiliated unions negotiated child care benefits for their employees, Canadian unions took the position that child care should be a public service financed by the state rather than by employers.\footnote{Interview B06.} Moreover, organisations such as the OCBDC argued that it was better for unions and employers to press for the development of public policy than to take individual initiatives.\footnote{Linda Ann White, \textit{Welfare State Development and Child Care Policies: A Comparative Analysis of France, Canada, and the United States}. PhD Dissertation (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998), 260.} Another important difference between the British and Canadian cases is the absence of a voice representing working parents. A former member of the CDCAA argues that the classic trajectory of a Canadian child care activist is to join the movement first as a parent and then to quickly turn that involvement into employment.\footnote{Interview B10. Also mentioned by a union activist, Interview B06.} The absence of a strong parental movement in Canada might be explained by the fact that, contrary to Britain, parents in Canada were and are still entitled to some form of tax relief, although minimal, for their child care expenses. Indeed, recent studies found that while the proportion of a Canadian family income going to child care services is higher than for British families, this is not the case for higher income families.\footnote{According to the OECD Family Database, in 2004, the net childcare costs for a dual-earner family earning 167 per cent of the average wage corresponded to 22 per cent of a family net income in Canada and 33 per cent in the United Kingdom. Data available at: \url{http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3343.en_2649_34819_37836996_1_1_1_1.00.html} [last accesses July 26, 2009]} As such, it is not surprising that working professionals, whose main objective is to expand the overall supply of services rather than specific forms of care, have played a greater role in the British than in the Canadian child care movement.

The CDCAA’s opposition to public-financing of for-profit child care was both a reflection of child care activists’ past fights (especially the proposed Birch reforms) and the strong presence of the labour movement. Labour unions active in the child care sector were especially worried about the impact of a greater presence of the for-profit sector on the working conditions of child care workers. A study conducted by the Task Force on
Child Care (see below) found that staff in commercial centres earned 30 per cent less than staff in non-profit centres and 50 per cent less than staff in public, municipal centres.\footnote{Memorandum on Child Care, Department of National Health and Welfare Canada (July 22, 1985). NAC, RG 29, Accession 1995-96, Box 1, File 4767-1-1, vol. 1.} They were also influenced by developments in the United States where a powerful commercial sector was able to defeat the FIDCR proposal (Federal Interagency Day Care Requirements), which would have created national standards. Moreover, studies from the United States, such as the National Council of Jewish Women’s “Windows on Day Care” rated the quality of care in the commercial sector as poor.\footnote{Interview B01.}

The CDCAA was not the only national voice in the ECEC sector. Another national organization was created in 1986, the Canadian Child Daycare Federation (CCDF), now known as the Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCF). For some activists and analysts, the CCCF was formed to act as a counterweight to the CDCAA. Its creation and financing by the federal Ministry of National Health and Welfare was viewed as a reflection of Canada’s neo-liberal turn in the 1980s. While the CCCF was without a doubt an organization of providers, accepting membership both from the non-profit and for-profit sector, it never played a prominent political role, focusing instead on supporting child care workers and the quality of service provision. In fact, the responsibility for promoting the public financing of for-profit services fell on the Canadian Childcare Management Association (CCMA), created by the long-time director of the Ontario-based Association of Day Care Operators, Herb Goldsmith.\footnote{Burt, “Organized Women’s Movement and the State,” 206.} However, this organization was only created in 1988 and, without an office in Ottawa, essentially relied on its members to develop contacts with bureaucrats and politicians. As a result, it played only a marginal role in the ensuing debate about the creation of a national child care system.

\textit{Towards a National Child Care System?}

One of the first demands of the CDCAA, presented at the Commission of Inquiry on the Equality of Employment (the Abella Commission), was that the federal government
appoints a task force on child care. Bowing to the growing pressure from activists and to the Abella Commission’s recommendation on the need for new child care arrangements, the Liberal government appointed a former president of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Katie Cooke, to head a Task Force on Child Care. However, just as the Task Force was starting its work, a new Conservative government was elected. It seemed at first especially antagonistic towards the objectives of many child care activists. First, many caucus members were close to conservative feminist organizations such as REAL Women of Canada (Realistic, Equal, Active, for Life). Second, key actors such as the National Health and Social Welfare Minister Jake Epp rejected many of the philosophical orientations of the child care lobby. In a controversial interview with the Globe and Mail, he made clear his belief that parents, not day-care workers, were best to raise children: “I do not accept philosophically the argument that kids are best stimulated in day care, the sooner the better.” He also stated that he did not consider child care a “women’s issue”, while stressing that it was an area of provincial jurisdiction, so that he needed provincial approval before any new program could be implemented.

So it is not surprising that the Conservative government rejected the report of the Task Force on Child Care when it was released in 1986. The report proposed a new national program with the federal government playing a key leadership role. Among the main recommendations, it proposed “that the federal government initiates the development of a nation-wide system of child care in Canada, by declaring its willingness to share a substantial portion of the cost of such a system, and initiating a new federal-provincial cost-sharing arrangement for child care.” It proposed that provincial and federal authorities cover half the cost of providing child care, with a long-term objective of covering the full cost of child care programs. Reflecting the preference of child care activists, it stressed that all future child care funding should be limited to licensed centres.

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operated by a branch of a provincial or municipal government or by a non-profit agency. Finally, it insisted that a new financing act not take the form of tax relief, since tax measures “cannot provide the basis for development of a child care system.”  The government quickly indicated that it had no intention of following these recommendations, pointing especially to what it considered the staggering price tag of the proposed reforms, which the Task Force had estimated in the long term (in 2001) to cost a total of $11.3 billion to deliver, of which the federal share would be $6.2 billion. According to Jake Epp, both for financial and philosophical reasons, the Conservative Cabinet “could not deliver on Katie Cooke.”

But at the same time, the government was conscious of the growing pressure for more child care services. Indeed, during the 1984 electoral campaign, Brian Mulroney, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, had promised to introduce a national child care plan that would provide Canadian families “affordable, accessible, quality child care.” In order to fulfill this promise, the Conservative government initiated a Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Child Care as well as charging a Special House of Commons Committee on Child Care to “report on the future of child care in Canada in the context of the changing needs of the Canadian family in today’s society.”

Key in the intergovernmental deliberations that unfolded between federal and provincial officials was the issue of extending the federal contribution to the operating costs of for-profit day care centres. The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Child Care recommended, indeed, that “the types of child care to be provided and financed within each province should be determined by the province. Thus federal contributions should not be restricted to a particular sort of service, such as non-profit day care.” This responded to provinces’ concerns that under CAP government funding was

671 Ibid, 331.
674 Orders of Reference to the Special Committee on Child Care. Reproduced in Special Committee on Child Care, Sharing the Responsibility: Report of the Special Committee on Child Care (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1987), 93.
675 Manitoba was the only province objecting to this principle. Briefing note on the Report of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Child Care. NAC, RG 29 Accession 1995-96/367 Box 2, File 4767-F1-1985.
limited to non-profit agencies and was tied to parents’ subsidies. It excluded subsidies to commercial providers as well as direct operating costs not linked to subsidies, which some provinces such as Quebec and Alberta had adopted. The result was that most provinces received less than 50 per cent of their total child care expenditures. In 1983-84, for example, the share of the federal contribution to the cost of child care was 14 per cent in Alberta, 31 per cent in Quebec, 37 per cent in British Columbia, 38 per cent in Newfoundland and 45 per cent in Ontario.\(^676\)

At an April 1985 meeting of Social Services Ministers, Alberta strongly argued in favour of extending public financing to commercial services; only the NDP government of Manitoba opposed this measure.\(^677\) Despite the argument of many child care activists that for-profit child care centres offered a lower quality of care, senior policy officials argued that there was “no compelling evidence to suggest that the quality of care in for-profit institutions is inherently inferior to that of public institutions.”\(^678\) While officials argued that the extension of cost-sharing to commercial providers would eliminate a serious impediment to harmonious relationships with the provinces, they also recognized that criticism was to be expected from “the province of Manitoba, the voluntary sector, women’s groups and the public”, while the proposal was rejected inside the state apparatus by Status of Women Canada.\(^679\)

The second element of the Conservative Strategy, the Special Committee on Child Care, involved public hearings throughout the country under the leadership of a Conservative MP, Shirley Martin. An activist interviewed argued that the Parliamentary Committee was an especially open process in which civil society organizations were encouraged to present their point of view.\(^680\) And indeed, an extraordinary number of organizations took advantage of the opportunity. Once again, activists were able to mobilize significant support. An analysis of the briefs presented to the Parliamentary committee found that 77 per cent of them opposed public support of for-profit child child


\(^{677}\) Memorandum on Canada Assistance Plan – Commercial Agencies. NAC RG 29 Accession 1995-96/367 Box 4, File 4768-8-14, Volume 5.

\(^{678}\) Idem.

\(^{679}\) Draft of a Memorandum to the Cabinet, Cost Sharing in Commercial Agencies under the Canadian Assistance Plan (July 8, 1985). RG 29 Accession 1995-96/367, Box 4, File 4768-8-14, Volume 5.

