Document généré le 11 août 2024 04:15

Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy
Revue canadienne en administration et politique de l'éducation

CJEAP Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy

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Numéro 204, 2024

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1111522ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1111522ar

Aller au sommaire du numéro

Éditeur(s)

Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan

ISSN

1207-7798 (numérique)

Découvrir la revue

Citer cet article

Yoon, E.-S., Winton, S. & El Masri, A. (2024). Educational Politics and Policy Change in Neoliberal Times: An Argumentative Discourse Analysis. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy / Revue canadienne en administration et politique de l'éducation*, (204), 3–16. https://doi.org/10.7202/1111522ar

Résumé de l'article

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Educational Politics and Policy Change in Neoliberal Times: An Argumentative Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

With the rise of neoliberal reforms and efforts to privatize education, there is a growing need to examine how actors and groups from the public and private sectors influence educational policy change together. In this article, we advance a critical approach to understanding the changing discursive space of educational politics by following discourses through an expansive policy network that goes beyond its traditional boundaries. Specifically, we draw on argumentative discourse analysis (ADA), which allows for the analysis of how and why various actors and groups come together to assign certain meanings to educational phenomena or problems, leading to policy responses or changes. Rooted in Foucault's notions of discourse and power, ADA offers a unique approach to discourse analysis that can illuminate policy change through discourse coalitions. Three case studies from educational policy scholarship are discussed to illustrate the value and utility of ADA in future critical education policy studies.

Keywords: educational policy change, critical policy analysis, discourse analysis, power, discourse, neoliberalism

Introduction

Ozga (2021) argues that the politics of education policy lies in "discourses around education" (p. 298), with Ball (2007) noting that it lies in the "discursive struggles over the meaning and causes of the crisis" in and of education (p. 5). Thus, a key task for critical policy scholars is to illuminate not only how policy is formed but also what discursive struggles underpin the exchanges among various actors whose voices are either heard or silenced in educational politics and policy change. Furthermore, the role of critical scholars is to facilitate a deeper understanding of the changing ideological and material conditions of education that influence whose voices get amplified and thus help to precipitate educational policy change (Apple, 2001, 2004). In contemporary times, Apple (2004) particularly points to the example of a conservative modernization alliance, which consists of a group of libertarian economists, authoritarian populists, and religious conservatives. Despite vast differences in their values, they have come together to solve "educational problems" by implementing market-based reforms to (re)establish a common culture and schooling with standardized testing while also controlling education resources under austerity measures and top-down management. As such, critical scholars are urged to elucidate these types of alliances that are actively involved in "the ongoing struggles that constantly shape the terrain on which education operates" (Apple, 2004, p. 15). In the absence of such analysis, critical scholarship is left "with increasingly elegant new theoretical formulations, but with a less than elegant understanding of the field of social power on which they operate" (Apple, 2004, p. 14).

A wide range of discourse analysis approaches has been used in studying education since the linguistic turn in the 1970s (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2017). Some approaches have focused more on the micro-level linguistic features of discourse, while others have emphasized the importance of disciplinary structures, values, and the "'regime' of truth" (Foucault, 1980, p. 133). Also, some approaches have emphasized power and ideology, while others have focused on processes of social construction (see Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Other discourse analysis approaches are critical in nature, such as Foucauldian discourse analysis (Phillip & Hardy, 2002; Rogers et al., 2016; Wodak, 2015; Wood & Kroger, 2000). Nevertheless, few discourse analysis approaches elucidate the changing nature of educational politics through the formation of discourse coalitions that shape the conditions of education.

In this article, we propose how an argumentative approach to discourse analysis can provide a critical lens through which to examine how dominant or "authoritative" discourse emerges, develops, and takes hold of politics through discourse coalitions on the emblematic issues that shake a society at its core (Hajer, 1995, p. 44). We suggest that an argumentative approach can support a critical analysis of the development of coalitions at the discursive level, especially an understanding of the current neoliberal politics of education that cuts across multiple sectors, especially between the private and public sectors of policy making.

Argumentative discourse analysis (ADA) can help examine policy as arguments (Hajer, 1995). Educational politics and policy development can be examined as exchanges of arguments that become advanced and consolidated by different discourse coalitions to effect policy change. This approach can shed light on the importance of a coalition of discourses from far and wide that (re)produce asymmetric power dynamics (Apple, 2004; Foucault, 1980; Hajer, 1995). ADA would thus contribute to the growing field of educational policy research scholarship, including critical policy analysis (Diem et al., 2014), policy as problems (Bacchi, 2010), policy as the effects of actor-network (Gorur, 2011), policy as assemblage (Savage, 2020), policy networks (Ball, 2016), and policy mobilities (Gulson et al., 2017).

As such, this article proceeds as follows. In the first part, we discuss ADA as developed by Maarten Hajer (1993, 1995, 2006), including Hajer's major concepts that draw on Michel Foucault's (1980, 1995) notions of discourse and power. In the second part, we showcase three studies that illustrate how Hajer's (1995) approach can be applied. Furthermore, we show how this approach can be adapted for particular research problems and questions in critical education policy studies. Finally, we conclude that ADA contributes to the understanding of how a complex interplay of discourses and their associated micro-powers affect policy change. ADA can thus provide a critical and timely approach to elucidating the changing discursive terrain that (re)produces asymmetrical power relations (Diem & Young, 2015).

