

**A critical analysis of contemporary early
childhood policies: The experience of the
'Cuna Mas' National Programme**

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Declaration

I, Andrea Portugal, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with exploring why and how early childhood development becomes an object of policy. More specifically, it sets out to explore the couplings of knowledge and power and how these productive encounters materialize in discourses, practices and subjectivities that create the conditions for the governing of children and parents.

A Foucauldian theoretical framework informed by postcolonial ideas is drawn on to question dominant understandings about young children, their development and the related production of policy knowledge. Based on a documentary analysis of policy texts of two multilateral organizations, it argues that specific evidence and research are used to construct early childhood development as foundational, malleable and profitable, and to prescribe a particular version of the 'normal' child and the 'good' parent. At the same time, it describes how data and statistics are strategically deployed to demonstrate the existence of a 'problem', which works to position less privileged children and their families as 'delayed', 'unable', and in 'need'. An investment narrative is identified as providing an economic rationale for government intervention in early childhood development that reinforces an understanding of children as potential human capital.

Drawing on Ball's methodological and analytical 'toolbox', the thesis traces how global narratives are reproduced, interpreted and refused at a particular national setting, while at the same time offering an insider's perspective of how policies are shaped, produced, enacted, and, importantly, with what effects. A critical auto-ethnography is used to reconstruct and examine the different contexts of influence, policy text production, practice and outcomes. The thesis examines these contexts in a particular site of policy experience: the national programme 'Cuna Mas' in Peru. It considers the effects of globalisation and the role of context and agency in forming, framing and limiting the production and enactment of state national policies, arguing that despite being informed by the globalised policy discourses, there is evidence of active adaptation and recontextualisation by local staff.

Impact statement

This thesis has engaged in a critical analysis of why and how early childhood development has become an object of policy at both global and national levels, with a particular emphasis placed on examining the implications for children's and parent's subjectivities and experiences from a social justice perspective. Based on the analysis of global and national policy documents and artefacts, as well as on my own previous experience as policy maker and enactor, the study has demonstrated that a neo-liberal rationality underpins the construction of children as future potential and profitable investments while at the same time 'deficient' and 'incomplete'.

It has argued that this understanding of children as the 'problem', in particular those from less privileged backgrounds creates the conditions for an intensive biopolitics of childhood, limiting children's freedom to be and act in the world. Similarly, it has illustrated how the view of parents as crucial in children's development while at the same time 'unable' and 'incompetent', serves to position families as ultimately responsible for their children's care and wellbeing, removing structural inequalities from the policy picture. Crucially, the thesis has revealed how particular kinds of knowledge are considered valid within the dominant regime of 'evidence-based' policies, which works to exclude other forms of understanding and being in the world.

This analysis is relevant both inside and outside academia. Firstly, it extends and elaborates on the increasing body of work which engages with the 'politics of knowledge' and the 'politics of truth' to fight systematic disadvantage and promote social justice by showing that early childhood development, as we think and talk about it today, is not natural or given, rather, it is contingent and historically constituted, produced by the productive encounters of power and knowledge, and as such open to change. That is, we can think about children and early childhood development in a different way. Secondly, it presents a unique and original account of how policies are produced and enacted from a critical 'insider's' perspective, showing how evidence-based policy making acts on and selectively steers research. In third place, the study brings new issues, problems and questions to bear that feedback into policy and policy making. On the one hand, it exposes the need to broaden the knowledge-base informing policy making in general, and early childhood policies, in particular; for governments to design more pertinent and contextualised policy solutions. On the other hand, it evinces the urgency to rethink the way early childhood development is articulated in policy discourse, as well as the alternative 'solutions' designed to

address it, given that as long as the 'problem' with early childhood development continues to be seen as caused mainly by deficient parenting, other structural inequalities such as poverty, social class and parental education will continue to be bracketed out.

Finally, there are several ways I can think about on how the impact of this thesis can be brought about. First, parts of the thesis will be disseminated as academic papers to a broader audience, as well with colleagues working in the government and multilateral organisations. More directly concern with my current work, this thesis has already influenced the design of pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes of the new school of education I have been designing and leading for the last two years and a half in two specific ways. Firstly, in addition to researching academic literature on teacher education and evidence on effective teaching practices, the design process has included in-depth interviews with students, parents, teachers and principals about their experiences, beliefs and understandings on what good teaching means, thus gathering their voices and perspectives. Secondly, the school's education model is grounded on a more comprehensive understanding of knowledge, learning and children, which seeks to value difference, context and complexity.

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'Childhood is not a natural space but rather is carved out by culturally and historically specific technologies of government' (Nadesan, 2010, p. 1).

Introduction

Over the last decade, early childhood development has been constituted as a policy object in global discourse as requiring expert guidance, deliberate cultivation and careful surveillance. In particular, developmental ‘delays’ among children living in conditions of poverty have become a top priority in the policy agendas of international organisations, with related policies being seen as essential for the development of social and economic outcomes for children, as well as for the fulfilment of other societal goals such as social inclusion and poverty reduction. An example is the recent inclusion of early childhood development, care and pre-primary education as a target within the Sustainable Development Goals¹. This focus of concern has been partly driven by the large body of evidence showing that the first years of life are crucial in shaping a person’s success over the life course (Almond and Currie, 2011; Cunha et al., 2006; Feinstein and Duckworth, 2006; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007), as well as by a renewed enthusiasm about the effectiveness of early interventions on improving child development, particularly among disadvantaged children (Heckman, 2006; Barnett, 1995; Gertler et al., 2013; Baker-Henningham and Lopez-Boo, 2010; Engel et al., 2011).

This growing spread of global ideas led by supranational and international organisations as to the role of early childhood development and education in securing economic growth and promoting social mobility, in turn, informs and shapes state policies. However, the ways in which global imperatives are interpreted and/or translated into the national policies and systems are far from homogenous; rather, they are shaped by the historical and cultural legacies of particular countries. This is in line with Ball’s understanding of ‘policy as text’ and ‘policy as discourse’, that is, they ‘are “contested”, mediated and differentially represented by different actors in different contexts (policy as text), but on the other hand, at the same time produced and formed by taken-for-granted and implicit knowledges and assumptions about the world and ourselves (policy as discourse)’ (Ball, 2015a, p.5-6).

¹ One of the targets of Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all sets that by 2030, is that all girls and boys should have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

This thesis sets out to explore how a social issue or phenomena –in this instance early childhood development- becomes an object of policy. More specifically, it addresses three main topics: (i) what are the dominant discourses circulating on children and early childhood development, and how these inform and shape national early childhood policies, (ii) what is the role of technologies of governance such as parenting interventions as a form of governing early childhood, and (iii) what is the relationship between research and policy making in early childhood, with particular emphasis on the ways in which evidence-based policy making acts on and selectively steers research. To that end, it explores the policy discourses of two multilateral organisations: the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), as well as the national programme ‘Cuna Mas’ of Peru, as a kind of ‘ethnographic case study’, that is, ‘a particular and context-bound setting animated by complex social interactions and relations of power-knowledge’ (Bailey, 2015, p.60).

Using a post-structural approach informed by Foucault’s work, as well as a post-colonial critique, the thesis shows how the science of statistics, along with expert knowledge derived from psychology, economics and neurosciences are strategically deployed to fabricate early childhood development as an object of policy, operating as ‘regimes of truth’; providing a set of principles for ‘truthful’ and intelligible practice. These discourses and truths, and the neo-liberal rationalities in which they are embedded, in turn, serve to legitimise particular forms of intervention or practices of the state aimed at managing certain sections of the population, deemed unable to manage themselves, and ensuring their proper development for the myriad purposes of economic growth, poverty reduction and social order. They create the ‘conditions of possibility’ for an intensive biopolitics of childhood (Nadesan, 2010). It is in this way, I argue, that early childhood development policies act as a *dispositif of security*. In particular, I identify parenting programmes as a neo-liberal technology of government to the extent that they ‘seek to structure the possible field of actions of others’ (parents, caregivers and children), that is, to conduct the conduct of others, as well as have been conceptualised, designed and supported based on a systematic review of scientific evidence on the phenomenon to address (Lemke, 2000, p.5). I also attend to the shepherd-flock relation between ‘Cuna Mas’ (as the provider of expertise and guidance) and the ‘poor’ families (seen as in need of salvation).

Importantly, this thesis is not only interested in the ‘how’ of government, but also on its effects. This involves critically examining how discourses and practices shape how children are understood, and subsequently governed. For example, how children are

construed as potential human capital that can be engineered through ‘positive’ early experiences while at the same time considered ‘delayed’ and ‘unable’, in need of repair (particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds); constructions that have served to justify government intervention in early childhood. Therefore, to put it in Foucault terms, my thesis seeks to understand ‘both the ways in which discourses are constructed and how they change, but also how they shape everyday existence, that is, in part at least, how they “form the objects of which they speak”’ (Ball, 2015a, p.2).

I first became interested in issues of social justice and equity while working as an Economist both in academia and multilateral and bilateral cooperation in projects related to democracy and social capital, health and nutrition, political violence and economic inclusion. However, it was after becoming mother and in particular through my experience as an engaged parent in a socio-constructivist nursery inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy, that I became especially concerned with early childhood education and its relation to broader issues of democracy, social justice and human rights. I felt fascinated with the way children were conceived of as competent and rich, and of how their learning and thinking was made visible through the many pedagogical documentations displayed in the walls of the nursery. Also, I was struck with how children as young as two years old could produce such sophisticated work and organise to make their voices heard in things that matter to them, as when a group of children led a school-wide campaign to eradicate the dog-poo in the near park where they went for outdoor learning (I was one of the parents leading this campaign as part of my role as member in the School Committee for Institutional Projects)².

I spend more than five years (between my two daughters) going every day to the nursery, interacting with teachers, children and other parents. It was during this period (more precisely October 2011), while I was working as programme officer in an international NGO, that I was invited, by the Minister (whom I personally knew), to work in the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion of Peru as advisor on early childhood development and future Director of ‘Cuna Mas’, a new national early childhood programme created by the incoming government of Ollanta Humala (2012-

² Parents participation in Specific Committees was mandatory.

2017) with the aim of improving early childhood development and well-being in children living in poor rural and urban areas.

As 'Cuna Mas's' first Director, I was responsible for leading the design and implementation of the new programme, as well as participating in the design of its impact evaluations. During this process I became aware of the tensions between global discourses about early childhood development, which articulated a view of early childhood as critical for economic and social prosperity and pushed for specific evidence-based early childhood development interventions, and local demands for the design of a contextualised programme based on community values, practices and contexts. As will be discussed later, these tensions were reflected in the texts, arrangements and artefacts which draw on different and sometimes contradictory theories and understandings of the child and early childhood development and education. For instance, the day care service was very much inspired in the Reggio Emilia approach³, whereas the home visiting programme based on a more structured and scientifically-based curriculum. As Ball (1993, p.11) suggests, public policies are developed through a complex process of thinking and writing, subject to the struggles and interests of different actors and voices; and the subsequent outcome of 'the policies themselves, the texts, are not necessarily clear or closed or complete'. Rather, 'the texts are the product of compromises at various stages (at points of initial influence, in the micro-politics of legislative formulation, in the parliamentary process and in the politics and micro-politics of interest group articulation)'. I would add that these different voices come not only from different actors, but also from oneself.

In the specific case of 'Cuna Mas', the discussion and reflection about our image of the child and the purpose of early education and care among staff, families and community members played an important role in clarifying and negotiating the programme's position. Throughout this experience, I became aware of the importance of thinking about our different understandings of children and early childhood development when designing, implementing and evaluating policies, and especially of the groups directly affected by them. This is one of the reasons why I am interested in exploring in more depth how discourses about early childhood are constructed at different levels (global, national, local), and together affect children's experiences and developmental outcomes.

³ The Reggio Emilia approach is an educational philosophy focused on preschool and primary education which values the child as strong, capable and resilient; rich with wonder and knowledge.

A further motivation for conducting this research is that the programme is currently being assessed through a number of quantitative evaluations aimed at measuring the impact of the intervention on child development, based on which the continuity of the programme relies. In effect, according to the Law that creates 'Cuna Más', depending on the programme's impact upon child development, the programme will continue and become institutionalised or shut down. Further, as helpful as these studies might be in measuring the direct impacts of the programme on a set of pre-defined outcomes, they fail to provide a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which the programme shapes and affects the subjects to which it 'speaks'.

On a more personal level, I have myself experienced tensions and doubts in relation to the different discourses about early childhood development and childrearing which have made me question (and continue troubling me) my constitution as mother and as professional working in the field of early childhood. For instance, how to reconcile (if possible at all) the tensions between radically different views of childhood such as those held by developmental psychologists, which understand early childhood development as a universal and predetermined process, against those of poststructuralists and critical educators, which question the very concept of childhood itself. This is a critical issue for professionals working in this field, having to decide what is in the best interest of children in a more general sense, but also in our daily lives as parents, when dealing with the difficult job of raising our children. This is probably the main reason for embarking in this endeavour: to critically examine my own position, not only regarding my understanding of children and early education, but of myself as a subject, shaped by dominant discourses and practices but also with the liberty to decide whom to be.

Finally, I must mention that I voluntarily quit my job as Director of 'Cuna Mas' in October 2013, after two years of intense work at the Ministry, in order to take a family break and pursue doctoral studies. Studying a PhD was already in my plans even before my role as Director. However, I considered that my time in government provided a unique experience on which to draw on my PhD and produce an original and (hopefully) useful thesis to better understand policy formation and enactment, and how it affects the lives of ordinary people.

This thesis is divided in three substantive parts. Following this introduction and the preceding theoretical and methodological chapters, the first part explores the idea of early childhood as an object of thought (and policy more recently), historically constituted and contingently articulated. It draws almost exclusively on literature from and about the global North in order to trace the knowledges and beliefs undergirding contemporary dominant discourses on early childhood development. However, it briefly explores local understandings of children and their development in the Andean culture, where the 'Cuna Mas' programme operated, to examine the differences and similarities against dominant narratives and to better contextualise the analysis of the Peruvian early childhood policy framework and the 'Cuna Mas' programme developed in the following chapters.

Using a genealogical analysis, this section illustrates how the governing of children and early childhood has been constructed and practised in different ways in accordance with shifting historical circumstances and political rationalities. That is to say, the problem spaces of childhood, children and child development, and the connection between these and the distinct logics of government through which they articulated are examined. It begins with the 'reason of state' and then moves on to consider liberalism, welfarism and neo-liberalism; attending to the complexity of the specific historical realities while at the same time looking for regularities and differences in the dominant discourses and practices surrounding children and childhood. It also includes a brief overview of local understandings of children and their development in Peru. The overarching goal of this part is to understand the 'conditions of possibility' for thinking and speaking of children as future potential and of early childhood services as profitable investments in contemporary policy discourse.

The second part of the thesis considers more closely the global contemporary policy terrain. It examines how early childhood development becomes an object of policy, identifying some of the dominant discourses and truths circulating in much global early childhood policies today, what I refer to as the 'global narrative'. It begins by exploring the different understandings of children and early childhood development articulated within two multilateral organisations (the WB and the IDB), drawing attention to some of the tensions and contradictions emerging from the different ways children are constituted within a single document. It moves on to consider how knowledge, or more specifically certain types of knowledge –that which fulfils specific and narrow criteria of quality–alongside statistics, are deployed to construct problem-solution frames that

determine how children are positioned and addressed in policy. It also considers how government intervention in early childhood development is rationalised and, hence, justified as a profitable and 'smart' investment. This part concludes arguing that a neo-liberal episteme operates within the WB and the IDB which produces particular sort of subjects (children and adults) and practices of state (parenting programmes) to ensure that children develop 'appropriately', providing the underpinnings of a neo-liberal rationality for government intervention in early childhood development.

The final part of the thesis critically analysis the formation of policy on early childhood development in a middle-income country in Latin America, tracing the global discourses examined in the previous part. It does so by focusing on a particular site of policy performance and experience: the National Programme 'Cuna Mas' in Peru. Using a policy cycle approach (Ball et al, 1992), it analyses an emerging prioritisation of early childhood development in Peru, and how this translates into policies and interventions, and with what effects. It begins by reconstructing the context of influence, in which 'Cuna Mas' was thought and announced publicly (the midst of a presidential campaign), drawing attention to the shift from a populist to a technocratic discourse for government intervention in early childhood. It locates this movement within a broader policy context informed and shaped by a network of international experts and policy influencers.

Next, it examines the production of two policy texts which provide the framework for early childhood development policy in Peru. Taking some of the themes introduced in the previous part, it explores some of the biopolitics of early childhood policy, analysing the problem-space of government within which 'Cuna Mas' intervenes into disadvantaged communities and families, managing certain sections of the population considered 'at risk'. More specifically, it considers the ways in which policies make up and make possible particular sorts of children (and parents) –the 'delayed child', the 'incompetent parent'. In doing so, it reveals some of the paradoxes and contradictions in the production of policies. The analysis also discusses how policies are rationalised within the state, drawing particular attention to the ways in which they install, embed and join up an arsenal of managerial practices: performance-based budgeting, evidence-based practices, what works and cost-benefit analysis, among others.

It moves on to examine the context of practice, paying attention to the role of context and the ways in which local policy practitioners interpret, translate and resist globalised discourses and practices in attempt to produce more authentic and

contextualised responses. Finally, it explores some of the programme's effects upon pre-defined measures of early childhood development and parenting practices, as well as on political matters such as social justice, equality and freedom. This part concludes arguing that despite clear evidence of policy flow in shaping national policies, there are also signs of active adaptation and recontextualisation by local staff, what some researchers refer to as 'local vernacularisation' or 'glocalisation' where context plays a crucial role. In effect, policies exercise power through the production of 'truth' and 'knowledge' while at the same time revitalising local values and assumptions that may have been previously subjugated.

Theoretical frameworks

This chapter outlines the analytical and conceptual framework developed and deployed in this thesis. Given the nature of my research and my multidisciplinary background, I do not draw on a single theory, nor is my research framed within the boundaries of any particular discipline. Instead, I develop an analytical approach informed by post-structural and postcolonial ideas and concepts to make sense of my data and to think about the relationships between the data and wider social processes (Ball, 2006a). This draws selectively on Foucault's analytic and conceptual 'toolbox', in particular, his concept *dispositif*, which articulates his relational and productive conception of power, and his analytical and philosophical commitment to archaeology and Nietzschean genealogy (Bailey, 2015). At the same time, I use insights from postcolonial theory to explore how power operates when indigenous people and children are involved in research, as well as to reflect about my own position as researcher.

In this endeavour, I take theory to be a 'necessity', playing 'a central role in forming and reforming key research questions, invigorating the interpretation of research, and ensuring reflexivity in relation to research practice and the social production of research' (Ball, 2006a, p.1). Here it is important to clarify that theory is not conceived of as a fixed or unquestionable body of knowledge. Rather, I see theory as dynamic and unfinished, and constantly redefined as we engage with existing knowledge in a dialogic relationship whereby, we as researchers do things with theory and theory does things for us and to us. Accordingly, a theory is best treated as a set of working hypotheses which may need to be modified—refined, revised, or rejected—in light of future inquiry and experience. Foucault's work is particularly useful from this epistemological position as it 'invites the reader to participate in the making of meaning rather than simply be subject to it', creating 'spaces for the reader and user to be creative and to be adventurous' (Ball, 2006b, p.5). Indeed, Foucault's understanding of the book as 'experience' where its main purpose is to transform both the writer and the reader guides this research.

Choosing the frame for my research is not a trivial decision; rather, it involves reflecting about how I believe knowledge can be produced and analysed in an ethical, transparent and respectful manner. At the same time, it involves thinking carefully about how my own biases and background might affect my research, as well as trying to anticipate the potential outcomes and uses of my study so as to prevent any harmful

effects. As Hugh suggests, 'a researcher's view of the world influences their choice of paradigm, and that paradigm effectively determines their methods and the type of knowledge they produce' (in Mac Naughton et al., 2010, p. 35). Further, it affects how we 'see' our research topic and the nature of our interpretations and recommendations. Therefore, what we learn about the world from our investigation will be deeply influenced by our choice of paradigm. However, I agree with Hugh when he argues that 'we should try to keep an open mind about the paradigm we favour and be prepared to try different ones' (Ibid, p. 36).

This chapter is organised as follows. First, I develop a post-structural theoretical framework informed by the work of Michel Foucault. I examine the three axes of the *dispositif* -truth, power and subjectivation- considering how these have been reinscribed in post-structuralist theory in an attempt to move on from positivist and modernist conceptions that prioritise rationality, science and objectivity towards one which embraces complexity, diversity and subjectivity. I introduce the study of government as an entry point to examining how possible action is structured and conduct governed. I continue discussing the potential of problematisations, and, in particular, the use of policy texts as an analytical tool to examine the 'how' of government. Finally, I offer brief remarks on the main insights of postcolonial theory and how this attend to the question of power within the research relationship, especially when children and indigenous peoples are considered. However, it should be added that, while I explain some of the key analytical concepts informing this thesis below, other concepts and literature will also be introduced and operationalised at appropriate points in subsequent chapters.

A post-structural perspective

A post-structural perspective recognises that there is a 'pre-discursive' reality 'out there', but we can have no direct access to it except through language, concepts, thought – truths of various kinds. That is to say, in practice, reality is nominal. Any attempt to describe it will always be inflected and mediated by discourse. It is important to underline that this type of analysis does not make claims about the true nature of social reality. The aim of post-structural analysis is not to establish a final truth for, as Edwards and Nicoll (2001, p. 105) point out, 'the claim to truth can itself be seen as a powerful rhetorical practice'. Instead, it is mainly concerned with examining how and what truths are produced, and with what effects both on 'what we

do (with implications for equity and social justice) and what we are (with implications for subjectivity)' (Ball, 2015a, p. 1).

In this thesis, I seek to explore the complex dynamics of relationships between knowledge, power and technologies of government and how these affect children and parents' beliefs, experiences and subjectivities. In what follows, I will try to define and describe how post-structural ideas and concepts will be deployed throughout this thesis. This is not an easy task as there is not a precise definition of what post-structural work is or how should one go about 'doing' post-structural analysis. Rather, there are many different interpretations and applications of its ideas and concepts. Here, I will present my own reading of post-structuralism, which has been enriched by the work of other post-structuralist thinkers.

A study of power, truth and subjectivation

The question of government, as I argue in this thesis, cannot be problematised without attending to Foucault's three 'axes' of analysis or 'aspects of experience' (Olssen 2006 p. 185 in Ball, 2016) - truth, power and subjectivation. As I will try to illustrate over the course of this study, the establishment of certain truths about the species body, in this case children, and their circulation and appropriation by existing apparatuses of power are crucial for the emergence, consolidation and legitimization of technologies of government that affect and shape bodies, souls and minds, acting on people's subjectivities. Before doing that, however, I consider necessary to examine the epistemological and ontological considerations undergirding these three analytic concepts.

For Foucault, power is not a thing or an essence that can be 'acquired, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip' (Foucault, 1978, p. 94). Power, as such, does not exist; it circulates, distributes and organises the social space. It is simply, as Deleuze (1990) argues, a 'third dimension of space'. Therefore, power cannot be attributed to institutions or things. Rather, power is a *relational* and *productive* set of forces operable in any given society through different mechanisms and devices which do not rely solely on rational discourse or overt coercion. It is the system –more or less organised, more or less authoritarian, but always reversible- of relations that weaves and keeps in tension (Chignola, 2018, p.239, own translation). It arises from the bottom up and is embedded in the mundane social relations: 'power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile

relations' (Foucault, 1978, p. 94). Foucault (1997) explains his theory of power relations as follows,

When I speak of relations of power, I mean that in human relationships...power is always present: I mean a relationship in which one person tries to control the conduct of the other...these power relations are mobile, they can be modified they are not fixed once and for all...[they are] thus mobile, reversible, and unstable. It should also be noted that power relations are possible only insofar as the subjects are free. If one of them were completely at the other's disposal and became his thing, an object on which he could wreak boundless and limitless violence, there wouldn't be any relations of power. Thus, in order for power relations to come into play, there must be at least a certain degree of freedom on both sides (quoted in St. Pierre, 2000. pp.289-290).

With this move, Foucault disrupts the concept of power in that it augments the notion of 'sovereign power', held and exercised by those in 'positions of power', with the idea of 'disciplinary power', which is productive and formative (Youdell, 2006b, p.35). 'Discipline "makes individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and instruments of its exercises' (Foucault, 1977, p.170). Importantly, disciplinary power 'shapes individuals – neither with nor without their consent. It does not use violence. Instead individuals are trained or moulded to serve the needs of power' (Ramson, 1998, p.37 in Dahlberg et.al, 2007). It achieves its goals through the constraints of a conformity that must be achieved; a norm defined by expertise (disciplines) as a standard of some kind against which individuals are assessed and categorised as normal or abnormal. Disciplinary power normalises, shaping the individuals towards a particular norm, steering or guiding the subject to a desired end preferably without their awareness of what is happening. That is to say that the exercise of power, in itself, is not necessarily violent, destructive or repressive; rather, it is productive, it produces subjects: the normal/abnormal, successful/unsuccessful, intelligent/stupid. Thus, Foucault argues, 'we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes", it "represses", it "censors", it "abstracts", it "masks", it "conceals". In fact, power produces; it produces reality' (Foucault, 1979, p.194).

In this way, Foucault moves beyond traditional conceptualization of power as something visible, abusive and intentional to examine how power operates in less direct and obvious ways; labelling, categorizing and restricting certain groups and individuals, masking itself in discourses of democracy, human rights and equality, and reproducing itself. He seeks to reveal not the deep structure or essence of power, but

the different 'games' of strategy that shape our daily lives. From this perspective, the effects of power can be produced without intent or purpose, or even as a result of 'well-intentioned' policies and interventions. This point is particularly relevant in the analysis of social policies which are often designed and implemented with the goal of 'improving' the lives of the less privileged, but which, following Foucault, have the potential of reproducing power relations and unequal social outcomes.

As I will show in the following chapters, disciplinary power works through various means and technologies, and truth, knowledge and discourse play a central role. For Foucault, truth and knowledge are not something that occur outside the field of human activity nor is their emergence seen as based on rationality or produced only from observation. Rather, they are conceived of as constructed within the interplay of the power relations circulating in discourse and cultural practice. They are 'that of which one can speak in a discursive practice' (Foucault, 1972, p. 182). Truth is not the production of 'true' statements, but the regulation of fields where the division between truth and false can be 'governed' (Foucault, 1982b, p.66), whereas knowledge is understood 'not as a reflection and transmitter of external truths, but as contingent and constructed and linked intimately to power' (Youdell, 2017, p.35). Thus, it follows, truth and knowledge cannot be separated from power: truth itself is power; it produces institutions and determines effects. In Foucault's (1982b, p. 27) words, 'Power and knowledge directly imply one another; there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations'. For example, the human sciences enable modern power to circulate through finer channels; they make certain forms of practice possible, indeed necessary (Ball, 2016).

Foucault works not in the sense of a critic of ideology, but on a politics of the truth. The task then is precisely to liberate truth from the regimes of 'veridiction' in which it operates or has operated until now (Foucault, 1992, p.200). 'The issue is not the essential truth or falseness of a claim, whether it is right or wrong in some absolute and objective sense: rather, the issue is how particular claims come to be treated in a particular time and place as if they were true knowledge' (Dahlberg et al, 2007). Truth is an event, as Chignola argues, and as such, cannot be verified, demonstrated or recovered. He continues: 'Truth must be *produced* by the relation of force that imposes it' (p.22). 'To say things clearly –Foucault notes- my problem consists on knowing how men govern (themselves and others) through the production of truth'.

He wanted to understand how particular truths/practices were established through institutions and professions to subjectify social actors.

Discourses are strongly implicated with the constitution of truth; they 'mobilise truth claims and constitute rather than simply reflect social reality' (Ball, 2010, p.5). They are *productive* and a *mechanism of power*.

Discourses are about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority. Discourses embody the meaning and use of propositions and words. Thus, certain possibilities for thought are constructed. Words are ordered and combined in particular ways and other combinations are displaced or excluded. (Ball 1993, p.14).

From this perspective, discourses are understood 'not simply as a form of rhetoric disseminated by hegemonic economic and political groups, nor as the framework within which people represent their lived experience, but rather as a system of meaning that constitute institutions, practices and identities in contradictory and disjunctive ways' (Larner, 2000, p. 12). Discourses do not need to be explicitly cited in order to be deployed. Rather, multiple discourses are referenced through the meanings, associations and omissions embedded in the historicity of apparently simple and benign utterances and bodily practices (Butler quoted in Youdell, 2006c, p. 514). For Foucault, those discourses that exercise a decisive influence on a specific practice can be seen as *dominant discursive regimes*, or *regimes of truth*, which serve a regulatory function, organizing our everyday experience of the world (Dahlberg et al, 2007, p.31). Crucial to this understanding of discourse is a conceptualization of language as constitutive of reality and subjectivity. That is, in contrast to humanist theorizations of language as transparent, only naming and reflecting with words that which already exists in the world; language plays a decisive role in constructing the world. 'The language that we use shapes and directs our way of looking at and understanding the world, and the way we name different phenomena and objects becomes a form of convention' (Dahlberg et al. 2007, p.31).

Foucault was concerned in addressing the structures and rules that constitute a discourse. He wanted to uncover the procedures of exclusion -namely prohibition, the division of madness and the will to truth, which control, select, organise and redistribute the production of discourse, in order to understand how these affect the right to speak and allow certain statements to be made and others to be silenced or excluded. By looking beyond the text, Foucault aimed to understand how 'what is said

fits into a network that has its own history and conditions of existence' (Barrett, 1991, p. 126), that is, how historical and interested truth-effects are being produced in language and cultural practice. However, Foucault was interested not only in the ways in which discourses are produced and transformed, but also how they 'shape everyday existence' (Olssen, 2006, p. 195 in Ball, 2016), that is, how they 'systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). In particular, his studies concerned with punishment and sexuality illustrate how the subject is produced within relations of power through technologies of subjection deployed within institutions that categorise, classify, normalise, hierarchize and surveill the individual (Youdell, 2006c).