\(^{680}\) Interview B01.
care centres.\textsuperscript{681} In its brief to the Special Committee on Child Care, the CDCAA proposed that, in order to qualify for funding under a new national Child Care Financing Act, services be operated on a non-profit basis or by a government. They also recommended a transitional period of three years to allow “for profit programs (excluding commercial chains) so that they have an opportunity to modify their status to non-profit if they so wish.”\textsuperscript{682}

Nevertheless, despite this extraordinary mobilization of child care activists, the Conservative majority on the Committee was able to impose its more conservative and pro-business views.\textsuperscript{683} Stressing the importance of increasing parental options, the committee’s main recommendation was to replace the CCED by a Child Care Expense Credit of up to 30 per cent of child care expenses.\textsuperscript{684} It also recommended the introduction of an alternative Refundable Child Care Tax Credit for those families where a spouse remains at home.\textsuperscript{685} Finally, it proposed the adoption of a new Family and Child Care Act that would have allowed the federal government to assist provinces with operating and capital grants for \textit{all spaces}.\textsuperscript{686} The proposals contained in the report were denounced by child care activists, as was the fact that it made almost no mention of child care as contributing to women’s equality.\textsuperscript{687} While many elements of the report were never implemented, it constituted the basis of the Conservative government’s strategy.

\textit{The Battle against Bill C-144}

In the wake of the publication of the Parliamentary Committee’s report, activists were bracing themselves for a confrontation with the federal government. Their position

\textsuperscript{681} As for the remaining 22 per cent who proposed financing to for-profit child care operators, 50 per cent were operators of existing for-profit child care services. Data reported in Martha Friendly, Julie Mathien, and Tricia Willis, \textit{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)}, (Ottawa: Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, 1987), 13.

\textsuperscript{682} Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, “For Today’s Families: A Solution to the Crisis in Child Care Facing Canadian Families,” Brief Presented to the Special Committee on Child Care (June 1986), 21.

\textsuperscript{683} The two non-Conservative members of the Committee, Lucie Pépin (Liberal Party) and Margaret Mitchell (NDP) submitted minority reports that strongly denounced the Committee’s recommendations.


\textsuperscript{685} Idem. Recommendation 3.

\textsuperscript{686} Ibid., 87. Recommendation 10.

on the desirability of a non-profit system was boosted by a study, released as the federal government was negotiating with provinces, which concluded that non-profit centres provided “significantly higher quality of care” than those run as businesses.\textsuperscript{688} Moreover, a petition signed by 120,000 people objecting to the financing of for-profit child care was presented to the House of Commons by supporters of not-for-profit child care.\textsuperscript{689}

In December 1987, the federal government finally released its National Strategy on Child Care.\textsuperscript{690} It proposed a number of important changes: a significant increase in the Child Care Expense Deduction from $2,000 to $4,000, the creation of a research and special project fund, and the replacement of the day care provisions in CAP by a new Child Care Act. Its main objective was to fund the creation of 200,000 new quality child care spaces. The cost of these initiatives was estimated at $6.4 billion over a seven-year period, although it was later revised to $7.3 billion after negotiations with Ontario revealed that the cost of funding a further 200,000 places had been underestimated. The first two elements of the National Strategy were adopted. However, a new Child Care Act required the introduction of a Bill in the House of Commons.

The proposed Canada Child Care Act (Bill C-144) stipulated that federal funds could be used not only to cover 50 per cent of operating costs but also 75 per cent of capital costs. The main objective of this measure was to encourage the construction of new centres. Moreover, the Bill also proposed a top-up that would allow the poorer Atlantic provinces, which had a lower proportion of children with access to centre-based child care services, to catch up with the rest of the country.\textsuperscript{691} The Bill also, for the first time, allowed the federal government to share in the operational costs of for-profit child care centres. While arguing that increased funding under the Act would help create 200,000 new places, the government also included a ceiling on federal transfers ($4 billion over the next seven years), replacing an open-ended cost-sharing arrangement with what was essentially a block grant.

\textsuperscript{689} Graham Fraser, “Ottawa Urged to Aid Only Non-Profit Day Care;” \textit{The Globe and Mail} (June 18, 1987): A8.
\textsuperscript{690} On the National Strategy on Child Care, see Timpson, \textit{Driven Apart}, 148-50.
\textsuperscript{691} It would have covered up to 90 per cent of operational costs in these provinces.
Child care activists immediately organized to defeat the Bill. The Minister Jake Epp would later say that the lobbying of child care activists was especially rough.\textsuperscript{692} To a House Committee charged with revising the Bill, the OCBDC argued that “Bill C-144 did not advance the development of comprehensive, high quality child care services for Canadian families and, in many ways, entrenched the weaknesses of the current scattered, uncoordinated approach to child care in this country.” The Coalition especially denounced the provisions related to the funding of the commercial sector, arguing that they would “undermine the development of high quality services.”\textsuperscript{693} In its campaign against the Bill, the child care lobby benefited from the support of other organizations, many of which relied on the work of expert advocates, such as Martha Friendly of the University of Toronto’s Child Care Resource and Research Centre.\textsuperscript{694}

The federal government had to deal not only with the vocal child care coalition, but also with some provinces. Quebec and Ontario were especially opposed to the ceiling on federal transfers as they had just announced ambitious plans to increase their spending on child care. Activists played on that card, arguing that it would be to these provinces’ disadvantage to support the federal proposal.\textsuperscript{695} The federal government was conscious of the risk of losing the support of both provinces. A secret provincial impact analysis conducted in June 1988 found that “looking only at the numbers, one would anticipate that seven of the ten provinces would likely sign on to the new program, and British Columbia could go either way. However, the provinces will be trading off higher federal spending ratios for leaving an open-ended program, and the virtual equivalence of the federal sharing ratios for Ontario under CAP and the new program will make this trade-off far less appealing to Ontario. The net result could be a program that does not include Ontario and Quebec, which together account for over 70 per cent of new places.”\textsuperscript{696} Provinces also criticized the plan because it made no provisions for inflation, had no guarantee that costs would be shared after 1995 and introduced more financial controls than under CAP.

\textsuperscript{692} Quoted in Monsebraaten, “The ‘Tiny Tot’ Brigade,” A06.
\textsuperscript{693} Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, “Bill C-144: A Backward Step for Child Care,” Brief presented to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-144 (September 7, 1988). NAC RG 29 Accession 1995-96/367, Box 6, File 4771-10-6.
\textsuperscript{694} Interview B03.
\textsuperscript{695} For an example of a public intervention of activists, denouncing how the new plan would limit provincial plans, see Janet Davis and Laurel Rothman, “New Day-Care Plan Will Limit Federal Funds,” \textit{Toronto Star} (August 26, 1988): A19.
\textsuperscript{696} Provincial Impact Analysis (June 9, 1988). RG 29 Accession 1995-96/367, Box 4, File 4771-7-50/F2.
Several provinces warned Ottawa that is should not assume that they would opt into the new agreement.\textsuperscript{697}

In the summer of 1988, the debate moved from the federal-provincial arena to the Canadian Senate, where activists found that some Liberal Senators were receptive to their critiques of the Bill. Indeed, in July 1988, a Senate subcommittee on child care had urged the government to take the non-profit route because “commitment [to quality child care] is most likely to come from those who have an interest in children which is independent of their livelihood.”\textsuperscript{698} The Minister Jake Epp was forced to defend his child care strategy, especially the decision to provide subsidies to commercial providers. He argued “that it is important to remember that forty per cent of the current licensed child care spaces in Canada are in the commercial sector. This reality cannot be ignored. It would be impractical and insensitive to do so.”\textsuperscript{699} At the end of September, as speculation about an imminent federal election was increasing and as advocates urged Senators to let the Bill die, the Liberal majority in the Senate decided to call witnesses to testify.\textsuperscript{700} The slow progress of the Bill and the controversy surrounding it meant that it could not be given royal assent prior to the start of a new election campaign and the Bill was not enacted.

Although the Mulroney government had promised to re-introduce the Bill if re-elected, it never did so. Increasingly worried about expenditure control and the start of a recession, it announced in February 1992 that it had no intention of following up on its promise of enacting a national child care plan. The only measure of consequence introduced during the second mandate of the Conservative government was the Live-In Caregiver Program, which allowed Canadians to sponsor immigrants to take care of their children or elderly relatives at home. The new National Health and Welfare minister,

\textsuperscript{697} Letter from Claude Richmond (Minister of Social Services and Housing, British Columbia) to the Honourable Jake Epp (Minister of National Health and Welfare) (August 3, 1988). NAC RG Accession 1995-96/367, Box 5, File 4771-8-3. A similar letter was sent by the Minister of Social Services of Manitoba.

\textsuperscript{698} Quoted in Leslie Fruman, “Epp to Pump Extra $1 Billion Into Day-Care Program,” \textit{The Toronto Star} (July 13, 1988): A8.

\textsuperscript{699} “Notes for Remarks on Senate Debate Bill C-144, Canada Child Care Act” (n.d.). NAC RG29 Accession 1995-96/367, Box 6, File 4771-10-8.

\textsuperscript{700} Graham Fraser, “Fate of Child Care Bill May Depend on Witnesses at Senate Committee,” \textit{The Globe and Mail} (September 30, 1988): A5.
Benoit Bouchard, argued at the time that child care was now, for the Conservative government, considered a “last priority”.  

In the Background: Provincial Developments in the 1980s and early 1990s

While the federal government played a more active role in ECEC in the 1980s, in part a reflection of the growing prominence of the issue on Canada’s policy agenda, provinces by no means remained idle. In fact, because of their involvement with political parties with strong connections to the labour movement, such as the Parti Québécois in Quebec and the NDP governments in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario, activists were able to make important gains as these parties were elected in the 1980s. Nowhere was such progress more important than in Ontario.