Argumentative Discourse Analysis: Three Key Concepts

What is ADA? According to Hajer (1995), the argumentative approach centres on understanding political processes that lead to policy change through discursive struggles. Individuals and groups struggle over the meanings of problems and solutions in exchanging their arguments, views, facts, and figures about political issues. Their views draw on the discourses that are based on specific practices, professions, or disciplines (e.g., academic subjects). As such, political processes include discoursing subjects "constantly" attempting to adjust, transform, and resist particular views of social reality and what actions need to be taken to address these social realities or challenges (Hajer, 1995, p. 51). Exchanges of these views become part of the process of shaping an idea or solution that generates political responses or changes, and this approach "conceives of politics as a struggle for discursive hegemony in which actors try to secure support for their definition of reality" (Hajer, 1995, p. 59).

Storyline

Storyline is one of the key concepts in ADA. It refers to how the stories and accounts put forward by diverse individuals, despite representing different perspectives and views, coalesce or snowball to form broadly shared, "more or less coherent" narratives that have the potential to effect change in policy and related practices (Hajer, 2006, p. 70). Storyline is thus an easily recognizable and relatable term that various actors use to refer to their shared view of a key political issue that requires a collective response.

A storyline's function is to conglomerate many views and discourses about why a certain phenomenon is a problem. A storyline then gets developed through discursive struggles across multiple spaces,

including outside traditional policy spaces such as the legislature, as individuals try to assert their views about the issue. In other words, a storyline is "the medium through which actors try to impose their view of reality on others, suggest certain social positions and practices, and criticise alternative social arrangements" (Hajer, 2006, p. 71). Through this development, their shared argument for a policy response may be transformed into policy if or when their arguments for change become dominant, which we discuss below.

Furthermore, according to Hajer (2006), the historical analysis of storyline development is "the discursive production of meaning with the analysis of the socio-political practices from which social constructs emerge and in which the actors that make these statements engage" (p. 67). Which storyline becomes authoritative is a discursive process that reflects a particular ideological context (Hajer, 1995). As illustrated in the three examples we present below, a dominant ideology, such as neoliberalism, influences the meaning-making process and policy change.

Discourse Coalition

The utterance of the same storyline(s) does not necessarily mean that the speakers have the same understanding of a phenomenon, problem, and/or specific solutions. What storylines achieve is "a coalition, sufficient to generate a political action" (Hajer, 2006, p. 69). *Discourse coalition*, the second key concept of ADA, refers to this ensemble of groups and actors who bring multiple and often incoherent discourses together to assert a voice for change using a single storyline or a set of related storylines.

Coalitions are made up of heterogeneous and inchoate groups and individuals who have their own particular interests and motives, whether political, economic, or otherwise (Hajer, 1993). Members may not have continuous or long-lasting relationships or ties. Discourse coalitions are neither coordinated nor led by a single leader, elite policy group, think tank, or network. They become a collectivity by advancing their shared storyline while seeking policy change. Importantly, coalitions include experts and the general population, but the emphasis is on the discourses that they exchange. As we illustrate in our case study examples below, some actors at times change their discourses or utter contradictory discourses, which then get weaved into different discourse coalitions. Hence, following discourses rather than individuals or groups allows for a more dynamic analysis of discursive struggles that undergird educational policy change.

Discourse coalition analysis thus moves beyond special interest groups, policy networks, or direct stakeholders, all of whom are considered conventional or traditional policy actors (Hajer, 1995). Let us have a look at the importance of discourse coalition in the storyline of the destruction of the rainforests (Hajer, 1995). Each actor or group that makes up this storyline contributes its own discourse as a lens, "a 'way of seeing', a way of interpreting a given phenomenon," which in this case is the rainforest and its destruction (Hajer, 2006, p. 66). As such, the systems-ecologist highlights the world as a biosphere and an integrated ecosystem. The World Wildlife Fund asks ethical questions about the destruction. The singer Sting raises questions about the culture of the Indigenous peoples who inhabit the rainforests. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration publishes satellite images of the worsening state of the rainforest over time. What this example shows is that each person or group speaks about the rainforest somewhat differently, but they converge on maintaining the thread of the destruction of rainforest as a storyline in environmental politics. In other words, each actor or group constructs a narrative that gives the phenomenon a particular meaning, and each view builds on discourses that are embedded in particular disciplines, institutions, communities, or practices that frame different views of a certain phenomenon, problem, or solution.

Actors and groups bring in discourse as "a set of concepts that structure the contributions of participants to a discussion" (Hajer, 2006, p. 67). Coalitions at the discursive level are thus critical to bringing together the "micro-powers" of discourses that each coalition member advances (Hajer, 1995, p. 51). Critical analysis of this type of coalition is particularly prominent in the neoliberal politics of education, which expands beyond traditional policy networks, something we illustrate using three examples in the latter part of this article.