Foucault refers to the process by which the subject is constituted and constrained through discourse as subjectivation. According to him, 'the person is *subjectivated*-she/he is at once rendered a subject and subjected to relations of power through discourse' (Youdell, 2006c, p.517). In this way, Foucault disrupts the notion of an essential self – 'unitary, coherent and stable' (Davies, 1989), arguing instead that we are produced discursively; that is, what we are is dependent on the discourses of our time (Ball, 2015a). Thus, far from being an empirical or knowledgeable object waiting to be discovered and emancipated through the removal of social constraints (as in humanist theories of the subject); the self is a subjectivity produced within the discourses in which it is positioned and positions itself. It is through discourse that meanings and people are made and through which power relations are maintained and changed (Mac Naughton et al., 2010). In effect, a growing literature shows how the discourses of the 'good' student, mother, or teacher regulate individuals both by establishing systems of monitoring and compensation, and by creating a desire to be good. In this process, the individual becomes more docile, judging itself from within the discourse. The possibilities for action become constructed within discourses as sets of conditions which enable and constrain 'the socially productive "imagination"' (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 34). As St. Pierre (2000, p.485) observes

Once a discourse becomes "normal" and "natural", it is difficult to think and act outside it. Within the rules of a discourse, it makes sense to say only certain things. Other statements and other ways of thinking remain unintelligible, outside the realm of possibility.

Crucially, then, discourses do have real consequences. They work in a very material way through social institutions to construct realities that control both the actions and bodies of people. As illustrated above, they have the power to shape how people are

understood; establishing and organising subject positions 'from which people are "invited" (summoned) to speak, listen, act, read, work, think, feel, behave and value' (Gee et al. 1996, p. 10). It is in this sense that discourses operate as a form of power, serving as a basis to practices that shape, regulate and normalize those who are the discourse subjects through disciplinary technologies and technologies of the self that act on our bodies, minds and souls. Foucault (1970, p.53) observes: 'Discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized'. That is, power exists within and among discourse and practice, and the subject is subjected to the effects of that power: a subject defined as a function of statement and as an effect of practice.

However, this account of discourse does not necessarily imply that discourse is guaranteed. Rather, as Youdell (2006c, p.515) observes, 'while particular discourses prevail in some contexts and endure over time, the potential for the meanings of these to shift and/or for subordinate discourses to unsettle these remains'. In effect, discourses are not 'closed systems; the silences and ambiguities of discourse provide the possibilities of refashioning them, the discovery of other conceptualizations, the revision of accepted truths' (Heckman 1990 quoted in St Pierre, 2000, p.187). Foucault (1981, p.101) makes this point clear:

Discourse can be both an instrument and effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it...

Foucault's later work insists on the possibility of refusal in power relations intrinsic to the productive nature of discourse; of being otherwise through the self-conscious practices of subjects. That is, the subject, despite being regulated and inscribed by discourse and cultural practice, can learn how not to be governed so much; to resist those normalizing inscriptions and their material effects by moving from a discourse where only certain statements can be made to another where different statements are possible. In effect, Foucault's own description of subjectivization as 'the procedure by which one obtains the constitution of a subject, or more precisely, of a subjectivity which is of course only one of the given possibilities of organization of a self-consciousness' (in Youdell, 2006c, p.517) illustrates this contingent subject. This means that subjectivity is not fixed or stable but in a state of permanent change, as it

positions and repositions itself and is changed and reacts to the changing discourse. Indeed, from this perspective, subjectivity itself becomes a site of struggle enacted by not engaging in the disciplinary or discursive practices and opposing the immediacy of power (Ball, 2015a). As Hughes (2010, p.50-51) argues,

For poststructuralists, everything and everyone can –and does- shift and change all the time, and the task of the researcher is to explain this constant instability without attempting to “capture” or stabilise it. (...). This instability derives from their (the subjects) status as both a ‘product’ and a ‘producer’ of languages –unstable systems in which the meaning of something can never be finally fixed because it may have several, different, mutually defining “others”. Thus, the subject is continually (re-) constructed by her/himself and other, adopting one or more “subjectivities” that may be mutually contradictory; and he or she understands the world in ways that may be inconsistent or incoherent.

An understanding of power in these terms makes it more difficult to examine it. In effect, Chignola (2018, p.25) argues that power can be analysed only there where it makes itself visible, from that which resists it: ‘resistance to power allows to trace its profile and trajectory; it evinces that upon which relations of power inscribe, its points of application, and the methods upon which it draws’ (own translation). Furthermore, he continues, ‘not only resistance anticipates and precedes power, but this cannot be analysed searching a supposed internal rationality’ (Ibid). What characterizes power is its capacity or not to solve strategic confrontations: the basis of power relations is the warlike clash between forces (Foucault, 2001, p.30). If, as Foucault argues, power is not a ‘thing’, something one can possess, then it follows that we should not be studying power ‘from its internal point of view’ but rather we should look at how power itself works, how it operates at the local level - what he refers to as the micro-physics of power, and examine ‘its real and institutional effects (Foucault, 2003, p. 97). That is to say, we need to analyse power from outside and beyond the judicial framework; to look at the mundane everyday where we see the effects of truth; where we are subjected to truth. In Foucault words, we need to decentre the analysis of power and displace it to the processes of circulation of power in the social fabric.

This involves studying power through the dispositifs and rules that produce and establish truth effects (Foucault, 2001, p.33). Foucault’s concept of *dispositif* precisely captures this orientation and is critically applied in this thesis as an analytical device for investigating the ‘micro-physics’ and ‘immanence’ of power, that is, the different ways in which power operates in minute and molecular ways in individual and heterogeneous encounters. At the same time, *dispositif* is undergirded by a

perspective on the contingent and fabricated 'nature' of social reality and subjectivity as described above, and in that sense, is also applied as 'a critical tool for exposing the ways in which the present is conditioned and fabricated within, and by, multiple forces of enablement and constraint' (Bailey, 2015, p.3). Here, the *dispositif* is understood, following Revel (2008), as a substitute term for *episteme*. In one of the few texts where Foucault (1977) provides a definition of the *dispositif* he emphasises, 'what I call *dispositif* is a much more general case of *episteme*', it is characterised by a more pronounced heterogeneity of its constitutive elements. The *dispositif* is not only the epistemic order that regulates what can be said and formulated in a specific period of time, but the relations of force that imposes knowledges and feeds from knowledge. It is 'strategies of relations of force supporting certain types of knowledge, and being supported by them' (Foucault, 1985, p.130). A *dispositif* is:

A resolutely heterogeneous combination of 'discourses', institutions, architectural edifices, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific pronouncements and philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions: in short, both things that were spoken of and things that were not (Foucault, 1994, p.299).

With the concept *dispositif* Foucault moves beyond discursive analysis, or, better said, decenters his own analytics from the archives of the texts of philosophy to get access to the space where knowledge interacts with material objects and practices to produce subjectivities. It is in this way that he is able to account for the non-discursive dimensions of reality. Importantly, the *dispositif* emerges in a determined period of time and specific field as a response to a strategic objective: any *dispositif* will be, albeit initially, formed in response to an 'urgent need' and perform a 'dominant strategic function' (Foucault, 1980a, p. 195). For example, the prison emerged as a mechanism to manage and discipline a mobile, undisciplined and poor population for labour in a mercantilist society. In this thesis, I will argue that 'Cuna Mas' works as a *dispositif of security* to the extent that it is targeted to poor and extremely poor children and families with an attempt to modify their practices and improve their children's outcomes with the overall goal of closing gaps and promoting social inclusion.

A study of government

Cutting across this thesis is the question of government; the government of children in general, and the government of the disadvantaged child in particular. Broadly speaking, a governmentality approach is concerned with exploring the ways in which individuals and populations are governed, that is, how the 'conduct of conduct' is

accomplished. It pays attention to the couplings of forms of knowledge, strategies of domination and technologies of the self and how these productive encounters materialise in discourses, practices, and subjectivities that enable the government of individuals and populations. According to Dean (2002b, pp. 119-120):

The study of government further leads us to an investigation of the means, techniques and instruments by which these ends of government are to be realized. This is a study of the technologies of government ... It also enables us to examine the kinds of individual and collective identity, and forms of subjectivity and agency, which are 'constructed' by these rationalities and technologies of government ... All this is part of a kind of 'thick' description of aspects of government.

The problem of government assumed a central place in Foucault's work, especially after the publication of the *History of Sexuality*, playing a key role in his analytics of power. Foucault uses the notion of government in a comprehensive sense geared strongly to the older meaning of the term. In addition to the management by the state or the administration, 'government' also signified problems of self-control, guidance for the family and for children, management of the household, government of the sick and directing the soul. For this reason, Foucault defines government as conduct, or, more precisely, as 'the conduct of conduct' and thus as a term which ranges from 'governing the self' to 'governing others' (Foucault, 1982a). He argued that from the sixteenth century:

A new kind of power arose with novel tactics and new strategic objectives. At the heart of this change was a displacement in the theory and practice of statecraft away from the sovereignty of the monarch and towards a concern for 'government', where the latter refers not only to the person governing but also to a wide variety of efforts in both the 'public' and 'private' spheres to *shape the human material at one's disposal*...Governance, as it turned out, had less to do with forcing people to do what the sovereign wanted and more to do with *steering them in the desired direction* without coercion (Ramson, 1997, p.28-29 quoted in Dahlberg et al 2007, p.29)

Foucault identified two different technologies for governing that emerged during the transformation from the juridical scheme to a market regime. On the one hand, what he calls 'discipline'; the system of practices through which the living body is invested to make it socially compatible and economically productive. This 'discipline' shapes the individual according to the criteria (the norm) which regulates the field where it is located; a norm produced by expertise -the 'technicians' of training (for example, pedagogues)-, who design instruments, modalities and content to shape the body in

a specific function. Through these, the individual becomes observed, examined and monitored closely to guarantee normalisation. Broadly speaking, it is in this way that discipline fabricates individuals. On the other hand, governmentality, which Foucault identifies as a technology that acts beyond the individual body, in the opposite direction, that is, massification. Here, the new subject is the population, not society or the individual.

By introducing the problematics of government, Foucault was able to investigate the connections between what he calls technologies of the self (explored in his genealogies of the subject and ethics) and technologies of domination (explored in his genealogy of the state), the constitution of the subject to the formation of the state and make explicit the forms of truth and knowledge which are brought to bear upon individuals and practices through the exercise of expertise. In this way, the study of government adumbrates the close link between forms of power and processes of subjectification (Lemke, 2001). At the same time, it enables him to move beyond a conceptualization of power that centres either on consensus or violence towards one that conceives power as foremost about guidance. This is not to say, however, that consensus or violence are excluded as forms of power. Instead, it means that ‘they are reformulated as means of government among others, they are rather “elements” or “instruments” than the “foundation” or “source” of power’ (Lemke, 2002, p.51).

Lemke’s (2002) formulation of government as a ‘more or less systematized, regulated and reflected modes of power (a “technology”) that go beyond the spontaneous exercise of power over others, following a specific form of reasoning (a “rationality”) which defines the *telos* of action or the adequate means to achieve it’ draws attention to the strategic character of government. In other words, conducting the conduct of others requires that thought and action be structured in advance. This, in turn, entails and requires biopolitical knowledge of the species body (Nadesan, 2010) which often derives from expert understandings (in the case of early childhood, from knowledge formations produced by educational, psychological, and psychiatric authorities). As Foucault (2007, p.474) observes, “biopolitics” aims to treat the “population” as a set of coexisting living beings with particular biological and pathological features, and which falls under specific forms of knowledge and technique.

Lemke refers to the potential of the concept of government for articulating an alternative critique of neo-liberalism that moves away from traditional views of neo-liberalism as ideology, as an economic political reality, or as a practical

'antihumanism' to one that is interested in exploring how a neo-liberal rationality functions as a 'politics of truth', producing new forms of knowledge, inventing new notions and concepts that contribute to the 'government' of new domains of regulation and intervention:

By situating the processes of theory construction and the invention of concepts in a socio-historical space, the concept of governmentality allows us to problematize their truth-effects. It thus becomes possible to account for the performative character of theorizing, that could be comprehended as a form of 'truth politics'. This 'strategic' conception of theory should prevent us from a very serious flaw that dominates much contemporary critique: the 'essentialisation of the critique of essentialism' (Lemke, 2002, p.61).

This research is interested in exploring how the establishment of certain 'truths' about the species body, in this case child development, and their circulation and appropriation by existing apparatuses of power are crucial for the emergence, consolidation and legitimisation of technologies of government of children and childhood. That is to say, how truth and power create the 'conditions of possibility' of government. In what follows, I briefly outline the concept of problematisations and its potential in 'reflecting on governing practices and the role they play in constituting kinds of subjects and forms of "object" that make rule possible' (Bacchi, 2012, p.5).

A study of problematisations

Foucault used the term problematisations both to describe his method of analysis, which he defined as 'thinking problematically', and to refer to a historical process of producing objects for thought (Bacchi, 2012, p.1). Problematisation as a method of analysis seeks to approach questions differently, to 'enquire into the terms of reference within which an issue is cast' (Ibid, p.1). Accordingly, emphasis is not placed on searching for the true cause(s) of social phenomena and the corresponding correct intervention(s), but on examining 'how it is "questioned, analysed, classified and regulated" at "specific times and under specific circumstances"' (Deacon, 2000, p. 127). As a process of producing objects for thought, problematisations concern with uncovering 'how and why certain things (behaviour, phenomena, processes) become a problem' (Foucault 1985, p. 115), or as Deacon (2000, p. 139) puts it how they are shaped as particular objects for thought.

For Foucault, problematisations emerge in practices. Therefore, to understand how a phenomenon is constructed as a problem, we need to examine the actual practices

involving those designated as 'the problem'. In particular, we need to focus on 'practices involved in governing (understood broadly), practices that "contain institutionally legitimated claims to truth"' (Rabinow, 2003, p.20). Here, practices are understood as involving not only the actual actions but also the political structures, laws, reports, guidelines and the various bodies of knowledges on which these are grounded and that serve to legitimise the regulation of those affected by them. As Foucault (1991b, p. 75) puts it, "practices" are "places" where 'what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted meet and interconnect'. They have a judicative component, establishing and applying norms, controls and exclusions ('rules imposed'), and a veridicative component, rendering 'true/false' discourse possible ('reasons given') (Flynn, 2005, p. 31). The term practice therefore 'describes the "intelligible background" for actions—which Foucault calls "thought"—"a preconceptual, anonymous, socially sanctioned body of rules that governs one's manner of perceiving, judging, imagining and acting"' (Ibid).

Hence, practices shape emergent individuals and relations. Through practices, we are constituted as particular kinds of subjects, while the multiplicity of practices ensures the always incomplete nature of these subject-ivation processes (Eveline & Bacchi, 2010: pp. 139-141 in Bacchi, 2012, p.3).

The concrete practice of punishment in schools can help illustrate this in that children's punishment can be seen as grounded, on one hand, on specific rules of conduct established by the school, and, on the other, on an accepted 'truth' that children learn to regulate their behaviour in response to disciplinary measures. In other words, as with the regulation of criminals, mad people and sexuality, those governing children rely on knowledge and truths about them to define, regulate and shape them in ways that serve their interests, be that promoting children's 'full' potential, guaranteeing a future source of human capital or securing the nation's health.

In the case of this research, the study of the problematisation of early childhood development involves examining what is done in relation to children; how are they constituted and treated; what institutions and methods are put in place to discipline, control, educate and care for them; what authorities are responsible for deciding about children's affairs; what laws, decrees, manuals and educational materials concerned with childhood and parenting are produced to regulate and, to some extent, prescribe how children are expected to develop and be raised; in short, looking at the network of institutions and practices in which children are 'caught and defined' (Foucault, 1969

in Eribon, 1991, p. 214). In this way, the study of problematisations allows us to question the presumed 'naturalness' of specific social phenomena, such as early childhood, and in doing so, to understand how these have been constituted, framed, regulated and ultimately emerged as a problem to address. Further, it allows us to raise a number of new questions, such as: How did childhood and early child development come to be seen as a 'problem'? What forms of governing practice (surveillance, discipline, self-government, etc.) are enabled where these are constructed as a problem? How have different disciplines tried to explain childhood and developmental inequalities? What are the effects of these formulations in the lives of those children who are constituted as 'delayed'/'disadvantaged'? As Bacchi (2012, p.2) puts it,

The main purpose of studying problematisations, therefore, is to "dismantle" objects (e.g. "sexuality", "madness") as taken-for-granted fixed essences (Foucault, 1991a [1981]: p. 29 in Rabinow, 2009: p. 29) and to show how they have come to be (...) Studying how these "things" emerge in the historical process of problematisation puts their presumed natural status in question and allows us to trace the relations—"connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies on so on" (Foucault 1991b: p. 76)—that result in their emergence as objects.

Crucially, by disrupting their taken-for-granted status as truth it renders 'fixed' objects contingent and fluid, thus opening up 'relations of ruling for critical scrutiny' (Ibid). In this way, problematisations provide 'innovative research strategies that make politics, understood as the complex strategic relations that shape lives, visible' (Bacchi, 2012, p.1). This form of analysis has been taken up in public policy, politics and comparative politics. Building on these ideas, and further extending them, Bacchi (1999, 2009) developed an approach to policy analysis which states that 'it is possible to use public policies and policy proposals as starting places to access the problematisations through which we are governed'. According to Bacchi, 'all policy proposals rely on problematisations which can be opened up and studied to gain access to the "implicit system in which we find ourselves"'. From this starting place, 'it becomes possible to tease out the complex strategic relations that produce "things"' (Bacchi, 2012, p. 3-4). This is grounded on the premise that 'what we say we want to do about something indicates what we think needs to change and hence how we constitute the "problem"' (Ibid, p.4). Accordingly, this research analyses early childhood policies as a way to explore how early childhood development has become an object of policy.

A postcolonial critique

Doing research which involves children, indigenous communities and 'poor' families creates new perspectives when thinking about truth, power and subjectivity. Issues such as racialization, discrimination, imperialism and colonization surface as important concepts to consider in my analytical framework. In particular, I take Martin's (2010) characterization of research as 'a tool of colonialism that can erase, erode, silence or marginalise' (p.86) as a warning to be especially alert to the effects of my research. As he suggests 'unless these power dynamics are first made conscious, then made explicit and then addressed, research will never deliver on the promise of equity and quality' (Ibid, p.86).

In this sense, I consider postcolonial theory as providing a conceptual frame to understand where and how power relationships occur in early childhood research and to challenge them. By focusing on the particular assumptions that the researcher brings to the research, as well as on the researchers positioning to knowledge, knowing and meaning making and the nature of the relationships established between researchers and participants, it allows to examine how power is exercised in the research process (Martin, 2010). This is critical in order to understand how it can be different and to make it different. In what follows, I examine the main ideas underpinning postcolonial critique looking at their potential encounters with Foucauldian analytics of power, and how these have been put to work in early childhood studies.

Postcolonial studies is a body of scholarship concerned with the legacy of colonialism and, in particular, how it legitimises discourses which support the hegemony of those who colonised and a constructed inferiority of those who were colonised. According to Canella and Viruru (2004, p.15),

Possibly the mayor reason for the existence of postcolonial theory, is that the establishment of colonies for the purpose of exploitation did much more than simply extract wealth (Loomba, 1998). Economies were restructured setting up a flow of both humans and capital that produced economic imbalances that made the industrial growth of Europe possible. Such systems resulted in conditions in which direct internal political control by the colonizers was not necessary because economic control was more secure and lasting. Further, this created a global system of capitalism imperialism through which capitalist economies established colonies that could provide human resources (like labour) to maintain the colonizers capital growth.

In addition to economic exploitation, and in order to secure it, colonial powers deployed different methods to legitimise the subjugation of large populations, including the categorisation of native populations as lacking, deficient, not advanced. This is thoroughly documented in Edward Said's 'Orientalism' (1978), often regarded as the origin of postcolonial studies, where he argues that colonial rule was justified by the construction of an Oriental/Western binary which represented the East as exotic, mysterious, and strange; the contrast to the rational and superior West. This dichotomous perspective constructs the East as the 'other', as those who are not as intelligent, powerful, or advanced as those in the West.

Canella and Viruru (2004) argue that the myth of a superior West and the belief that parts of the world are still underdeveloped are currently prevalent. This can be seen in the division of the world into hierarchical categories created by the West: First, Second, and Third Worlds. As Escobar (1995) explains, this construction of an inferior world represents a certain Western perspective that would create power over particular peoples by universalizing and homogenizing. Indeed, one of the main tenets of postcolonial theory is that colonialism still exists; that colonialist impositions are contemporary issues and imperialism 'continues to be played out in economic structures, societal institutions and ways that people view themselves, as well as through continued physical occupation in various locations of the world' (Canella and Viruru, 2004, p.11).

Postcolonialism embodies the recognition of the Western imperialist project, followed by historical attempts to physically decolonize, while at the same time leaving nations and peoples living under one form of imperialist political and economic domination that is spreading to include power over identity(ies) and intellect, contemporarily infused with active critique and innovative interventions that would challenge oppression, objectification, and othering (Young, 2001, in Canella and Viruru, p19).

Here, Young is referring to democracy and capitalism. According to postcolonial scholars, capitalism has become the one great unescapable power, where democracy has played its part in setting the foundations for capitalism to take root. In relation to this, Cervantes–Rodriguez (2002 cited in Canella and Viruru, 2004) argues that the creation of international divisions of labour that perpetuate this capitalist world system and the creation of globalised racialised identities are intertwined and continue to dominate the world. For instance, 'capitalist production perspectives create biological categories like women, children, and adult males that define and regulate human

beings based on productive capacity and market value' (Canella and Viruru, 2004, p.23). This capitalist labour, regulated by well-defined processes and by principles of efficiency and organization create the belief that human activity is measurable, homogenous, and marketable, changing the ways of societies. In Foucault (1979, p.55) terms, a disciplinary power is created through 'codes of factory regulation, the relationship between machinery and men, stage legislation guiding the organization of factory lives'.

In addition, studies using postcolonial interpretations and critiques have demonstrated that hegemonic epistemological orientations, dominant languages, and privileged discursive practices generate power for particular groups over others. For instance, Lerner (1986) illustrates how colonialism operates through constructions of hierarchy and privilege as in patriarchy, where males and females are considered essentially different from each other, with males being stronger, more rational, and naturally superior. Feminists would even argue that Western thought is grounded in patriarchy and that the assumptions of patriarchal discourses and practice are prevalent through colonialism and imperialism: 'the logic Enlightenment/modernism that has been forced on the colonised is a linear, male-constructed form of reason and hierarchical power that reinforces the notion that one group is superior to another' (Canella and Viruru, 2004, p.21). This same imperialist assumption of superiority is evidenced in relation to children, Indigenous and black people (Canella, 1997).

Foucault's conceptualization of power has been particularly useful in providing a 'unique insight into the complexities and workings of colonialist power, especially related to the social, emotional, and intellectual inscription of particular views of the world as dominant, even as superior' (Canella and Viruru, 2004, p.60). For example, the understanding of language and literacy through the lens of both post-structural and postcolonial ideas illuminates how the conception of language and literacy as a truth and as necessary has been crucial in the continuing colonization of the world. Indeed, language and literacy have been used as critical features to distinguish between 'civilization and barbarism' (Seed, 1991, p.8) and, through that, to maintain colonial power as those civilizations who use written languages are seen as superior to those who do not (Tiffin and Lawson, 1994 in Canella and Viruru, 2004). This point is especially relevant to my research as the proportion of illiterate people among the population receiving the 'Cuna Mas' programme is much higher than in any other group of population within Peru, which has partially contributed to their constitution as delayed, incompetent and ignorant. In relation to this, I would tend to agree with the

growing body on critical literacy which shows that literacy, as language, is another false fact created in a particular social and political context in which it is valued. In fact, human beings have functioned very successfully in a range of times and cultures without being literate.

However, postcolonial scholarship is not only concerned with examining the causes, expressions and implications of colonialism but it is mainly committed to developing 'new forms of engaged theoretical work' (Young, 2001, p.7) in the pursuit of social transformation for liberation.

Above all, postcolonialism seeks to intervene, to force its alternative knowledges into the power structures of the west as well as the non-west. It seeks to change the way people think, the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between different people in the world.

Postcolonial scholars tend to agree that, although we should never forget that physical colonization still exists in some areas around the world, contemporary methods used to construct forms of Empire are much less obvious and more seductive requiring 'revelation, critique, and resistance' (Canella and Viruru, 2004, p.60). In this way, theory is seen both as a catalyst for action and as productive itself in the struggle against domination and for equal access. But, as Chakrabarty (2000) argues, decolonization is not necessarily about rejecting or discarding Western thought; it is about 'recognising how dominant, established ways of knowing are at the same time "indispensable and inadequate", and how this kind of thought can be "renewed from and for the margins"' (in Canella and Viruru, 2004, p.29). It is about 'possibilities for liberation from the range of locations that we inhabit, from the unthought of recesses of our beings, and from our collective will to hear, see, and respect the multiplicity of lives that inhabit our world' (Ibid, p.29). In this endeavour, postcolonial critique challenges truth-oriented disciplines, arguing that disciplinary knowledge colonizes, while seeking connections across disciplines and between different intellectual traditions. Thus, postcolonial critiques have attempted to recognize the complexity of life through such notions as border lives, hybridity, and transcultural/transnational existences (Canella and Viruru, 2004).

In the field of early childhood studies, postcolonial ideas have been used to analyse the construction of the child and the pedagogical practices, spaces and techniques of evaluation associated with it. Drawing on the work of a range of postcolonial scholars and their own research, Canella and Viruru (2004) suggest that childhood is a

colonizing construct that 'attempts to construct subjects, and even objects, of/for the Empire' (p.85). They claim that the knowledge generated through the study and observation of the child creates a colonizing discourse that produces children as fragile, lacking and in need of protection, which has been used to legitimate systems of surveillance and control over them. Indeed, as several studies have demonstrated, the child is physically and mentally controlled by societal institutions that classify them as slow, gifted, hyperactive, problematic, just to name a few. Similar to the colonizing European discourses about Orientalism, children have been constructed as the 'other', exotic beings different from adults and interesting only to the extent that they could be analysed for who they would become. In this sense, children are seen as the evolutionary baseline to understand the development of the advanced adult mind; as the 'key' to reveal the origin of man (Canella and Viruru, 2004, p.84-85).

This way of constructing the child as inferior and ignorant as opposed to the superior and knowledgeable adult also serves to justify the almost complete absence of children's knowledge, theories and ideas in the construction of knowledge about the world, not even in respect to their own lives. As long as children are constructed as incomplete subjects, their voices will remain at the margins of what is considered legitimate knowledge. Moreover, they will be negated knowledge in the 'name of protection' (Walkerline, 1984). As will be further explored in the next chapters, these understandings of children are embedded in specific forms of interpreting and addressing the world rooted in Enlightenment/modernist perspectives, such as dualism, progress and reason which continue to privilege adult Western logic over children and other societal groups who choose other forms of knowledge and being (Canella and Viruru, 2004). For instance, the expectation that everyone passes through specific stages, embedded in Piagetian notion of child development, serves to legitimate the regulation of one group by another, creating power for those who are at the advanced level of those stages. At the same time, his theories of logical-mathematical thought continue to dominate contemporary theories of learning that see it as an individual activity and which privilege cognition over emotions and the social, thus ignoring other forms of understanding and representing the world such as art, music, fantasy, pleasure and romance. Based on this, postcolonial scholars contend that 'examining constructions, discourses, and institutions of the child and childhood as forms of colonization could serve to increase life possibilities' (Canella and Viruru, 2004, p.84).

Methodology

The 'problem' of early childhood development has been researched from different perspectives and disciplines, compromising the use of either quantitative or qualitative approaches, or a combination of both. The mainstream literature has been grounded on a 'scientific' approach where 'evidence-based' research under some 'gold standard' has become the 'norm'. Here, the focus has been mainly on the underlying child, family and households determinants of early childhood development, with a range of studies showing a strong relationship between socioeconomic indicators, such as social class, parental education, and family income, and child development; and how these are mediated by a large and complex set of interrelated processes, being parenting one of the most significant. However, while the argument that individual, family and community characteristics interact and influence each other affecting children's experiences and outcomes is persuasive, less attention has been given to exploring the more complex dynamics of social exclusion and the hidden operations of power which have the effect of disadvantaging precisely those groups defined as 'disadvantaged'. For instance, how a developmental discourse, by constituting children as 'normal' or 'abnormal', works to privilege some groups in detriment of others (Mac Naughton, 2006; Canella, 1997) or how gendered or raced stereotypes are used to exclude minority groups from being positioned as 'good learners' (Youdell, 2003, Bradbury, 2011).

Thus, as I will argue later, this body of work has the potential of producing a 'deficit discourse' which constitutes children from less privileged backgrounds, as 'poor', 'delayed' and 'unable', and their families as 'uncaring', 'ignorant' and 'incompetent'; constructions that have become common sense among policy makers, scholars and the general public, and which may strengthen the link between poorer families and educational failure. In effect, research has shown how the discourse of 'deprived' children as already disadvantaged when they start school reinforces the low expectations of children from these settings by their teachers and parents (del Pino, 2011; Bradbury, 2011; Ball, 1981); a discursive practice that serves to maintain the status quo, given that as long as there exists a group constituted as disadvantaged, the existence of an advantaged group is made possible (Canella, 1997). Crucially, this work has had a major influence on policy makers both globally and in Peru, where there is an increasing emphasis on early intervention as a means of overcoming

structural inequalities, as in government policies like 'Primera Infancia Primero' and the national programme 'Cuna Mas'.

Against this dominant research trend within early childhood development studies and, in line with Pascale's demand for 'more critical modes of engagement' (2011, p.5), in this thesis I will explore the 'problem' of early childhood development from a qualitative perspective rooted in post-structural and postcolonial ontologies and epistemologies. Specifically, I will use auto-ethnography, genealogical analysis, and Foucauldian discourse analysis to produce and analyse the data. Therefore, my focus will be on my own experience, and the knowledges, discourses, and practices that inform early childhood development policies, and on how these interact in productive and complex ways to constitute children and define who they are and who they can be. In what follows, I define each of these methods and how they have been deployed in my own research. I will discuss how theory is intersecting with 'method' and how each method will engage issues of agency, subjectivity, and experience in terms of the underlying ontology and epistemology that underpin each method. Finally, I reflect on the political possibilities and challenges of using a post-structural and postcolonial approach, and how these have influenced my own thinking. Because as Lather (2013, p.759) puts it, 'the philosophical foundations embedded in our analytic strategies both enable and constrain empirical analyse' (Lather, 2013, p. 759).

Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno) (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005). As a method, auto-ethnography combines characteristics of autobiography and ethnography. On the one hand, when researchers do auto-ethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that are made possible by being part of a culture, producing meaningful, aesthetic and evocative texts that engage readers using conventions of storytelling such as character, scene, and plot development. On the other hand, they produce a 'thick description' of particular micro-settings of social interaction grounded on personal experience. However, in addition to telling about experiences, auto-ethnographers are required to analyse and develop interpretations of these, including how power-knowledge relations play-out and manifest in them. Like genealogy, auto-ethnography seeks to disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions by rendering the familiar strange and by subjecting practices to critical analysis and reflection.

Auto-ethnographers must not only use their methodological tools and research literature, but also must consider ways others may experience similar epiphanies; they must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and, in so doing, make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders. To accomplish this might require comparing and contrasting personal experience against existing research, interviewing cultural members, and/or examining relevant cultural artefacts. Further, auto-ethnographers recognize the innumerable ways personal experience influences the research process: 'Auto-ethnography is one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist' (Ellis et al., 2011, p.274). In this sense, auto-ethnography challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others (Spry, 2001), opening up 'a wider lens on the world and eschewing rigid definitions of what constitutes meaningful and useful research'. As Adams and Jones (2008) put it, it treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act.

This research deploys auto-ethnography to analyse early childhood development policy. That is, it draws on my personal experience as Director of 'Cuna Mas' to critically explore the programme as a kind of 'case study'. Having participated in the design, management, and evaluation of the programme offers a unique, albeit at times problematic, position from where to engage in critical policy analysis. As its first Director, I was involved in the 'genesis' and design of the programme, translating and shaping the President's original idea of how 'Cuna Mas' should look like into a 'real' policy object. This involved engaging with the academic literature on early childhood development, education and care, gathering data from 'Cuna Mas's' potential beneficiaries, and undertaking several discussions with different stakeholders, including international cooperation, civil society organisations, and other national and local governmental agencies, regarding the objectives, strategies, approaches and resources of the programme.

I also participated in much of the production of the programme's policy texts, technical documents and artefacts, from the legal decree that created the programme to more ephemeral texts like the handbooks and fact sheets that caregivers and home visitors use in their daily practice, and even edited some of the children's books. Here, the demands from the programme's staff to take context seriously in any adaptation of international models and interventions on early childhood development demanded a

careful and sustained process of interpretation, re-writing and going back to the 'text'. That is to say, I was involved in both policy formation and policy text work – and movement back and forward between them. As Director, I was too responsible for the programme's management, which initially involved the 'roll-out' of its services at national level, where the complex cultural, social and geographic realities demanded further adjustments. Finally, I also participated in the design of several of the impact evaluations of the programme, some of which have already been undertaken, which provide evidence of some of the effects of the programme upon children's development and parenting practices, that feeds back into the context of influence, and in various ways text production (media coverage for example).

All these circumstances, one would think, offer a privileged position from where to research any policy, in particular, to learn and understand the often inaccessible or opaque contexts of influence and policy text production. In many ways I believe this to be true. However, I also consider that this hybrid position of former 'insider' and current critical researcher adds to the complexity and messiness of doing critical policy analysis, requiring an enormous responsibility on part of the researcher. In that sense, I have been particularly aware of the sensitivities of my insider's view of things and taken care to ensure that I avoid matters that might be considered controversial. Time also matters here. As Ball (1993, p.11) argues, 'policies shift and change their meaning (...) Policies are represented differently by different actors and interests'. In other words, the policy I helped create and expand is not the same today, and the texts and documents I myself wrote or edited may have a different meaning today. People change too. I am not the same person I was seven years ago when I was appointed Director. The experience of working in the government transformed me, and the same is true of my PhD, which without doubt has shaped how I 'read' those texts today. In fact, as I will describe further in the next chapters, as Director of the programme, I experienced uncertainties with regard to my own beliefs and images of children and childhood. At times, the apparent robustness and simplicity of much quantitative analysis around early childhood development narrowed my views of childhood and how to address it. This relates to what Ball refers to as policy effects (more of which later).

Genealogy

As already mentioned, this thesis is primarily concerned with exploring the more recent positioning of early childhood development in the agenda of both international and national organisations and governmental institutions, as well the dominant discourses upon which this is grounded. A genealogical analysis seems appropriate in this task to the extent that it is targeted to the present, focusing on an immediate problem 'to see it in its historical dimension; how this problem turned out to be the way we perceive it today' (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 213). In so doing, it 'exposes the fabricated nature, fragility and arbitrariness of past practices and truths' (Bailey, 2015, p.59).

Foucault produced genealogies or histories as a way of demonstrating uncertainty and contingency, and that absolutes are historical. This follows from his rejection of essentialisms and universals –as he sets out to do in the 1978-9 Lectures –he challenges us to 'suppose universals do not exist'. For Foucault, the process of constitution of the subject that thinks, of the present in which he thinks and the way of thinking that this present enables, are assigned to a temporal dimension, therefore completely historical (Chignola, 2018, p.15). Thus, the present is taken as 'an effect of selective procedures, as product of the particular configuration assumed by the relations of force, as a unilateral actualization of the possibilities that will remain virtually at disposition for other combinations, and beyond the pure negative that makes critique a simple instance of dissolution' (Ibid, p.14, own translation). As Foucault (1972, p. 206) explains:

What reason perceives as its necessity, or rather, what different forms of rationality offer as their necessary being, can perfectly well be shown to have a history; and the network of contingencies from which it emerges can be traced. Which is not to say, however, that these forms of rationality were irrational. It means that they reside on a base of human practice and human history; and that since these things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were made.

In other words, nothing in the present is necessary. The task therefore is to 'diagnose' the present. To 'diagonalise the present with history', highlighting how the apparent necessity of what it is, in fact, is not, and that its truth is the result of a determined – and hence always variable –selection of possibilities. In the specific case of this research, this means that the task is, in part, to find out 'how the human being (the child) is envisaged in a particular period and the social practices that constitute this

human being' (Ball, 2013, p. 35). In Foucault's words (1997, pp. 139–140, quoted in St. Pierre, 2000, p.479),

We have to dig deeply to show how things have been historically contingent, for such and such reason intelligible but not necessary. We must make the intelligible appear against a background of emptiness and deny its necessity. We must think that what exists is far from filling all possible spaces. To make a truly unavoidable challenge of the question: What can be played?

Importantly, genealogy does not localize origins, instead, it highlights the couplings between heterogeneous logics that determine deviations, ruptures and new beginnings in the connexion between knowledge and power, attending to the complexity of the specific historical realities while at the same time looking for regularities in the discourses and practices. In terms of how to go about 'doing' genealogies, Foucault observes that the genealogist has the need for history – 'of the archives where practices sediment, of the memories of confrontations and of the conflicts between freedom and power, of the battle field that the analytics of the quotidian reveals – to precisely invoke the chimera of the origin' (Chignola, 2018, p.43, own translation). Thus, historical texts and documents constitute a primary source of data. However, Foucault also used literary and scholarly work, art, institutional plans and various kinds of ephemera – both past and present – and even objects such as pipes (Tamboukou, 1999). This thesis draws mainly of policy documents, including Laws, Decrees, official guidelines, as well as power point presentations, media coverage, email exchanges, aide memoires, and artefacts such as toys, illustrations and children's books to subject the policies and practices of multilateral organisations and the 'Cuna Mas' programme to genealogical critique. In so doing, it traces their discursive origins along the trajectories of multiple technologies and modalities of power with the point of showing that the dominant discursive regimes framing global and national early childhood development policies have been historically contingent, and for that reason, are not as necessary as all that.

Foucauldian discourse analysis

This study explores the forms in which discourses manifest and operate as 'regimes of truth' through policies. That is, how policies 'work to exclude statements which they characterise as false and they keep in circulation those statements which they characterise as true' (Ball, 2011, p.618). To this end, I use discourse analysis informed by the work of Foucault. Accordingly, my focus will be primarily on the

discourses and knowledge-domains that constitute children and inform early childhood development policies and practices. In so doing, I am not searching to uncover the true meaning of language or the hidden interests behind the text. Instead, I am more interested in understanding how statements are formed and made possible (Ball, 2015a); that is, to question the intelligibility of truth/s we have come to take for granted (Graham, 2011, p. 666), and examine what the implications of that what is said are. For instance, how circulating developmental discourses produce the child as object and resource; valuable to the extent that it is transformed into a productive adult.

Here, policies are understood not only as 'things' but also as processes and outcomes, and in that sense, always dynamic and alive (Ball, 1993, p.11). In effect, as Ball argues, policies are produced through negotiations and compromises, subject to changes within the state, and open to multiple interpretations and recontextualisations; they have an interpretational and representational history. Reading policy as text recognizes the possibilities of agency and of mobilising 'subjugated knowledge' in policy enactment. But, he argues, policies also provide the space for the materialisation of discourses through artefacts, systems, subjectivities and practices. They are, in fact, a manifestation of discourses, which exercise power through a production of 'truth' and 'knowledge' which articulate and constrain the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment (policy as discourse). 'Policy as discourse frames what can be said and who can speak in respect of policy' (Lingard and Sellar, p. 269). This is evident in policies seeking to improve educational outcomes and making schools accountable for these, which constitute the way in which schools function, and who teachers and pupils can be within them (Ball, 2008). Policies are, in this sense, 'very specific and practical regimes of truth and value and the ways in which policies are spoken and spoken about, their vocabularies, are part of the creation of the conditions of their acceptance and enactment' (Ball, 2008, p.5).

Policy is ... an 'economy of power', a set of technologies and practices which are realised and struggled over in local settings. Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended. Policies are always incomplete in so far as they relate to or map onto the 'wild profusion' of local practice. Policies are crude and simple. Practice is sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable. Policy as practice is 'created' in a trialectic of dominance, resistance and chaos/freedom. Thus, policy is no simple asymmetry of power. (Ball 1994,p.10–11).

Although there is no such thing as a single model for 'doing' discourses analysis within a Foucauldian framework, and Foucault (1994, p. 288) himself disliked prescription stating, 'I take care not to dictate how things should be', there are some directions on how one might go about doing 'Foucauldian' discourses analysis. Graham (2011) develops what she calls a discursive analytic; 'a methodological plan to approach the analysis of discourses through the location of statements that function with constitutive effects' (p.663). 'Statement' is here understood as '[t]he atom of discourse' (Foucault, 1972, p.80), not as a linguistic unit like the sentence, but as 'a function' (Ibid, p. 98). The statement as 'function' can be theorised as a discursive junction-box in which words and things intersect and become invested with particular relations of power, resulting in an interpellative event (Althusser, 1971; Butler, 1990) in which one can recognise and isolate an act of formulation.

Taking up the concept of statement as productive means that to locate a statement, we need to look for an 'act of formulation', where words and things produce the object of which we are speaking. But, 'in order for an object of discourse to be "produced", it must first be definable', (Graham, 2011, p.668), using language. Further, for an object to be locatable it must also be recognisable and that is the 'enunciative function of statements' (Ibid, p.669). As Butler suggests, '[o]ne "exists" not only by virtue of being recognized, but, in a prior sense, by being recognizable' (Butler, 1997, p. 5). This involves tracing pathways between words and things and the processes of validation involved; to understand how the language we use to describe and define something is the mechanism through which we produce the very 'things' or objects of which we speak. It demands that we are attentive to 'the use of particular discursive techniques in the production of meaning', as they 'present a particular view of the world and prepare the ground for the "practices that derive from them"' (Graham, 2011 p.668). For instance, in the case of the policy documents analysed in this study, this involves looking at how the arguments deployed to justify and legitimise state intervention in early childhood development are carefully crafted through the use of rhetorical strategies, such as the reference to statistics and scientific evidence. To be able to identify these 'acts of formulation', Graham argues, we need to develop a post-structural sensibility, born of a 'theorising that rests upon complexity, uncertainty and doubt and upon a reflexivity about its own production and its claims to knowledge about the social' (Ball, 1995, p. 269).

Once statements are located, the analysis consists on describing them and the enunciative function of which they are bearers; on analysing the conditions in which

this function operates, and on covering the different domains that this function presupposes and the ways in which those domains are articulated (Foucault, 1972 quoted in Graham, 2011, p.669). The objective then is to 'explicate statements that function to place a discursive frame around a particular position; that is, statements which coagulate and form rhetorical constructions that present a particular reading of social texts' (Graham, 2011, p.667). In Foucault words, 'the task is to determine, in all the possible enunciations that could be made on a particular subject, why it is that certain statements emerged to the exclusion of all others and what function they serve' (quoted in Graham, 2011 p.667). This entails asking questions such as: How have some meanings emerged as normative and others have been eclipsed or disappeared? What do these processes reveal about how power is constituted and operates? How does discourse function, get produced and regulated and what are its social effects? (St. Pierre, 2000). As Graham (2011, p.671) explains, 'through the location and analysis of such statements, it becomes possible to isolate the "positivity" (Foucault, 1972, p. 214) of a particular power/knowledge'. Furthermore, I would extend the analysis to explore how it is possible that two or more apparently incompatible enunciations are used alongside in what Foucault terms the 'productive act'. For example, the combined use of human rights and human capital approaches, in principle contradictory, to promote and legitimise societies concern in early childhood development.

Adopting a discursive frame of reference therefore means approaching the written texts not as reflections of experience but as discursive productions (Rheddings-Jones, 1996) and, understanding that 'the process of analysis is always interpretive, always contingent, always a version or a reading from some theoretical, epistemological or ethical standpoint' (Wetherall, 2001, p. 384). As noted earlier, this kind of analysis rests on the belief that social reality and subjectivity are contingent and historically produced. Finally, I agree with Codd (1994) that 'in order to show how policy texts work to produce these effects, it is necessary to interpret them within a wider framework that takes account of the social contexts in which these texts are located' (p.44). As Mulderring (2014, p.563) claims, 'education policy texts do not exist in a social vacuum, but have a complex, historically changing, and mutually constitutive relationship with their social context'. In this sense the analysis presented here locates these discourses within the broader settings which provides their context.

Critique as a 'limit-attitude': Possibilities and challenges

This thesis is in great part motivated by an interest to understand why and how early childhood development has become positioned as an object of policy in the present, and with what effects. But, perhaps more important, it is driven by a sense of urgency to start thinking differently about early childhood policy and myself as a mother and professional in this field. A post-structural approach, in particular one informed by the work of Michel Foucault, I believe provides a powerful conceptual tool-box to critically analyse early childhood policies in that it seeks to trouble both discursive and material structures that limit the ways we think about the world, and our work; offering a set of new lenses to examine any commonplace situation, any ordinary event or process, in order to think differently about that occurrence – to open up what seems 'natural' to other possibilities (St. Pierre, 2000).

As already mentioned, the point of departure of Foucauldian analytics of power is the urgency of the present. He puts the question of the present at the centre of his discourse (Foucault, 1999), problematising the relationship between thought and the present, and engaging in a 'permanent critique to our historical self' (Foucault, 1999, p.345). Importantly, however, Foucault understands critique not as an expression of rejection or negation of the present or a simple analytic of the limits that circumscribe it, but as an 'attitude', a style or an ethic. A 'limit-attitude', as Foucault calls it, in relation to the present. Under these terms, critique means a 'practical critique' and 'possible overcoming' of the universals of which one can trace and identify their unilaterality and contingency (Chignola, 2018, p.17, own translation). For Foucault (1982b, p.76), the critique 'is a challenge to what it is'.

This critique is not transcendental and is not aimed to make possible a metaphysic: is a genealogical critique in its purpose and archaeological in its method. Archaeological –and not transcendental– in that it will not pretend to extract the universal structures of every knowledge or every possible moral action, but will try to deal with the discourses that articulate what we think, say and do, like any other historical event. And this critique will be genealogical in that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what is impossible for us to do or know, but it will extract from the contingency that has made us what we are the possibility of not being, making or thinking what we are, do and think' (Foucault, 1999, p.348 in Chignola, 2018, p.16, own translation).

In this way, the *Kritic* can be rewritten in productive terms: take on singularity, difference, freedom instead of the general, necessary and mandatory. It must be

understood as ‘the work of “unblocking” that liberates thought from the obsession of the real as a whole that must be restored, and that acts more as a link between the present in which we live and think, the past that has produced it and the future that remains at disposition when the present is put in movement and can then be practised as a set of possibilities and lines of force’ (Chignola, S., 2018, p.18, own translation). It follows then that, even within a constitutive framework of the subject which thinks – and that thinks within a network of references and signifiers that include him in a system of knowledges and powers that locate him in a determined present- freedom and movement are possible if one has the courage to take this ‘limit-attitude’. As Butler (1995) argues, the foundations are contingent, not necessary, not absolute, and therefore open to change. Indeed, it is the very contingency of foundations that provides the agency for political action.

Foucault’s basic approach is therefore one of critique, based on erasing essentials and acknowledging that things are not necessarily as we think they are. This analytical perspective helps us to question the intelligibility of truth/s we have come to take for granted, making it ‘possible to come to a different relationship with those truth/s which may enable researchers to think and see otherwise, to be able to imagine things being other than what they are, and to understand the abstract and concrete links that make them so’ (Graham, 2011, p. 666). And perhaps it is here where the potential of Foucault’s ‘toolbox’ lies: not only to understand how the present is made, but also of how it might be unmade by “following lines of fragility in the present”, trajectories that might allow us to “grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is” (Foucault, 1988a, p. 37 quoted in Youdell, 2006c, p. 512).

In relation to my research, Foucault’s work offers a set of conceptual, analytical and methodological tools from which I have selected those I consider most useful for investigating the social space of childhood, to think about it in a different way. In so doing, I take Ball’s (2013, p.3) position that the challenge of using Foucault’s ideas ‘is not to agree with him, but to be disconcerted by him, to be made to think in new spaces and to consider new possibilities for thought.’ For example, the foregrounding of the idea that language does not simply mirror the world, representing pre-existing things and ideas, but rather helps to construct and maintain it, opens the possibility that things can be different. That is, we can deconstruct it and reconstruct it again and again through language and cultural practice in our daily human micro-practices. This means that I can ‘read’ and ‘use’ language in a different way, and to think about the world and myself differently. In the same vein, the understandings of discourse and

power as productive, and of truth and subjectivity as unstable and contingent enables me to question certain 'truths' about early childhood and children that have become natural and taken for granted.

Further, by problematising these issues through the lens of a postcolonial critique, it opens up new ways of looking at the 'problem' of developmental 'delays' amongst children from disadvantaged families not as inherent or inevitable given their less privileged conditions, but, in part, as a product of dominant discursive regimes which value certain knowledges and competencies, themselves produced by relations of power. More practically, it enables me to question how the problem has been formulated, instead of accepting the statistics on child development as definite and true accounts of children's ability and competence, as well as to question whether the problem lies in the content of the curriculum, the definitions of child development or in the appropriateness of the indicators used to measure it. Working within this analytical approach thus creates the possibility of being uncertain about things that have been taken for granted for too long, and from that position of doubt, to be open to the not yet thought and to wonder. Overall, then, I would argue that this is a research with a different purpose; focused less on what is true and more on how particular discourses and practices produce 'truth effects' (Lather, 1992); intended to provoke rather than to provide certainties, resolutions or conclusions (Rhedding-Jones, 1996).

As might be expected, working within this perspective carries a series of difficulties, challenges and limitations. It entails working without foundations, absolutes and certainty in our ways of knowing. It means working with a different set of constructions where there can be many 'others', not just one, and no hierarchies, which allows for conflicting frames of knowledges and multiple and simultaneous discourses, meanings, and readings (Rhedding-Jones, 1996). That is, it involves moving away from research positioning and practices which seek accurate expositions of the research object to acknowledging explanations as always partial, tentative and unstable; what Rhedding-Jones (1996, p.22) refers to as a 'shift from positive to possibilities'. Some of the methodological challenges of working within a post-structural approach entail addressing a series of questions such as how to deal with issues of narrative authority in our empirical work? How to frame possibilities of meaning rather than close them in working with empirical data? How to create multi-voiced, multi-centred texts from such data? And how to deconstruct the ways our own desires as emancipatory inquirers shape the texts we create? (Lather, 1992, p.95). In

trying to deal with these issues, we can make use of Harding's (1986) counsel against feminist post-structuralism whereby she encourages 'multiple epistemologies and methodologies as we explore the paradox of needing both a "successor regime" powerful enough to unseat scientific orthodoxy and a keen awareness of the limits of any new "one-best-way" approach to doing science' (in Lather, 1992, p.93). As Lather (1992, p.88) explains,

This is not to substitute an alternative and more secure foundation, what Harding (1986) terms a "successor regime," but to produce an awareness of the complexity, historical contingency, and fragility of the practices we invent to discover the truth about ourselves.

Crucially, working with this analytical perspective engages the researcher differently in the research practice, bringing into play the researcher's subjective understandings. This implies sharing our private experience and recognising that there is no such thing as the subject and the object as separate entities, rather subjectivity encompasses both the subject and the object. Thus, it exposes the researcher locating him or herself in a position of vulnerability. At the same time, it means accepting entering into a relationship with the reader, hailing him or her to engage with the text, and taking responsibility for this. This involves the difficult task of using language in a way that reflects the complexity of our own subjectivity and the reality we encounter but at the same time is accessible to multiple readers. Last, but by no means least, Foucault's criticisms of humanist ideas are not accompanied by an alternative way of doing things, that is, he questions humanist ideas in order to think differently, but he never tells the reader what 'different' might look like. This is what, according to Ball (2015b), makes Foucault difficult to read: not that his ideas are abstract or his writing unclear; rather, it is because the premises on which his ideas are based.

A history of childhood governance

Early childhood development has constituted as a policy object in the present, requiring expert guidance, deliberate cultivation and careful surveillance. This has significant implications for children and their families, as well as for how the social space of childhood is understood and regulated. This chapter will show that the concern of the state, church and public for the body and soul of the child has a long history. Using Foucauldian genealogies of childhood, psychiatry and developmental psychology, including works by Jacques Donzelot (1977), Nikolas Rose (1989, 1996), Najia Holmer Nadesan (2010), and Foucault's own work, I trace the problem spaces of childhood, children and child development, and the efforts made to govern children for the purposes of future economic productivity, showing how these have evolved in accordance with the political rationality or rationalities of the time. In particular, I am concerned with examining the constitution of early childhood development as an object of policy and how this, in turn, has led to the creation, institutionalisation, and proliferation of 'liberal' technologies for maximizing children's potential and compensating existing 'delays'. That is, I seek to understand the 'conditions of possibility' for thinking and speaking of children as employable assets and profitable investments in contemporary policy discourse.

This chapter is organised in five substantive sections. The first section examines the form of government characterised as state mercantilism, showing how interest in children's souls and bodies emerged as a response to the circulation of new representations of children as innocent and valuable assets, which in turn fostered new practices of surveillance. It briefly describes the prominent role of the Protestant Reformation in shifting attention towards the cultivation of the child's soul and the emergence of a police state aimed at guaranteeing the strength and productivity of the nation's population. The following section on the liberal 'art of government' explores the expansion and consolidation of what Foucault (2010) termed a police state, which gave birth to a 'tutelary complex' (Donzelot, 1977) aimed at managing children and families, in particular those regarded as 'dangerous'. The third section describes how concerns about increasing poverty led to the emergence and expansion of a welfare state and the subsequent socialization of risk. Here, I discuss how there was a shift in emphasis from rehabilitation of 'abnormal' children to the normalization of all children, marking a turning point in the consolidation of childhood and parenting as sites of intervention. The fourth section gives an account of the

emergence of neo-liberal forms of reason and the gradual dismantling of welfare state apparatuses which has led to a shift of risk from collectivised forms towards individual subjects, alongside the re-emergence of more disciplinary and punitive technologies of governing children, in particular those labelled as 'risky'. In the last section, I examine the local understanding on children and their development in Peru in order to explore to what extent this reproduce dominant discourses.

By examining the transformations and continuities between the formulations of childhood and children across different liberal logics of government, I seek to elucidate both the role of expert knowledge in the production of children as objects of observation, measurement, and improvement, and of political economy in rendering the child and the family visible as a source of national wealth through its economic productivity and reproductive capacities. Hopefully, this chapter will serve to better contextualise the more focused analyses offered in the subsequent chapters.

***Raison d'Etat* and the 'intrusive mode' of childhood**

The art of government organised in terms of the principle of reason of state emerged in the sixteenth century and marked a crucial break in the conceptions and practices of government. It enabled the way of governing to be modelled on something called the state displacing 'Christian notions of government in terms of God's revelation and commandment' (Dean, 2010, p. 105). According to Foucault, the characteristic feature of reason of state was that it defined the state and separated it out as both a specific and an autonomous reality. That is to say, the state plays the role of both a given, but also, at the same time, something that has to be constructed: 'The state is at once that which exists, but which does not yet exist enough (Foucault, 1997, p. 4). Wealth, power and stability of the state become paramount, therefore government actions must be directed to this end. Ball (2016) observes, 'This was a new type of political rationality and practice which "no longer sought to achieve the good life nor merely to aid the prince, but to increase the scope of power for its own sake by bringing the bodies of the state's subjects under tighter discipline" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983, p.137) making them "sober, healthy and competitive" (Jones, 1990, p.68)'. Foucault (2010, p. 4) emphasises: 'To govern according to the principle of *raison d'Etat* is to arrange things so that the state becomes sturdy and permanent, so that it becomes wealthy, and so that it becomes strong in the face of everything that may destroy it'.

As national wealth started to be linked to the productive capacities of the population, attention shifted away from territory towards the population. Enhancing productive capacity became a central objective of state government, producing a new interest in the population's health and growth. Nadesan (2010, p.6) observes: 'the sovereign was responsible for increasing all the forces of the state from within, including the tightly coupled relationship of population and wealth, while developing military forces and diplomatic relations capable of protecting the territorially delimited nation'. The population thus becomes 'a sort of technical-political object of management and government' (Foucault, 2009, p. 70); it 'comes to appear above all else to be the ultimate end of government' (Gordon, 1991, p. 100). In particular, the family and children emerge as a problem space both for state and early philanthropic authorities in European societies by the eighteenth century. In his lectures of *Security, Territory and Population*, Foucault (2009) argues that the early reason of the state that guided sovereign authorities was based on a 'continuous and multiple networks relationships between population, the territory, and wealth' (Foucault, 2007, p. 106), what he refers to as 'the governmentalization' of the state' (Foucault, 2009, p. 109).

Concerns over the health, growth and economic productivity of the population, alongside efforts to document and accumulate wealth through the population's productive capacities led to the emergence, on one hand, of new medical and health authorities and institutions, such as public sanitarians, constables, orphanages and medical hospitals, and on the other, political statisticians who used statistics to establish links across the health, productivity and wealth of the nations. Foucault (2009, p. 61 quoted in Ball, 2016) emphasises the 'role of statistics in mediating and facilitating the relations of state and population, which are articulated in a set of "new notions" in their field of application – that is, "case, risk, danger and crisis"'.

With children's novel economic importance under state mercantilism, new strategies for monitoring and governing child populations, including hygienic practices aimed at reducing child mortality and improving children's health also emerged, especially for the poor (Donzelot, 1977). Foucault refers to these institutions and technologies as apparatuses of police, which followed a kind of secularised Christian ecclesiastic authority based on the model of the shepherd's relation to his flock. The term police here refers not to an internal state institution limited to security issues, but as a way for government to organise and embody itself in a practice. For Foucault (2008, p.5), the police state entails:

a set of objectives that could be described as unlimited, since for those who govern in the police state it is not only a matter of taking into account and taking charge of the activity of groups and orders, that is to say, of different types of individuals with their particular status, but also of taking charge of activity at the most detailed, individual level.

Emphasis on the family and children under state mercantilism coincided with the gradual, albeit uneven, emergence of a new conceptualisation of children as 'fragile creatures of god who needed to be both safeguard and reformed' derived in part from transformations in Christian practices and understandings (Aries quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p. 20). Children's spiritual life and moral development became the focus of the clergy. In particular, the confessional offered religious authorities greater access into children's interior life while providing them opportunities for acting upon transgression through penance. For Foucault (1997, p.19), these practices were part of a broader ecclesiastic interest over the 'inner' life of the soul which he traces back to the Counter-Reformation's efforts to impose more 'meticulous rules of self-examination'.

Concern over children's spiritual development gave birth to what deMause (1974) describes as the 'intrusive mode' of child rearing which forged childhood as 'a unique space of life requiring special attention and special discipline'. This led to greater scrutiny over children's daily practices and spiritual life's, alongside efforts to reduce risks posed to and from children. Crucially, the new model of child-rearing involved a shift in focus from control of the physical moulding of children found across the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries to their psychic moulding, beginning in the seventeenth century. deMause (1974) graphically describes this shift:

The child was no longer so full of dangerous projections [of the devil], and rather than just examine its insides with an enema, the parents approached even closer and attempted to conquer its mind, in order to control its insides, its anger, its needs, its masturbations, its very will (p.52)

A whole pedagogical literature for children appeared to educate them in proper moral conduct and develop their character and reason (Aries, 1962). John Locke and Jacques Rousseau were key figures in the promotion of pastoral government of childhood innocence. For Locke the development of reason in childhood was necessary for the self-government of 'Appetites' in adulthood whereas Rousseau emphasised the role of pedagogy in developing the capacities of self-government. He believed that the tutor should aim to subject children's will without their awareness: 'Let your pupil always believe that he is the master, but in fact be the master yourself.'

No other subjection is as complete as that which keeps up the pretence of freedom; in such a way one can even imprison the will' (quoted in Canella, et al., 1997).

Overall, the aim was to produce disciplined, rational children through education and child-rearing. This is not to say that earlier repressive forces used to control children, such as corporal punishment disappeared; rather, they were supplemented with new technologies aimed at shaping the 'vulnerable' and 'malleable' child. That is, 'children were to be cultivated, not simply moulded through physical force' (Nadesan, 2010, p. 23). This intrusive mode of child rearing became central to producing the 'moralistic, pious, economically productive subjects of early liberal capitalism' (Ibid, p.22) that we now turn to examine.