The NDP gained significant influence in 1985 with the election of a minority Liberal government. The NDP and the Liberal Party signed an Accord that guaranteed NDP support for a two-year period. The Accord committed the government to “reform day care policy and funding to recognize child care as a basic public service and not a form of welfare … to be implemented within a framework of fiscal responsibility.”  

Moreover, the Liberal Government agreed to set up a special committee to examine the private sector’s involvement in nursing homes, hospitals and day-care centres. An “overwhelming majority” of groups who addressed the Committee stressed their opposition to any public financing of the commercial sector, including the Liberal Party Women’s Perspective Advisory Committee. But the committee believed that the province could not afford to replace existing commercial day care centres. While the report stated that non-profit centres were preferable, the large number of existing commercial centres meant that the province could not phase out the private centres or let

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their service deteriorate.\textsuperscript{706} The report was denounced not only by the NDP and the OCBDC, but also by a coalition of five powerful unions that included the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the United Steelworkers of America, the Canadian Auto Workers, the Service Employees International Union and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. The Ontario Federation of Labour sponsored a thirteen-city tour, named Kids Are Not For Profit, to promote non-profit child care.\textsuperscript{707} Faced with increasing pressure form advocates, the Minister of Community and Social Services, John Sweeney, announced his intention to offer incentives to commercial operators to convert to non-profit status, while also announcing that no public money would be used to finance the capital costs of commercial centres.\textsuperscript{708}

Nevertheless, the Ontario government was still faced with the challenge not only of making child care more affordable, but also of encouraging the expansion of (not-for-profit) centre-based spaces. It announced in April 1987 that all new schools built in Ontario would have to include space for day care centres.\textsuperscript{709} This followed successful experiments at the local level over the previous decade. The number of school-based child care centres increased from 25 centres in 1975 to 884 in 1989.\textsuperscript{710} Another important decision was to give direct operating grants to non-profit child care centres to help them increase the low salaries of their workers (the for-profit sector was entitled to half the grant provided to the non-profit sector). As a result, Ontario’s for-profit sector experienced a trickle of day-care workers to higher-paying, non-profit centres.\textsuperscript{711} According to an activist involved with the OCBCC, these measures contributed to the consolidation of the non-profit sector.\textsuperscript{712} Despite the important reforms enacted by the Liberal government, according to the same activist, the child care movement continued to support the NDP and was therefore elated after the party’s victory in 1990. A founding

\textsuperscript{706} The report was opposed by the NDP, but gained the support or the Liberal and Conservative members of the Committee. Regina Hickl-Szabo, “More Spaces Needed, Day-Care Report Says,” \textit{The Globe and Mail} (May 6, 1987): A5.
\textsuperscript{712} Interview B12.
member of the OCBCC, Frances Larkin, first became Minister of Government Services and then Minister of Health. Her chief of staff was Sue Colley, who had been the executive director of the OCBDC.

The NDP came to power in 1990 with a plan to boost non-profit child care services by $105 million. However, little of that money was to be spent on expanding places, as the main objective of the government was to remove the profit motive from the delivery of child care as a stepping stone to a universal system. Marion Boyd, Minister of Community and Social Services under the NDP, justified the government’s proposal:

A service as essential and important as the care of children should be publicly funded and universally accessible, just as hospitals and schools are. We feel that such a system will best be built on the non-profit, community-based model. It will actively involve parents and volunteer boards in the design, delivery and financial administration of child care.\(^{713}\)

The first component of the NDP’s effort to reduce the proportion of for-profit services was the allocation of $30-million to non-profit centres to help pay salaries, which increased the average salary to $21,000 a year from $19,000, a measure described as a down payment on the government’s pay equity program. The Association of Child Care Operators denounced the decision, arguing that it would lead its members to increase their fees, causing more parents to favour non-profit centres or simply withdraw their children.\(^{714}\) The second decision was to spend $75 million to encourage private operators to convert to non-profit status.\(^{715}\) Officials of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, according to a former civil servant, thought that the plan was “silly”: “It’s a fight you don’t need to have. It’s using money, which is scarce, and it’s so ideological, without thinking how we can solve this problem.”\(^{716}\) For activists though, this reform was essential to ensure that child care would be a public program.


\(^{715}\) The plan included $16 million to purchase toys and equipment from for-profit child-care services wishing to convert to non-profit services; $31 million in operating funds to for-profit services once they have converted to non-profit; $10 million in replacement of commercial services which decide to close instead of converting; and $10.8 millions to assist non-profit centres hurt by declining enrolments due to the recession. Anne Kershaw, “A Significant Point in Ontario’s Day-Care System,” *The Whig-Standard* (December 16, 1991): 1; Lynda Hurst, “Who Should Mind the Kids? NDP Squeeze on For-Profit Day Care Stirs Up a Storm,” *Toronto Star* (December 15, 1991): B1.

\(^{716}\) Interview B09.
While the NDP plan improved the working conditions of child care workers who, as it was often argued, were earning less than zoo keepers, it did little to reduce the cost of child care services for most working parents. As a result, while long waiting lists existed for subsidized spaces (25,000 in 1994), there were at the same time numerous vacant, non-subsidized spaces (7,000).\(^{717}\) The NDP government was pressured by activists not only to change the structure of the system, but also to significantly increase the allocation of public funds. In response, the government released a policy paper entitled *Setting the Stage*, which declared that child care was an essential public service. Child care activists from the non-profit sector had helped the government write the report.\(^{718}\)

However, the government recognized that it did not have the financial means to even start to move towards a universal system, and it was only in February 1994 that the NDP government announced its plan to expand services. Under a plan considered by the cabinet, the province would have funded all day-care centres directly and collected fees from parents (who would have paid according to their income at least for those with family earnings less than 70,000$). All families would have registered for a day-care space with a local agency, instead of at individual centres, and got the first “available, suitable” space once at the top of the list. For Martha Friendly, who was then the chair of the child care committee of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, the NDP proposal was nothing less than the beginning of a universally accessible child care system because it was changing the way people get into child care, instituting a first come, first served approach to child care.\(^{719}\)

Less than a month after the announcement, the Minister for Community and Social Services Tony Sillipo announced that the government, due to financial constraints, would not implement its proposed reform. Child care activists who had been among the most dedicated supporters of the NDP were furious.\(^{720}\) Activists were especially outraged because the federal Liberal government, elected in 1993, had announced that new child care funds would be available to Ontario through a Strategic Initiative Fund. There were

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718 Interview B12.
720 Kerry McCuaig, executive director of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, was quoted as saying: “The Tories killed national child care; the NDP have killed provincial child care.” Quoted in Thomas Walkom, “Even Modest Child-Care Reform Too Much for NDP,” *Toronto Star* (March 31, 1994): A23.
also indications that Lloyd Axworthy, the new Minister of National Health and Welfare, wanted the province to proceed with its proposal because it could serve as a model to other provinces and spur a movement towards a national system. Indeed, in its campaign platform (known as the Red Book), the Liberal Party had promised to create 150,000 new places.

According to a former member of the OCBCC executive, in hindsight, there was little the NDP could do. They were confronting a recession and the opposition of a bureaucracy that was unwilling to pilot such a large re-organization, especially since the NDP was likely to be defeated in the next election. A former bureaucrat presents a different picture, arguing that the proposal failed because of the unrealistic demands of advocates: “There was no such thing as satisfying them. There is no such thing as pure enough.” Whether activists or officials were to blame, the NDP government was unsure whether it could really count on the financial support of the federal government to implement its plan. Rapidly after the Liberal election, in the words of Lloyd Axworthy, “child care got caught up in the federal-provincial mix-master.” Moreover, prior to an announced referendum on Quebec independence, federal officials started to worry that a new national child care program could be seen as another example of the federal government’s intrusion in a provincial sphere of jurisdiction. Hence Axworthy’s dream of a national child care program was abandoned by December 1995, as only British Columbia had indicated a serious interest in joining. Indeed, the social services ministers of other provinces issued a report suggesting that the federal government get out of child care. In many ways, this is what the federal government would do as CAP was replaced by the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), a block transfer to provinces with no conditions attached. The period of federal involvement in the ECEC sector had come to a halt. Many activists predicted an unparallel expansion of the commercial sector, while others predicted a race to the bottom leading to a significant decline in provincial investment in child care.

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721 Interview B12.
722 Interview B09.
723 Monsebraaten, “The ‘Tiny Tot’ Brigade,” A06.
Summary: Cause and Consequence

As argued in Chapter 1, an ECEC production regime is produced and reproduced through the strategic action of policy coalitions. In Canada, throughout most of the 1980s, child care activists made significant political gains that allowed them to gradually impose the predominance of the non-profit sector in the delivery of services. Between 1979 and 1995, the proportion of all centre-based care spaces under the auspice of the for-profit sector declined from 49.1 per cent to 28.6 per cent.\(^{726}\) This transformation was especially dramatic in Ontario, where the proportion of services delivered by the for-profit sector declined from 49.6 per cent in 1980 to 19.8 per cent in 1995.\(^{727}\) In hindsight, a former member of the OCBDC marvelled at “how strong we were on that issue.”\(^{728}\) They did so through a process of policy layering, as they promoted new institutional arrangements, child care centres in the school setting, which contributed to a significant expansion of the not-for-profit sector.