Dominant Discourse in Political Process

According to Hajer (2006), a discursive order takes shape and begins to solidify when a discourse coali-

tion succeeds at making its view of reality or a problem widely accepted via its storyline. This process is referred to as *discourse structuration*, a process through which a coalition's storyline about a particular problem (e.g., acid rain) gains the approval of the broader population (Hajer, 1995). The coalition is then able to generate a *dominant discourse* in the discursive space of politics. Once the process reaches this turning point, the dominant discourse becomes the basis for the establishment of practices, strategies, and mechanisms that make up institutions, which Hajer (2006) refers to as *discourse institutionalization*.

The key in this process is the central actors (i.e., politicians or government officials) accepting or integrating the "rhetorical power of a new discourse" in advancing certain policy (Hajer, 2006, p. 71). A policy shift thus represents the meanings supported by the winner of these struggles, namely, the meanings embraced by the dominant discourse coalition (Hajer, 1995). Dominant discourse, in turn, shapes new strategic plans, action items, institutional guidelines, and policies. As such, critical scholars should pay greater attention to what storylines are supported by those who are in positions of power (e.g., the governing party). This mapping would help to show the changing spaces of educational politics and ordering. Furthermore, it would clarify whose interests the government ultimately supports, and thus who benefits and who loses.

Moreover, because storylines are an amalgamation of different discourses and actors, the process of institutionalization is complicated by the involvement of different and multiple policy actors and the political practices and discourses of the governing party (Hajer, 2006). In other words, there would be further struggles over how certain policies need to be implemented during institutionalization. Therefore, ADA can illuminate this inherently complex nature of policy making. It can also elucidate how discourse creates and structures social reality, constructs policy truths, and diverts attention away from alternate realities (Hajer, 1995).

Intellectual Influences: Foucault's Theory of Discourse and Power

In advancing ADA in educational policy studies, we draw on the work of political science and urban studies scholar Maarten Hajer. Hajer's work, such as that on acid rain (1993) and on ecological modernization (1995), has contributed to the development of ADA in understanding environmental politics and policy change. ADA, as discussed thus far, aims to illuminate how "politics brings together a great variety of actors who not only all have their own legitimate orientations and concerns, but have their own modes of talking" about effecting policy change (Hajer, 1995, p. 46). In this approach, Hajer's (1995) work challenges policy science and positivistic epistemology to understand politics, suggesting that political issues need to be examined based on "a set of assumptions and (implicit) social choices that are mediated through an ensemble of … discursive practices that guide our perception of reality" (p. 17). In other words, the analysis of policy change requires socially and politically constructed interpretations and arguments.

Additionally, we draw on Hajer's (1995) work for its emphasis on discourses as "modes of talking" rooted in Foucault's (1980, 1995) theory of discourse and power (p. 41). Modes of talking are the effects of micro-powers that circulate discreetly yet effectively through discourses that shape practices, disciplines, and bodies (Hajer, 1995; Foucault, 1995). Following Foucault, Hajer's (1995) theory identifies that individuals and groups draw on certain discourses to make meanings of their realities and of who they are and, importantly, that the discourses are not generated by particular individuals themselves. Discourses are (re)produced through a set of practices and traditions while shaping certain views of reality, issues, or phenomena, and how to respond to the reality, issues, or phenomena (Hajer, 2006; Foucault, 1980).

Hajer draws on Foucault's understanding of the individual as a discursively constrained subject rather than a sovereign subject free to change or manipulate discursive orders and structures. The individual as the subject speaks on certain topics conditioned upon the regime that underpins the production of particular discourses (Foucault, 1980). Power is exercised in these regulated discursive practices which shape what, how, where, and when the subject can express their ideas in addition to their practices and understanding of what is true (Foucault, 1980; Hajer, 2006). In this sense, Hajer's perspective on discourse analysis resonates with a critical policy view of discourses for providing "possibilities of political thought and thus policy" (Ball, 2007, p. 1).

What Hajer's (2006) discourse analysis has added to critical policy analysis is how discourses, or modes of talking, shape debates over emblematic issues. Hajer's (2006) approach highlights the im-

portance of the sociohistorical context in which certain narratives, discourses, and forms of meaning making emerge. This theorization is relevant for considering the neoliberal context of policy change and how neoliberalism as discourse matters in shaping how actors make meanings of certain educational phenomena as problems. When we discuss our three case studies, we provide some specific examples of how the sociopolitical context matters.

Hajer applies Foucault's notion of multiplicity rather than singularity in understanding the nature and mode of power. In particular, Hajer draws on Foucault's (1980, 1995) later work, which focuses on how multiple discourses and practices produce and maintain social orders, norms, discipline, punishment, and sexualities among others. To analyze how social orders and norms (and in our analysis, we add policies) are maintained or changed, Foucault (1980, 1995) suggests moving beyond analyzing a single institution (in its entirety) and rather focusing on smaller and less visible practices and techniques that sustain the institution's regulative power.

