

AUSTERITY and its **ALTERNATIVES**



More Than Just Good Ideas

Politics, Power and Advocacy for Policy Alternatives

Bryan Evans (Ryerson), David Macdonald (CCPA), J.Z.
Garrod (Carleton University)

The Second AltAusterity Workshop – March 23-24, 2018
Embassy Hotel & Suites, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada



Ryerson
University



The Project

- Our project is concerned with policy advocacy; specifically, with how policy proposals which veer away from the neoliberal norm are manufactured and 'shopped' to the state.
- We examine two examples—the Canada Child Benefit and Ontario Bill 148—where progressive policy proposals were accepted by the government to explore what factors are necessary for alternative policy ideas to be accepted.





Theories of Policy Change

Institutions: Historical institutionalism, path dependency.

Interests: Rational choice theory, interest group theory, elite theories.

Ideas: Policy streams, punctuated equilibrium, advocacy coalition framework

Networks: Policy network analysis





Influence, Non-profits, and New Public Governance

- All theories of policy change imply a link between advocacy activities (direct or indirect) and outcomes.
- There is currently a lack of research on nonprofit advocacy.
- This lack is significant given the extent to which theories of New Public Governance assume them to be regular contributors to the policymaking process.



Our Cases

- **Canada Child Benefit (CCB)**
 - Introduced by Trudeau Liberals in 2016.
 - Replaced the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS), the Universal Child-Care Benefit (UCCB), and the enhanced UCCB.
 - Pays out \$5400 per year for each child 6 to 17 and \$6400 for each child 5 or younger.
- **Ontario Bill 148 (A plan for fair workplaces and better jobs)**
 - Introduced by the Wynne Liberals in 2017.
 - Increases minimum wage to \$14 per hour in 2018, and \$15 in 2019.
 - Provides a number of other changes, such as: equal pay for non-permanent workers; fairer scheduling rules; 3 weeks vacation after 5 years; expanded leave.



Methods

- Our project consists of interviews with the relevant players in the policy process of our cases.
- This includes: government staff, academics involved in the creation of policy, and nonprofit staff.
- These interviews will form the basis for an exploration into what factors are necessary for alternative policy ideas to be accepted.



Early Results

- Early, off-record, phone interviews indicated that there were many factors at play in the creation of the CCB:
 - The context of the election (growing inequality, focus on middle class);
 - Previous policies that brought new money into the system;
 - Impressive potential impact estimations (14% drop in child poverty);
 - Timing (benefits would flow out before the election);
 - Population (provides a benefit to majority of voters).



Join the Conversation

Learn about our project and see more of our research and media:

<http://altausterity.mcmaster.ca/>

<https://twitter.com/altausterity>

#altausterity