They also mobilized strategically at both the provincial and the federal levels. In provinces like Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and Ontario, they developed strong connections with labour unions and social-democratic political parties that led to policies restricting the expansion of for-profit services or, as in Ontario, contributing to the gradual expansion of non-profit day care centres. Moreover, they were able to block policy reforms at the federal level that would have opened up the possibility for provinces to finance for-profit services. While the federal political system allowed them to block reforms that were perceived to be against their interest or preferred policy solutions, it also constituted a road block to the national, not-for-profit system many of them favoured. Divergent interests among provinces made the adoption of such a system almost impossible, as many provinces, especially Alberta, insisted that any new deal had to allow the financing of for-profit services. Nevertheless, changes in other policy areas, especially the national unity file and the financial austerity program of the federal government led to

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\(^{728}\) Interview B03.
the abolition of CAP. However, as shown next, this contributed to an important period of provincial experiments.


The abolition of CAP was an important step back for child care activists. While they had criticized the program in the past, it did favour the non-profit sector and entailed a role for the federal government in the child care sector, a potential stepping stone towards a real national system. Now that there were no strings attached to how federal transfers could be used by provinces, child care had to compete for scarce resources with other programs, especially the ever expanding Medicare program. However, the abolition of CAP opened up the possibility for provinces to experiment, as they were freed from the targeted, means-tested approach with which it was associated.\textsuperscript{729}

The CHST and the Age of Provincial Divergence

Quebec and Ontario offer an interesting portrait of diverging trajectories in the post-CAP period. When CAP was abolished, a Conservative government dedicated to a program of neo-liberal reforms was governing Ontario. It had stated its intention of enticing the private sector back into a child care sector that was increasingly dominated by non-profit agencies.\textsuperscript{730} Janet Ecker, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services, was given the task of reviewing the province’s child care system. By the time her report was released, she had become the Minister. The report recommended nothing short of a radical transformation of Ontario’s child care system. Ecker’s stated objective was to increase the number of low cost child care spaces and increase subsidies for the children of the working poor. Among the proposed changes, her report recommended moving from a needs-based system to an income-based system; reducing how often day-care centres must be licensed; giving fee subsidies to unlicensed day-care programs such as recreation classes, summer camps or even neighbourhood babysitters; subsidizing up to half the capital costs of new day centres that are built by either


\textsuperscript{730} Philp, “Last Shared-Cost Program Scrapped,” A11.
commercial or non-profit operators; relaxing existing staff-to-child ratios; and cutting the special wage grant in non-profit day care centres to the average level of the wage grant given to commercial day care centres.\textsuperscript{731}

According to child care activists, Ecker’s plan was a clear attack on quality child care. Kerry McCuaig, executive director of the OCBCC, made the case that “there is no advantage in increasing the amount of child care in this province if you are going to provide more bad child care and attack the quality of care that is out there now.”\textsuperscript{732} McCuaig pointed out that the Conservatives were “making low-paid child-care workers pay for the subsidies of low-income parents.”\textsuperscript{732} Ecker quickly encountered the resistance of the OCBCC, which according to a member, was at the peak of its power at the time and could rely on the support of a number of civil society organizations.\textsuperscript{733} Another activist involved with the labour movement stresses the difference with the Australian case, where advocates were divided as to whether the government should relax standards and encourage the expansion of the for-profit sector.\textsuperscript{734} As a result, most of the proposed reforms contained in the Ecker report were abandoned following public pressures reminiscent of the mobilization against the Birch proposal. Nevertheless, reforms were implemented that were, from the point of view of activists, an important step backward. The conversion program was abandoned as was the policy of making it compulsory for new schools to dedicate spaces for non-profit child care centres. More importantly, in its first years in office, the Harris government imposed drastic cuts to the child care budget. The total cuts in the 1995-97 period amounted to a $60 million reduction in the child care budget.\textsuperscript{735} Moreover, participants in the government’s welfare to work program could use their child care subsidies as they wished, including for informal forms of care. However, as argued by a child care activist, the Harris government was simply not interested in child care and the reforms it enacted did not fundamentally transform the structure of the

\textsuperscript{731} Ontario. Ministry of Community and Social Services. \textit{Improving Ontario’s Child Care System: Ontario’s Child Care Review} (Toronto: Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1996).


\textsuperscript{733} Interview B05.

\textsuperscript{734} Interview B06.

Ontario child care system. As a result, the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty elected in 2004 did not have to contend, in promoting its early childhood education plan, with an expanding for-profit sector (see next section).

Developments in Quebec could not have been more different than in Ontario. Quebec’s child care strategy was strongly influenced by labour market considerations. In fact, the decision to develop a new family policy was taken in the wake of a socio-economic summit in 1996, in which one of the main consensuses was on the need to stimulate job creation. According to Pauline Marois, who was then Minister of Education and Families, new jobs created at the time were often precarious and often did not include any social benefits such as maternity leave, making work less attractive for parents. Marois made the case to the Premier of Quebec, Lucien Bouchard, that an increase in the labour force participation, especially of women, could only occur by developing programs facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life. According to Jane Jenson, the reform of Quebec’s family policy laid out at the summit had three main objectives: 1) to improve parent’s capacity to balance work and family life; 2) to provide child care services which were both financially accessible and developmentally sound, in particular for facilitating school readiness; and 3) to induce parents with low incomes or on social assistance to find employment or better jobs. The reform of Quebec’s family policy was officially enacted in 1997. The Quebec government first extended full-time kindergarten to all five-year-old and the provision of child care at an out-of-pocket price of $5 per day to all four-year-olds (now 7$). The $5 policy was extended to all three-year-olds in 1998, two-year-olds in 1999, and children under two in 2000.

The Quebec program can be seen as the result of the province’s unique “concertation model”, by which important policy decisions are made through formal

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736 Interview B12.
737 This account is based in part on a presentation of Pauline Marois to an event organized by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Toronto (22 October, 2008).
738 Jane Jenson, “Against the Current: Child Care and Family Policy in Quebec,” in Child Care Policy at the Crossroads: Gender and Welfare State Restructuring, eds by Sonya Michel and Rianne Mahon (New York: Routledge, 2002), 312. Jenson argues that over time, the promotion of parental employment became the most important objective of the reform. She argues that such development was not surprising, considering that the institution responsible for family policy, the Ministère de la Famille et de l’Enfance (Ministry of Child and Family Welfare) was created in 1997 by amalgamated the Office des Services de Garde à l’Enfance (Office of Child Care Services) responsible for regulating and licensing child care, and the Ministère de la Sécurité du Revenue (Ministry of Income Security).
discussions between government actors and representatives from the business, labour and the associational sector, especially the feminist movement.\textsuperscript{739} It was also the result of the fact that Quebec activists believed that the provincial government was more likely to enact progressive social policies, a significant contrast with the rest of Canada where the federal government tended to be viewed by activists as more likely to adopt such policies. According to Katie Cooke, the former head of the Liberal Task Force on Child Care, activists outside of Quebec have too often viewed the federal government as the key actor able to contribute to the expansion of child care services, and have not paid enough attention to their home provinces.\textsuperscript{740} While activists in the rest of Canada have long favoured the adoption of a national child care system, both for ideological (child care as a nation-building tool like Medicare) and strategic reasons (the greater fiscal capacity of the federal government), it would be erroneous to underplay important mobilizing efforts at the provincial level. Indeed, after the adoption of the Quebec model, activists pressured their respective provincial governments to adopt a similar program, in some cases with success. In British Columbia, the NDP government announced in 2001 that it would adopt a policy similar to the Quebec model, though it was rapidly abandoned following the election the same year of the Liberal Party. In Manitoba, the NDP government introduced an ambitious reform agenda in 2002, including increased salaries for child care workers, training incentives funds for providers and a freezing of maximum fees parents pay as part of funded programs. These reforms were facilitated by the absence of a strong for-profit sector in Manitoba.\textsuperscript{741}

However, the Quebec initiative came to be used by some provincial authorities to justify their inaction. The Ontario Conservative government argued that the Quebec program was, in the words of Brenda Elliott, Family Services Minister, “challenging”, “unsustainable” and unaffordable, while the Finance minister Janet Ecker argued that it

\textsuperscript{739} The president of la Fédération des femmes du Québec, Françoise David, played a very prominent role during the 1996 socio-economic summits, making the case that the employability and deficit reduction agenda of the government needed to be balanced by measures to fight poverty.

\textsuperscript{740} Interview with Katie Cooke, “Child Care Advocacy Policy Processes: History and Practice from World War II to Present.”

would limit “choices for parents”. Worries about the financial sustainability of the Quebec system were also expressed at the federal level. A former high-ranking member of the CCAAC argued that officials of in the Department of Finance were concerned about the price tag attached to a national ECEC program based on the Quebec model. Politicians and bureaucrats also often pointed to studies conducted by think tanks and academics about the negative impact of the Quebec system on children. They also raised the issue of the allegedly poor quality of child care services in Quebec.

It was also not uncommon for both federal and provincial officials to simply argue that Quebec was different. The broader Quebec strategy, according to a federal official interviewed, is a reflection of prominence of labour market and demographic considerations in that province. An Ontario activist also report that provincial officials, especially in the wake of the Liberal Party’s “Fair Share” Campaign, were likely to argue that Quebec could afford its child care program because of the equalization program. They were likely to argue, especially in Ontario following the election of the Liberal government, that federal financial support was essential to the creation of new ECEC programs.

Investing in Children: Towards a New Approach to ECEC?