Liberalism and the emergence of the tutelary complex

In eighteenth century England, a new liberal mentality of rule –liberalism, emerged as a critical response to reason of state and the police state, in particular to the 'threats' they posed to individual liberty. Crucial to the formation of this liberal mentality were the philosophies of John Locke (1632 – 1704) and Adam Smith (1723 – 1790), whom advocated for the limits on sovereign authority in relation to the market. They believed that the market was governed by natural laws which guaranteed the orderly character of market transactions, therefore freeing 'reflection on economic practices from the hegemony of the *Raison d'Etat*' (Foucault, 2008, p. 320). A new regime of truth started to emerge; that of the market as a private space ideally free of state control and as representing the ultimate expression of personal and societal freedom (Foucault, 2008).

With its loss of authority over the market under laissez-faire liberalism, the state's legitimacy had to derive from new functions. Accordingly, the state sought to 'promote the fecundity of the population and to arbitrate among potentially competing interests' (Nadesan, 2010, p. 7). This required the formalisation of the state's structure in juridical codes that enabled to distinguish between the political, economic and private spaces. In this process, the nuclear family became an important feature of the emerging civil society as the space where children were taught to exercise their freedom tempered by morality and prudence. Treating the family as a focal point of multiple social practices and discourses, Donzelot (1977) examines the role of philanthropy, social work, compulsory mass education, and psychiatry in the control of family life and describes the transformation of mothers into agents of the state.

The virtuous, self-determined, industrious, forward-thinking individual became the idealized inhabitant of this semiprivate sphere of family/population, bridging micro and macro cosmos (Nadesan, 2010, p. 25).

Foucault (2008, p. 67) draws attention to the fact that 'the development, dramatic rise, and dissemination throughout society of disciplinary techniques for taking charge of the behaviour of individuals day by day and in its fine detail is exactly contemporaneous with the age of freedoms'. He observes: 'Society, in fact, represents the principle in the name of which liberal government tends to limit itself (...) But it also forms the target of a permanent governmental intervention, not in order to restrict formal liberties on the level of practical reality, but in order to produce, multiply, and guarantee those liberties that the liberal system needs' (Foucault, 2007, p.499). Thus, 'liberalism must produce freedom, but this very act entails the establishment of limitations, control, forms of coercion, and obligations relying on threats, etcetera' (Ibid p.64). To hedge the risks stemming from the freedoms of a liberal political economy, increased security apparatuses were deployed by the state such as standing armies, police forces diplomatic corps, intelligence services and social welfare services, including health and education systems (Dean, 1999, p.20).

Nonetheless, the logic behind child governance was somewhat different as 'liberal political economy demanded that governmental (i.e. police) operations aimed at enhancing the biovitality of the population be rationalised within economic calculi of value' (Nadesan, 2010, p.25). This entailed raising the question 'What is the utility value of government and all actions of government in a society where exchange determines the true value of things?' (Foucault, 2010, p. 46). The principle of utility, which was underpinned by a relentless suspicion towards the government, thus started to operate to limit state competence and involvement with the populace (Foucault, 2010).

Security mechanisms, in turn, entailed and required detailed knowledge about the objects and domains 'external' to the formal state apparatuses, such as the population, civil society and families; knowledge that was provided by existing disciplines of political economy and statistics and by emergent modern disciplines such as economics, psychology, public health, social work, social policy, sociology and criminology. A 'will to know' and understand these objects in order to serve the broad objectives of order, economic strength and security of the state became a

characteristic feature of liberal rule. In *Psychiatric Power*, Foucault (2006) considers the newly psychological authorities and institutions as a critical ingredient in the creation of disciplinary apparatuses aimed at compensating the growing ruptures in familial sovereignty.

Children's newly discovered innocence and vulnerability made them critical sites of danger and target of control. In particular, formulations of poor children which emphasised their dangerousness, pre-delinquency, and potential degeneracy, all of which posed a threat to the nation's stability and prosperity, helped mobilised efforts to attend to children's needs. Within the liberal imagination, private philanthropy was considered the most desirable technology for promoting the biovitality of the population given the extent that it posed fewer infringements on individual and market autonomy and it operated without the compromise of public taxes. However, failure of philanthropic efforts to address increasing social problems faced by the population led social reformers to advocate for more public interventions. Gradually, the state took more responsibility in regulating the formerly private domains of society (Dean, 2010), which gave way to the emergence of a social form of liberal government. Under this new ethos of rule, the liberal state was expected not only to ensure freedom of the market and the individual, but to take a more active role in securing the welfare of the population and shaping the good, normal, and self-governing social and economic citizen (Ibid).

These changes in the arts and crafts of government prompted the constitution and institutionalization of what Donzelot (1977) terms the 'tutelary complex', which incorporated the expertise of older philanthropic institutions, as well as the knowledge of emergent human and social disciplines and practices of medical and hygienic authorities. The main goal was to cultivate children's personal morality and secure their future productive capacity. Accordingly, a wide array of medical, hygienic, and philanthropic authorities was mobilised to assist in the child's socialisation which lead to the 'discovery' of norms of health, norms of conduct and norms of morality (Nadesan, 2010). These norms were considered crucial for the child's proper socialisation and, hence, were used to identify social problems amenable to intervention (Donzelot, 1977, p. 57).

deMause describes the promotion of childhood norms as producing a new mode of childhood –the 'socialisation mode'- which emphasised childhood normalisation and characterised by the emergence of 'expert' knowledge about child rearing and the

dissemination of regimes of child discipline (Nadesan, 2010). One of the manifestations of the presence of this new tutelary complex was the appearance of new attitudes towards mothering and new strategies and institutional forms for compensating and rehabilitating 'dangerous' children. While middle-class women came to understand their class status in relation to their cultivation of quality children; reproduction control through 'preventive checks' such as delayed marriage, voluntary celibacy, and abstinence in marriage was encouraged among working class women to prevent overpopulation of unwanted classes (Greene, 1999, p.20 quoted in Nadesan, 2010). In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the family's sexuality would ultimately serve as a focal point for surveillance over, and securitisation of, the national's health and its reproductive suitability (Nadesan, 2010), as less children allowed mothers to provide better quality of care and stimulation. This novel focus on quality of care helped reconceptualise the economic value of children as 'developable assets' (Ibid, p.28).

Responsibility over reproduction control and children's socialization thus became individualised and transferred to the mother to a certain extent, given that those who failed to behave according to the expected norms were subject of philanthropic and public scrutiny (Nadesan, 2010). In particular, children of the poor became a central target of this tutelary complex as fears of social and medical contagion spread. Specialised institutions for children such as orphanages and juvenile rehabilitation centres were created to remove children from corrupting social influences and rehabilitate juvenile delinquents through highly regimented and disciplined environments (Mintz quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p. 30). Specialised asylums for blind and disable children were also created during the first part of the nineteenth century, as well as specialised schools for training 'idiot children'⁴. As Dean (2008, p.30) describes, '[t]hese practices, disciplines and actors helped establish political concerns for national well-being, prosperity, social cohesion and the extension of citizenship. A social domain was hence being formed, and with it a social way of governing'.

By the end of the nineteenth century, prevention mechanisms started to supplement the goals of segregation and rehabilitation as child savers saw in preventive actions an opportunity to reduce future criminality, save lives, and prevent mental pathology.

⁴ Edouard Seguin, founder of these schools, considered idiocy as a disorder of will which entailed the child's refusal to submit to parental authority and hence sought to educate them using 'moral treatment'. Accordingly, the role of the tutor was to become the 'absolute master of the child' through the corporeality of his body (Foucault, 2008, p. 215).

Statistics on urban poverty and mortality rates were used by sanitarians as evidence for their arguments and to promote sanitary reforms. Economic arguments stressing the economic costs of their illness and the loss of national productivity were also raised to mobilize public support for interventions targeted upon the poor. A model of hygienic prevention based on the ideals and practices promoted by the sanitarians⁵ eventually informed the tutelary complex's approach to the government of 'dangerous' children.

In addition, the new specialisation of paediatrics helped raise concerns about infant feeding practices and their importance for reducing child mortality. Expert norms for the proper feeding of infants were created, as well as child-saving programmes such as infant-feeding stations and safe milk supplies. This medical-hygienist strategy of intervention engendered subsequent tutelary interventions aimed at the education of 'ignorant mothers' (Nadesan, 2010, p.34). Strategies to prevent infant mortality therefore expanded to encompass mothering behaviour (Meckel quoted in Nadesan, 2010). With the professionalisation of paediatricians and psychologists, children emerged within their medical gaze as a unique population, distinct from adults (Meckel, p.47 quoted in Nadesan, 2010). New childhood mental illnesses were identified and medical specialists started linking adult disorders, in particular psychiatric, to early childhood developmental failures further promoting preventive interventions. These formulations gradually transformed understandings of mental illness as inherited emphasising instead the mediating role of social environments and experiences (Nadesan, 2010, p.37). Working-class children, in particular adolescents, were seen as especially vulnerable to corruption and as a potential source of contagion of 'innocent' middle-class children.

In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault (2007) describes how fears of social and medical contagion opened up the family to new ways of expert surveillance and normalising disciplines. The private space of the family gradually became subject to interventions aimed at educating mothers and targeting children at risk. Visiting nurses, child-rearing workers and day nurseries supported by the state entered working class mothers' homes to supervise their mothering and educate them on proper feeding, hygiene, and child-rearing standards, thus contributing to the normalisation of child rearing in relation to expert knowledge and advice. 'The mother, previously implicated

⁵ The sanitarians were early and mid-nineteenth-century urban sanitary reformers in England and the United States who sought to prevent the circulation of diseases linked to poor living condition and poverty (Nadesan, p. 202).

in producing her children's morality, was by the beginning of the twentieth century directly implicated in childhood mortality, delinquency, degeneracy and madness' (Nadesan, 2010, p. 37). Furthermore, children living in 'undesirable' homes were removed to avoid they were adversely impacted by their parents' failings based on the principle of *parens patriae*, or 'the State as parent'. The usage of the idea of the child's best interest thus institutionalised to legitimise legal reforms that allowed stronger regulation over parents and access to private homes.

At the turn of the twentieth century, child advocates promoted the expansion of public education to prevent delinquency and mental degradation. This remedial education emphasised inculcation of normative values into the educational curriculum, especially the principles of morality, thrift, industry, and self-reliance (Ibid, p.38). Efforts were also made to reduce child labour on the basis that it kept wages low and, more importantly, denied child workers remedial childhood socialisation offered through public education. Education thus assumed a vital importance as a security technology within the child-saving discourse for transforming poor children into respectable citizens. Conditions were therefore in place for the emergence of a social welfare state.

The 'helping hand' and the normalization of childhood

In the early twentieth century, progressive reformers concerned for the welfare of children in the face of the persistence and exacerbation of high rates of poverty, as well as with the inadequacy of private philanthropies to address these problems, advocated for the expansion of public services for the poor. In the United States, public acknowledgement that US economic markets failed to produce enough jobs to employ Americans in jobs that paid above poverty wages constituted a repudiation of laissez-faire logics. At the same time, the knowledge and practices derived from the new field of public health, in particular, epidemiology were used to rationalise the expansion of social welfare logics in order to prevent disease outbreaks, criminality, madness and juvenile delinquency (Nadesan, 2010).

A new social form of government thus emerged where the state took a more direct role in governing society through the expansion and institutionalisation of state apparatuses dedicated to child welfare and guidance and which profoundly altered, replaced or supplemented laissez-faire liberal logics and problems of government. At the core of this new social welfare liberal logic was the idea that preservation of

democratic freedoms required economic interventionism (Foucault, 2008, p. 68). Accordingly, in 1935, the United States passed the Social Security Act to compensate for market failures in the depths of economic depression, whereas the 1944 Education Act in the UK formed a cornerstone of the welfare state. Risk, previously allocated to concrete places and individuals, was now constituted at the level of the population and shifted toward collectivised government apparatuses. However, as will be further explore in the next section, many of the social welfare reforms and programmes relied on culturalist explanations for poverty, that is, they saw child poverty as the result of a culture of poverty, therefore focusing on relief measures and individual behaviours rather than on poor work conditions and other structural economic factors contributing to the persistence of poverty.

As the social sciences proliferated and the philanthropic institutions underwent professionalisation, focus on children initially restricted to the 'subnormal', 'dangerous' and 'dependent' extended to include 'normal children' in order to understand the 'natural development' of all children. Experts strove to establish the characteristics of 'normal' stages of children's intellectual and social development through the observation and documentation of natural development processes (Nadesan, 2010). Crucial to the formation of the new developmental psychology field was the work of Arnold Gessel (1880-1961) and Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Based on the observation and treatment of children with school problems, Gesell established standardised developmental scales that were widely disseminated within the medical community and became institutionalised as 'objective' measures of 'normal' development. According to Nicolas Rose, Gesell's work

Introduced a new division into the lives of small children, a division between normal and abnormal in the form of the differentiation of advanced and retarded...Norms of posture and locomotion; of vocabulary, comprehension, and conversation; of personal habits, initiative, independence, and play could now be deployed in evaluation and diagnosis (quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p.42)

Similarly, Piaget's work on cognitive development culminated in the creation of 'normal' stages of childhood which enabled the identification of 'abnormal' or 'delayed' cognitive development. These new knowledges about the nature of childhood were popularised and instrumentalised by many new classes of child experts, including paediatricians, child psychologists and child psychiatrists and incorporated into the design and implementation of preventive technologies that gradually replaced nineteenth century disciplinary regimes. As Armstrong (2002) concludes in *A New*

History of Identity, the early twentieth century engendered a new approach to medical subjectivity centering on surveillance, mental hygiene, the child, and interpersonal dynamics (quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p.43). The new public schools, in particular, provided the opportunity for expert surveillance of children's mental and physical health, becoming 'laboratories for the application of the emerging principles of mental hygiene' (Nadesan, 2010, p.44). These new knowledges, authorities and measures, and their institutionalisation in central government through the creation of government departments and bureaucracies in health, education and social policy, transformed childhood in the early twentieth century. Under the new social state, the goals of socialisation, previously circumscribed to the segregation, rehabilitation, and prevention of deviance in poor children, had extended to incorporate the normalisation of all children. In all this, the norm emerged as that which made 'possible to control both the disciplinary order of the body and the aleatory events that occur in the biological multiplicity' (Foucault, 2004, p. 253).

Further links made between children's rights, reasonable discipline and human progress resulted in the idea that social stability and democracy could be engineered through the child (Perkins, 1900; Key, 1909 quoted in Nadesan, 2010). Childhood socialisation and children's welfare thus became critical to democracy, national well-being and state security. Accordingly, mothers were advised to monitor their children based on newly established norms of cognitive and behaviour development, and ultimately made responsible for their children's normalcy. Producing 'normal' children became important not only for the health of the child but also for the very strength of the nation. As a result of these changes, by the early twentieth century, the school and the family home had become subjected to what Foucault describes as a kind of 'cellularization' of space and time that normalised comportment and facilitated surveillance by expert authorities and parents (Deacon, 2002b, p.448).

The rise and circulation of psychoanalytic theories further informed and shaped expert knowledge about family life, as well as public attitudes towards motherhood. Particularly significant was the work of theorists Anna Freud and Melanie Klein which slowly infused child psychiatry constituting the role of parenting –particularly mothering- as vital to the child's psychic development and personality. By the mid-twentieth century, a new rationale of child guidance had emerged out of psychoanalytic and humanistic psychology grounded on the idea that children were malleable and could be shaped through the 'correct' interventions, thus contributing to the expansion of the apparatuses of the liberal welfare state. DeMause (1974, p.52)

refers to this view of child rearing as the 'helping hand' mode of childhood socialisation, which 'involves the proposition that the child knows better than the parents what it needs at each stage of its life, and fully involves both parents in the child's needs as they work to emphasise with and fulfil its expanding and particular needs. Here, there is no attempt at all to discipline or form "habits"'.

Both parents and professionals were encouraged to steer each child in the form of an 'invisible pedagogy' and develop cooperative and nonauthoritarian relationships (Cox quoted in Nadesan, p. 51); their primary purpose was to guide development and self-transformation rather than to prescribe it. This 'involves a move from "reading" the child as a surface, to a depth psychology whereby the child is measured and known through the techniques of testing – uncovering the truth of the child' (Ball, 2016). As Rose (1989) argues, despite the apparently less invasive forms of these invisible pedagogies, with the expansion of the 'psy' sciences, the child's interiority is revealed as a space requiring surveillance and control, which leads to the replacement of direct control with a panopticon of invisible pedagogies aimed at producing the subjects of liberal democracy. Once again, we see how expert knowledge shapes the knowledge base of, and discourses about, 'responsible' motherhood, helping expand the apparatuses of the liberal welfare state and instructing individuals in the technologies of the self to enable self-government.

However, the logics of the welfare state eventually faced challenges from different, and at times, contradictory forces. On one hand, negative attitudes towards poverty reflected in the idea that the poor were poor because of a lack of personal initiative and skills rather than by a lack of economic opportunity started to gain purchase among the public, promoting market-based solutions to poverty alleviation in detriment of social welfare policies. Alongside this, an ethos of personal responsibility was advocated among political leaders who sought to transfer public burden of welfare to individual citizens⁶. On the other, the welfare settlement was being undermined by a number of social and political struggles including the student and counter-cultural movement, Marxists, feminists and the everyday citizen, which sought to wrestle autonomy from a state and its apparatus conceived increasingly as patriarchal and overly bureaucratic. Taken together, these movements began to

⁶ In the United States, President Clinton formalised welfare reform with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in 1996, while President Bush offer an 'Ownership Society' wherein citizens would assume more risk while reaping benefits of personalized home ownership, control over retirement savings, among others individual benefits (Nadesan, 2010, p.57).

articulate and disseminate 'a culture of the self and its actualization' which 'intersect[ed] with neo-liberal critiques of the welfare state in the new valorization of the self-actualized subject' (Dean, 2010, pp. 181-182).

In the context of the various economic crises of the 1970s, critiques to the welfare state reach its peak, with President of the United States, Richard Nixon, concluding that 'the present welfare system has to be judged a colossal failure' (quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p. 57). Accordingly, by the late twentieth century, the social welfare logics and institutions were, in many places, challenged and eventually replaced by neo-liberal logics and problematics which saw the market as the model for all realms of society. Drawing mainly on Foucault's genealogy of liberalism and neo-liberalism, the next section traces back the origins of these neo-liberal ideas and explores how these have constituted families as central to the reproduction of poverty, encouraging the popularization of the 'neo' logics of government towards childhood and families.

Neo-liberal governmentality and the optimization of childhood

Neo-liberal governmental logic gained social salience and political power beginning in the 1980s. However, neo-liberal ideas were incubated much earlier, in the writings of Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek through the 1920s and 1940s; and were further developed in post war Germany as a new kind of 'positive' or 'ordo' liberalism, to be later radicalised by the American neo-liberals and free-market economists of the Chicago School. Despite their differences and idiosyncrasies, a common feature of these different neo-liberalisms is the idea that the liberal state must intervene to ensure the conditions of and for competition and the market; that is, 'exclusions from the market must be eliminated, because optimal competition requires optimal participation' (Nadesan, 2010, p.14). As Donzelot (1977, p.124) puts it, 'the role of the state is to intervene in favour of the market rather than because of the market, in such a way that the market is always maintained and that the principle of equity of inequality produces its effect'. Unlike liberal's assumption that competition is natural, and the market governed by a guiding hand, neo-liberals believe the state should promote competition to facilitate the well-functioning of the market and guarantee that markets allocate resources most efficiently (Donzelot, 2008).

In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault (2010) identifies as important dimensions of neo-liberal governmentalities the 'analysis of non-economic behaviour through a grid of

economic intelligibility, and the criticism and appraisal of the action of public authorities in market terms' (p. 248). He argues that

The generalization of the economic form of the market beyond monetary exchanges functions in American neo-liberalism as a principle of intelligibility and a principle of decipherment of social relationships and individual behaviour. This means that analysis in terms of the market economy or, in other words, supply and demand, can function as a schema which is applicable to non-economic domains. And, thanks to this analytical schema or grid of intelligibility, it will be possible to reveal in non-economic processes, relations, and behaviour a number of intelligible relations which otherwise would not have appeared as such –a sort of economic analysis of the non-economic (Ibid, p.243).

Indeed, he uses the characterization of mother-child interactions in terms of an investment in human capital as an example of the replacement of the welfare state, 'child saving' and 'child guidance' discourses by a neo-liberal governmentality (Ibid). Foucault observes that while under laissez-faire government, the market was a principle of government's self-limitation, under neo-liberal logics, the market becomes a tool to be turned against government; a 'sort of permanent economic tribunal confronting government' (Ibid, p.247). The pervasive market scrutiny of the state and public authorities under neo-liberalism thus requires that all forms of state-supported assistance work on behalf of the market, and all state expenditures be rationalised using cost-benefit analysis and measurable outcomes. As I demonstrate in my analysis of the discourses of global early childhood policy, 'the decision to preserve social welfare apparatuses requires elaborate rationalization using statistically calculable representations of increased efficiency and measurable outcomes' (Nadesan, 2010, p.14). The emergence and positioning of economists as new authorities in fields formerly dominated by psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers is symptomatic of the penetration of market logics in all areas of life.

Within this neo-liberal logic, approaches to poverty alleviation focus on the individual subjects with employment being the main route to personal empowerment. This, in turn, has led to an increasing attention to educational reform as a key strategy that can simultaneously alleviate poverty and promote social mobility through the creation of jobs as well instilling the sensibilities and competences of entrepreneurship and transferable labour market skills. School discipline and student performance becomes a prime focus of attention both within educational policies and school practices. Here, education is seen as a means to securing employment based on the assumption that the educated person is capable of inserting itself into the labour market mainly through

its self-employment in the form of an entrepreneurial initiative. Amongst upper and middle class families, this has translated in an intensification of parental surveillance and pastoral cultivation through a wide array of technologies of the self, encouraged by the proliferation of social discourses that guide, advise and promote 'good' parenting, and aimed at fostering innovative and flexible subjects capable of succeeding in the new cognitive age and risky environment (see Laureau, 2014, for a detailed ethnography of class-based strategies). For lower income children, instead, it has implied the re-emergence of a more punitive and disciplinary approaches to child government, in the form of parenting interventions aimed at compensating biological and cultural 'deficiencies', alongside the promotion of new techniques of self-government. Thus, we see how neo-liberal logics and technologies shape the lives of upper- and middle classes in very different ways compared to lower middle and working classes by creating a symbolic and material division whereby some children -namely those belonging to upper-and middle-class families- are constituted as a valuable resource in the creation of a better future, whereas others—the poor and marginalised- are seen as a burden and potentially a threat to the ideal future envisaged.

In this way, family culture and parenting emerge as a problem-solution space central to the reproduction of poverty. Once again, families and children become target of social policies seeking to reform the 'culture' of poor parents and encourage personal industriousness and accountability (Ludwig and Mayer quoted in Nadesan, 2010). As Nadesan (2010, p.59) contends,

Economy –deindustrialization, automation, and globalization –plays little to no part in neo-liberal and conservative accounts of child poverty. At the turn of the twenty-first century, “values” circulate in the popular imagination as the first principle undergirding unemployment, underemployment, and poverty.

Consistent with this faith in the market and education, neo-liberalism must promote social welfare policy only insofar as it aims to encourage personal economic initiative and competition. Within this logic, poverty stems from a failure of market penetration; a lack of market opportunities and market disciplines. Accordingly, rather than redressing economic conditions such as the unavailability of well-paying jobs, social policy assumes as its central role to encourage and shape the independent, competitive and entrepreneurial subject from birth (Nadesan, 2010). Risk, previously socialised under social welfare states, is now dispersed to privatised institutions and

'self-governing' individuals. The 'helping-hand ethos' is therefore gradually replaced by a discourse of personal responsibility replacing collective state apparatuses for individual technologies of improvement and more punitive approaches to governing children. In this way, neo-liberalism attempts and accomplishes two dual objectives: to divest the state of paternalistic responsibility, and to encourage individuals to assume responsibility for their employment, their health, their education, and ultimately their happiness. As Lemke puts it, 'by stressing individual "self-care", the neo-liberal state relinquishes paternalistic responsibility for its subjects but, simultaneously holds its subjects responsible for self-government' (quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p.15). This enables a new kind of government 'at a distance', encouraging 'individuals to effect by their own means or with help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls' (Foucault, 1988). The following chapters develop and extend these themes through the analysis of contemporary global and national policy discourses around children and childhood.

Local understandings of children and their development

So far, I have explored historically, some different conceptions of children and their development in an attempt to identify the knowledges and beliefs undergirding contemporary dominant discourses on early childhood development. With that purpose, I have drawn almost exclusively on the work from and about the global North, considering that this, and not that written in the South, has informed global understandings. However, as it might be expected, in most cases this work fails to represent the diversity of local conceptions of childhood that exist today in other parts of the world. This is the case of some parts of Peru, in particular of the rural Andean world; where the 'Cuna Mas' programme has focused its services. Therefore, in what follows, I draw on the work of local anthropologists and psychologists who have studied the Andean culture and their conceptions and practices around childhood in order to better contextualise the analysis of the Peruvian early childhood policy framework and the 'Cuna Mas' programme developed in the following chapters.

The notion of children in the Andes

Andean culture has a defined identity with its own language, religion, customs and uses that are connected with the Andean history, traditions, economic and social reality, and ecosystem. These systems of values and beliefs are embedded in and

reproduced by the Andean family, seen as a productive social unit where all of its members participate actively in labor and domestic work, including young children. Within the families' economic microsystem, the child is considered a 'little adult' and inserted as a productive member. By the age of 4 or 5, children are expected to undertake specific tasks in the family structure such as taking care of the youngest siblings, domestic housework and help in the small farms. 'They do everything that we do, they sweep, bring firewood, take care of their siblings, everything...'⁷ (Panez et al., 2007, p.107).

Ethnographic observations of the lives of children in the Andes illustrate how children as young as 5 years old, carry their baby siblings on their backs and take them everywhere they go, even to preschool, as well as undertake various activities in the house and in the farm (Panez et al., 2007, p. 106). Furthermore, when asked to draw themselves with their children, mothers represent them as adults, and in some cases, in a larger size than themselves. That is, in the mothers' imaginary, children have a representation of an older child, without the characteristics unique of infants, 'as if they denied children this condition and expressed their desire for them to be grown-ups and independent' (Panez et al., 2007, p. 109). The quechua⁸ word *Hachuy Runa* used to name children translates to 'people in little' which, according to Panez et al. (2007) evinces, at the level of linguistic image, the existence of the notion of the child as a small productive adult and the implicit refusal of childhood, as if it didn't exist.

From this, it can be inferred that mothers have not incorporated the characteristics and needs of children. They are valued more as 'peers' or members of the family that help to satisfy the needs of subsistence (Panez et al., 2007, 109).

Perceived as an 'adult', the child is expected to behave as such and to adjust as soon as possible to the behavioural patterns and norms that govern the community, including work in the small farms and taking care of the animals, as well as providing domestic support to satisfy the surviving needs of the family group. Children's drawings of themselves at the age of five also illustrate how they see themselves as productive members within the family, carrying water, feeding the animals and taking care of their siblings. The 'ideal' child according to children's descriptions of their drawings is that which obeys and accomplishes all the tasks asked by their parents

⁷ Interview with María Soledad, 34 years old, mother from the rural community of El Naranjo, in Cajamarca.

⁸ Indigenous dialect.

(Panez et al., 2007, p.118). This notion of the 'productive child', in turn, determines in part the identity and nature of the system of childrearing. For example, ethnographic fieldwork reveals that there are no play areas or toys within the houses for children, which according to Panez et al. (2007), is another example of parent's denial of childhood and their desire for children to insert as a productive and functional family member.

'States' of childhood development in the Andes

Just as there are differences in the conceptions of childhood, Andean understandings of how children develop also differ in many ways from Western theories of child development. In the Andean Cosmos vision, the human is indivisible from nature, and therefore, has a close relationship with animals and plants. According to this, there are three states of child development, rather than stages, as in Western conceptions of child development. The first state, between birth and four months, is referred as *lulla* or primary state, where the child only eats and sleeps, cannot listen, and has no competencies. Observations of mothers with their babies show that they do not observe or talk much to them given that 'mothers think that babies under 4 months are *opas*⁹, and therefore, consider they will not respond to games, or other intellectual stimulus (Silva, 2005 quoted in Panez et.al. 2007). According to Panez et al. (2007, p.114), 'rural Andean mothers, based on the observations of a baby that does not walk or talk construct the "naive belief" that their capacities are null, similar to mentally impaired'.

Once babies start crawling, they are in a state of *wawa*, which for Andean mothers means that the baby is in 'a natural state, almost savage, it does not understand what is said, it does not possess adult competences, it does not walk or talk' (Panez et al., 2007, p.115). As such, the *wawa* is carried on mothers' back and transported everywhere, as if the baby were part of the mother, without possibilities of individual action (Gherzi, 2004). Eventually, the 'mastery' of crawling offers babies opportunities to explore and move by themselves, which in the Andean culture indicates the transition to a new state characterised by the 'awakening' of their capacities and the possibility of more integration with the members of the family. These competencies allow them to identify their parents, as they crawl directly to them, which in the case of the father, is taken as a 'test' of paternity.

⁹ 'Opa' is an Andean Word that means 'without capacity, intellectually limited, idiot, stupid'.

When children start walking and talking, they move to a new state of development, referred to as *hachuy runa*, which means little adult. This is recognised in the ceremonial party ‘the hair cut’, which celebrates the new location of the child in the collective (Panez et al., 2007). In this ceremony, the godfather and other participants cut locks of the child’s hair and change the unisex *wara* used by both boys and girls with a cloth according to the sex of the child. The ceremonial ritual of the ‘haircut’ symbolizes that the collective ‘puts’ order in the primitive nature of children, cutting the tangled mess of hair as an act of initiation that allows children to enter society (Panez et al., 2007, p.117). At the same time, the haircut and hairstyle given to the child, alongside the dressing according his or her sex, are rituals through which the collective celebrates and certifies that the child has stopped being the *wawa opa*, the ‘stupid baby’ or disabled, and has acquired capacities characteristic of adults, which entails his or her recognition as a social being, with personal and sexual identity, as well as his integration to the social collective.