Building on this perspective, Hajer (2006) developed ADA as a way to understand politics and policy change as comprised of various discourses and practices that exert micro-powers rather than locating power with a single institution, individual, or position of power. Foucault's notion of power undergirds Hajer's understanding of how coalition works in influencing policy change. Hence, we find that ADA is suitable especially for analyzing how a coalition of individuals—or, more precisely, discourses—can effectively achieve policy change rather than how a single individual (or discourse) in a position of power imposes change.

Where Hajer (1995) further extends Foucault's work in argumentative analysis is his use of *social-interactive* discourse theory from the field of social psychology, especially the work of Michael Billig (1996) and Rom Harré (1993). Billig (1996) and Harré (1993) theorize that individuals are "constituted by discursive practices" because humans interact using language to make sense of reality while also producing it (Hajer, 1995, p. 53). Individuals exchange arguments, sometimes embracing opposing and contradictory views. Billig's (1996) work thus further buttresses Hajer's (1995) theorization that individuals engage in arguments to persuade others of their views of reality. Drawing on this social interactionist perspective, Hajer strengthened his discourse analysis, focusing on its argumentative aspect rather than its linguistic components.

Applications in the Studies of Educational Policy and Practice

Over the years, we have encountered research problems related to understanding change in educational politics, policy, and associated practices (see Yoon & Winton, 2020). Some of the major changes we have observed are neoliberal educational reforms. While there is merit in theorizing these reforms as top down and the state as the driving force, we now see these changes from a different perspective, namely, an argumentative approach, drawing from Hajer, as discussed above. We have come to see that policy and practice get changed by a coalition of actors who are seemingly unrelated and at times even contradictory. Moreover, these individuals and groups are not necessarily restricted to advocacy groups who share common beliefs or to policy networks who share a similar and coherent logic.

As such, we have come to appreciate that ADA provides a critical lens for elucidating the linkages across multiple policy spaces and actors through discourses that activate micro-power. ADA is especially timely in illuminating neoliberal politics, whereby the state is re-positioning itself away from being the funder or manager of the public sector to being its broker or regulator (Ball, 2007). In this context, ADA can illuminate how the boundaries between the public and private spaces of policy are increasingly porous. Also, ADA can illustrate how discourse coalitions from opposing spectrums of political views can affect policy change in neoliberal times.

In the following section, we discuss three case studies that were previously published to showcase how Hajer's (1995, 2006) approach can be applied to uncover new ways of understanding changes in policy and practice. These cases demonstrate what ADA can reveal about policy struggles. Case 1 highlights the power struggle between opposing discourses that support different policy solutions. It also sheds light on how discourse coalition members shift as their interests change and how policy meanings change over time. Cases 2 and 3 show that actors with different values can form discourse coalitions and that contestation is not always visible. All these cases help us understand the formation of discourse coalitions in an effort to effect policy change.

Case 1: ADA of School Fundraising in Ontario's Public Schools

In the article "The Normalization of School Fundraising in Ontario: An Argumentative Discourse Analysis," Winton (2016) presented findings from an ADA of arguments mobilized in the struggle over school fundraising policy to address the growing problem of educational funding in Ontario, Canada, between 1996 and 2015. The data for this study comprised 159 texts, including media articles, transcripts from parliamentary debate, political party platforms, government documents, and reports published by advocacy groups.

Winton (2016) used an open-coding approach to identify arguments about fundraising and then determined how these arguments fit together to create storylines over three time periods: 1996–2002, when Ontario was under a Progressive Conservative government; 2002–2012, when Ontario was under a Liberal government before it introduced the *Fundraising Guideline* (Ontario Ministry of Education [OME], 2012); and 2012–2015, when Ontario was under a Liberal government after the *Fundraising Guideline* (OME, 2012) was in place.

Winton (2016) grouped the individuals and organizations that mobilized the constituent arguments of the storylines into discourse coalitions. She identified two storylines and discourse coalitions: the *fund-the-basics* discourse coalition and the *fundraising-is-necessary-and-desirable* discourse coalition. Notably, only the fund-the-basics discourse coalition explicitly engaged in a public struggle over fundraising. Members of this coalition include People for Education; the Metro Parents Network; Social Planning Toronto; the Ontario Public School Boards Association; the New Democratic Party; the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; and some teacher unions, parents, school trustees, and journalists. Some members left this coalition and joined the opposing one when their circumstances changed.

The fund-the-basics discourse coalition consistently argued that school fundraising, once a means of providing funds for graduation teas and other frills, had become a strategy to address shortfalls in government funding for the basic necessities of schooling. Their storyline, fund the basics, expressed the idea that the government, not families or school communities, was responsible for providing these materials. Furthermore, members of the fund-the-basics discourse coalition expressed ongoing concern that since not all school communities are able to fundraise, some students would not have the basic materials necessary for learning.