While the federal government had for all purposes ceased to have any direct involvement in the child care sector in the post-CAP era, activists continued to support the development of a national child care program. However, they significantly modified their

742. Reported in “$10-a-Day Child Care Not Feasible, Province Says,” Sudbury Star (March 6, 2003): A1. Two provincial officials also confirmed that the Quebec program was also viewed as unaffordable by the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty. Interviews B04 and B11

743. Interview B08.

744. One officiala and one activist interviewed mentioned the impact of a controversial study by Michael Baker, Jonathan Gruber and Kevin Milligan which showed mainly that the Quebec system a) tended to heavily favoured middle and upper-class families, and b) on a range of measures of well-being, Quebec’s children were worst off after the introduction of the universal childcare program. Interviews B08 and B10. See Michael Baker, Jonathan Gruber, and Kevin Milligan. “Universal Childcare, Maternal Labor Supply, and Family Well-Being.” NBER Working Paper No. 11832 (2005). Available online at http://www.econ.ubc.ca/kevinmil/research/childcare.htm (last accessed March 11, 2009).

745. Quebec’s regulations for training and staff ratios were indeed among the least demanding in Canada. Jenson, “Against the Current,” 324.

746. Interview B12.

747. Interview B08.

748. Through the Canadian equalization program, the Canadian federal government transfers financial resources from wealthiest provinces to poorer provinces to help them cover the cost of social programs.
discourse. They increasingly referred to ECEC as a form of (social) investment in children. According to a child care activist, the change of discourse was partly strategic. Talking about women’s equality had less and less resonance in the 1990s, as feminism was a declining social force. Focussing on child care as a women’s issue also tended to lead to debates about what a “good” or a “bad” mother was. By focusing on the benefits of child care for children, this activist continued, you removed from the debate conservative organizations such as REAL women. According to another activist, it was also much easier to promote a “public” solution to child care when it was viewed as an educational service for children. Finally, it meshed with the children’s agenda of the federal government who had made the fight against child poverty one of its main objectives in the 1990s. Indeed, reports from the federal government came to be filled with references to how “children are our future.”

After leaving ECEC to provinces in the mid-1990s, the federal government wanted once again to take a leadership role in the sector by the beginning of the new millennium. A civil servant involved in federal-provincial negotiations on child care argues that the renewed commitment to child care of the federal government was motivated by three factors. First, the OECD had published a number of analyses showing that Canada was, from an international standpoint, a significant laggard in its investment in ECEC services. Second, the federal government had improved parental leaves of absence. The official argued that if the government was encouraging Canadians to have babies, they needed also to offer new parents a place where they could leave their children while at work. Third, and more importantly, the official argues that what was really driving the federal government was the potential impact of early childhood education on educational outcomes. A member of the Liberal Party Caucus points out that the Finance Minister Paul Martin was especially close to Fraser McCain who had released an important report in the late 1990s on the benefits of early childhood education. Martin was also influenced, 

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749 Interview B10.
750 Interview B12.
751 Interview B06.
752 A search of the Canadian government website found 143 results with the mention “children are our future”, ranging from the Report of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Consultation on Custody and Access and Child Support, to the radio advertisement for the Healthy pregnancy campaign that reminds listeners that “Our Children are our future. Give them a healthy start! If you’re planning a pregnancy or are pregnant, it’s important to visit your health care provider early.”
753 Interview B08.
according to the same person, by the Quebec program, which he saw as a model the rest of the country should strive to emulate.\textsuperscript{754}

However, in the post-CAP and post-referendum era, the federal government was restricted in its capacity to impose its priorities on provincial governments. The federal government had signed the Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) which precluded any new federal action in areas of provincial jurisdiction without first obtaining the consent of provinces. Still, under pressure from activists, it enacted a children’s agenda of which early childhood education was a component. In September 2000, it signed with all provinces except Quebec the Early Childhood Development Agreement.\textsuperscript{755} The Agreement left it to provinces to decide how to allocate money in four priority areas: healthy pregnancy, birth, and infancy; parenting and family supports; early childhood development, learning, and care; and community supports. Because of different provincial priorities, the proportion of spending allocated to child care programs varied considerably among provinces. The Ontario government, for example, did not allocate any money to child care services.\textsuperscript{756} In 2002, in order to encourage spending on formal child care services, the federal government signed another agreement with all the provinces (with the exception of Quebec), the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care (MFA), that made $900 million available to provinces to invest in ECEC services over a five years period. The agreement allowed provinces to invest in a variety of regulated services (child care centres, preschools, family day care) and for a variety of purposes (wages, capital and operation costs, training, referral services).

It is with the election of Paul Martin as the leader of the Liberal Party in 2003 that child care was elevated to the top of the federal government’s policy agenda. The 2004 election platform of the Liberal Party contained a promise to invest $5 billion over five years to build a national ECEC system, based on what was referred to as the QUAD principles: quality, universality, accessibility, and developmentally focused

\textsuperscript{754} Interview B07.
\textsuperscript{755} For a good overview of the different early childhood programs under the Liberal government, and the process leading to their adoption, see Martha Friendly and Linda A. White, “From Multilateralism to Bilateralism to Unilateralism in Three Short Years: Child Care in Canadian Federalism, 2003-2006,” in \textit{Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness, and Legitimacy (2nd ed.)}, ed. Herman Bakvis and Grace Skogstad (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2008), 182-204.
\textsuperscript{756} According to a former provincial bureaucrat. Interview B11.
After the election of a minority Liberal government, officials were worried that the complexity of the file, the strong ECEC lobby and the diverging interests of provincial governments would lead, once again, to a failed attempt at reform. An activist remembers that a civil servant that had worked on the file during the Mulroney years, and was now working in the Privy Council Office, asked her whether they would derail again any accord. Another officials working with Social Development Canada remembers that they warned activists not to use the media to press for their preferred policy solutions. Ken Dryden, the federal minister responsible for child care, was well aware of earlier failures and explicitly warned activist not to let their push for a perfect, national system derail his efforts to woo provinces. At a national conference on child care held in Winnipeg, as negotiations were starting with provincial governments, he made the case to child care advocates for a pragmatic approach to the development of a national ECEC program:

> We had no idea 100 years ago what education could be. No idea what health care could be. And today, we have no real idea of what early learning and child care can be 20 years from now, 40 years from now. By trying to get things perfect now, all we do is disappoint ourselves, discourage ourselves. When things go wrong, we rob ourselves of the energy and excitement we need to take on the task. Further, we distract ourselves away from the real goal, a high quality affordable national system of early learning and child care. (...) I am not a perfectionist. I want to win. (...) My biggest fear is that in the months ahead, the history of little fights will distract us and de-energize us from the big fight: the fight to create a national early learning and child care system.

However, a number of activists and officials believe that, at least at the national level, child care activists had become much more pragmatic. They had accepted that a universal, not-for-profit system from coast to coast was probably not a realistic scenario. A number of factors account for such pragmatism. First, while the child care lobby had a

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757 Friendly and White, “From Multilateralism to Bilateralism to Unilateralism in Three Short Years,” 189.
758 Interview B01.
759 In my interviews, both a federal and a provincial civil servant stated that child care activists had what they considered to be a frustrating tendency to leak documents to the media. Interviews B08 and B09.
760 The speech quoted here was given November 16 in Ottawa, four days after the Minister’s speech in Winnipeg. Excerpts reported from different newspapers suggest that the remarks were roughly the same. The remarks are available at: webdocs.edmonton.ca/octopusdocs/Public/Complete/REPORTS/Cs/Elected-1995/2005-01-10/2005CSW006.doc [Last accessed July 26, 2009]
strong presence in Canada, its leadership was aging and was having difficulty renewing itself. Many of them viewed the Liberal proposal as a last chance to develop a national program.\textsuperscript{762} Second, others pointed to the close relationship that had developed between Ken Dryden and the child care community, especially Monica Lysack, the executive director of the CCAAC.\textsuperscript{763} According to an advocate associated with the CCAAC, the organization had never developed such a close relationship with a politician before, and decided to trust Dryden as long as the government continued to make progress on the development of a national framework and limited public funding to not-for-profit centres as much as possible.\textsuperscript{764} Third, both a member of the Liberal caucus and two activists confirm that in light of problems associated with the rapid expansion of the for-profit child care sector in Australia, the federal government was much more aware of the importance of monitoring the expansion of “big-box” child care chains in Canada than had been the Mulroney government.\textsuperscript{765} Finally, child care activists were much more conscious of Quebec’s distinctiveness. An activist pointed out the key role played by Barbara Cameron, a former head of the NACSW and professor of political science at York University, in convincing the ECEC movement that it was acceptable for Quebec not be bound by strict accountability measures since it was so much ahead of the rest of the country.\textsuperscript{766}

While the adoption of a discourse stressing the benefit of a “national” system of early childhood education gained the support of many child care activists and federal officials, it did not resonate as well with many provinces. Many of them denounced the intervention of the federal government in a field of provincial jurisdiction. Alberta and Quebec were especially resistant to national standards and bent on resisting federal intrusions. While the former had the financial resources allowing it to refuse federal contributions, the latter viewed itself as a model in Canada that had little to learn from the federal government. Moreover, according to a federal official, Alberta and Quebec were

\textsuperscript{762} Martha Friendly was quoted as saying: “There’s no question Dryden needs this win. But we need it too. I don’t know how we’re going to engage the next generation if we don’t get a breakthrough now.” Quoted in Laurie Monsebraaten, “Child-Care Deal Remains Elusive,” \textit{Toronto Star} (February 14, 2005): A07.

\textsuperscript{763} While many past leaders of the CCAAC were close to the NDP and the labour movement, Lysack was a former bureaucrat (in Saskatchewan) who had been previously involved in federal-provincial negotiations over child care. After stepping down from her position with the CCAAC, she ran for the Liberal Party in Saskatchewan during the 2008 election (she was defeated).