At the age of two, the *hachuy runa* leaves the mothers’ back and enters his group of peers and begins to acquire competencies and learning under the close care and mentoring of one of his older siblings (Gherzi, 2004). Finally, by the age of three, the child is considered a ‘small productive adult’, that is, a member within the families’ productive system that accomplishes domestic work, takes care of the animals, makes errands, and gradually takes over other tasks such as carrying water and firewood, and labor tasks in the farms. This insertion in the productive system awards the *hachuy runa* a recognized location as member with roles and responsibilities, as already described.

Based on this brief account of local understandings and practices of early childhood, we can see that there are significant differences between western dominant constructions of children and their development (and the related parenting practices) and local ones. However, these local understandings of children and their development, are not fixed. Rather, as more recent studies in the Andean regions have shown (Castro, 2014; BID, 2016, Céspedes et.al. , 2011), there have been some changes in parenting practices due, in part, to the increasing presence of NGOs and government interventions focused on ‘improving’ childrearing practices and educating parents on how to take the care of their children. In the next sections, I will provide a more detailed account of some of these changes and the mismatches between ‘Cuna Mas’ principles and practices and more traditional ones.

Global narratives of early childhood policy

In the previous chapter, I examined the history of childhood and the governing of children, illustrating the dynamic relationship between the symbolic formulations of childhood and technologies for governing children to changing socioeconomic problematics and political rationalities. In this way, I questioned naturalised assumptions about children and childhood, thus opening new spaces for reconceptualising the meaning of early childhood development and education. This is particularly relevant in the present times where concerns about stagnating economic growth and improving competitiveness have rendered the view of children as employable assets and profitable investments as taken-for-granted. Here, I want to explore the dominant discourses and truths of global early childhood policy, and in particular, how early childhood development has become an object of policy in the present day. To this end, this chapter focuses on two multilateral organisations: the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), examining some of their most recent publications on early childhood development: 'The Promise of Early Childhood Development in Latin America and the Caribbean' (Vegas and Santibañez, 2010) by the WB, and the 'The Early Years: Child Well-Being and the Role of Public Policy' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015) by the IDB.

This chapter focuses on the WB and the IDB for two main reasons. Firstly, both organisations are key players in policy making in middle and low-income countries, providing financial resources and technical assistance to support them in their fight against poverty and inequality. In effect, the IDB is Peru's main multilateral lender, accounting for about 28% of the country's external public debt and 41.5% of its multilateral debt, as well as the main provider of technical cooperation and advice for public policies, knowledge products, and support for the private sector (IDB, p.1)¹⁰. Secondly, both the WB and the IDB have identified early childhood development as a top priority, considered an effective strategy for poverty alleviation and promoting economic growth. WB's funding in operational investments in early childhood development has more than doubled from an average of \$211 million per year between 2001 to 2011 to \$524 million in 2012 and \$707 million in 2013, whereas IDB's active portfolio of projects in early childhood development amounts to \$555 million in public sector loans (13% of social investment loans) and 10 million in

¹⁰ IDB Country Strategy with Peru 2011-2016, June 2011.

technical cooperation (10% of social investment technical cooperation), positioning early childhood development in third place within their social investment sector, after poverty alleviation (47%) and citizen safety (14%).

Following a similar trend, funding for analytical, advisory and partnership activities work, has experienced a massive increase from an average of \$3.3 million per year between 2001 and 2012 to \$15 million in 2013 in the WB (Sayre et al, 2015, p.xii). The Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund, an initiative funded by the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, DFID, and others, through which the WB has supported impact evaluations of early childhood interventions in dozens of countries across the world is a good example of this knowledge-building work. According to the WB, these studies 'have significantly contributed to the expansion of knowledge on the impact of various types of ECD interventions in low and middle-income countries' and 'helped stimulate policy dialogue and informed the design of new ECD investments'(www.worldbank.org).

Likewise, activities related to knowledge production have proliferated in the IDB. A search on the organisation's webpage shows there are 53 publications in early childhood education, 17 in early childhood development and 15 in youth and children. The primary focus of its research agenda is upon improving the design of early childhood development policies and programmes by focusing on four areas: circumstances under which scaled-up programmes are effective, dimensions of quality that have positive effects on child outcomes, appropriate services for children of different ages, and evaluations that measure medium- and long-term effects of interventions (www.idb.org). As will be examined in what follows, this evidence-based knowledge is having a significant impact in informing and shaping early childhood policies around the world.

Clear evidence of the significance that early childhood development has gained within the WB and IDB's knowledge production agenda are the two publications examined in this chapter which focus on the role of government in early childhood: 'The Promise of Early Childhood Development in Latin America and the Caribbean', published by the WB in 2010 as part of the Latin American Development Forum Series¹¹; and, 'The

¹¹ This series was created in 2003 to promote debate, disseminate information and analysis, and convey the excitement and complexity of the most topical issues in economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the World Bank.

Early Years: Child Well-Being and the Role of Public Policy', published by the IDB in 2015 as part of the Development in the Americas series – the flagship publication of the IDB that each year presents an in-depth study of an issue of concern to Latin America and the Caribbean.

Interestingly, with the goal of expanding their reach, these organisations have extended their alliances beyond traditional partners within the global early childhood development community. In effect, besides their partnership with UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO, Global Partnership for Education, bilateral donor agencies, foundations, and international NGOs; the WB has partnered with the internationally renowned musical artist Shakira Mebarak's ALAS Foundation and tennis player Novak Djokovic's Foundation to support WB's global advocacy on the importance of investing early in the lives of children; as well as to improve the nutrition, health, education, and early stimulation of more than \$5 million children and mothers in Latin America, and disadvantaged children in Serbia, respectively.

The specific publications examined in this chapter have been chosen for two main reasons: firstly, they are, as far as I am aware, the most recent publications by these organisations on early childhood development, thus articulating the organisation's current approach to childhood; and, secondly, they are both addressed to policy makers with the aim of influencing national policies on early childhood development. In effect, from the outset, both documents make explicit their intention of influencing local policies by providing a rationale for government intervention in early childhood and assisting governments on what to do to enhance young children's well-being:

This book looks at what governments can do to more effectively help our¹² youngest flourish in the early years (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.xxi).

This book aims to fill gaps in existing knowledge about early childhood development (ECD) efforts in Latin America and the Caribbean by reviewing a selection of ECD programs in the region—including those in early childhood education, health, and nutrition—and distilling lessons related to their design, implementation, and institutionalization (Vargas and Santivañez, 2010, p.xxi).

The analysis of the WB and IDB publications is organised as follows: First, I begin by exploring the different understandings of children and early childhood development

¹² The use of the possessive pronoun 'our' to refer to children in general is interesting in that it creates a sense of belonging and, hence, responsibility for children.

articulated in the books, highlighting some of the tensions and contradictions, as well as their implications for children. I then examine how both organisations draw almost exclusively on two main bodies of knowledge: developmental psychology (to define what early childhood development means and how it shapes future outcomes) and, economics (to assess the impact of early interventions on children's and other societal outcomes). I try to show how scientific knowledge has served to create norms and standards which in turn produce a normative discourse of the 'normal/abnormal' child and the 'good/bad' parent.

The next section explores how both documents strategically deploy a vast number of statistics to describe the current situation of early childhood development in the region and individual countries and, based on these, constitute early childhood development as a policy 'problem'. This is followed by an analysis of the ways in which both organisations demonstrate the importance of early childhood development for the child's and society's progress and build their case for government intervention in early childhood development. I emphasize the strong reliance on quantitative evidence - derived primarily from experimental and quasi-experimental studies- to support the notion that early childhood development matters and to determine the type of programmes that can effectively shape it. Here, it's worth mentioning that the IDB's publication was edited by two Economists with the contribution of fourteen collaborators, of whom eight are Economists, three experts in Public Policy, two in education and one in nutrition; another example of the increasing role economists are playing in social sectors heretofore led by social specialists (such as educators, doctors and psychologists)¹³.

Crucially, the chapter illustrates the potential of the problematics of government to make explicit the forms of truth and knowledge which are brought to bear upon individuals and practices through the exercise of expertise, thus allowing us to move beyond a conceptualisation of power centred either on consensus or violence towards one that conceives power as foremost about guidance. The chapter concludes arguing that a neo-liberal episteme operates in both the WB and IDB publications which provides the underpinnings of a neo-liberal rationality for government intervention in early childhood development.

¹³ This is also the case of Peru, where the three main social sectors (Health, Education and Development and Social Inclusion) have been led by economists during the 'left-wing' nationalist government of Ollanta Humala (2011-2016).

Children as potential human capital

The way children are constituted in the WB and IDB documents is implicit in their justifications for government intervention in early childhood development. In the case of the IDB's publication, two main arguments are presented in favour of a larger role for public policy in determining the well-being of young children. First, 'children have a legal identity and a set of interests that are separate from their parents and worth protecting' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015 p.1), which is grounded on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)¹⁴, and, second, 'children that flourish in the early years are more likely to become productive citizens' (Ibid, p.1). That is, a double discourse is articulated whereby on one side, children are constituted as subjects of rights and valuable in their own right; and, on the other, they are constituted as potential human capital, defined in terms of their futurity, worthy today to the extent that they become responsible and productive adults in the future.

However, the predominance of the human capital perspective is clearly made throughout the rest of the policy documents, where the relationship between early childhood development and later outcomes is stressed and demonstrated through extensive reference to studies both in the developed and developing worlds. Indeed, besides this initial brief reference to children's rights, the rights approach is not further elaborated which sharply contrasts the significant space given to demonstrate that children are 'the adults of the future':

As the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean face an increasingly challenging economic environment, governments have a singular opportunity to help one of *our* most precious *resources*—our youngest children. There are about 50 million children in the region under the age of 5, who will eventually be the core of our *workforce* and our social and political leadership. It is in our best collective interest to make sure their foundations are solid as we will all be standing on those *foundations* in the future (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, xv, emphasis is mine).

Within this rationale, children are considered public 'resources' and seen as 'foundational' for the future, valuable to the extent that they become productive citizens in the future, either as part of the workforce or as social or political leaders. Their proper development is particularly relevant in the advent of difficult times of stunted economic growth insofar as they can contribute to the country's productivity

¹⁴ The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the treaty on human rights more widely accepted, signed by 194 countries; replacing the 'Needs Approach' embedded in social policy.

and economic growth with their human capital, acting as a sort of 'insurance'. As Gillies et al. (2017, p.41) describes:

Children assumed a new strategic importance as vectors of a sustainable capitalism in which economic growth would remain high while risks became opportunities. The young would be enabled to drive flexible knowledge-based service economy, while managing their own risks (low pay, precarious contracts, shifting demands or skills).

Statistics on the number of children worldwide are further used to reinforce the statement that children count. The value of children as individuals whom are competent and capable of participating and contributing to society now is not discussed, even less measured. All this reflects a focus on children as future members of society rather than questions relating to their 'here-and-now' well-being. Campbell-Barr (2011) points out: 'there is a view of the child as becoming in relation to the skills they will gain rather than valuing those that they already have' (p. 350). Dahlberg et al., (2007, p. 45) argues that this language for speaking about the child is permeated with a cultural-historical definition of childhood that envisions early childhood as 'the foundation for successful progress through later life; as the start of a journey of realization, from the incompleteness of childhood to the maturity and full human status that is adult-hood, from unfulfilled potential to an economically productive human resource'.

Childhood is also represented as a 'window of opportunity' with children seen as an effective means to overcome structural problems in the distribution of wealth and opportunities through social mobility:

Early childhood development programs are the foundations for successful social investments over the lifetime of an individual, especially for the poor. Investing more in this area is one of the most effective ways governments can improve economic mobility (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, xvi).

Early childhood interventions can act as an important policy lever to equalize opportunities for children and reduce the intergenerational grip of poverty and inequality' (Vegas and Santibañez, 2010, p.xxiii).

That is, childhood is seen as a unique stage in life in which adults have the power to shape the future lives of young children (especially of the 'risky' disadvantaged) and, through them, 'fix' society. Again, children are instrumental, this time in the fight against poverty and social inequalities. This rationale underlies many European welfare states where the increasing economic and social challenges have led to

significant reforms on the welfare provision, coupled with a stronger commitment to employment policy and policies seeking to achieve redistribution over the life cycle through human capital investments (Hemerijck, 2012 quoted in Campbell-Barr, 2014); amidst which early childhood education and care play an increasing role. Gillies et al. (2017 p. 41) emphasises: 'As principles of need and mutual obligation have given way to an emphasis on building capacity and managing risk, the minutiae of infant experience has acquired a central significance in policy'. In the UK, 'Tony Blair pledged to eliminate child poverty by 2020, reflecting a conviction that targeting interventions at poor children would secure a more flexible economy in the future' (Lister, 2006 quoted in Gillies et al. 2017, p. 41).

But not only are children relevant in terms of their impact to economic growth and the reduction of poverty and inequalities. A wide range of other social problems such as public health, unemployment, criminality, young pregnancy and alcoholism are linked in the literature to developmental outcomes in early childhood:

Early childhood development outcomes play an important role throughout life, affecting one's income-earning capacity and productivity, longevity, health, and cognitive ability. Importantly, the deleterious effects of poor ECD outcomes can be long lasting—affecting school attainment, employment, wages, criminality, and the social integration of adults (Vegas and Santibañez, 2010, p.xxiii).

Childhood is thus identified as potentially 'the site of key social problems' (James and James, 2004, p.193), with children seen both as *at risk* (of not developing their full potential) and as *the risk* (for threatening economic growth and social order). In relation to the latter, Stephens (1995) observes that the growing sense of children themselves as the risk has led to a view of some children as 'people out of place' which must be either eliminated or controlled, reshaped, and harnessed to changing social ends, a position that would help understand 'the centrality of children, both as symbolic figure and as objects of contested socialization, in the contemporary politics of culture' (p.13).

This attitude (and perhaps a kind of political rationality) towards children, albeit differently framed, can be traced back two centuries, in a series of US bills in the mid-1800s whereby children are regarded as the crux of social reform: 'So long as society will not begin this reform at the base, that is, through an untiring vigilance over childhood education, our manufacturing cities will be constant centers of immorality, disorder, and sedition' (quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p.26). As Nadesan points out,

'concern over child welfare did not reflect a concern over the quality of life for the child per se, but rather reflected the view that careful control over the adult-child relationship was vital for protecting cities from working-class revolt' (Ibid, p.26). In the same line, Foucault argues that social assistance was established in order to promote order and obedience:

In short, the function of everything we call social assistance, all the social work which appears at the start of the nineteenth century, and which will acquire the importance we know it to have, is to continue a kind of disciplinary tissue which will be able to stand in for the family, to both reconstitute the family and enable one to do without it (quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p.26).

Early childhood is thus textured with both a discourse of economic competitiveness, through which the child becomes a crucial resource in securing economic growth and promoting social mobility, and a pastoral discourse of needs and social problems, whereby the child is seen as 'at risk' as well as a potential threat to social order. This centrality of childhood in turn serves to justify and rationalise government intervention in early childhood development:

Spending resources on early childhood may be one of the best investments a government can make. To begin with, the earlier the government invests in a child, the longer the country has to reap the benefits. Moreover, the rate of return to some investments may be lower if made later in life (e.g., it may be hard to achieve gains in IQ after a certain age). Finally, investments in ECD generate potential ripple effects on investments made later on; in other words, the returns to investment in human capital are higher if investments were made in the early years (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p. 149).

Spending on effective programs for young children is not charity. It is an investment that, if done well, will have very high returns. It is both efficient and can reduce the inter-generational transmission of poverty and inequality. And it is an investment which, if not made, will lower the returns to the substantial investments being made in education for school-aged children throughout the region (Ibid, p. 203).

Given its high rates of return, government investment in early childhood becomes a 'smart' investment where everyone –the child, family, society and, especially, the economy - wins. The use of the word 'investment' instead of 'expenditure' conveys the implicit construction of children as an asset on which time, energy, and/or matter is spent with the expectation of the future realisation of benefits within a specified time frame. The statement 'More Bang for the Buck' (a heading in IDB's publication) when

referring to investments in early childhood development clearly illustrates the economic approach regarding children.

Concurrent with the understanding of early childhood development as both a means to increase a nation's economic growth and address poverty, social inequalities and other societal problems, early childhood education comes into focus as a 'critical' temporal site for the optimization of children through the development of intellectual, linguistic and socio-emotional skills and proficiencies. Its main goal is articulated in terms of improving child development. Here, quality becomes a guarantor for improved child outcomes. In effect, in the IDB's chapter 'Day care services: It's all about quality', it is argued that 'There is convincing evidence from the United States that providing intensive, high-quality day care to children from very disadvantaged backgrounds can have dramatic effects on their development and life chances' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.112). Dahlberg et al. (2007, p:vii) argues:

This discourse is instrumental in rationality, neo-liberal in values, technical in practice and managerial in discipline. It tells a positivistic story of early childhood education and care as a technology that can help fix many faults in post-industrial society, without society having to address its underlying structural flaws of inequality, injustice and exploitation. In this story, quality plays a key part as guarantor of the technology, whose task is to deliver subjects made equally ready for the compulsory system, having attained a set of pre-determined outcomes or goals that indicate such readiness.

Under this perspective, the role of early childhood education becomes one of producer of capitalist labour power with early childhood services constituted as 'enclosures where technologies are applied to children to produce predetermined outcomes' (Dahlberg et.al. 2007, p. x). In effect, 'schools seem to be captured by a version of education that is intimately tied into schooling for economic competitiveness and an increasing neglect or sidelining (other than in rhetoric) of the social purposes of education' (Ball, 2008, pp. 11-12). However, as Nadesan (2010) suggests, it seems that the purpose of early education is framed differently according to class: for upper- and middle class children, it is as a space for the optimisation of children's intellectual and socio-emotional skills, whereas for children of lower classes, it constitutes a space of remediation of their inherited and environmental 'deficiencies'. This mirrors globalising/economising trends in education policy. As Ozga and Lingard (2007, p.70) put it:

This is a policy trajectory that is preoccupied with the construction of a 'knowledge economy' and 'learning society'. Within this trajectory

schooling/education/training systems are acknowledged to be significant instruments for economic and social change: for building intellectual capital and capacity for innovation; for enhancing workforce development in ways that realise economic and, to a considerably lesser extent, social and civic outcomes; and for managing communities in ways that seek to minimise alienation and exclusion and that promote self-reliance and resource-fullness. Enterprising selves are promoted (in all senses of the word), in school, work, and life.

These discourses of early childhood education are 'exclusionary and selective, only certain "goods" are sensible or legitimate. Other versions of the good schools become unthinkable or doable, and are consigned to the "field of memory"' (Braun et al., 2011, p.607). In effect, the role of day care as enhancing maternal employment, gender equality or strengthening democratic practices remains marginalised. Similarly, the vision of the school 'as first and foremost a public space and a site for ethical and political practice – a forum in civil society where children and adults engage in projects of social, cultural, political and economic significance' (Dahlberg et.al 2007, p.123) becomes unintelligible. As Carlina Rinaldi (2006, p.2), educator and co-founder of Reggio Emilia municipal preschools argues, the ethical and political dimensions of education are too often neglected issues:

The idea of education for all children, including young children, as a shared experience in a democratic society and of schools as part of that society whose citizens take responsibility for all their children is increasingly replaced by another idea. Education is increasingly viewed as an individual commodity and the metaphor for the school's changes from the forum or public space to the business, a business competing in a market to sell its products – education and care. Parents become autonomous calculating consumers, supported in their calculation by managerial concepts such as delivery, quality, excellence and outcomes. The school is reduced to a site of technical practice, to be evaluated against its ability to reproduce knowledge and identity and to achieve uniform and consistent criteria.

This discourse of children as potential human capital and early childhood development as a profitable investment is powerful and has become common sense in public debate, as well as in policy and practice, where the child has become object of intervention and transformation. As Mac Naughton (2015, p.1) explains, 'This particular way of understanding children and early childhood education has settled so firmly into the fabric of early childhood studies that its familiarity makes it just seem "right", "best" and "ethical". I would argue that this construction of infancy has been further reinforced, often unintentionally, by the plethora of quantitative studies on early childhood development and education. In particular by research that demonstrates the importance of the early years in both social and economic indicators including

school performance (Almond and Currie, 2011), labour productivity and wages, physical and mental health (Anda, 2008, 2009, 2010), as well as more recent evidence that shows the positive impact of early interventions, particularly in children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Cunha and Heckman, 2007, 2008).

The predominance of the image of the child as 'human capital' or 'window of opportunity' as opposed to the child as 'subject of right' would be in line with what Nadesan (2010) describes as a shift from social welfare logics, technologies and strategies of childhood government to neo-liberal ones which emphasise 'individualized technologies of the self, privatized market-based solutions, and outcome-based programs stressing personal accountability and financial efficiency' (p.63). However, what has remained central to both logics of government has been the focus on children as sites of interventions for the myriad purposes of securing economic growth and social order. This constitution of children as ultimately objects resonates Foucault's conceptualization of population not 'as a collection of subjects of right, nor as a set of hands making up the workforce'; but 'as a set of elements that, on one hand, form part of the general system of living beings (the population then falls under "the human species," which was a new notion at the time, to be distinguished from "mankind [le genre humain]"), and on the other may provide a hold for concerted interventions (through laws, but also through changes in attitudes, ways of doing things, and ways of living that may be brought about by "campaigns")' (Foucault, 2007, p.473), and possibly an example of different forms of power relations aimed at different parts of the population.

But how has it become possible to think and speak of children as potential human capital and of early interventions as profitable investments. Or, to put it in a different way, what are the discourses, knowledges and practices informing and shaping these ideas of children and early education? In the *Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault (2004) argues that neo-liberals study the way in which human capital is formed and accumulated, focusing in particular on the acquired, as opposed to inherited, human capital. He asks, 'what does it mean to form human capital, and so to form these kinds of abilities-machines which will produce income, which will be remunerated by income?' He answers: 'it means, of course, making what are called educational investments'. But, he stresses, for neo-liberals, these educational investments are much broader than schooling or professional training. Time spent and care given by parents to their children, outside of simple educational activities, are seen as

contributing to the formation of those elements that can make up a human capital. Drawing on observational experiments, he argues:

We know that the number of hours a mother spends with her child, even when it is still in the cradle, will be very important for the formation of an abilities-machine, or for the formation of a human capital, and that the child will be much more adaptive if in fact its parents or its mother spend more rather than less time with him or her (Foucault 2004, p.229).

Anticipating the proliferation of studies on the impact of the environment on child development, he argues: 'This means that it must be possible to analyse the simple time parents spend feeding their children, or giving them affection as investment which can form human capital' (Ibid, p. 229). Crucially, Foucault saw this kind of analysis as requiring a different way of problematizing education, culture, training, inequality; one which focuses 'no longer around an anthropology or an ethics or a politics of labor, but around an economics of capital. And the individual considered as an enterprise, i.e., as an investment/investor (...)' (Ibid, p.233).

On the basis of this theoretical and historical analysis we can thus pick out the principles of a policy of growth which will no longer be simply indexed to the problem of the material investment of physical capital, on the one hand, and of the number of workers; on the other, but a policy of growth focused precisely on one of the things that the West can modify most easily, and that is the form of investment in human capital.

Twenty years later, work by economist James Heckman (2006) on human development and skill formation over the life cycle, which draws on economics, psychology, genetics, epidemiology, and neuroscience to examine the origins of inequalities, has demonstrated that human capital formation is a dynamic process that begins early in life and continues over the life cycle. More specifically, he has shown that the 'factors operating during the early childhood years play an important role in the development of skills that determine outcomes later in life' (Vegas and Santibañez, 2010, p.xxiii), and that early childhood interventions can 'act as an important policy lever to equalize opportunities for children and reduce the intergenerational grip of poverty and inequality' (Ibid.). As mentioned earlier, this work has led to an increasing interest in early childhood development around the globe and has been crucial in naturalising the conception of children as assets and future becomings and of early childhood development policies as profitable investments, which has produced children as objects of intervention and control. As Foucault (2004, p.228) argues:

And as soon as a society poses itself the problem of the improvement of its human capital in general, it is inevitable that the problem of the control, screening, and improvement of the human capital of individuals, as a function of unions and consequent reproduction, will become actual, or at any rate, called for.

Human capital theory has thus become the dominant rationale for investing in early childhood education and care, both within supranational organisations such as the World Bank, OECD, EU and national governments. Within the discourse of human capital, every single action in the adult-child relationship is framed in terms of an investment (or lack of it): ‘the mother’s quality of care, affection, time, and pedagogical assistance for her child are all reduced to an economic formulation, an investment in human capital’ (Nadesan 2010, p.13).

The emphasis on human capital at an international level can be seen as evidence of hegemonic globalisation, whereby a series of universal truths have been created as to the benefits of early childhood education and care (ECEC). Human capital offers a powerful global rationale for national governments to invest in ECEC provision and offers evidence of where localism was once valued in caring for young children, now global economics plays a part (Campbell-Barr et al, 2014, p.348).

Interestingly, in the IDB’s document ‘The Early Years: Child Well-Being and the Role of Public Policy’, the strong influence of the human capital approach would seem to be disguised with the use of concepts such as well-being; defined as ‘the state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous’ and thus suggesting a more comprehensive understanding of childhood. Nevertheless, the emphasis placed on development and child outcomes, in particular, those related to cognitive and language skills when justifying government’s intervention, along with the lack of any efforts to assess children’s happiness, reveals a rather instrumental view of childhood. Other relevant dimensions such as children’s sense of belonging and recognition and the extent to which they are listened to and allowed to participate in society are not considered nor discussed.

In addition to the crucial role of human capital theory in constituting the child as capital, theories of child development, produced within the discipline of developmental psychology¹⁵, have also contributed to reinforce the image of the child as a malleable entity requiring a flow of ‘investments’ to become a productive citizen (more of which

¹⁵ Erica Burman’s (1994) genealogy on developmental psychology provides a critical historical account of the emergence of the child-study movement in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and the consolidation of psychology as the dominant discipline in the study of children.

later). In particular, Piaget's theories of children's cognitive development, which blends experiential knowledge with the child's a priori mental organising capacities, have been used by developmental research to conclude that cognitive skills could be improved by 'intensive engineering of social environments' (Nadesan, 2010, p.70).

Together, these theories and bodies of knowledge have produced an ensemble of discourses that have played a crucial role in constituting children as assets and early childhood education and parenting as technologies of optimisation. At the same time, they have reinforced a view that sees the child-adult continuum and the links between early childhood development and future progress as 'regimes of truth'. This, in turn, has provided a powerful rationale for government intervention in early childhood, in particular among 'disadvantaged' families, by creating, on one side, a common sense that what we do (or fail to do) with the child in his or her early stages of life has irreversible implications for the long term economic prosperity of the nation, and, on the other, that we can actually do something to change the course of life, thereby creating a 'moral' mandate to act. This is not to suggest that children's development and their future progress are not important. Instead, I am being critical of the way in which evidence is used to justify government and society's concern in children exclusively in economic terms. At the same time, I am questioning the apparent equal value given to a rights-based approach vis-à-vis human capital approach, arguing that while the former is used as a rhetorical device, the latter provides the main grounds to legitimise government intervention in early childhood development.

As a critique to this view of childhood, the 'new social studies of childhood' has sought to examine childhood as a social construct and rewrite the image of the child, repositioning children as competent social actors in their own right who should be taken seriously in the present, as beings, rather than engaged simply as 'future-adults-in the making' or as 'not-yet-social beings'. Here children are understood as autonomous individuals who are sovereign over themselves and capable of producing knowledge independently of adults. According to this ontology of children as agentic Cartesian beings, children's more or less stable and coherent identities give them access to self-knowledge; and as coherent, knowing, autonomous beings, children are imbued with agency (Gallagher and Gallagher, 2008, p.501). However, this position has more recently been questioned for its failure to attend to the material nature of childhood and for presuming a 'discrete and identifiable knowing subject – a Cartesian *cogito* (Foucault, 1989)' (Gallagher and Gallagher, 2008. p.502).

In a move away from a view of the child from humanism as dependent and inferior and a socio-constructivist understanding of children as autonomous agents, posthumanism turns towards the idea of the child 'enmeshed in an immense web of material and discursive forces, always intra-acting with everything else' (Murriss, 2016, p.xi). In the same vein, James et al. (2014) argue that childhood is not best studied within a framework built from and/or implicitly assuming a set of oppositional dichotomies (i.e childhood as a social construction as opposed to a biological/natural process). Instead, he suggests treating childhood as made of a 'material, discursive, cultural, natural, technological, human and non-human resources' (p.2). That is, we should seek to preserve the idea of competent children but also bring the question of the temporality of body, languages and the development of competencies. According to this perspective, both children and adults should be conceived of as in a state of becoming; as constantly evolving (Davies et al., 2013). This image of childhood and adulthood would, in my opinion, help destabilize the status of superiority of adults over children while acknowledging that children, as adults, are incoherent, unstable, and immature, in a process of emergence and becoming.

Child development as a cumulative, universal and biosocial process

How we define early childhood development plays a crucial role in the analysis of childhood given the extent to which it limits and shapes how we understand children and the purpose of early childhood education and care, and hence the policies and programmes we design for them. This section examines more closely the concept of early childhood development as articulated in the WB and IDB publications, arguing that despite some differences in their conceptual formulations, both share common discourses, namely that child development is a cumulative, universal and biosocial process, and draw almost exclusively on scientific knowledge produced within the discipline of developmental psychology and more recently neurosciences. By engaging with Foucault's notion of biopolitics, it explores how these dominant discourses and knowledges are instrumentalised for legitimising government intervention oriented to improve children's development, with the effect of producing new mechanisms of governing children and families.