Consequently, they argued that the practice of school fundraising contributed to a two-tiered system and undermined the principles of public education in Ontario. For example, they pointed to findings from a survey of elementary schools in 2002 that found that parents fundraised $38 million in Canadian dollars that year, with the amounts raised varying from $0 to $65,000 in Canadian dollars per school (People for Education, 2002). Furthermore, they reported that "the top 10% of schools raised as much money as the bottom 60%" (People for Education, 2002, p. 62). In 2015, the range of funds raised had widened, and the percentage of elementary schools fundraising for learning materials had increased from 29% in 2002 to 47% (People for Education, 2002, 2015).

After 2005, members of the fund-the-basics discourse coalition began calling for a provincial policy on school fundraising that defined materials that were necessary for learning and specified how the fundraised money could be spent. In 2011, the Ontario Liberal government released a draft of the *Fundraising Guideline* (OME, 2011), which outlined what fundraised dollars could be used to purchase. It articulated key arguments mobilized by the fund-the-basics discourse coalition, including the expectation that fundraising was not to be used to pay for learning essentials.

However, members of the fund-the-basics discourse coalition expressed concern that the proposed *Fundraising Guideline* (OME, 2011) was inadequate, and some called for the final guidelines to include a list of the items and services that all children should receive in schools. The final *Fundraising Guideline* (OME, 2012) did not include such a list, and it ultimately did little to stem the tide of school fundraising, address the vast differences between schools, or stop schools from using fundraised dollars to buy learning resources (People for Education, 2015). At least one member of the fund-the-basics discourse coalition, Social Planning Toronto, called for a total ban on all school fundraising, but this position was not shared by everyone (Rushowy & Winsa, 2011).

Finally, over time some members of the fund-the-basics discourse coalition started to redefine the issue of school fundraising as not only a problem of inadequate government funding but also a consequence of parents' desires. As one member explained:

> We all feel we have the right to pay for whatever it is we want. We're a more individualistic society than we were 20 years ago. And as parents, we're all kind of nuts. Everything has to be perfect for my child all the time. (Winsa & Rushowy, 2011, para. 42)

Many people in Ontario seemed to believe that school fundraising was desirable and necessary, although explicit arguments in support of the practice were uncommon. Rather, the presence and dominance of the fundraising-is-necessary-and-desirable discourse coalition was most evident through the institutionalization of the practice. Evidence of institutionalization included the growing incidence of fundraising; an increase in the amounts of money raised; continued spending of fundraised dollars on learning materials; the creation of board and provincial government fundraising policies; the establishment of charitable foundations to fundraise for schools while avoiding fundraising restrictions introduced by the *Fundraising Guideline* (OME, 2012); the finding that school councils spent the majority of their time fundraising; and teachers' threats to withdraw—and the actual withdrawal of—their involvement in fundraising during contract negotiations.

Through the creation of policies and the intensification of school fundraising since 1996, it is evident that both the Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments, as well as many school boards, school staff, school councils, parents, and students, were members of the fundraising-is-necessary-and-desirable discourse coalition. When a Liberal government came into office in 2003, some members of the fund-the-basics discourse coalition were elected as Members of Provincial Parliament and mobilized arguments in support of the very practice they had previously critiqued. For example, Kathleen Wynne, former premier of Ontario, who asked in 1998 if it is "the intention of the government that parent fundraising makes up the gap in financing" (Chamberlain, 1998, p. 1), asserted in 2007 that "fundraising is much more than just the dollars and cents that communities raise for projects. It is about community cohesion. It is about community building" ("School fundraising is raising questions," 2007, p. R7). Indeed, even some members of the fund-the-basics discourse coalition expressed this belief. What the People for Education spokesperson said in 2007 demonstrated the dominance of the fundraising-is-necessary-and-desirable discourse coalition storyline (i.e., the condition of discourse structuration):

> We don't think parent fundraising is inherently evil. It is a way for people to be involved in the school, it's fun, it can build school spirit, it is a way of engaging people. It is not bad in and of itself ... just the notion that it is a necessary part of public education. (Payne, 2007, p. J4)

Winton (2016) explained that the dominance of the fundraising-is-necessary-and-desirable discourse coalition can be attributed in part to dominant discourses in the policy's broader sociohistorical context, one that encouraged individualism, privatization, and reduced government spending on public services. Cuts to public education and changes to how schools are funded introduced by Ontario's Progressive Conservative government left some parents, especially middle-class parents who had relied on public schools to play a key role in reproducing their families' class status, seeking new ways to maintain the opportunities and privileges afforded to their children.

The findings of this case study demonstrate how this methodology can help us achieve the goals of critical policy analysis. Winton (2016) highlighted the significance of historical and social contexts on policy processes. In this case, the findings explain why a practice shown to reproduce patterns of inequality between school communities was supported by many parents and resistant to change—even when discouraged by formal policy. The findings also show how the meaning of the policy mobilized by the fund-the-basics discourse coalition shifted in response to Ontario's changing social context: the problem of fundraising was initially defined as inadequate government funding and the creation of a two-tier system and expanded to include parents' individualistic desires, which were becoming a more dominant discourse in the era of neoliberal educational reforms. Findings from Winton's (2016) study also highlight that an individual's interests and discourse-coalition membership may change in response to changing circumstances.