\textsuperscript{764} Interview B10.

\textsuperscript{765} Interviews B07, B10, B12.

\textsuperscript{766} Interview B10.
the two Canadian provinces whose students had the best scores in international educational tests such as the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).\textsuperscript{767} Alberta argued that since its students were doing so well, there was no need for the province to invest in formal early childhood education and the money could be used to finance informal forms of care. The Quebec government, on the other hand, argued that these results were demonstrating the success of its own ECEC system and as such would refuse to be bound by any federal conditions. Not all provinces were opposed to a greater federal presence. The Ontario Liberal government, especially, strongly supported national standards. This reflected the past experience of Ontario, since no money of the previous Early Years Program had been earmarked under the Harris and Eve governments for child care.\textsuperscript{768} Manitoba and Saskatchewan were also eager to use federal money to develop early childhood education programs that could benefit their aboriginal populations.\textsuperscript{769}

As a result of these different interests, extended negotiations occurred from the summer of 2004 to February 2005. At a meeting in Vancouver in February 2005, a number of provinces refused to support the federal initiative. According to a federal civil servant involved in the negotiations, opposition to the federal proposal came mainly from Alberta and New Brunswick, which wanted to channel some of the federal funds to non-licensed child care services. In order to move beyond this deadlock, the Ontario government pushed the federal government to move in a bilateral direction. Child care activists, who in the past had always pushed for a national system, also encouraged the federal government to shift to a bi-lateral process, believing that the days of the minority government were numbered and therefore that any momentum that had been gained over the previous months might be lost if an election was called.\textsuperscript{770} According to an activist involved with the CCAAC, the organization also suggested to Ken Dryden that he starts

\textsuperscript{767} Interview B08.
\textsuperscript{768} Interview B11. The Ontario Children’s Minister made the following argument in favour of national standards: “What happened under the former Tory government in Ontario was unconscionable. (Federal) money that was supposed to go for child care didn’t. So I think there has to be some accountability for quality.” Quoted in Sean Gordon, “Ottawa, Provinces Meet on Daycare,” \textit{Toronto Star} (February 11, 2005): A01. In another interview, she argued that “accountability is very important. My government in Ontario will spend the money on child care, but I don’t know what future governments will do.” Quoted in Laurie Monsebraaten, “Child-Care Deal Step Neared,” \textit{Toronto Star} (February 12, 2005): A09.
\textsuperscript{769} According to a federal civil servant. Interview B08.
with Manitoba and Saskatchewan, believing that these two provinces were more dedicated to a system that would favour the not-for-profit sector and as such could become a template for other provinces.\footnote{Interviews B10, B01. On activists’ lobbying of provincial government seen as receptive to their demands such as Manitoba, see Laurie Monsebraaten, “National Law on Child Care Sought,” \textit{Toronto Star} (November 15, 2004): A03.} Over time, Dryden’s strategy was effective, as he managed to sign bilateral agreements with all provinces, including Alberta, New Brunswick and Quebec.

In the end, the program had limited strings attached. Federal officials believed that it was not their responsibility to decide whether funding should go to the non-profit or for-profit sector. Their main objective was simply to emphasize the importance of the QUAD principles.\footnote{Interviews B07 and B08.} Dryden believed that two factors would, however, force provinces in the long-term to favour the expansion of high quality child care. First, he counted on the mobilization of parents and child care activists to pressure provincial governments to increase the quality of child care services. Second, he believed that over time provinces would be hooked on federal money and would be more likely at a later stage to agree to tougher accountability measures and requirements, much like it had been the case in the health care sector where the Canada Health Act was adopted more than ten years after the adoption of the Medicare program.\footnote{Interviews B07, B08 and B10.}

However, quickly after the signing of the last bilateral agreement with New Brunswick an election was called and the Liberal government was defeated. The newly elected Conservative Party had opposed the Liberal approach to ECEC, believing that it did not give parents enough freedom of choice. It followed through on its promise to end the bilateral agreements after one year and to introduce a $1,200 taxable allowance for each child under the age of six. There was little provincial outcry. According to two federal officials, provinces knew that the Conservative government strongly opposed a national child care plan and believed they had little to gain by denouncing the federal government.\footnote{Interviews B07 and B08.} Many provinces still went ahead with their plans to expand access to early childhood education, albeit in many cases on a more limited scale. Perhaps the most
ambitious of these plans was announced in 2007 in Ontario. The McGuinty government announced that in 2010, all four and five-year-olds would have access to full-day learning.

**Summary: Causes and Consequences**

The post-CAP period was not marked by massive cuts in child care spending or by a significant increase in the proportion of for-profit services as predicted by some activists. It nevertheless created a situation in which Canada was becoming one of the OECD countries allocating the smallest proportion of its GDP to ECEC services, as many Canadian provinces allocated increasing scarce resources to health care. The limited growth in the spaces available outside of Quebec led, among other things, to the continuous use of informal forms of care, especially child care delivered by immigrant women. In the province of Alberta alone, in 2005, the top occupation of incoming foreign workers was babysitters, nannies or parent’s helpers. Most of these workers came to Canada through the Live-in Caregiver program. Between 2000 and 2006, the number of persons in Canada in possession of a working permit under the Live-in Caregiver program increased by 300 per cent, from 5,942 to 21,489. The end of CAP also opened up increasing possibilities for change, as provinces were allowed to use federal funds as they wished. Quebec used this opportunity to develop a unique ECEC system in North America that sparked an important debate in the country about ECEC services. However, in the rest of the country, much more than labour market considerations, it was concerns about educational outcomes (especially in Ontario) as well as the perceived benefits of investing in early childhood education that resonated with activists and public officials.

**Conclusion**

Over the last fifteen years, Canada has become the Anglo-Saxon country that dedicates the least resources to ECEC services, an important turn of event considering that

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775 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *The Monitor* (First and Second Quarter, 2006).
Canada was once viewed as a model to be followed by British child care activists. However, Canada has not experienced a significant expansion of the for-profit sector such as was the case in other Anglo-Saxon countries like Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand. While most parents rely on informal forms of care, licensed-based services have increasingly been delivered by non-profit agencies.

Such dominance of the not-for-profit sector was the result of the unique sequence of policy development in Canada. Contrary to the case of Great Britain, regulations were put in place in Canada regarding child care providers before a significant increase in demand for child care services. Moreover, child care services were financed through an intergovernmental shared-cost program, making difficult the implementation by one level of government of radical policy change that could have contributed to a rapid expansion of commercial ECEC services. However, the slow but gradual expansion of the not-for-profit sector was not only the result of past policy decisions. It was also the product of the mobilizing efforts of the third sector. This sector both defended policies adopted in the post-war period that impeded the expansion of the commercial sector, and promoted new policy developments that contributed to the further expansion of not-for-profit services.
Chapter 7

Conclusion: 
Comparing the Evolution of ECEC Production Regimes in Canada and Great Britain

This dissertation has traced the evolution of ECEC services in Canada and Great Britain since the 19th century. It has demonstrated that distinct coalitions have emerged over time in both countries to promote greater public investment and better quality child care services. Despite setbacks, concessions and all too rare policy victories, these coalitions have nevertheless been able to promote gradual, but over time path shifting policy changes. The picture presented in this dissertation is thus in sharp contrast with the image of contemporary welfare states as immovable objects in an era of globalization. This dissertation has also demonstrated that despite important historical similarities – limited taxation resources, a targeted, liberal approach to social programs, and the presence of conservative political parties that viewed child care as a family responsibility - both countries have adopted different approaches to the delivery of ECEC services. I have made the case that such differences can be explained by different timing in the introduction of ECEC regulatory frameworks as well as the territorial organization of the welfare state in the two countries.

In this conclusion, I review the main findings of this dissertation. I address the principal questions that were at the core of this dissertation: What does the trajectory of Canada’s and Great Britain’s ECEC systems tell us about the evolution of contemporary welfare states? How do welfare states evolve? Are liberal welfare states converging in a context of neoliberalism and globalization? What accounts for the observed differences between Canada and Great Britain?

Associations, Mobilization and the Politics of Mixing and Matching

As argued in chapter one, a growing body of literature has made the case that differences among welfare regimes are bound to persist in an era of globalization and post-industrial changes because of the costs of reversing institutional arrangements. While stressing the resilience of contemporary welfare states, proponents of this path dependency approach have also argued that liberal welfare regimes are more vulnerable to
episodes of welfare retrenchment (reinforcing their dependency on markets) and are more likely to converge over time. Liberal welfare states are thus presented as inexorably locked in a logic of targeted services, increasingly delivered by private corporations paying low-wages to a largely female care workforce, increasing as a result gender inequalities. This dissertation has contested such an image of contemporary liberal welfare states.