The WB's publication does not provide a definition of early childhood development. Instead, it begins by presenting recent research on the development of the brain and its impact on early childhood development outcomes, as if the development of a child could be equated with the development of his or her brain. However, the authors then

develop an analytic framework, which according to them, is intended to build a case for policy makers and others interested in improving child development outcomes. The framework defines early childhood development in terms of three main outcomes: (i) cognitive development, which includes the acquisition of language and literacy; (ii) socio-emotional development, which includes the ability to socialise with others; and (iii) physical well-being and growth, which encompasses height, weight, nutritional status, and other physical indicators (Vegas and Santibáñez, 2010, p.xxii).

In addition, it acknowledges that 'early childhood development does not take place in a vacuum' (Ibid, p. xx11). Rather, in any given country, the macro context (that is, the economic, political, and social context) affects the nature and extent of social policies and the type of programmes made available to young children and their parents, which directly affect children's well-being. Meanwhile, the micro context, which considers the household characteristics and the interaction between a child and her or his primary caregiver sets a child on a trajectory that affects her or his future development (Vegas and Santibáñez, 2010). Emphasis is placed on early experiences and interactions, particularly on the role of the primary caregiver as a source of care and stimulation; whilst phrases such as 'sensitive periods', 'brain plasticity' and 'window of opportunity' are used to convey the criticality and the irreversibility of experience in those early years.

Building on this definition, the book provides an overview of early childhood development in Latin America and the Caribbean examining the contextual factors that affect childhood development. In so doing, it presents statistics and qualitative data on a wide range of indicators, including poverty rates; income distribution; educational achievement; political and social commitment; cultural beliefs on childrearing, motherhood, and the role of women in society; ethnic and racial diversity; status of early childhood professionals; chronic malnutrition; poor housing conditions; and parental education, income and practices.

Unlike the WB, the IABD's publication provides a precise definition of early childhood development as 'the psychological and biological changes that occur as a child transitions from a dependent infant to an autonomous teenager' (Fernald and others 2009 in Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.4). These changes include physical development (changes in the size, shape, and physical maturity of the body, including physical abilities and coordination), the development of language/communication skills (learning and using language), cognitive skills (the ability to reason, solve

problems, and organize ideas), and socio-emotional skills (gaining a sense of self, the ability to empathise and express feelings, and how to interact with others) (Ibid). The developmental process is seen as cumulative with events occurring during predictable time periods. The irreversibility of the effects of failing to invest in children in the correct timing and in the right amount is underscored: 'lack of development in certain areas or at certain points in time may have permanent consequences and may affect the well-being of an individual over his or her entire life cycle' (Ibid). In order to determine (and monitor) whether a child is developing normally, precise milestones for each dimension and stage of development are defined.

Perhaps the main contrast in their definitions of early childhood development lies in that the IDB does not refer to the macro context¹⁶ or household characteristics other than parenting practices. Instead, the emphasis is placed almost exclusively on the four outcomes that define early childhood development: physical, language/communication, cognitive and socio-emotional skills (the biological child) and on the role of early interactions between adults and children in shaping these (the social child). Accordingly, the statistical data presented is limited to indicators on child health and nutrition, language and communication, cognitive, motor, and socio-emotional development. No data on poverty, inequality or housing conditions are included. Within this framework, the dyad adult-child is seen as playing a crucial role in the child's growth and development: 'The family is the single most important determinant of child wellbeing' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.55.); 'How they (children) are raised will determine their well-being and the future of the countries they live in' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015b, p.3). As Gillies et al. (2017, p.3) put it, 'Rather than the spotlight alighting in the unequal material and social conditions in which children live and doing something about them, it is focused on parents and how they rear their children'. Within this discourse, families are held accountable not only for their children's well-being but for societies prosperity.

The differences in their formulations of early childhood development also reflect in the review of policies and programmes included in the books. Whilst the WB includes policies and programmes on health, hygiene and nutrition (aimed at improving prenatal care, breastfeeding, immunizations, access to health care); early childhood education; and, poverty alleviation; the IDB refers mainly to cash transfers, day care

¹⁶ The socio-political and economic context is only considered when thinking about the institutional architecture required to support the implementation of public policy in early childhood.

services, preschools and parenting programmes, most of these strictly concerned with education. As will be examined in the next chapter on local policies, these conceptual differences translate in different approaches and strategies on how to address early childhood development: where the IDB focuses on measures of cognitive and socio-emotional development and parenting practices as the most effective intervention to change these, the WB advocates for systemic policies that seek to change the system of child protection and support.

At first sight then, the analysis of the definitions articulated by both the WB and the IDB suggests a more holistic construction of children by the WB; one which considers the social, political and cultural contexts where the child is located, as well as the material and socio-economic conditions of the child's environment, compared to the IDB, where a stronger emphasis on the individual styles of parenting indicates a more narrow and restrictive conception of early childhood development. However, despite these differences, we can identify an assembly of signifying discourses operating across their definitions of early childhood development. First, there is a shared understanding of development as a cumulative process where the child is seen as progressing from a state of 'immaturity' and 'dependence' to 'full maturity' and 'independence' through sequential stages of intellectual, physical and socio-emotional growth and change. According to this, children's development is chronologically ordered and hierarchically arranged along a continuum from low status, infantile, 'figurative' thought to high status, adult, 'operative' language (Jenks, 2014, p.22). That is, the child's nature is assumed as inherently different from an adult's: children are regarded as 'immature, irrational, incompetent, asocial [and] acultural' with adults being 'mature, rational, competent, social and autonomous' (Mackay, 1973, p.28 in James and Prout, 1997, p.13). Implicit in this construction of development is the notion of time, ineluctable and indispensable for the transition from one stage to the other. That is to say, given time, the child will develop to become the adult he or she is biologically pre-destined to be.

This transition to adulthood through a sequence of stages contains an 'achievement ethic' which implies a change in the child's relation to the world; what Piaget refers to as 'decentring' (Jenks, 2014, p.22). This involves a series of transformations: 'a change from solipsistic subjectivism to a realistic objectivity, from affective response to cognitive evaluation, from disparate realm of value to the absolute realm of fact'; the end result being 'scientific rationality', represented as the capacity for 'abstraction,

generalization, logico-deductive process, matematization and cognitive operations' (Ibid, p.23). Dahlberg et al. (2107, p.20) explain,

To be fully realized is to be mature and adult, independent and autonomous, free and self-sufficient, and above all rational, an individual whose other qualities all serve reason. The closer individuals come to the reason the closer they come to themselves, to their true nature or essence. Realized individuals can reflect on themselves and the world, arriving at true understanding by the personal application of reason, knowledge and self-consciousness.

Canella (1997) argues that the 'belief in childhood as a unique and distinct period of humanity appears to have emerged in the Enlightenment and Modern historical periods', and specifically in relation to the notion of progress, understood as 'man advancing in a predetermined, desirable direction', and to the belief in the existence of natural law, which manifested itself in the search for universal human truths (Canella, 1997, p. 21-23). For Jenks, the view of children as 'different, less developed, and in need of explanation' proceeds from a pre-established but tacit ontological theory of what makes up the being of the other – one that remains unspoken and committed to difference - that give rise to the definition of the 'child as a "natural" meaningful order of object' (2014, p.4). Such implicit theories serve to render the child-adult continuum as taken for granted. Mayall (2013, p.3) observes that 'propositions within the child-study movement included the idea that very young children, having had little time to learn, were close to nature and so provided a route into adult understanding of what is to be human'. That is, the 'child is taken to display for adults their own state of once untutored difference' (Jenks, 2014 p.5), and, through that, it opens a door to discover 'the origins and specificities of mind, that is, the adult mind (Burman, 1994, p.10).

The notion of development 'as progress' constitutes childhood as foundational and intrinsically different from adulthood, which in contrast, is ideally represented as complete, stable and superior. In Murriss words, it consigns 'the child with many other "earth dwellers" to an inferior position as lesser beings, outside the charmed circle of fully developed adult person, the apogee of existence' (2016, p.xi). Jenks (2014) alerts us that these social hierarchies come to be seen as common sense because we do not examine the assumptions on which they are based; ones which embody western values and interests that in turn produce normative expectations within the wider society.

This way of understanding the development of the young child has, in turn, contributed to the construction of specific theories and forms of practice (Burman, 1994), namely child-centred and play-based pedagogies. In effect, Walkerline's (1984, p.155) study of the apparatuses of pedagogy demonstrates the 'intimate connection between the practices and the set of assumptions about learning and teaching premised on child development', arguing that the 'parameters of practice are given by the common sense of child development which is everywhere, in apparatuses from teacher-training, to work cards, to classroom layout', which themselves provide a 'norm, a standard of good and possible pedagogy' (Ibid, p. 162). She further examines the historical conditions which produced the possibility of the 'developmental psychology/child-centred pedagogy couple' (Ibid, p.164), arguing that the movement towards science and away from religion 'forms a significant backdrop to the genesis of the idea of rationality as natural' and, therefore, to the search for a 'pedagogy which could produce the desired forms of individuality by means of natural development' (Ibid, p. 164). According to her, it is psychology's very status as science with particular practices for producing evidences and claims to truth, and the development of the idea of 'the child' as an object both of science in its own right and of apparatuses of normalisation, that is crucial in understanding the historical construction of the present form of schooling (Ibid, p. 196). As Hook (2001, p.6) argues, 'the strongest discourses are those which have attempted to ground themselves on the natural, the sincere, the scientific –in short, on the level of the various correlates of the "true" and reasonable'.

Understandings of early childhood as clearly separated from adulthood –often referred to as the 'modern' conceptualisation of childhood, are deeply rooted in various strands of psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry (Rose, 1985)¹⁷. In particular, developmental psychology has been responsible for constituting a particular system of scientific rationality whereby development is organised around the notion of progress and treated as universal; regarded as necessary and inevitable, and thus part of normal life. Thus, I would argue that despite some of the positive influences of developmental psychology on securing children's right to care and welfare provision, representations of children as given, immature and separate from adults has had significant implications for childhood, shaping the possibilities children have to be and act in the world.

¹⁷ See Hendrick (1997), Wooldridge (1995) and Rose (1985) for a deeper analysis of the different constructions and reconstruction of British childhood.

By reinforcing a particular model of 'the child' –one that emphasises children's needs and deficiencies- theories of child development have served to justify differential treatment of children and adults and legitimate the ideological foundation for adult's 'natural' right to exert power and control over children (Qvortrup, 1994). For example, Walkerline (1984), drawing on Foucault (1997), demonstrates how child-centred pedagogies form part of those apparatuses which he describes in terms of administrative apparatuses for providing techniques of social regulation (Walkerline, 1984, p. 163), whereas Rothman (1971) considers the sorting of children into age groups, derived from the idea of a common stage of development, as 'one form of adult social control over children, rather than a natural response to the laws of development' (quoted in Mayall, 2015, p.8).

From a politics perspective, children's capacity to exercise their right to speak and decide in matters that directly affect them is undermined; their voices and knowledges are not listened to or taken into consideration to expand our understanding of the world. Instead, 'children must wait for knowledge to come, either to be supplied by adults or through innate biological, processes of development, both ending in the goal of adult maturity' (Jenks, 2014, p. xii). This has the effect of ignoring the 'continuous lived social practice of being a child with a specific and coherent meaning structure', thus failing to 'constitute the child as an ontology in its own right' (Ibid, p.9-10). As Bok puts it,

As long as questions are not asked, -as when power is thought divinely granted or ordained by nature – the right to coerce and manipulate is taken for granted: Only when this right is challenged does the need for justification arise. It becomes necessary to ask: When can authority be justly exercised –over a child for instance (1978, p.10 quoted in Qvortrup, 1994, p.3).

But psychology has not only served as basis for children's regulation by adults. As Rose (1999) illustrates in his seminal work on the genealogy of subjectivity, the 'psy' knowledges and expertise have also played a key role in constructing 'governable subjects', encouraging and producing practices of self-regulation among adults and children early on in their lives:

I think that these types of knowledge and expertise, largely invented since the mid-nineteenth century, are of particular significance. For these embody a particular way in which human beings have tried to understand themselves –to make themselves the subjects, objects, targets of a

truthful knowledge. And I think that they have played a constitutive role in shaping the ways in which we think of ourselves and act upon ourselves (Rose, 1999, p.vii).

Meanwhile, the strong boundaries established to keep childhood and adulthood separated serves to preserve the social order allowing the state not to have to deal with the challenges of equality and inclusion of children in society. Qvortrup (1994) refers to the concept of protection, often used to characterize childhood and exclude children from certain 'dangerous' spaces, as a 'convenient tool to protect the adult world against intrusion of children' (p.21). For Canella, 'the knowledge base used to ground the field (of early childhood studies) actually serves to support the status quo, reinforces prejudices and stereotypes, and ignores the real lives of children (and other human beings such are their parents and teachers)' (1997, p. 1-2). Jenks (2014 p.11) explains:

These boundaries do not simply delineate the extent and compass of the child in society, but they do prescribe the social space which in turn, and at a different level, express the control component exercises in the framework of that social system and the control variant which reveals the interests that sustain its functioning.

Secondly, both institutions treat development as a 'universal' process in that each and every individual is born into the world as a child and follows pre-determined biological stages to become an adult. The definition of universal time frames and milestones for the unfolding of development has the effect of constituting childhood as a natural and biologically given phenomenon, 'as a stage, a structured process of becoming rather than as a course of action or a coherent social practice' (Jenks, 2104, p.8), irrespective of the child's particular social and cultural context, presupposing that the experience and significance of being a child is unitary and comparable across cultures and historical times. Within this perspective, the status and subject position of 'the child' is taken as read and is not, in itself, made a matter of dispute (see Qvortrup 1994).

This is problematic in that it presumes (and prescribes) the universality of social practices surrounding childhood. For instance, emphasis on a primary caregiver by theories of social development and attachment reflect societies where the mother is positioned as the main responsible for caring for her children –namely Western countries, ignoring different cultural practices where children are cared by a wider range of women. This paradigm underpins the representation of parenting of both institutions as illustrated in the following passages:

The strong consensus from many disciplines is that it is critical for young children to develop a strong, affectionate tie with at least one primary caregiver (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p. 92).

The primary caregiver is the main source of brain stimulation in the first years of life and her or his interaction with a child heavily influences brain development (Vegas and Santibañez, 2010, p.2)

This tendency to 'naturalize' development obscures a set of criteria used to assess children's development which might be implicit or grounded within a specific network of interests; a criterion which remains 'normative and unexplicated' (Jenks 2014, p.36). At the same time, it 'serves to conceal its analytic importance behind the cloak of the mundane; its significance and "strangeness" as a social phenomenon is obscured' thus leaving the actual child untheorized (Ibid, p.7). These discourses about early childhood development as progress and universal continue to inform education, health, social protection and child-rearing practices (Walkerline, 1984). As Mayall (2015) observes, developmental psychology's links to service provision has served to position and legitimise it as the dominant discipline in providing knowledge about children to those who work with and for children, thus given it great power to control knowledge and affect people's lives. In the same line, Burman (1994, pp.183,185) argues,

In purveying what is advertised as a general, universalist model of development, developmental psychology is a vital ingredient in the "globalization of childhood" (...) In general, the concept of childhood on offer is a Western construction that is now being incorporated, as though it was universal, into aid and development policies.

As will be explored in the next sections, these discourses about early childhood can produce systems and practices that further discriminate against minorities and those groups identified as in 'disadvantage'. Drawing on Foucault's notion of discourse as the 'space' where 'power and knowledge are joined together', Mac Naughton (2005) analysis of the micro-practices of power in early years classrooms demonstrates that 'truths' about children are used to define what is 'developmentally' normal, and to rank and define children in ways that privilege particular groups of children and oppress others. From a postcolonial perspective, 'this power is constructed as intellectual, as an expectation for ways of being, as privileging particular emotions, and as disciplinary desires'; a 'colonizing power' produced by human beings, which 'places particular groups of people in the margins, signifying them as "others" who are less

advanced in thinking, underdeveloped, unqualified to speak, and undeniably less human than those in power' (Canella and Viruru, 2006, pp. 59-60). As Foucault puts it, 'this power is netlike and is always everywhere, in the construction of colonizing discourses, institutional structures, and unquestioned technologies' (quoted in Canella and Viruru, 2006, p. 60). Thus, I concur with Allport (1968) and Bradley (1989) (quoted in Canella and Viruru, 2006) whom argue that findings within psychology should not be taken as facts, but rather as ideas and stories based on assumptions and practices that fit their times and places.

Finally, and crucial for the justification of government intervention in childhood, is the conceptualisation of early childhood development as a biosocial process; that is, shaped both by biology (nature) and environment (nurture):

When human beings become embryos, their complete genetic makeup is determined. The individuals they turn out to be is the consequence of the interaction between this genetic makeup and their life experiences (Berlinski and Schady, 2015, p.13).

In the past, scientists thought the brain was fully formed by the time a child was born and, as a consequence, education or experience could do little to shape individual brain development. More recent research has revealed, however, that the brain keeps changing throughout life, with a great deal of brain formation taking place between birth and the age of three (Ibid, p.13).

Further, the formulation of child development in terms of separate although interrelated dimensions of cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development produces a fragmented child; one whose different parts can be moulded through especially designed interventions. Indeed, the WB and IDB documents suggest a large repertoire of activities to enhance the child's gross and fine motor development, memory or social skills, just to name a few. However, now interventions not only aim to regulate the social behaviour (i.e positive discipline) or shape the external body (i.e physical education) but rather seek to act in the 'inner' body (i.e the brain):

Childhood experiences, moreover, shape the actual architecture and wiring of the brain. Thus, the care and stimulation that children receive in their earliest years is critical to their cognitive development and future lives (Vegas and Santibanez, 2010, p.1).

Biology and environment therefore not only interact dynamically to form the human being; environment itself is considered as having the power to act upon the material body and transform it to the extreme of counteracting the negative effects of poverty

upon brain development. As a result, both the body of the child and parts of it become object of intervention through new 'technologies of optimization' (Rose, 2007, p.16) derived from knowledge produced within the fields of environmental epigenetics and neurosciences. The following long passage explains the dynamic interaction between genetics and environment while suggesting that the brain can be modified by the environment, especially during the early years:

At the time of delivery, the baby's brain has not completed its development, although the brain's structure (which is genetically determined) is already formed. At birth, the human brain has a minimal set of connections and neural pathways. In the first three years of life, brain development is at the core of the development of a child (...) In the brain's process of producing and disposing synapses, the individual's interaction with the environment (reaction to stimuli; collection, processing, and storage of information) plays a major role (Fox, Levitt, and Nelson 2010). Apparently, brain activity is directed by genetically configured neural patterns, while the details of such patterns (the amount and type of synaptic connections) are largely determined by the interaction with the environment (Greenough, Black, and Wallace 1987). The brain is able to modify its organization and functions according to experience—an ability known as brain plasticity (Greenough, Black, and Wallace 1987; Masten and Coatsworth 1998) (...) Recent neurological research (Weaver and others 2004; Rommeck and others 2009, 2011; Nelson, Fox, and Zeanah 2014) suggests that warm, stimulating childcare has a profound impact on brain development via the development of neural connections and patterns (Berlinski and Schady, 2015, p.10).

This understanding of development as biosocial would be in line with contemporary views of childhood that see it as simultaneously part of culture and nature; as a social construction and a biological phenomenon where the social and genetics are intimately interconnected. At the same time, the notion of 'brain plasticity' whereby the brain functions are seen as malleable and susceptible to change through external stimulus such as parent's responsiveness, care and stimulation has helped challenging ideas of genetic determinism still present in popular imaginary and to a lesser extent in social policies¹⁸.

The implications of this new knowledge upon the logics of government and the policies and action orientations derived from these, as well as on how the subjects of policy are construed, are significant. In a recent paper, Gulson and Webb (2016) argue that this has led to an increasing prevalence of biosocial explanations of phenomenon in

¹⁸ As Nadesan (2010) observes, ideas of heritability of mental deficiency spurred by the eugenics movement were popular during the early twentieth century and used to convey that poor children were prone to crime and other forms of degeneracy.

the public policy arena, which are producing new biosocial rationalities for education policy and intervention. The analysis of the publications by the WB and the IDB shows how both organisations have instrumentalised new evidence from neuroscience research to legitimise government intervention in early childhood and in certain types of programmes. For example, they conclude that early experiences are the single most important aspect influencing a child's wellbeing as they have 'persistent, long-lasting, and significant effects on a wide array of important youth and adult outcomes' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.13). In particular, parents' interactions with their children are seen as critical in shaping children's brains: 'The primary caregiver is the main source of brain stimulation in the first years of life and her or his interaction with a child heavily influences brain development' (Ibid, p.13). Thus, parenting comes to be seen as a 'key determinant of children's future life chances' (Gillies et al. 2017, p.42).

At the same time, parental stimulation and care in the early years are seen as 'protective factors' against the negative effects of poverty and harsh environmental conditions upon the brain, and as a way to overcome these:

Much can be done to overcome socioeconomic disadvantages by facilitating positive experiences that promote brain development in the early childhood years, such as fostering positive interactions between a child and her or his environment and counteracting the negative effects of poor stimulation and care. In sum, early childhood presents a critical window of opportunity in which interventions can influence the healthy development of children and youth. Consequently, policies and programs targeted at early childhood development can have substantial and lasting impacts on human development. (Vegas and Santibañez, 2010)

As a result, parent programmes aimed at 'improving' child-rearing practices come to be seen as an instance of what Brooks et al. (2009) call a 'silver bullet' policy solution to a 'grand-challenge', that is, to prevent, compensate and/or overcome the effects of poverty. As will be discussed later, how we define early childhood development influences the way we construe the 'problem' of low developmental levels; ultimately as one caused by deficiencies in families. These culturalist accounts of poverty, in turn, have the effect of individualizing the responsibility of children's care and placing the burden on families, especially mothers, as well as producing a dominant discourse of what 'good' parenting means that involves a significant amount of resources, both financial and time.

Foucault's concepts of biopower and biopolitics provide a useful analytical tool to critically examine the use of biological knowledge to design early policies and interventions aimed at enhancing children's development. This new form of biopolitics, which shifts emphasis from the 'whole' body as integral to the study of molecularisation, has been characterised as 'molecular' biopolitics (Rose, 2007, p.11); which 'means that intervention is not on the external or behavioural aspects of the body, but rather, is in the body, "on its organic substance, which is now perceived as malleable, contestable and improvable" (Lemke, 2011, p. 101). In this way, 'biotechnology and biomedicine allow for the body's dismantling and recombination to an extent that Foucault did not anticipate' (Lemke, 2011, p.94). Further, as Gulson and Webb (2016) contend, molecular biopolitics provides a rationality for policy action 'based on the premise that molecular knowledge provides new forms of the "technically best course of action"' (p.8). As they explain, where policy science once provided rigorous and scientifically based solutions to social problems, now molecular knowledge offers new forms of evidence. This has led to the emergence of new authorities: 'Experts in life itself', as Rose (2007, p.27) calls them, which have positioned in the education and social policy fields relocating traditional authorities such as teachers, social workers and doctors. This increasing role of biological evidence coupled to the more entrenched use of economic instruments like cost-benefit analysis in social and educational policy can be seen as producing a 'bioeconomic' rationality for early childhood policies.

With regard to the processes of subjectification, as has been illustrated in several of the passages, this type of evidence leads to greater concern for the future outcomes both of individuals and society. In this way, we could argue that early interventions are to a great extent motivated by a desire of changing the subject of the future. Then, this implies a change in temporality with the emphasis of governance shifting from the present to the future; what Rose and Abi-Rached (2013) refer to as a 'general regime of futurity' (quoted in Gulson and Webb, 2016). In a similar vein, Gulson and Webb (2016) contend that neuroscientific research has the potential to reshape what it means to discuss policy and the subjects of policy, as the focus on 'futurity means that there is both a demand on the individual to "live responsibly" but also that "[c]ontemporary biopolitics is infused with futurity, saturated with anticipations of imagined futures, with hope, expectation, desire, anxiety, even dread". In this process, the boundaries between adulthood and childhood become increasingly blurred.

Overall, we can see that early childhood development as a construct is the 'primary metaphor through which childhood is made intelligible, both in everyday world and also within the specialist vocabularies of the sciences and agencies which lay claim to an understanding and servicing of that state of being' (Jenks, 2014, p.34). As such, childhood is conflated with progress and taken as given and pertinent to all, irrespective of context. At the same time, this understanding of childhood contributes to the government of both children - so they achieve the expected developmental outcomes, and parents – so they raise children to become 'fully' developed according to expert knowledge. In what follows I explore the role that scientific knowledge incarnated in the figure of the 'expert' has played in the normalisation, categorisation and management of children and parents.

The 'normal child' and the 'good parent'

This section explores how 'expert' knowledge is used to create norms and standards that produce a normative discourse of the 'normal child' and the 'good parent', and the ways in which children and parents are positioned around these identities. This, in turn, serves to legitimise mechanisms of social control of children, as well as to place the burden of children's care and development on families, especially mothers. At the same time, it examines the apparent contradictions of a discourse that places authority over childhood and parenting upon 'experts' while, simultaneously, claiming the crucial role of the 'non-expert' parents; suggesting this is subservient to the purposes of childhood governance and government 'at a distance'.

In foregrounding the notion of children as potential human capital and of early childhood development as a cumulative and malleable process, both organisations draw almost exclusively on a large body of scientific knowledge produced within the disciplines of biology, neuroscience, psychology and economics. In the case of the IDB's publication, 'expert' knowledge is used to define normative parameters in children's physical, language, cognitive and socio-emotional development according to age:

In general, children grow very rapidly in the first 6 months of life. At birth, the median child is 49.5 centimeters long, weighs 3.25 kilograms, and has a head circumference of 34.2 centimeters. Growth accelerates during the first 2 months of life and continues at a declining rate thereafter (...) First, children learn to sit without support. This is typically followed by crawling on hands and knees, standing without assistance, walking with assistance, standing alone, and finally walking alone. (...) Children babble

at 2–4 months and make noises and try new and different sounds at 4–6 months. They point and gesture at around 12 months and say their first words and sentences in the first two years (...) When children respond to their own name at about 12 months and learn to stack or nest objects at 15–18 months, they are developing their cognitive abilities on schedule (...) Healthy infants and toddlers show preferential attachments to caregivers: they recognize their parents' faces at 1–4 weeks of life, smile at 4–5 weeks, respond to parents' voices at around 7 months, and indicate their wants at 7–15 months. (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.4-7).

These outcomes on the different dimensions of child development, as well as the time frames in which they should take place, are set as standards of 'normal' child development. The establishment of a universal criteria to assess child development makes possible to measure, categorise and compare children's developmental outcomes across countries and by different social categories such as gender, ethnicity, class, age, etc¹⁹. It allows us to define 'who' the child is and how to recognise it, creating the expectation that every child, irrespective of his or her historical, cultural or socioeconomic context, must develop according to these pre-defined norms. In so doing, it produces the discourse of the 'ideal child', that which develops according to the norm. Dahlberg et al (2007, p.37) emphasizes:

The child becomes an object of normalization, via the child-centred pedagogy that has grown out from developmental psychology, with developmental assessments acting as a technology of normalisation determining how children should be. In these processes power enters through the creation of a type of hierarchy among children according to whether or not they have reached a specific stage, and achieving the norm and preventing or correcting deviations from the norm takes over pedagogical practice. Such classificatory practices can be seen as a form of manipulation through which the child is given both a social and a personal identity.

The discourse on the 'normal child', in turn, has the effect of producing simultaneous images of otherness. In effect, failing to achieve these norms or transgressing the very notion of childhood (i.e children as abusers or murderers) may render the child problematic, unintelligible or even pathologised as 'abnormal'.

¹⁹ The need to assess children's progress according to pre-determined milestones produces a proliferation of systems of measurement and evaluation of children's developmental and educational outcomes, with quantitative studies being the norm in the assessment of early childhood development round the globe, rendering alternative approaches to evaluation almost irrelevant indeed.

Those parents who fail to promulgate or accommodate this vision of childhood within the family are effectively seen to fail as parents, and those children who fail to confirm to the image of the 'child' are seen as some of childhood's failures (Armstrong quoted in Jenks, 2014, p. 123).

The establishment of child development norms and standards, which are shared and agreed upon serve to maintain and reproduce order through the production of binaries such as normative and deviant behaviour. Jenks (2014, p.129) explains, 'anomalies are, in essence, the by-products of systems of ordering. Crucially, the concern with normalisation of children may result in an increasing governing of children activities and experiences in order to preserve the very notion of childhood. According to Foucault, these are all technologies of power produced by discursive systems to discipline and regulate people: a form of disciplinary power which is 'imposed on bodies by creating the desire to be "normal" -a normality created by discourse (Canella and Viruru, 2006, p.62). Here, Jenks metaphoric allusion to Foucault's panopticon seems quite pertinent: 'The dark spectre of Foucault's watchtower is brought to mind again along with the mechanical reduction of human conduct wrought through the one-sided emphasis on the 'voir' in 'savoir' (Foucault ,1977 quoted in Jenks, p.127). As will be examined in the next section, these norms are used to define the existence of a problem with early childhood development which then serves to rationalise government policies and interventions aimed at shaping or more precisely improving child outcomes.

The discursive regime of the 'normal child', in turn, enables the discourse of the 'good parent' which prescribes what good and bad parenting looks like: 'Warm, stimulating and nurturing home environments', 'parent's knowledge on child development', 'exclusive breastfeeding', 'responsive interactions', 'positive discipline' and 'talking, reading and playing with the child' are some of the features associated with being a good parent, whereas 'malnutrition', 'harsh and cold home environments', 'corporal punishment', 'not talking, reading or playing with the child', are all features of bad parenting (Berlinski and Shady, 2015). That is, if the 'normal child' is produced out of standard development outcomes, the 'good parent' is that which provides the conditions for children to 'succeed'. As one of the books explains,

In addition to having warm, nurturing, and stable interactions with their caregivers, young children need to have a home environment that stimulates the development of language and cognition. Children who are exposed to a greater number of words, for example, when parents talk to them, read to them, or tell them stories, develop a richer vocabulary early on. A child's early vocabulary is highly predictive of performance on test

scores in the early grades of primary school. Parents reading or telling stories to their children may also enjoy other benefits, including promoting attachment (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.68).