Case 2: ADA of Public-Private Partnership Fundraising

This case is based on the article "From Bake Sales to Million-Dollar School Fundraising Campaigns: The New Inequity" by Yoon, Young, and Livingston (2020). While this study is related to Case 1 in that it is about the problem of school funding and what to do about it, Case 2 applied ADA to the case of one school to understand how the approach can be applied at the level of school policy and practice. It used ADA to examine the formation of a dominant discourse that gave rise to a multi-million-dollar fundraising campaign for Red River High School (pseudonym) in Canada. The discourse analysis focused on about 20 media documents collected over a 10-year period, using the key words "Red River High School" and "fundraising" from the Canadian Major Dailies database, which provides full-text articles and op-eds. The search focused on major newspapers circulating specifically in the province where the school is located. The researchers chronologically ordered and then open-coded the articles. Their reiterative coding focused on narratives, using key concepts, ideas, and categories that structured the foundation of the fundraising actors' views (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Yoon, Young, and Livingston (2020) identified the five main groups of fundraising actors: city councillors, school administrators, the superintendent, large and small businesses, and the fundraising organizing group. They found a variety of discourses from which different actors drew to construct unique and personalized narratives in supporting the storyline *fundraising through a public-private partnership.* The researchers noted the utility of ADA in identifying the storyline of fundraising through public-private partnership, which allowed the institutionalization of the policy and practice at the school level.

For instance, in supporting the storyline, school administrators drew on the discourses of multiculturalism and the right to play to articulate the need for a variety of sports. The school administrators pointed to the needs of their diversifying student population, arguing that the students had a right to play their sports at their own school rather than having to travel to other locations. The fundraising organizing group, made up of alumni and educators, stressed the important role that the school community played in creating an inclusive community and that the school could also increase its own revenues by raising the enrolment of international students, who also showed interest in the types of sporting activities for which the school did not have facilities. They also articulated the discourse of financial efficiency when the public-private partnership was formed.

In comparison, those who were from outside the school, such as business partners, district-level administrators, and politicians, articulated a slightly different set of discourses. For instance, the business community and private donors used a customer appreciation discourse to show their participation in the public-private partnership efforts to raise funds, not just as businesspeople but as community members as well. The superintendent added the discourse of equity, arguing for the benefits of providing facilities in the school—benefits the children would otherwise not get. The superintendent supported partnership fundraising as a win-win strategy for both private and public actors, especially in times of fiscal austerity. Finally, the city councillor highlighted the discourse of community building by bringing together the public and private partners and actors. These different discourses mutually reinforced the discourse coalition in articulating a dominant narrative about school fundraising through public-private partnership.

Furthermore, following Hajer's lens, the changing political context of the school fundraising was analyzed. At the time of this school fundraising, the government ramped up austerity measures that focused mostly on funding cuts. There was a growing acceptance of raising private money as a solution to shortages in public education funding. The Progressive Conservative government decreased public school funding while encouraging private participation in the public sectors. Unlike the previous New Democratic Party government, the Progressive Conservative government did not intervene with a no-naming-rights-for-donors' policy when Red River High School named its athletic field after the businessman who donated a quarter of a million dollars.

Yoon, Young, and Livingston (2020) argued that a public-private partnership style of school fundraising at the school level became possible in part by the lack of government intervention. The provincial government officials and the education minister *silently supported the storyline* by not voicing any opposing discourses (or storylines). The austerity measures applied pressure and encouraged support for private-sector involvement. Hence, fundraising through public and private partnerships became the dominant discourse, which then allowed the school to raise millions of dollars to make athletic facilities available for their students. The government's discursive abstinence allowed the school administrators,

with the support of the district's superintendent, to name the facility after the main donor.

This case study illustrates how ADA can help examine how multiple, and at times contradictory, discourses (i.e., equity and customer appreciation) come together to form a coalition and have powerful effects that continue to reproduce inequities among schools, while maintaining the neoliberal discourse of individual solutions (i.e., school-level fundraising) to collective problems (i.e., funding shortages). The researchers' analysis shows that a "coalition [was] formed without necessarily sharing deep values" (Hajer, 2006, p. 71). ADA is thus helpful in illuminating the power of neoliberalism, increasing via partnerships across the public and private sectors, working through the storyline of school fundraising. Also, as Yoon, Young, and Livingston (2020) noted, one of the study's limitations is that it was conducted largely based on media articles that were available about this case, and there was little evidence of an opposing discourse coalition.

Case 3: International Education Policy Making

In "Who Speaks for International Education? An Ontario Case Study," El Masri (2020a) examined international education policy making at the postsecondary level in Ontario, Canada. The context of this study is the drastic decline of public funding for postsecondary education. From 2001 to 2019, public funding for postsecondary education gradually but markedly declined from 53% to 32% at colleges and from 46% to 36% at universities (Statistics Canada, 2022). Colleges and universities have thus increasingly sought alternative funding sources, including the recruitment of international students, whose tuition fees are much higher than those of domestic students. In this context, El Masri (2020a) applied ADA to illuminate the political and sociohistorical contexts, adopting a long-term perspective focusing on the period from 2005 until mid-2017.