As shown in chapter 2, Canada’s and Britain’s ECEC regimes have diverged in many ways from this liberal logic over the past thirty years. Policy changes have been especially important in Great Britain, where all three- and four-year-olds are now entitled to a publicly-funded half-day place in preschool education. While the pace of reform has not been as important in Canada, some provinces have adopted (Quebec), or announced their intention of adopting (Ontario) ECEC programs that intend to provide universal coverage. As such, in both countries, reforms have been adopted that have moved them away from the liberal norm of targeted services, although this norm does remain important in both countries, especially in terms of access to child care subsidies. Despite the claim of growing similarities among liberal welfare states, Canada and Great Britain have not converged over time. This is especially the case in relation to both countries’ approach to the delivery of ECEC services. While a decreasing proportion of child care services is provided by the for-profit sector in Canada, commercial providers now sponsor a majority of ECEC services in Great Britain. Thus this dissertation has highlighted the increasingly hybrid character of contemporary welfare states, combining in the case of Britain a universal approach to access to services, usually associated with social-democratic welfare states, with the delivery of these services by for-profit providers, an approach common to many liberal welfare states. This increasingly hybrid character of contemporary welfare states has been under-theorized by welfare state scholars. As argued by Daniel Wincott, the idea that welfare states come in three “internally coherent types

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778 As will be discussed later, data for ECEC are usually provided by the British government only for England, or England and Wales. Data are respectively from Martha Friendly et al., Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2006 (Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2007), 206; and Robert Kinnaird, 2006 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey: Full Day Care Providers (London: Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007), 41.
locked into inexorable, self-reproducing path dependencies—has come to distort our ability to understand social policy change.\textsuperscript{779}

In order to understand important episodes of policy changes that have led to what I called in the introduction as the mixing and matching of different regimes and pillars aspects of the welfare state, I have focussed on the mobilizing activities of the third sector. I have shown that third sector organizations were able to promote the adoption of important reforms by presenting ECEC as a solution to specific policy problems and by taking advantage of different political opportunities made possible by the occasionally changing territorial architecture of the welfare state.

In chapter five and six, I showed the crucial role of the mobilization of the third sector in encouraging policy changes by attaching ECEC as a solution to policy problems. Two periods were identified as particularly crucial. In the 1960s, activists were able to make important gains by stressing how ECEC services were key to both countries’ war on poverty. More recently, they have stressed how ECEC services, and especially early childhood education, were essential to improve educational outcomes, a central aspect to both countries’ social investment agenda.

Not all reforms were adopted as a result of the mobilization of activists during “critical junctures”. Following Lise Nelson, it can be argued that the mobilization of associations over time left “sedimentation” at the level of identities, political vocabularies and practices that had a defining impact on the evolution of the ECEC system of both countries.\textsuperscript{780} In Great Britain, the impact of this sedimentation process could be seen in the continuing support among policy-makers in the 1980s for the idea, first promoted by activists in the 1930s, that nursery education should be available to all three- and four-year-olds. Such support, even among Conservative MPs, was especially remarkable considering that the Thatcher government had both explicitly rejected this proposal and made it optional for local governments to provide nursery education services. In Canada, and especially in Ontario, such a gradual process of sedimentation could be seen in efforts developed first in the late 1960s to promote child care as an educational and public service. Over time, these efforts led to a policy of favouring the expansion of school-based

\textsuperscript{779} Wincott, “Paradoxes of New Labour Social Policy.” 288.

child care services and, more recently, a proposed reform to guarantee a full-day place in kindergarten to all four- and five-year-olds in Ontario. Exploring these slow sedimentation processes is especially important for public policy scholars since policy changes, while they often might appear to be sudden, are in fact preceded by a series of events and activities that may extend over several decades.\(^781\)

The second factor promoting policy change is the occasional transformation in the territorial organization of the welfare state. As argued by Baumgartner and Jones, the existence of multiple venues in a political system “means that cracks are likely to appear somewhere, and these can be exploited by political activists.”\(^782\) Indeed, changes to the territorial organization of the state are central to the current process of welfare state restructuring, opening spaces both for innovation and in some cases retrenchment. As Geddes and LeGalès argued:

Esping-Andersen underlines the major challenges for welfare states but he and his colleagues typically underestimate a number off ‘silent changes’ taking place in many countries. Because they are concerned with the national institutional arrangements and the trade-off between employment and equity, and also because they are keen to demonstrate that despite external pressures, national welfare states are not simply privatized and in decline, they do not address the issue of internal reorganization of welfare states.\(^783\)

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that important policy changes have come after ECEC activists took advantage of the transformation of the territorial architecture of both welfare states. In Canada, important reforms were adopted at two crucial moments, first in the 1960s when CAP marked the end of municipal dominance over social services, and then in the 1990s when the federal government withdrew from the ECEC sector. In Britain, important policy changes were made possible after the Thatcher government centralized responsibility over educational and social services in the 1980s, making the imposition of reforms from above possible after the election of New Labour in 1997.

While focusing on the mobilizing activities of child care activists promoting different policy images and the changing territorial architecture of the British and

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Canadian cases explain episodes of policy change and the growing hybrid character of contemporary welfare states, it tells us little about the contrasting evolution of both cases. As I argued at the outset of this dissertation, in order to understand the variation between the Canadian and the British cases, it is essential to investigate how the sequence of policy development and political institutions influenced the preferences of policy coalitions and their capacity to promote policy change.

**Explaining Policy Variation: Tax, Time and Territory**

The second key objective of this dissertation was to explain the distinct trajectory of Canada’s and Great Britain’s ECEC regimes. As argued in chapter one, I have adopted a “process induction” strategy, the main objective of which main according to Andrew Bennet and Alexander George, “involves the inductive observation of apparent causal mechanisms and heuristic rendering of these mechanisms as potential hypotheses for future testing.”

In chapter one and three, following insights from scholars such as Dietrich Rueschmeyer, Evelyn Huber Stephens, John D. Stephens and Joseph Wong, I have presented a theoretically informed framework to explain the similarities and differences between Canada and Great Britain. The presentation of such a framework at the outset now makes it possible, in light of our exploration of both cases, to develop more refined hypotheses for further testing, and to identify some of the limitations of the study and future directions for research. Throughout this dissertation, I have stressed especially the central importance of three variables to account for the emergence of distinct policy coalitions and distinct ECEC production regimes: tax, time and territory.

**Tax**

In chapter 3, I made the case that limited public investment in child care services in conservative and liberal welfare states can be explained by the ideological opposition to policies that would undermine the traditional family in the former, or lead to higher levels of taxation in the latter. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that more important than ideological opposition to higher levels of taxation per se, it is the reliance on specific

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"Process Tracing in Case Study Research," paper presented at the MacArthur Foundation Workshop on Case Study Methods, BCSIA Harvard University (October 17–19, 1997). Available at:
forms of taxation that retarded the expansion of publicly financed ECEC services in Canada and Great Britain.

As shown in chapter four, the means-tested approach of both countries to ECEC services can be explained by their historical reliance on the inelastic and unpopular property tax to finance both educational and social services. In both countries, attempts to expand ECEC services to children under the age of five not only faced the objection of citizens opposed to services targeted at “irresponsible” working mothers, but more importantly of local taxpayers who revolted against increases in the property tax to finance such services. As a result of their opposition to increases in the property tax, local taxpayers in Canada and Great Britain tended to insist that publicly financed ECEC services be restricted to the deserving poor.

While the centrality of the property tax in the financing of ECEC services in both countries explains the lack of publicly financed, universal services in both Canada and Great Britain, important differences between the two cases can also be explained by historical variations in their dependency on this tax. One of the reasons why Great Britain was able to develop an important pre-school sector for children under the age of five is that for a short, but nevertheless crucial period of time in the late 19th century, a significant proportion of ECEC costs was financed by the central government. Consequently, by the end of the 19th century, Britain had the highest proportion of children under the age of five in schools in Europe. If access to ECEC services declined in the first half of the century as a result of a return to the financing of education through the property tax, the period nevertheless had led to the creation of organizations dedicated to the expansion of pre-school services and the publication of a number of policy reports that made it the official policy of the state that three- and four-year-olds should have access to early childhood education services. Contrary to the case in Britain, there was never a moment in Canada in which a significant proportion of children between three and five years old were in early childhood education programs in a school setting. As a result, to this day, early childhood education tends to be limited to five-year-olds. Moreover, it is only in the second half of the twentieth century, when provinces took greater responsibility for the financing of education from municipalities, that pre-school education for five-year-olds became the norm in Canada.
The weakness of local governments in both countries, a result of their limited fiscal capacity, also largely accounts for their propensity to rely on voluntary and commercial entities to provide social and educational services. In Great Britain, confronted with taxpayer revolts in the 1960s and 1970s, municipalities decided to favour the expansion of low-cost parental playgroups and childminders rather than the more expensive public day nurseries and nursery schools. In Canada, the policy of encouraging the expansion of not-for-profit services came in the wake of a number of provincial reports that outlined the incapacity of municipalities to finance and deliver social care services.

These findings are based on two case studies, and as such cannot at this stage be generalized. Nevertheless, these findings are significant. The cases of Canada and Great Britain challenge the literature’s neglect of the impact of distinct financing mechanisms on the expansion of the welfare state. They also confirm the findings of a growing body of research that demonstrates that countries that have a greater reliance on more visible taxes such as the property tax are more likely to experience tax backlash. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that reliance on inelastic and visible forms of taxation is a significant obstacle to the expansion of universal services. I hope in the future to explore whether dependency on the property tax can also explain the limited development of pre-school services in other Anglo-Saxon countries such as Australia and the United States. I have already demonstrated though that one of the reasons why a country like Sweden did not experience the same level of “privatization” of child care services as Great Britain and, to a lesser extent, France, was that municipalities had access to varied and elastic sources of revenues that reduced pressures to encourage low-cost alternatives to public child care services.

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785 Gösta Esping-Andersen, for example, argued as such at an OECD conference, stating “I do not believe that how the welfare state is financed is especially important.” Reported in Robert E. Goodin and Martin Rein, “Regimes on Pillars: Alternative Welfare State Logics and Dynamics,” Public Administration 79, no. 4 (2001): 770.