According to this, children need to be breastfed, nurtured, cared, stimulated, challenged, pushed, and cultivated from very early in their lives in order to thrive; and all these experiences should be provided primarily by parents. In this way, intensive parenting becomes normalised and treated as a technical skill, something one needs to learn in order to be good at. Parent's willingness to learn and improve their parenting skills appears as crucial as the quality of care provided: 'Parents who are concerned and interested in learning about effective parenting styles and strategies are, almost by definition, better parents than others' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.88). That is, in order to be recognised as good parent, one must have the desire and motivation for self-improvement; to become an entrepreneur of oneself.

This view of parenting is in line with findings from critical studies on parenting which have argued that the contemporary discursive regime constitutes parents (in particular mothers) as the ultimate responsible for children's development and portrays the 'ideal parent' as that which enables the realisation of the 'normal child' through an intensive engagement with parenthood. I would argue that this type of subjectivity is produced by a neo-liberal regime that intervenes in the private sphere, encouraging permanent competition against others and oneself while demanding parents to become autonomous and independent citizens. Thus, parents are caught within a dilemma whereby, on one hand, they are enthused to learn and improve their parenting skills through a wide range of 'technologies of the self', including expert advice, and, on the other, are expected to achieve these skills independently. The different styles of and engagements with parenting, and hence the plausibility of being recognised as a 'good parent' are, as will be examined in the next section, correlated with parent's socioeconomic characteristics. This is in line with Gillies (2008) and Widding (2015), who have demonstrated that parenthood ideals are classed, raced and gendered.

Another problem that emerges from this way of constituting parenting is that it takes for granted that care is itself a unitary or a 'natural' feeling. According to Jenks (2014), two main interconnected discourses would be sustaining these images of intensive parenting: dependency and altruism. That is on one side, children are constituted as dependent and needy, requiring constant care and surveillance, and, on the other, parents are presumed (and expected) to be altruistic, placing their child needs and

interests before theirs. This altruistic character of child-adult relationships would seem at odds with the dominant image of self and success within modernity (Ibid, p.39). However, considering parent's altruistic feelings towards their children not as unitary or natural but as a social construction, Jenks (2014, p.40) argues that 'altruism may be read as ideological, an appearance of care that disguises the true purpose of control'. According to this view, dependence and care become instruments in the process of social and cultural reproduction given the extent that they serve to sustain the status quo:

Care, in this sense, itself becomes hegemonic (Gramsci, 1970); it provides a moral and philosophical context for social relations which claims the assent of large groups of people for a sustained period. Care becomes part of a subtle ideology that possesses the moral high ground, defies opposition and exercises a continual control over the other in the name of 'what is best for them' (Jenks, 2014, p.40).

The child thus becomes the 'metaphor for the strategies and functioning of control in modern life' (Ibid, p.102). Ambert (1994, quoted in Jenks, 2014, p.39) describes the 'symbiotic' child-adult relationship in a similar tone:

This linkage between what we conceive to be the nature of childhood and that of parenting is based less in the natural unavoidability of parents for children's survival and well-being as on society's structure and socioeconomic requisites, which not only place children in the context of family, but 'parentalize' and, I will add, 'maternalize' them. Thus, when one sees children, one 'sees' parents. When one sees children who have problems, one looks for parents, especially mothers.

As a result, the traditionally private sphere of families becomes an area of policy intervention for the purposes of social control: the 'tutelary complex' described by Donzelot (1986) would, masked in the form of care and concern, be intruding into 'difficult' families, threading 'a careful line between repression and dependency such that the family is preserved as the unit of attention, for the dispersal of mechanisms of control, and also the house of the child' (in Jenks 2014, p.103):

The contemporary state no longer addresses the polity directly; governmentality like the discourse of morality becomes oblique; the family is now the basis unit of control. All ideas and practices concerning the care of, justice for and protection of the child can be seen as instrumental in the ideological network that preserves the going order (Jenks, 2014, p.102).

This resembles Bernstein's (1972, p.47) understanding of the role of education in reproducing the social order:

How a society selected, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control. From this point of view, differences within and changes in the organization, transmission, and evaluation of educational knowledge should be a major area of sociological interest.

Now the features of what constitutes 'good' and 'bad' parenting are, as expected, not defined by parents or children. Rather, professionals from diverse disciplines, in particular those referred to as the 'psy' disciplines (psychology, psychoanalysis and psychiatry) by Rose (1989) are regarded as legitimate authorities when it comes to raising children. For instance, the work of Cyril Burt on individual differences and that of Susan Isaacs (quoted in Hendrick, 1997) on children development, as well as the psychiatrically dominated movement in the UK during the twentieth century played an influential role in emphasising the role of the family, and especially the mother in the 'rearing of emotionally balanced children'. Meanwhile, Isaacs (1930, 1933) argued that children were 'naïve egoists' whose aggressiveness was due to their egotistical desire for 'possessions, power and attention', in turn driven by an infant unconscious dominated by 'basic wishes, fantasies and fears' (quoted in Hendrick, 1997 p.52). To 'free' the child's ego 'for the possibility of real development—in skill and understanding, and stable social relations' (Ibid), Isaacs informed mothers to leave the child free to choose its own form of expression and take an understanding and tolerant attitude towards the child.

The statement 'Scientists in the fields of biology, psychology, and economics have a clear view of what outcomes (and trajectories) define a happy, healthy, and potentially prosperous child' (Berlinski and Schady, 2015, p.1) further illustrates how scientific knowledge about children has become accepted as definitive, beyond reproach; disregarding parents, teachers and children's knowledge, values and practices. The belief that scientists can clearly know in advance what means for a child to be happy, healthy and prosperous has important implications on how childhood and parenthood are constituted. On one hand, it creates the illusion that there is a 'correct' way of raising children; that which produces happy, healthy and prosperous children and is only available to scientists; and, on the other, it takes for granted that these outcomes are the most important in relation to children. At the same time, it suggests a

consented and pre-defined conception of these rather elusive concepts, such as happiness. In so doing, it restricts 'expert' knowledge to specific disciplines, namely biology, psychology and economics, rendering other bodies of knowledge such as sociology, anthropology, history and art as irrelevant in the endeavour of understanding children²⁰.

Not only is the exclusion of these body or work problematic, but also of other quantitative whose findings show a less significant impact of early childhood development and education²¹. Popular knowledge and alternative views and interpretations of what these concepts might mean and of their value for different groups are also ignored, and in some cases, even considerate inadequate. Ironically, this rather 'superior' knowledge of scientists and the expert discourses that derive from it have the effect of constituting the family as the 'key' determinant of child development; the centre of the child's world. However, as Nadesan (2010) shows, the concern over normalisation of children and parenting is not new; by the late nineteenth century, children had already emerged as central targets of normalising forces, when public interest in their health and development prompted careful professional delineation of 'normal' behaviours and stages of children's intellectual, physical and social development.

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault argues that biopolitical norms established in the late nineteenth century served as the basis of 'new technologies of power that operated upon the population to elicit and channel its vital forces while reducing risks to those factors' (quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p.8). These biopolitical norms, supplemented with biopolitical disciplines and technologies of the self 'both acted upon individuals as objects within a mass and were aimed at willing individuals, thereby operating as technologies of subjectification by transforming individuals into particular kinds of subjects who reflected upon themselves in accord with newly established forms of health, manner, conduct, sociality, and affect' (Foucault quoted in Nadesan, 2010, p.8). Therefore, we can conclude that expert's understandings of child development produce a biopolitical knowledge which is used by the state to design systems,

²⁰ There is also the problem of relevance of evidence from studies targeted to very specific populations (i.e. deprived African American and Hispanic living in the US in the case of Head Start) for different contexts with varying institutional arrangements and cultural practices (See Penn, 2010, Wastell and White, 2012).

²¹ For example, studies by Wastell and White, (2012) which show that the impacts identified in the early US studies such as Head Start are transient, and by Hopkins et al (2010) suggesting that the impact of early childhood education and care in England is not significant (quoted in Campbell-Barr, 2014) are not mentioned in the books.

structures and interventions that seek to manage the population in the interest of national competitiveness. This echoes Foucault's assertion that a 'normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centred on life (Foucault, 2007, p.144).

Poor children (and parents) as the 'problem'

The previous section described how scientific knowledge is used to create norms and standards which in turn produce a normative discourse of the 'normal/abnormal child' and the 'good/bad parent'; categories that serve to understand the construction of the 'other' and legitimise technologies of government. In this section, I want to explore early childhood development policies in relation to biopower. This will involve examining how 'an issue or social phenomenon' – in this instance delays in early childhood development among children from poor families– 'is framed as a problem in need of political intervention' (Triantafillou, 2012, p. 20). In so doing, I will show how statistics and scientific knowledge are strategically deployed in fabricating developmental delays as a policy problem. At the same time, I will explore how both organisations constitute parenting programmes as 'the' policy solution, arguing that this way of defining the problem/solution frame of early childhood development decontextualises childhood and parenting and shifts the responsibility over children's welfare from the public realm of the state to the private realm of families. Finally, I reflect on some of the methodological problems derived from how statistics on early childhood development are deployed to construct a policy problem and justify government intervention.

Both the WB and the IDB deploy a wide range of statistics to identify and define a problem with early childhood development. These include indicators on health, nutrition, parenting practices, availability of play materials, among others. Based on these, it is argued that despite the regions remarkable progress in improving health and nutrition,

The picture is less positive with regard to other dimensions of early childhood development. Young children in poor households lag seriously behind their counterparts in better-off households. The gap between rich and poor is apparent early on, and grows as children become older, at least until the age when they begin formal schooling. It is particularly large in two dimensions of development— language and cognition—that are most strongly associated with early school performance (Berlinski and Shady, 2015b, p.5).

Here, the problem is defined in terms of the existence of gaps between rich and poor and, more specifically, that children in poorer households in the region have substantially lower levels of development, especially cognitive and language development, than children in richer households. This is considered a problem because these two dimensions of early childhood development are, according to the existing causal evidence, the most strongly associated with early school performance, which is seen as determining children's future outcomes, as well as those of society:

Policymakers in the region (rightly) worry a great deal about the poor test scores of 15-year olds on the international PISA exam, in particular relative to high-performing countries like China, Korea, and Singapore because they understand that the low levels of skills of Latin American teenagers have important implications for their productivity as adults, and for a country's growth potential (Berlinski and Shady, 2015b, p.205).

That is, both organisations present the problem of developmental gaps as an issue concerning the vitality of the 'disadvantaged child' and society more generally. This includes their material conditions of disadvantage, but also their present and future conduct and their aspirations, that is, 'their habits, disposition and character' (Dean, 2007, p. 190). Again, concern over children is framed in terms of their future outcomes and justified to the extent that it affects society's prosperity. The fact that there are significant social inequities among children from different backgrounds is not so much seen as a problem per se as revealed by the less emphasis on the effects of these 'delays' in children's current wellbeing.

The 'problem' of developmental gaps and delays described above is explained as caused mainly by two factors: 'bad' parenting and 'low' quality of day care centres and early schooling. With regard to the problematisation of parenting, both publications argue that developmental gaps emerge early on, even before children begin formal schooling. That is to say that the existence of delays among the poor are caused by other factors besides schools, most notably the home environment and parenting practices.

Children in poorer households in the region have substantially lower levels of development, especially cognitive and language development, than children in richer households. Parents in poorer households invest less in their children (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.71).

By locating these two propositions together, a causal link between lower levels of parental investment and lower levels of development amongst children in poorer households is implicitly made. Further, a number of studies and data are presented to show that the 'home environment is responsible for keeping many children in Latin America and the Caribbean from reaching their full potential' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015). For example, it is argued that in every country where the HOME²² scale has been applied, results indicate that there are socioeconomic gradients in the quality of the home environment; that is, mothers with higher education obtain better scores than mothers with lower education. Similarly, statistics from Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) are deployed to show that harsh corporal punishment is higher among mothers with incomplete primary education or less. As far as parent's engagement in activities and experiences that stimulates their children's cognitive development, steep socioeconomic gradients in all Latin America countries except Guyana are identified, with children of mothers with less education being much less likely to be read to than children of mothers with more education. Only in the case of breastfeeding (where poor mothers perform better than their richer counterparts) are mothers from disadvantaged backgrounds portrayed in positive terms. It is in this way that statistics are deployed to conclude that poor households and mothers with low levels of education exhibit worse parenting compared to their richer and more educated counterparts (Berlinski and Shady, 2015). This relates to Foucault's notion of the science of statistics as a conduit and technology for a 'massifying' state power which 'establishes its dominion' over life (Foucault, 1998, p. 138).

Both organisations also refer to a large body of evidence that documents the existence of developmental gaps between children from different socio-economic backgrounds (Heckman, 2006, 2007; Paxson and Schady, 2007). Drawing on this literature, they argue that such differences usually emerge early and persist over time and that cognitive skill is particularly sensitive to parental investments during early childhood. Parental practices and the quality of the home environment are therefore understood to be the main driving forces behind unequal developmental outcomes among children. In particular, the lack of adequate stimulation and support at home is considered a major constraint preventing children in socioeconomically disadvantaged families from reaching better developmental outcomes. To an extent, this is a reiteration of eugenics in cultural form, where 'bad parenting' is evoked to

²² The HOME scale is an instrument developed to provide information about the home and maternal environment as a stimulus to infant learning and development.

'explain' developmental 'delays' among disadvantaged children. As a result, a discourse that 'denaturalises' and 're-naturalises' women's motherhood and blames them for neglecting their children becomes common sense, as suggested by several ethnographic studies in the rural highlands of Peru (del Pino, 2011; Anderson, 2005). As Ball (2013, p.92) observes:

A new iteration of degeneracy comes into view in relation to the pathological family, the abnormal family, set in direct contrast to what Musgrove quite simply called "the good home". There emerged two key elements to this pathology, one a failure of discipline and the other a failure of aspiration. The failures of the family are passed on as a form of heredity, as outlined by Burt, in "cycles of disadvantage". (2013, pp. 91-92, citing Musgrove, 1970, and citing Burt, 1937).

Research that demonstrates that such developmental gaps affect schooling and limit children's future economic opportunities and wellbeing through lower employment status, wages and participation in crime, even after controlling for wealth and maternal education (Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007), is also referenced to evince the criticality of government intervention in early childhood development. That is, persistent socio-economic group differences in developmental outcomes come to be understood as one of the channels explaining the intergenerational transmission of poverty and reproduction of inequality. As Foucault describes, the knowledges and truths of political economy (such as statistics) were joined by the emergent disciplines of the human and life sciences: psychology, epidemiology, sociology, and public policy/health, whose expertise and authority were a condition for liberal government. These discourses and knowledges in turn translate into early childhood policies targeted to the most 'vulnerable' that are often designed based on the 'weaknesses' and 'limitations' of children, families and communities.

The focus on parenting, I would argue, has the effect of bringing families closely under the gaze of the state. In effect, 'Government's Hand in Family Affairs', 'Teaching Mom and Dad' and 'A Place for Government at the Family Table' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.86) are some of the ways in which government intervention in the private realm of families is framed in the IDB publication. It is in this way that different 'technologies of government' emerge and act to regulate and manage parents (and children) in the name of the child. These are, what Rose (2007, p.6) calls,

'technologies of life' that act in the present to 'secure the best possible future for those who are their subjects'. This mirrors contemporary family policies in countries like England where the prevailing political discourse increasingly focuses on families and parenting as the solution to structural social problems:

If we want to have any hope of ending our broken society, family and parenting is where we've got to start (Cameron, 2011, after the August 2011 riots).

The early home environment is the single biggest influence on a child's development, more important than material circumstance or parental income, occupation or education (Allen Report, 2011 p. xiv).

What parents do is more important than who they are (Allen Report, 2011, p. 57)

What matters most to a child's life chances is not the wealth of their upbringing but the warmth of their parenting (Cameron, speech to demos, January 2010).

However, as Nadesan (2010) shows, the constitution of poor children and families as a 'problem' to be addressed is not new. Rather, she traces back to the nineteenth century, when the concept of dangerousness emerged to refer to the risk poor children posed to society's health and prosperity. By that time, negative attitudes towards lower-class children were grounded on the belief that poor children were inherently deficient and therefore fundamentally risky: 'risky children are the future welfare dependents or future criminals' (Ibid, p.3). With the emergence of new authorities of the helping professionals, the notion of the 'dangerous' child was replaced by the formulation of the child 'at risk', helping to 'shift blame away from "defective" individuals towards deleterious environmental conditions' (Ibid, p.9). In other words, what changed were the explanations formulated to account for poor children's delay (from a genetic determinism to a sort of environmental determinism), not the view that 'poor' children posed a 'problem' to society. The end of the twentieth century saw a rebirth of the image of the dangerous, pre-delinquent child, and of the sentiment that the poor were poor because they lacked the motivation for economic self-sufficiency, thus eroding support for social welfare programmes. Concurrent with these shifts in the formulations of risk, the technologies of government proposed to regulate and manage these groups have changed over time, with parents now being constituted as the primary target of policy.

This way of formulating the 'problem' with children's growth and development has the effect of decontextualising childhood and parenting by displacing the economic

inequalities of neo-liberalism into differential 'responsible' behaviours. Within this problem-solution frame, parents from poor households are constituted as 'bad' parents lacking 'soft' skills, such as character, motivation, and aspiration, required to provide the care and stimulation children need to thrive. What parents and caregivers provide for their children, which is narrowly defined in terms of their interactions, is seen as a result of a combination of behavioural and attitudinal practices. That is, one can always be a good parent or a good caregiver if only one is willing to. Self-direction and motivation are therefore crucial. No wonder why so much emphasis is placed in demonstrating why 'The family is the single most important determinant of child wellbeing' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.55). As the IDB publication describes:

It (the family) matters in myriad ways. Parents decide what to feed their children and when to take them to the doctor. The home environment in which children are raised can be nurturing and warm, or harsh and cold. By talking to children, playing with them, reading or telling stories to them—or not—parents and other family members determine how much stimulation young children receive'.

As Jens puts it, this acts to name the crisis as 'moral', irrespective of context and material conditions such as limited space, access to clean water and drainage, food and adequate physical infrastructure; thus closing off the discussion of structural factors and the role of the state in reproducing 'troubled families'. The statement 'improving quality is, in large measure, about changing the nature of the interactions of children with their parents, caregivers, and teachers; spending on physical infrastructure does not by itself help' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015) reflects this standpoint. Thatcher's famous phrase 'there's no such thing as society' seems to be undergirding this problem-solution frame. In this way, neo-liberalism displaces responsibility over children's development away from the state and welfare institutions to economically rationalised 'self-governing' individuals (parents, caregivers and teachers) and privatised institutions. By stressing individual 'self-care', the neo-liberal state relinquishes paternalistic responsibility for its subjects but, simultaneously holds its subjects responsible for self-governance (Lemke, 2001, p.201)

[t]he strategy of rendering individual subjects 'responsible' (and also collectives, such as families, associations, etc.) entails shifting the responsibility for social risks such as illness, unemployment, poverty, and so forth, and for life in society, into the domain of 'self-care'. One key feature of the neo-liberal rationality is the congruence it endeavours to achieve between a responsible and moral individual and an economic-rational individual (Lemke, 2002, p.59).

As Nadesan (2010, p.68) contends, 'neo-liberal authorities favour shifting risk to individuals away from institutions because this shift in risk is seen as encouraging individual responsibility, personal initiative, and economic innovation'. In contrast, 'redistributive policies are seen as stifling the competition believed necessary for markets to operate optimally'. This means that individuals are encouraged and expected to assumed responsibility over 'their employment, their health, their education, their life-long learning, their financial independence, and their happiness' (Ibid, p.14). In such a context, particular discourses and practices organised around key signifiers such as 'empowerment', 'performance', 'participation', 'communities' and 'prevention' become highly valorised (O'Malley, quoted in Nadesan, p.14).

Ironically, under neo-liberalism, parents are construed as both the cause and the solution of children's and societies problems. With this, I am not rejecting the claim that parents are very important in a child's life. I myself am a mother and believe I am quite powerful in affecting my daughter's well-being and identities. Rather, I am questioning the way in which knowledge about the role of parenting in children's well-being is used to produce a discourse that has the effect of individualizing and decontextualizing children's care. This, in my opinion, is very dangerous for the implications it has in prescribing how children and their families are supposed to live their lives, and in placing the weight of the burden of children's 'failure' fundamentally on parents.

A similar rationale is used when discussing the problem of low quality of pre-school education, where based on existing evidence, it is argued that structural quality (i.e. classroom environment, nature and level of teacher training and experience, adoption of certain curricula, class size, and student teacher ratios) is less relevant to improving child outcomes than process quality (i.e. the ways teachers implement lessons, the nature and quality of interactions between adults and students or between students and their peers, and the availability of certain types of activities):

Reviews of hundreds of interventions in the United States conclude that the evidence that these structural features have a direct impact on children's academic achievement or social development is mixed (...) Murnane and Ganimian (2014) review 115 well-designed impact evaluations of educational interventions in over 30 lower- and middle-income countries, and conclude that learning outcomes were not consistently improved by better materials, classroom technology, flexible education funding grants, or smaller class sizes, unless the day-to-day interactions of children and teachers were also targeted (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.132).

Here teachers, like parents in the case of younger children, are constructed as the main determinant of children's school outcomes. This is made evident in one of the subtitles in the IDB's publication 'Early Schooling: Teachers Makes the Difference' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p. 121). Again, the effect is that of individualising responsibilities and placing the burden of children's learning and outcomes on individuals, in this case teachers.

From a methodological perspective, when reading the statistics on early childhood development and parenting practices, it is important to bear in mind issues such as what exactly are these instruments measuring, who is applying them and in what context and whom does the results benefit. For example, the HOME scale used to measure parent's responsiveness includes questions such as: Did the mother or father spontaneously said kind words or phrases to the children at least twice during the interview? At least once, did the mother or father responded verbally to a child's vocalisation? At least twice, did the mother or father spontaneously praised the children? Did the mother or father conveyed positive feelings toward the children when they spoke to or about them? Did the mother or father caressed or kissed one of the children at least once? In this sense, the level of responsiveness of parents to their children is measured according to observable situations that emerge during the interviews of parents by external observers.

In my view, there are a number of the problems related to the use of such instruments. First, children might differ in their experiences of exposure to external observers which could explain differences in their behaviour. It would be expected that children attending nurseries from a very young age would be more used to being observed and evaluated than children with no preschool experience, which is often the case of children in dispersed rural areas. Second, the way in which parents relate with their children also varies significantly according to the cultural context, as ethnographic studies of childrearing practices demonstrate. In some cultures, and according to some educational theories, praising is considered inappropriate as it may reinforce child dependence on external motivation. Similarly, some cultures are much more discrete. In other words, that some parents are less expressive in their affection or admiration of their children's accomplishments does not necessarily imply they are less responsive or caring. Therefore, inferring parental engagement and responsiveness based on observable situations according to western theories of child development in different contexts seems problematic. Taking these alternative

perspectives, we could argue that problems do not exist a priori or are given, rather they are socially constructed. Thus, we could question whether the lower results obtained by children in Latin America in general, and in poor households in particular, are in fact the 'real' problem to address. As Ball (2012, p.14) puts it, policy problems are 'in part at least, constructed discursively'.

An economic rationale for government intervention

In much contemporary public policy making, the existence of a problem in itself does not necessarily justify government intervention. Instead, the causes of the problem must be first identified through 'rigorous' research and the proposed problem-solution frames be validated. Similarly, following the discourses of 'best practices' and 'what works', the type of policies and programmes proposed to address the identified problem must be based on evidence regarding its effectiveness in delivering results. Now who decides what counts as legitimate evidence may vary within countries and between government sectors²³. This section analyses the ways in which both publications use an economic rationale to build their case for government intervention in early childhood. I will underline how bio-political problems concerning the health and vitality of the state population -in this instance the development of the disadvantaged child- are rationalised in accordance with governmental practice, arguing that neo-liberalism as a political rationality creates the 'conditions of possibility' for the intelligibility and legitimacy of the arguments presented for government intervention, and the resulting proliferation of instruments of governmental practices such as early childhood policies and parenting programmes. In other words, the way the problem of early childhood development delays is formulated and addressed in current policy discourse, cannot be separated from a neo-liberal political rationality. In effect, for Foucault (2010, p.317), bio-political 'problems [are] inseparable from the framework of political rationality within which they appear[...]'.

Overall, both publications follow a similar structure and sequence to justify government intervention in early childhood: (i) define the problem, (ii) define instruments to measure the problem, (iii), use research-based evidence to ascertain the relevance of the problem, (iv) use of statistics to identify the problem and (v) define

²³ For instance, in Peru the MEF is responsible for defining the criteria to assess the quality of evidence which is part of their methodology of performance-based budgeting for the design of public programmes.

a policy tool kit to address the problem. However, there are some differences in the nature of the knowledge-based deployed. In the IDB publication, two justifications for government intervention in the early years are provided, which relate to the two causes of low developmental outcomes described in the previous section. First, the existence of failures in decision-making at the household level, which explains 'bad' parenting, and, second, the existence of failures in various markets that deliver services to young children, which explains the poor quality of early education and care. That is, government intervention is justified based on the recognition that in the realm of childcare, the market fails to create the necessary conditions for children to thrive. In relation to the former, it is argued that parents and guardians make an infinite number of choices (consciously or unconsciously) that determine children's experiences in the early years of life:

They start by choosing when and how to bring them into this world. Then, they decide what and when to feed them, where they will live, and what clothes they should wear. They also make choices about when to take them to the doctor and whether to follow their advice. They make nonmaterial decisions, such as whether to raise them in a nuclear family, how and when to talk to them, and how to encourage acceptable behaviour and discourage unacceptable reactions (Berlinski and Shady, 2015).

To understand how parents make these choices, the authors develop a framework based on Becker's (1981, 1993) rational choice theory; which assumes that rational agents, taking into account of available information, probabilities of events, and potential costs and benefits, choose the best choice of action. The problem of parental choice is thereby characterised as one in which parents are trying to fulfil their needs and the needs of those they care about subject to two constraints: a technological one, which relates to how the resources they spend (time and money) translate into what they want for their children, and, a financial one, which means that the cost of fulfilling these needs cannot exceed the resources available to cover these costs.

In relation to the first constraint, there are different issues to consider. On one side, temporality, understood as how much are parents willing to trade off the satisfaction of current versus future needs; that is, how impatient are parents; and, on the other altruism, referring to how much do parents care about the needs of others and, in particular, of their children; that is, how altruistic are parents. Considering that, even with perfect information on the relationship between investment and child outcomes, 'parents may not value future outcomes as much as society as a whole (they may be too impatient) or they may not be willing to make the sacrifices that will result in the

optimal allocation of resources for society (they may not be altruistic enough)' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.16), this provides a first rationale for policy intervention. Now, the model also considers that it is possible that parents may not make the best decisions on behalf of their children because they have imperfect information on the relationship between experience and outcomes. This, then provides a second rationale for government intervention.

The second constraint relates to the cost and availability of resources. Lack of money and resources create a binding constraint for parents to increasing the investment in children to the desired level. Because capital markets can provide resources only imperfectly (only partially or to a subset of families), then constraints in the access to credit generate a third rationale for policy intervention. The presence of negative or positive externalities, that is, that the costs of resources are not borne exclusively by parents, and the benefits are not enjoyed solely by them and their children, generates the fourth rationale for policy intervention. Based on this model, it is suggested that parent's may fail to make objective and rational decisions in relation to what's best for their children and society as they are 'understandably' biased, due in part because of their emotional bonds, and/or limited given their lack of knowledge and financial resources:

But parents can make decisions that are not optimal for child development for a variety of reasons. Parents may have low incomes and be credit-constrained, and so be unable to purchase goods and services that are beneficial for child development. They may have discount rates that are higher than those that are socially optimal. They may not know the benefits of certain behaviors (e.g., the benefits of breastfeeding); may not know how to implement them (e.g., how to discipline children without harsh physical punishment); or may not be capable of performing certain tasks (e.g., an illiterate mother cannot read to her child). (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.86)

With regard to the second justification for government intervention, it assumes that many working parents are unable to take care of their children themselves and therefore rely on day care services to care for their children. These are often delivered by different institutional arrangements: private providers, private/community providers with partial subsidies from the state, and public providers creating a heterogeneous supply in terms of quality. Given the lack of incentives for providers to provide information about the quality of their services, along with the fact that childcare is what economists call an 'experience good' (a good whose quality consumers are likely to ascertain only after consuming it), this creates another rationale for state intervention

in the childcare market through defining standards, licensing systems, subsidizing childcare provision and offering vouchers. In this way, government intervention is justified exclusively in relation to the market (more specifically to failures in its functioning) and using the language of economics such as rational choice theory, imperfect information, incentives and competition.

In the case of the WB, two main arguments are presented to build the case for greater public investment in early childhood development programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean. First, it is argued that evidence has made clear that the early years of a child's life matter and that early childhood interventions can have significant and long-standing results. That is, what we do (or fail to do) in relation to children will have significant implications for both the child's future and that of society, and, more importantly, it is possible to affect this causality with the right interventions. Second, the argument is made that a closely examination of the micro and macro contexts shows that children, in particular of families living in poverty, face many challenges during their early years that affect their opportunity to receive adequate nutrition, stimulation, and care, hence failing to achieve their full developmental potential. This, in turn, contributes to the intergenerational transmission of poverty and the persistence of inequalities. In this sense, the authors recognise the importance of context and the existence of material limitations that undermine children's 'optimal' development. Based on this, the authors conclude that investment in early childhood is not only reasonable and fair, but profitable:

First, all else being equal, returns to investments in early childhood will be higher than returns to investments made later in life simply because the beneficiaries have a longer time to reap the rewards from these investments. Second, investments in human capital have dynamic complementarities: improved ECD outcomes result in improved educational attainment levels, health outcomes, and labor market outcomes. Third, while education policies are important, what happens in schools is not sufficient to equalize opportunities and reduce inequality. (Vegas and Santibañez, 2010, p. xxiv).

Both publications refer to the trade-off between equity and efficiency, arguing that early childhood investments are a unique policy option in that they don't involve a trade-off between equity and efficiency since they 'avoid many of the moral hazard problems inherent in programs that seek to equalize outcomes in adulthood, such as tax and income transfers, which are often seen as inequitable' (Ibid, p.xxiv). As Vegas and Santibañez puts it (2010, p.17), 'ECD policies may be some of the most promising

levers available to policy makers who are working to break the cycle of poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean’.