El Masri (2020a) explored how international education is constructed as a policy discourse, who the policy actors are, what they contribute to the postsecondary international education policy-making process, and what role they play in influencing international education policies and empowering and silencing different discourses. The data sources included 414 newspaper articles from the period identified. Based on a scan of these articles, a list of key search words was developed to inform the media search. Media stories were organized chronologically and initially coded by giving a brief description of its structuring concept or discourse (e.g., international student safety, recruitment, and revenue generation). The contents of the newspaper articles were coded by identifying key discourses within each article rather than the general theme of the article, those who uttered these discourses, and the socioeconomic political contexts in which they were uttered. Once initial coding was completed, relevant discourses were assembled into storylines, and actors mobilizing the same storyline were identified as its coalition members.

As explained in her earlier work (see El Masri, 2019), El Masri (2019) adapted Hajer's methodology and identified one "container" storyline and three other storylines within it (p. 115). While all three of the latter storylines agreed that international education is desirable in the postsecondary education sector in Ontario, they diverged in their definitions and approaches to international education, its rationales, and its activities leading to policy changes. In other words, the internationalize storyline functioned as a container storyline (El Masri, 2019), bringing various groups of people together in a discourse coalition because of its ambiguity. It was surprising to discover that no discourses objected to internationalizing Ontario's postsecondary education sector since the assumption of ADA is that policy landscapes are a discursive battlefield between opponents and proponents. The international education policy landscape in Ontario proved to be different from the environmental policy landscape that Hajer studied and where ADA originated.

El Masri (2019, 2020a) argued that within the container storyline or phrase (i.e., internationalize), the discursive struggle continued. This finding is consistent with Knight's (2014) observation that "internationalization has become a catch-all phrase used to describe anything and everything remotely linked to the global, intercultural or international dimensions of higher education and is thus losing its way" (p. 76). In other words, while there was an agreement that international education is valuable and needed, discourses constructed and defined international education differently. Some focused on its benefits, which varied and sometimes were contradictory, while others focused on how to mitigate risks associated with it.

Even where there was a general alignment, discourses highlighted different motivations, rationales,

benefits and risks, and approaches to international education. Therefore, El Masri (2019) decided to adapt Hajer's framework by taking it a step further and examining the next layer of storylines within the internationalize storyline (p. 115). It was important to sift through the complexity of discourses of the anything and everything of international education to examine how they were shaping international education policies. Hence, El Masri took the analysis to a deeper level by identifying and examining three storylines within this dominant internationalize storyline, as they met Hajer's (1995) criteria for forming discursive coalitions from previously independent practices and creating a common discourse in which several practices take on meaning in a common political project.

The first storyline—*internationalize, it is good for the economy* (Economy)—presented international education as an imperative in the current global knowledge economy. It managed to assemble four main discourses, all of which link international education to the domestic economy in one of the following ways: as a tool to enhance Ontario's business and trade relationships, as a means to promote research and innovation, as a valuable revenue-generation tool, and as a rich source of human capital (i.e., international students who are constructed as the solution to the province's aging population, low birthrate, and skill shortage).

The second storyline—*internationalize yet manage its risks* (Risks)—managed to attract diverse and sometimes contradictory discourses and understandings of the nature of the potential risks: protecting international students from victimization and exploitation (e.g., substandard services and exorbitant tuition fees), protecting domestic students from competing with foreign nationals (e.g., enrolment in postsecondary education, funding, and jobs) as well as safeguarding Canadians from foreigners' fraudulent practices to access the housing market or immigration pathways, and protecting the quality of Ontario's postsecondary education and its reputation abroad.

The last storyline—*internationalize, it is Canada's gateway to the world* (Gateway to the world)—brought together two discourses. The first stressed the value of international education in enriching the teaching and learning experience by exposing students to different knowledges, cultures, and languages. The second was invested in the role of international education in enhancing Canada's and Ontario's global image and international relations through promoting diplomatic relationships and fulfilling Canada's philanthropic role in the international community.

El Masri (2020a) tracked the emergence of each storyline and how they connected to a broader policy change in different policy spaces, such as immigration and student funding. The Economy storyline achieved hegemony as it became increasingly coherent, attracting the biggest number and greatest diversity of discourse coalition members both in terms of scale and space and in imposing its logic and ways of deliberation on the international education policy landscape (structuration). The actors included ministries of finance, industry, education, innovation, and immigration; postsecondary education institutions; employers; lawyers; organizations focused on research and innovation; and economic think-tanks and others, affirming Hajer's (1995) assertion that the more multi-interpretative a storyline is, the more appealing it becomes, increasing its ability to attract actors with different or overlapping but not fully aligned perceptions and understandings. The storyline achieved institutionalization as it was translated into institutional policies and practices at both the federal and provincial levels that facilitated the recruitment and retention of international students for their economic impact (e.g., *Canada's International Education Strategy* [Global Affairs Canada, 2014] and Citizenship and Immigration Canada's reports [Evaluation Division, 2010, 2011, 2015]). While the Economy storyline was generally the most dominant, El Masri (2020a) identified instances where the Risks storyline succeeded in initiating specific policy change by imposing its interpretation of the risks associated with international education and related funding policies (see El Masri 2020b, 2019).