While the reliance on highly visible taxes and subsequent tax backlashes account in part for the slow development of public investment in ECEC services, I have argued in chapter three that it is also important to investigate the factors that promote or restrain the expansion of private, licensed services. After all, an alternative approach to the public-financing of services is for parents to buy child care services in the market. However, the capacity to buy services can be constrained by the availability and costs of such services. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that the timing in the introduction of regulations regarding child-to-staff ratios, the necessary qualifications of child care workers as well as their wages can constrain the expansion of private services, especially for-profit services.

In Canada, legislation regulating the ECEC labour market in most Canadian provinces, as well as a federal-provincial shared-cost program that favoured the non-profit sector, were established prior to a significant increase in the demand for child care services. Such policy decisions not only limited the rapid expansion of the commercial sector; they also created a strong coalition composed of ECEC professionals, advocates from the non-profit sector, and labour unions opposed to any policies that might lead to a greater role for the for-profit sector. The strength of this coalition in comparison to the poorly organized for-profit lobby allowed it to defeat legislative proposals in some provinces, as well as at the federal level, that would have opened the door to a greater presence of the commercial sector. In Britain, on the other hand, national regulations were put in place significantly after a rise in demand for ECEC services. Because of the lack of a legislative framework regulating the activities of ECEC providers, a range of institutions emerged, including nursery schools, local authority-run day nurseries, parental playgroups, commercial day nurseries and nursery schools, as well as a relatively small community-based sector.

I also demonstrated that such a sequence of policy development not only empowered groups dedicated to the preservation of their privileged position, it also influenced political debates. In Canada, debates revolved largely on the impact that a greater role for the for-profit sector would have on the quality of services and the working conditions of ECEC workers. In Britain, on the other hand, because of the existence of a range of providers and the absence of national legislation for most of the post-war period,
debates focused rather on the best way to rapidly expand state support for ECEC services, independent of who would provide such services.

Finally, this dissertation has demonstrated that the expansion of private actors as a result of the timing in the introduction of ECEC regulations can significantly restrict options available to the state. As argued by Béland and Hacker: ‘by fostering vested interests, shaping public expectations, and embedding institutions, the spread of private provision (usually in response to indirect state encouragement) may constrain the scope for government programs even if conditions are otherwise permissive.’

I have demonstrated though that the expansion of private services does not mean that the state will be unable to develop public programs, but rather that such programs will be built on to existing private institutions by redirecting their aim (policy conversion) or by creating new institutional structures without displacing existing ones (policy layering).

** Territory **

I have argued throughout this dissertation that the capacity of activists to promote and protect their preferred policy choice was closely related to the territorial organization of the welfare state, especially the presence of strong subnational governments. First, subnational governments with strong fiscal and legislative capacity can innovate and experiment. These experiments can inspire other subnational governments to follow suit, and may put pressure on the central government to ensure that services are available throughout the territory.

Secondly, autonomous and politically powerful subnational governments can block attempts at radical reform from above, especially in cases of shared-cost programs in which subnational governments play a key role. Indeed, as argued by a number of theorists, welfare state retrenchment is easier in countries with high levels of political centralization.

Hence differences in the power of the main subnational entities in Canada (provinces) and in Great Britain (municipalities) account for differences...

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789 Wincott makes such an argument with regard to Britain in Daniel Wincott, *Transformed Risks and Inherited Welfare Regimes*.

in the timing in the introduction of regulatory frameworks in both countries as well as the capacity to resist unilateral reforms from above.

The federal nature of Canada provided child care activists alternative venues in which they could promote the more generous implementation of welfare programs and the enactment of a legislative framework regulating the child care sector, making Canada an early policy innovator. Yet, as shown in chapter six, such programs had two significant feedback effects on the development of ECEC services. First, the “provincialization” of child care services meant that provinces jealous of their autonomy occupied the policy field, making it difficult for the federal government to impose radical policy change from above at a later date. At the same time, the key role of the federal government following the adoption of the Canada Assistance Plan in establishing the conditions under which child care services would be financed restricted the capacity of provinces to experiment. Second, the division of responsibility between the two levels of government allowed the non-profit sector to employ a ‘veto strategy’ in which it used one venue to veto change in another, thus hindering the expansion of for-profit services. It is only with the abolition of the cost-shared Canada Assistance Plan in 1996, as mentioned previously, that a significant opportunity for policy change occurred, especially in a province like Quebec where child care activists had a close relationship with provincial politicians.

In Great Britain, on the other hand, attempts by feminist child care activists to institutionalize a community-based model of child care services at the local and metropolitan level were largely unsuccessful, a reflection of the limited fiscal and legislative power of local authorities. Under Thatcher, Britain moved from being one of the most decentralized European countries to one of the most the most centralized, making even more difficult the development of such an approach to ECEC services. This centralization of power forced groups representing different ECEC providers to join forces in order to press for change. At the same time, it facilitated the adoption of an ambitious reform. Coming to power with the objective of increasing women’s labour market and combat child poverty, Tony Blair’s government was able to roll out an unparalleled number of initiatives without facing the opposition of strong local governments or of child care groups opposed to its preference for a mixed economy of ECEC services.
These findings demonstrate that a distinction between unitary and federal countries is problematic as a proxy for decentralization in relation to social services. As shown in chapter five and six, for most of the post-war period, responsibility over child care services was much more centralized in Canada than in Great Britain as provinces rather than municipalities were responsible for the financing and regulation of ECEC services. Moreover, these findings are consistent with a growing body of literature on the contingent effect of territorial politics. Stephen Leibfried, Francis Castles and Herbert Obinger, for example, report that “federalism does indeed have inhibitory effects on welfare state development, but that these effects have crucial and temporal limitations”, since “under certain circumstances, federalism may actually serve to encourage the growth of social expenditure.”

Responsibility over child care services was even more centralized in another federation mentioned previously, Australia, where the federal government had taken control over the child care sector in the post-war period and was able in the late 1980s and early 1990s to encourage a radical expansion of for-profit services. The difference between Australia and Canada demonstrates that it is not only which actors get their first that matters to understand the evolution of a policy sector, but also which levels of government get their first. As recently argued by Keith Banting, saying that a country is a federation is a poor indicator of the likely evolution of a policy sector considering that some programs are delivered by the federal or provincial governments acting independently while others require the formal agreement of both levels of government. The veto effects associated with federalism depend greatly on the structure of the program in place.

Conclusion

In 1982, Helen Penn, one of the co-founders of Britain’s national childcare campaign, came to America. She travelled first to Winnipeg, attending as a foreign

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observer Canada’s Second National Child Care Conference. She discovered, to her surprise, that senior civil servants present at the conference accepted feminists’ arguments for day care. Continuing her trip to Toronto, New York and Boston, she was impressed by the significant advances made by Canada’s child care movement, while finding rather depressing the state of daycare in Reagan’s America. From her British point of view, Canada’s child care system seemed “unbelievably radical”.793 Contrary to the situation in Britain, she found that well paid Canadian women preferred collective child care in nurseries rather than hiring nannies at home. Even more striking was that the provision of publicly financed child care services by often unionized community nurseries was not limited to children at risk; they also provided services to the children of many working parents. As for the British child care system, which relied heavily on parental playgroups, she recognized that it was largely viewed as a joke in Canada.

More than twenty-five years after Penn’s visit to North America, despite significant policy changes, the ECEC systems in Canada and Great Britain continue to exhibit important differences. In both countries, confronted with different policy legacies and working in different institutional settings, child care activists have developed different coalitions and different policy proposals that account for both important episodes of policy changes and the continuous differences between the two cases. As such, this dissertation is a testament to the continuous importance of the mobilizing activities of civil society organizations in an age of globalization that has too often been viewed as constraining the capacity of actors to promote important policy changes. Nor have both countries, despite such globalization process, seen a decline in the role of the state. While the state has gradually abandoned responsibility over the delivery of child care services, this dissertation has demonstrated that a case can be made that the state’s role in the ECEC sector has in fact significantly increased over the last two decades. In the UK and some Canadian provinces, the ECEC bureaucracy has expanded, national or provincial curricula have been adopted, and training requirements have been standardized.

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793 Helen Penn’s account of her trip to Canada is from Helen Penn, “Childcare in Canada and the USA,” National Childcare Campaign Newsletter no. 16 (1982). Daycare Trust-National Childcare Campaign Archives.
More than 70 years ago, the Canadian Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations made the case that ultimately, a more generous education system could only survive if citizens were willing to fight for it:

[I]t seems to us best that education, like every other welfare service in a democratic community, should have to fight for its life, and that a generous provision for the education of children of the nation should depend, not on any arbitrary constitutional provision, but on the persistent conviction of the mass of the people that they must be ready to deny themselves some of the good things in life in order to deal fairly by their children (...).

In both Canada and Great Britain, ECEC now figures prominently on the policy agenda of governments in both countries, whether they are local, provincial or national, a result of the willingness of activists to fight for it. However, in both Canada and Great Britain, the next few years will be crucial. In the past 150 years, major innovations have been adopted in both countries that were quickly abandoned. The survival of recently adopted programs in both countries is not guaranteed, as ECEC must compete with other government priorities, especially the growing demands for health and social care services associated with an ageing population.

However, this dissertation has shown the capacity of activists and citizens to be important drivers of change and innovation. So how do they sit within the framework of tax, time and territory that I have developed? These provide the framework within which activists must work. They impose constraints and limits, making some alternatives more or less feasible and acceptable. But they also open spaces and opportunities that resourceful, determined and imaginative players can exploit. Taken together, time, tax, and territory do not make or explain change. That comes from motivated political actors.

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