El Masri (2020a) argued that Hajer's framework allowed for a broadening of the scope within which participating actors could be located, including some that had not been identified by other policy studies. These include, but are not limited to, federal and provincial government agencies that oversee foreign affairs, immigration, international trade, the economy, innovation, industry, and education; opposition parties; postsecondary education institutions, faculties, and students and their special interest groups at the national and provincial levels; the private sector, including employers, lawyers, investment and talent acquisition companies, and housing market specialists; research, business, industry, and trade special interest groups, think tanks, and specialists; the general public, including Indigenous groups; international

actors such as foreign media, parents of international students, consulates, embassies, and ministries of education; and many transnational actors.

In applying ADA, El Masri (2020a) noted the significance of focusing on how storylines, instead of actors, helped to account for the different discourses that were produced by diverse players and in disciplines and fields, such as immigration, the economy, and foreign affairs, ultimately influencing international education policy making. For example, El Masri's (2019, 2020a) work revealed discourses within the housing sector, (un)intentionally contributing to the internationalize yet manage its risks storyline as they warn that international students are jeopardizing the stability of the housing market in Ontario. This is an example of diverse actors (re)producing certain storylines without necessarily orchestrating their actions or sharing deep values with the other actors.

El Masri (2020a) argued that Hajer's ADA helps explain the fluidity in discourse coalition membership and accounts for the contradictions that policy actors embodied, while also providing tools to understand why actors may mobilize different storylines in different contexts. El Masri (2020a) presented multiple instances of the members from other storylines reiterating some aspects of the internationalize, it is good for the economy storyline, unintentionally contributing to its power, dominance and "reification" (Hajer 1995, p. 56). For example, despite their calls not to treat international students as cash cows and their criticisms of unregulated international students' fees, student groups reiterated the financial contributions of international students to the Ontarian economy, reproducing discourses made by the internationalize, it is good for the economy coalition. These statements by student groups became part of the discursive map and resulted in unintended political effects in furthering the power and dominance of the internationalize, it is good for the economy storyline. Hajer's framework (1995) thus provides a critical tool to develop a nuanced understanding of how global, national, and provincial political, economic, and social contexts help international education storylines emerge, gain or lose momentum, and/or align with another storyline or other storylines.

Concluding Remarks

In this article, we have outlined, discussed, and argued for the possibilities that ADA can offer in understanding educational policy change, politics, and practice through the key concepts of storyline, discourse coalition, and dominant discourse. Discourse coalitions are less coherent and more broadly traceable than traditional policy networks or formally organized political groups (Ball, 2016). Yet, discourse coalitions are at work and can be powerful through discourses shaping our realities (Hajer, 1995). Hence, ADA can be effective in illustrating how broader support for change can be shared through a storyline.

The three case studies illustrate what an argumentative approach to discourse analysis looks like in educational policy studies. Moreover, the studies show the timeliness and relevance of ADA, even though it is yet to be taken up seriously in critical studies of education. Each case study applied ADA slightly differently, as each study was attentive to its research in terms of scale, periods, and contexts. These differentiated applications indicate the versatility of ADA and highlight that it can be used to shed light on various discursive forces being formed when change is being initiated and in the process of becoming effective. A lack of opposing coalitions may indicate the dominance of a coalition that is emerging to influence a particular policy or that alternative or dissident views do not receive the attention they should in mainstream media. Yet, what the three analyses show is how ADA can provide a critical lens through which to study educational policy change and practice in the contemporary era when the formation of partnerships between the public and the private sectors has accelerated (Yoon & Winton 2020). ADA offers a sharp analytical framework to study how multiple and fluid discourse coalitions influence policy change in future critical studies of education policy and policy sociology.

ADA provides a useful toolkit for critical scholars who play the role of public intellectuals (Apple, 2001; Foucault, 1980). Critical scholars could help map and identify divergent voices and perspectives and show how different discourses may be brought together to precipitate a particular policy change. This analysis would help critique and dismantle the (re)production of power that preserves the status quo, such as the conservative modernization alliance (see Apple, 2004). As such, ADA compels critical scholars to participate actively in public debate and policy consultation.

Scholars can play an important role by identifying emerging storylines and discourse coalitions. This intellectual work can elucidate discursive spaces and struggles over how different actors advance their arguments in shaping realities and policy changes. We are not saying that critical policy scholars

can create, change, or alter storylines individually, but they can certainly clarify them and illuminate their potential effects. As Apple (2004) emphasized, this kind of public intellectual work is important and necessary. ADA presents new tools for critical policy scholars in interrogating not only overt manifestations of power (from a position of power) but also the more insidious ways policy change happens through discourses and micro-power.

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