Based on the analysis presented above, I would argue that neo-liberalism, with its discourses of efficiency, productivity and competitiveness produces a prioritization and extension of economic logics to the policy realm; thus shaping life in that market logics come to define the attitudes toward children, child-rearing and education. On one side, children are constructed as resources with potential high rates of return provided that they develop according to the norm and become productive adults participating in the labour market. On the other, parents, caregivers and care providers are conceptualised as rational economic agents who make decisions strictly based on their individual utility function, and for that reason, may not necessarily decide what is in the best interest of children or of society as a whole. These considerations justify government intervention in order to fulfil children’s potential returns and, consequently, maximise society’s collective utility. This illustrates the central role of early childhood development and education in the government’s alignment of social justice with economic participation. Moreover, the following statement shows the view of equity and social justice as subservient of economic and social development: ‘Ensuring that all individuals have equal opportunities to develop their full potential and lead a fulfilling life is fundamental for economic and social development’ (Vegas and Santibañez, 2010, p.xxiv). In other words, living a fulfilled life is not seen as a right for all nor valued on its own; rather, it’s framed as a means towards achieving society’s progress.

Comparative statistics on government spending in early childhood both within the Latin America and the Caribbean and OECD countries are also presented to argue that despite the increase in government spending over the last decade, governments need to spend more and better. But on what kind of early childhood policies and programmes should governments invest? And, how should governments choose amongst different alternatives? It would be expected that the proposed solutions directly relate to the identified causes of the problem. In the case of the IDB, each of the solutions presented addresses the causes of the problem of unequal and low child outcomes, namely ‘bad’ parenting and low quality of early education and care. To decide amongst these alternatives, and taking budgetary constraints as point of

departure, the main tool suggested is a cost-benefit analysis²⁴ as it ‘produces a clear ranking of projects’ which allows to maximise the returns to investments in early childhood development (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.162):

Early childhood programs differ in costs and government resources are limited. Therefore, governments should implement those programs that allow them to *reap* greater benefits given costs. This reasoning lends itself to the use of cost-benefit analysis. Akin to investment decisions made in the private sector, governments should invest in those programs with the highest returns (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.162, cursive added).

According to this statement, a government should choose the policy option that generates the greatest return to investment, and, furthermore, only create a policy or programme if the benefits associated with it exceed the costs. In other words, public spending in social services should emulate the rationale behind decision making in the private sector. The statement ‘letting numbers speak for themselves’ (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.160) would be suggesting that deciding among alternative policy options is automatic; numbers have the power to define courses of action whereas politics and ethics can be dispensed.

Using this methodology, the IDB publication simulates the costs and benefits associated with providing three different programmes: home visits, preschool and full-time day care taking into account different levels (basic or enhanced) and types of quality (structural, i.e. caregivers’ qualifications and compensation, infrastructure and materials, and process, i.e. training and supervision). An analysis of the structure of costs shows that home visits are the least expensive policy option and improving process quality is far less expensive than improving structural quality for any programme. From an efficiency perspective, these results would be suggesting that governments should invest more in scaling home visits and focus on improving process quality. However, when benefits are also considered, the ‘ranking’ of policy options varies significantly. Indeed, estimates from the cost-benefit analysis show that the highest benefit-cost ratios are for preschool²⁵, with benefits about four times the resource costs, the second highest benefit-cost ratios are for home visits, with benefits about three times the resource costs; and, far behind, day care benefit-cost ratios are around one.

²⁴ This methodology requires ‘assigning a price for every resource used and monetizing all present and future costs and benefits’ (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p. 162).

²⁵ Evidence from both developed and developing countries suggests that an additional dollar invested in high quality preschool programs will yield a return of anywhere between US\$6 and US\$17 (www.worldbank.org).

Therefore, the use of a cost-benefit analysis to decide among policy options in early childhood would lead to a reduction of government spending in child day care and an expansion of parenting programmes. Needless to say, the way in which policy options are selected according to a cost-benefit rationale ignores the actual context and the individuals affected by them; for instance, the mother's availability and willingness to assume full responsibility of raising their children. Here, it is also important to question what type of benefits are being considered. First, early childhood development programmes are believed to enhance lifetime productivity mainly through increases in child cognitive development and skills. Long-term benefits for children such as engagement in crime, civic duty, and family formation are not included in the analysis given the lack of data to monetize these benefits. Second, in the case of full-time day care, facilitating mother's participation in the labour market is considered a potential benefit only in terms of higher household income. Other effects such as promoting gender equality, empowering women and reducing violence against them are not included in the analysis.

This would be indicative of the narrow and instrumental understanding of the aims of early education as a technical practice to increase productivity and economic growth. At the same time, the emphasis placed on quantitative dimensions such as cost-effectiveness, investment returns and objective outcomes when assessing early childhood policies and programmes would be reflecting the broader discourses of financial accountability and surveillance now deeply ingrained across the public sector, themselves manifestations of the ideologies of neo-liberalism and economic rationalism that inform government policy-making. In relation to this, Foucault (2010, p.247) argues that under neo-liberalism, the market becomes 'a tool to be turned against the government' (...) 'It is a sort of permanent economic tribunal confronting government' (ibid). This constant market scrutiny of public authorities requires that all governmental decisions be rationalised using 'statistically calculable representations of increased efficiency and measurable outcomes' (Nadesan, 2010, p.14); hence, the extended use of cost-benefit analysis in noneconomic realms of life such as parenting and childhood. In other words, social welfare programmes are justified within neo-liberal logics only to the extent that they can deliver cost savings, even if these materialise in the future. As an extreme example, the debate around whether children should be punished (through spanking) or not is discussed in terms of the causal effects of corporal punishment on later outcomes and the extent to which it is

an effective disciplining strategy; not as a moral issue and a right of children not to be physically punished.

The use of these kind of techniques in decision-making within sectors such as health, environment, and education has been questioned on two grounds. On one hand, there are programmes which despite their costs exceeding their benefits, must be created from a moral perspective. On the other, there exist many non-material benefits and costs in these sectors which thereby should not be monetised. In these cases, it is argued that is not justified to undertake a cost-benefit analysis to decide among a set of alternatives. This, in my view, would be the case of early childhood development and education. However, the economic rationale does not work on its own. Rather, it is supported by scientific knowledge about child development (previously discussed); and, with evaluation studies which show the large impact of the programmes advocated and the marginal (or even negative) effects of the other alternatives. Evaluation literature is thus used to persuade governments to invest more in early childhood and in the kind of policies and programmes which, according to evidence produced by impact evaluations²⁶, have proven to be effective in influencing ‘the kinds of investments that parents and other caregivers make in young children’ (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.55).

In the IDB’s publication, evidence on two type of policy tools that directly affect the quality of the home environment are provided: cash transfers, which seek to relax the household budget constraint by transferring cash to families, and parenting programmes, which directly attempt to change parental behaviours and practices. With regard to the former, it is argued that evidence of the impact of cash transfers on nutritional status and child development is mixed. For example, evaluations of the impact of the *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* programme on child cognitive and language development found that the transfers increased the number of words children aged 12–35 months could say as reported by their mothers, while overall, there was no impact on children aged 36–59 months. By contrast, the authors argue that evidence on parenting programmes ‘convincingly’ shows that these can significantly impact child development when the programmes are of high quality and follow a prescribed curriculum which emphasises verbal interaction between mother and child, and teaches specific concepts such as colour, shape, size, number, and position’. Indeed, both publications refer to the most influential and widely cited study

²⁶ Experimental designs are considered ‘gold-standard’ in impact evaluations.

carried out in Jamaica to evaluate the impact of a home stimulation programme targeted to malnourished children between 9-4 months in the poorest neighbourhoods in Kingston using a randomised control trial. In this way, parenting programmes aimed at improving the quality of parent-child interactions are constituted as the best alternative for governments to follow based on a 'what works' approach.

On the other hand, evidence presented on the low levels of quality of early childhood education and care in the region and the negative effects it can have on child development, as well as on the negative associations between maternal employment during the first year of life of the child and ECD helps to reinforce the case of parenting programmes as the preferred policy option. Again, the effect is that of minimizing material circumstances (less support to cash transfers, childcare and maternal employment) in favour of the individual's effort and skill as a parent (parenting programmes). A critique on the pervasive use of such evaluation studies is that they often assess only a very narrow set of indicators of child development, such as the number of words a child can spell. Changes in other aspects relevant to children's well-being and that of their parents such as children's sense of belonging and trust in others, mother's opportunities to participate in the community life, as well as parents and communities social capital are not taken into account due to difficulties in gathering 'objective' and 'reliable' data, failing to provide broader evaluations of public policies and programmes.

Thus, despite recognising that 'children in Latin America and the Caribbean are raised in very different ways, depending on the country in which they are born, and the income and education levels of their parents' (Berlinski and Shady, 2015, p.71), the evidence provided would be suggesting a one-size-fits-all solution. In this sense, I question the extent to which scientific evidence is produced, selected and used to put forward and legitimise a policy 'solution'. At the same time, it provides further evidence on how the focus on families and parenting is been driven not only by an economic rationale but also by the need to control individuals' behaviours and minds and to recover more traditional ways of raising 'our' children where the family, in particular the mother, plays a crucial role. These are all relevant issues, in particular when thinking about the significant practical implications these perspectives have on the lives of millions of families, especially on women and children. For instance, in the case of Peru, this type of evidence has been crucial in shaping policy making, as is the case of the 'Cuna Mas' programme.

Based on the above discussion, I would argue that the way in which the role of public policy is conceptualised by these international organisations has the effect of producing children (and parents) as objects of intervention which can be moulded through a set of 'effective' mechanisms previously tested and assessed²⁷. At the same time, this analysis clearly shows how international organisations seek to influence policy thinking at a national level along human capital ideals, privileging an instrumental rationality and technical practice that reflects a 'what works' approach to policy making' (Moss, 2007 quoted in Campbell-Barr, 2014).

Improvement, investment and responsibility: a new style of governing

This section has used a post-structural approach informed by Foucault's conceptual 'tool-box' to explore the constructions of children, early childhood and parenting articulated within the global policy documents of the WB and the IDB, and how these are constituted as a policy problem and subsequently governed through different technologies of childhood governance. By incorporating political economy, it has aimed to identify the political rationality that creates the conditions of possibility and legitimacy for government intervention in early childhood (Nadesan, 2015). In relation to this, Lemke (2001) argues that the semantic linking of governing ("gouverner") and modes of thought ("mentalité") indicates that it is not possible to study the technologies of power without an analysis of the political rationality underpinning them (p.2). Thus, it follows that it is not possible to understand early interventions and, more specifically parenting programmes as a technology of power without understanding the political rationality underpinning them.

Based on the analysis of global policy texts of two multi-lateral organisations, I identify a neo-liberal episteme operating in their policy discourses which produces particular sort of subjects (children and adults) and practices of state (i.e. parenting programmes) that provides the underpinnings of a neo-liberal rationality for government intervention to ensure that children develop 'appropriately'. This, in turn, generates particular sort of research concerned with identifying 'best practices' and 'what works' that respond to practitioner's demands and needs. In this process, key

²⁷ Indeed, the book provides a policy toolkit on how governments should enhance children's lives from the time of their conception until well after they enter school which contemplates the use of one or more of the following instruments: information and coaching (i.e. awareness campaigns, coaching mothers on breastfeeding), laws (i.e. parental leave, compulsory education at a given age), regulations (e.g., regulation of advertisements about baby formula, regulation of child-to-staff ratios in day care centers), transfers (i.e. universal child transfers, tax credits, conditional cash transfers), and prices (i.e. subsidised childcare, free vaccination).

concepts such as early childhood development emerge as 'truths' and co-opt discussions around childhood. This is in line with Nadesan's (2010) findings that neo-liberal rationalities create the conditions of possibility for an intensive biopolitics of childhood, shaping government and parent's technologies for managing, optimizing and remediating children. As Lemke (2001, p.8) explains

A political rationality is not pure, neutral knowledge which simply "represents" the governed reality. It is not an exterior instance, but an element of government itself which helps to create a discursive field in which exercising power is "rational". The concept of governmentality suggests that it is not only important to see if neo-liberal rationality is an adequate representation of society, but also how it functions as a "politics of truth", producing new forms of knowledge, inventing new notions and concepts that contribute to the "government" of new domains of regulation and intervention'.

Within this episteme, three core concepts operate discursively throughout the texts, feeding and legitimising each other in productive ways: improvement, investment and responsibility. The importance of the notion of improvement is well established from the beginning where the role of early development on future outcomes is emphasised through the deployment of a large body of scientific evidence. From birth, children are expected and encouraged to improve. A wide range of strategies and technologies are designed to assist parents and other adults caring for children in this endeavour. Parents themselves are expected to improve their knowledge and skills on child rearing in order to promote their child's development. Further, the understanding of children as immature, dependent and incompetent, in a state of becoming, echoes the unfinished neo-liberal subject always incomplete, in need of constant improvement, which serves as basis for children's regulation and surveillance, legitimising the deployment of technologies of government aimed at shaping children's bodies and souls.

However, a distinction must be made here in relation to what kind of improvement and for what purposes. It seems that the nature and purpose of improvement is differently conceived according to children's socio-economic status. Whilst children from upper- and middle-classes are expected to improve their intellectual and socio-emotional competitiveness in order to increase their productivity and the nation's economic growth, what Rose refers to as 'technologies of optimization', children from poor backgrounds (the main targets of the publications examined here) are subject to technologies of remediation to compensate for their combined inherited and environmental 'deficiencies' and, through that, contribute to social mobility and the

reduction of inequalities. In other words, in the case of upper- and middle-class children, improvement is not enough as no resource can be wasted in a fiercely competitive world. The development of the child's full potential emerges as the new discursive regime when addressing children's learning and wellbeing. This differentiation, in my view, creates and reinforces existing developmental and social inequalities.

Now, in order to produce the desired improvements, investment in both children and parents becomes crucial. But what kind of investment and from whom? Investment, understood in a broad sense, includes time, material and affective resources spend on children ranging from infrastructure, books, clothes, and food, to caress, feeding, teaching, reading and talking to the child. At the same time, investment is constituted as an external input provided by a range of actors and institutions, most notably parents, but also teachers, doctors, caregivers and state institutions, among others. Both the WB and the IABD publications advocate for larger investments in early childhood development by governments. However, a close examination of the problem-solution frames reveals a displacement in the responsibility over children from the state to the family, which transfers and individualises the causes of social problems and risk management. Indeed, choosing parenting programmes as the best policy solution implies that investment by the government can only be partial, requiring a larger investment by parents; an investment it would seem mostly in themselves to become better parents. That is, parents need to take the responsibility of improving themselves seriously; to become entrepreneurs of themselves. As Lemke (2001, p.12) argues, "the strategy of rendering individual subjects "responsible" (and also collectives, such as families, associations, etc.) entails shifting the responsibility for social risks such as illness, unemployment, poverty, etc. and for life in society into the domain for which the individual is responsible and transforming it into a problem of "self-care". This 'acts to completely remove wider structural inequalities from the picture' (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000, p.216).

As Ball (2008) argues in relation to UK's 'Third Way' policies, a discourse of individual responsibility pervades these policies, where the government is prepared to provide 'interventions' where necessary, but the individual 'good learner' is responsible for his or her success in a meritocratic system. In the same vein, Gillies (2005a, p.835) argues that 'theories of "individualization" and "risk" have shifted attention away from the material and structural roots of inequality and sanctioned a psychologised view of class distinctions in terms of personal qualities'. Interventions targeted to improving

parents' skills and motivation then come to be seen as a 'one-size-fits-all' solution. However, in thinking about how/why parenting programmes are seen as the best policy solution, one must not conclude that parenting programmes are more rational than, let's say, day care centres or cash transfers. Rather, as Foucault reminds us, one must consider that within the logics of government:

One isn't assessing things in terms of an absolute against which they could be evaluated as constituting more or less perfect forms of rationality, but rather examining how forms of rationality inscribe themselves in practices or systems of practices, and what role they play within them, because it's true that "practices" don't exist without a certain regime of rationality (Foucault 1991b, p. 79 in Lemke, 2001, p. 7).

In effect, as I argue in this study, the individualisation of social life in contemporary policies is grounded on the neo-liberal tenets of individualism, freedom of choice, market security, laissez faire, and minimal government (Larner, 2000) and characterised by technologies of self-governance, audit, and appraisal (Rose, 1999), which aim and achieve to produce responsible, active, self-managed, enterprising and self-improving individuals (Foucault, 1982a). Accordingly, the individual is required to act as the 'active citizen-consumer, empowered and responsabilised to make choices that further their own interest or those of the "community"' (Mulderrig, 2011, p.570). One key feature of the neo-liberal rationality is the congruence it endeavours to achieve between a responsible and moral individual and an economic-rational individual, whose moral quality is precisely grounded on the fact that it rationally assesses the costs and benefits of a certain act as opposed to other alternative acts. Here, the consequences of the action are borne by the subject alone, who is also solely responsible for them (Lemke, 2001, p.12). This is the kind of citizens early childhood programmes aim to produce.

This new style of governing²⁸ *at a distance* requires a shift in power relations: 'citizens must have greater agency over their own actions; the government less direct control' (Mulderrig, 2011, p.570). That is to say, 'the social state gives way to the enabling state' (Rose 1999, p. 142). Thus, contemporary neo-liberal governance operates 'through isolating and entrepreneurialising responsible units and individuals, through devolving authority, decision making, and the implementation of policies and norms of conduct' (Brown 2015, p.129). As Foucault puts it, 'Neo-liberal governance is a

²⁸ According to Mulderrig (2011), in the last quarter of the 20th century, the decline of the post-war bureaucratic regime and its centrally regulated industrial economy gave way to the gradual emergence of a new 'diagram' between government, expert, and citizen.

supreme instance of *omnis et singulatim*, the gathering and separating, amassing and isolating' (p.131). However, this does not imply, as Foucault makes it clear, a 'retreat of the state' or the 'end of politics', but rather, a displacement from formal to informal techniques of government and the appearance of new actors which have given way to a transformation of politics.

In all these processes, scientific knowledge plays a crucial role. More specifically, expertise, like psychology, biology and economics operate as 'regimes of truth' creating certain truths –childhood as foundational, children as potential human capital, and early childhood development as a biosocial process- that produce particular sort of subjects –the delayed child, the bad parent– and practices of state –parenting programmes– in order to ensure that children develop 'appropriately'. For example, developmental psychology produces the child as potential human capital that can be engineered through 'positive' early experiences while at the same time producing a 'deficit discourse' which constitutes children from less privileged backgrounds as 'poor', 'delayed' and 'unable', and their families as 'uncaring', 'ignorant' and 'incompetent'. As Ball (2010, p.5); puts it, 'discourses mobilise truth claims and constitute rather than simply reflect social reality'; they 'form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972, p. 49). These constructions of childhood and parenting in turn serve to rationalize government intervention in early childhood as a profitable and 'smart' investment creating the 'conditions of possibility of an intensive biopolitics of childhood' (Nadesan, 2010).

Overall then, this section has demonstrated the potential of the problematics of government to make explicit the forms of truth and knowledge which are brought to bear upon individuals and practices through the exercise of expertise, thus allowing us to move beyond a conceptualization of power centred either on consensus or violence towards one that conceives power as foremost about guidance and "Führung" (i.e. governing the forms of self-government, structuring and shaping the field of possible action of subjects). That is, using the concept of government in a comprehensive sense, as Foucault did, allows us for a more complex analysis of neo-liberal forms of government that feature not only direct intervention by means of empowered and specialised state apparatuses, but also characteristically develop indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals. It allows us to explore the relationship between power, language, subjectivity and the cultural constructions of childhood, parenthood and education from a different perspective. Rather than seeing power solely as concentrated on the state and acting upon the population through

technologies of domination, the problem of government raises the question of individuals' self-government as a crucial strategy of state government. For instance, how parenting programmes, understood as a technology of government to the extent that they 'conduct the conduct of others', by transmitting knowledge and skills to parents, 'empowers' them to seek for ways of improving themselves as parents; that is, to pursue technologies of the self. This is not to say, however, that consensus or violence are excluded as forms of power. Instead, it means that 'they are reformulated as means of government among others, they are rather "elements" or "instruments" than the "foundation" or "source" of power' (Lemke, 2001, p. 3).

A policy trajectory of early childhood policies in Peru

The previous section explored the ways in which children subjects and subject positions are formed and re-formed by policy. More precisely, it has illustrated how early childhood development is constituted as a 'policy problem' in the global early years discourse based on a strategic use of scientific knowledge and statistics, and through that how government interventions in early childhood are justified. In doing so, it has allowed us to understand how it has been possible to think and speak about early childhood development, and what kinds of practices are involved in the constitution of early childhood development as a problem space, such as the optimization or remediation of children, and the intensive engineering of parenting practices. Crucially, it has illustrated 'the way in which policy ensembles, collections of related policies, exercise power through a *production* of "truth" and "knowledge", as discourses' (Ball, 1993, p.14).

However, as Ball (2015a, p.4) observes, there is here a very imminent danger 'that we conjure up a world that is simply of domination' in which discourse is always prior to the subject. Therefore, in this section, I want to engage in policy analysis from a different perspective; seeking to attend to what Ball (1993, p.10) refers to as the 'complexity and scope of policy analysis'. Or to put it in Ozga's (1990, p. 360) words, my aim is to acknowledge and examine the '*ad hocery*, serendipity, muddle and negotiation' immanent to policy making and policy enactment (the complexity part), as well as to pay attention to the 'micro level investigation, especially that which takes account of people's perception and experiences' (the scope part) (Ibid, p.359). This entails exploring the 'complex web of interpretations, translations, "active readership" and "writerly" work around policy (Ball, 2015a). Here, policies are conceived as more than 'things' (Ball, 1993, p.11), they are also processes that are negotiated and struggled over and outcomes, and importantly practices. This understanding is crucial to attend to context and capture the possibilities of early childhood policy and politics. As Ozga and Lingard (2013, p.67) observe,

This opens policy up to the appropriate participation of all those involved all the way through points of conception, operational formulation, implementation, delivery on the ground, consumption and evaluation, rather than separating policy from politics, which has the effect of

protecting and sustaining bureaucratic logics of practice from democratic possibilities.

To his end, I adopt a different analytical strategy that is what Ball et al. (1992) refer to as a 'policy trajectory study', to analyse two specific policies on early childhood development in Peru. The trajectory method considers four primary policy contexts, each of which consists of a number of 'arenas of action'. The first context is named the 'context of influence' in which debate about the why and how of the phenomena examined is initiated and initial subject production work is done, as described above. This 'context of influence', then relates to a second context, the 'context of policy text production' in which ideas about the why and how of the phenomena are articulated in policy documents and artefacts. The focus here is on the tensions and contradictions of policy texts, what Ball et al. (2011) refer to as 'policy paradoxes', and on how something becomes an object of policy. The third context is the 'context of practice' which focuses on policy enactment and where the issue of 'who does what to whom and when' is addressed. That is to say, texts become action, and in doing so, they affect the lives of ordinary people, in this case, mostly children and their families. Finally, the 'context of outcomes', which looks at both 'first-order policy effects, which are measured against the policy's own articulated goals, and second-order effects, which require a more normative assessment framed by the analyst's construction of social justice' (Lingard and Sellar, 2013, p.266).

Moving beyond Ball's 'early nation-centric work' on policy development in education in England, (Lingard and Sellar, 2013, p.266), and drawing on his later work (Ball 2012, 2013), the policy analysis presented here recognizes the 'global contexts, frames and fields of policy making' (Ibid, p.265) and considers the effects of globalisation on state early childhood policies, with specific consideration of the balance of multinational forces and vernacular capacities and responses (Ozga and Lingard, 2007, p.65). In particular, it focuses on the relationship between research and policy in the globalised, economised agenda for early childhood. In doing so, it attempts to capture the complex interplay of global and local, what Appadurai (1996) calls 'vernacular globalisation', and draws attention to the dynamics of the relationship between globalisation and technologies of early childhood governance, and mediating vernacular forces that affect the ways in which these play out and affect children and parent's lives. Following Ozga and Lingard (2007), globalisation is here understood not only as neo-liberal economics and politics but as blurring distinctions between the

international and domestic, the global and local and in so doing affecting a new spatiality of politics.

By looking at these four policy contexts within a global framing of policy, the trajectory method provides 'a mechanism for linking and tracing the discursive origins and possibilities of policy, as well as the intentions embedded in, responses to and effects of policy' (Ball 1993, p. 16). It enables us to reconstruct the 'interpretational and representational history' (Ball 1993) of policy texts, and to capture retrospectively the 'secondary adjustments' (Riseborough, 1992, p. 37, quoted in Ball, 1993) undertaken by the different stakeholders involved in the processes of policy formulation and enactment. Attending to Ball's call for 'complexity and scope' in policy analysis, it provides a tool to explore the tensions between speaking subjects and discourse, as well as the struggle, compromise and *ad hocery* involved in each context. Crucially, as Ball (1993, p.16) puts it, 'such a trajectory form of analysis may also be a way of ensuring that policy analyses ask critical/theoretical questions, rather than simple problem-solving ones'.

As in previous sections, my analysis focuses on the concept of early childhood development, and how this is constituted as an object of policy. This involves exploring the more recent positioning of early childhood development within the government agenda in Peru, and how this is shaped and informed by globalised policy discourses on early childhood development. I consider that placing the child as subject of the various texts examined here offers an entry point to explore the ways in which different versions of the child are being contested, with some versions (i.e. the child as human capital) given priority in some documents and other versions (i.e. the child as social actor) in others. At the same time, I explore early childhood policies in relation to biopower and biopolitics, arguing that by targeting disadvantaged children and families, they operate as a *dipositif of security*. Finally, I am concerned with how these policies are interpreted and/or translated in practice, and with what effects. That is to say, I am concerned with the 'why', 'how' and 'what' of early childhood development in Peru, while also paying attention to the global/national imbrications in policy production and enactment.

The context of influence

Why and how has early childhood development become positioned in Peru? What role has it played within the broader agenda of social reform? What have been the main discourses, beliefs and knowledges circulating and informing the debate on early childhood? This section sets out to explore the context in which early childhood surfaced into public discourse and how this shaped government interest in and articulation of early childhood. This is in line with Mulderring (2014, p.563), who argues that 'Policy texts do not exist in a social vacuum, but have a complex, historically changing, and mutually constitutive relationship with their social context'; therefore, in order to show how policy texts work, it is necessary to interpret them within a wider framework that takes account of the social contexts in which these texts are located (Codd, 1994, p.44).

The analysis is organised as follows. First, I describe the political and social context in which early childhood becomes a government priority; in the midst of the presidential elections of 2011 and the establishment of a new government in office, in an attempt to understand why and how has early childhood development become positioned in the government's recent agenda in Peru. Next, I examine the discourse on social inclusion and how it is framed as a state policy by the incoming President, providing a broader framework for the conceptualisation and formulation of early childhood development as a policy problem. Finally, I explore the policy discourses around early childhood development in Peru. The different understandings of and positions around early childhood by political parties and different organisations seeking to shape early childhood policy in Peru are discussed.

From the 'Great transformation' to 'The roadmap'

By 2011, Peru had experienced sustained economic growth over more than two decades, with a growth rate of 73% during the decade 2001-2011 (IMF, 2011), among the highest rates in the world. This sustained growth, along with lower population growth rates and increased social expenditure, translated into a reduction of poverty by more than 30 percentage points between 2004 and 2011 (ENDIS, 2012). However, the benefits of an economic growth model largely based on the relaxation of labour markets, commercial deregulation, free trade agreements and primary exports were unequally distributed, with poverty reduction concentrating in the urban areas. In effect, in 2010, still more than 60% of the rural population lived in poverty (out of which

40% was in extreme poverty), with an annual income per capita of 977 dollars, compared to 2,295 dollars in the urban areas. Access to services such as education, health, water and sanitation, and justice was far from universal, with poor and rural groups carrying the highest burdens of an absent state. As a result of this, the urban-rural poverty gap increased during the same period from 35% to 38% (ENDIS, 2012).

Peru's political context was no less complex. Despite the restoration of democracy in 2001 after a decade of dictatorship, pervasive corruption and human rights violations, Peru was still a long way from having strong political powers and institutions. In effect, over 80% of the population had no trust in the Parliament and the Political Parties (Latinobarómetro 2011). In this context Ollanta Humala, former member of the armed forces and leader of the Nationalist Party ran for the presidency in the elections of April 2011. Echoing popular discontent, Humala's campaign was based on the need for a 'great transformation' from the neo-liberal agenda which had prevailed for the previous two decades (Crabtree and Durand, 2017). His governmental plan advocated fighting corruption, establishing a new development model based on a national open market economy, recovering sovereignty over natural resources from multinational corporations, and creating free and high-quality universal systems of education and health. Central to his electoral campaign was his social justice discourse, focused on reducing poverty and including historically marginalised groups, in particular, the poor, children and elderly.

With almost a third of the votes, Humala came first in the presidential elections, followed by Keiko Fujimori with 23.55% of votes. Humala's strongest support base came from the South of Peru, where large pockets of poverty persist, as well as from more progressive groups which saw in Humala an alternative to the hegemonic neo-liberal model and traditional political parties. However, in order to win the general elections, Humala needed to attract a different type of electorate in the second round; one that had voted for former international financier Pedro Pablo Kuczynski. Hence, Humala strategically shifted to a more moderate rhetoric during the second round, re-writing and re-naming his government plan 'The roadmap'.

'The roadmap' outlined, in a much shorter version, Humala's main economic and social policies. These included maintaining economic growth, macroeconomic stability, promoting private investment, reducing poverty and expanding the benefits of economic growth. Despite some of the radical changes in 'The roadmap', social inclusion remained central to Humala's political agenda and discourse. Humala's

moderated plan proved sufficient to provide reassurance to the country's wealthy economic elites with whose support Humala came victorious over Keiko Fujimori in a tightly contested presidential runoff. In order to deliver his 'roadmap', Humala 'placed key appointments in the hands of those who enjoyed the confidence of all-important investor community' (Crabtree and Durand 2017, p.1). Once again, the investment discourse had prevailed over the interests of the 'people'. The shift from a radical political agenda towards a more moderate position marks the beginning of what Crabtree and Durand (2016) refer to as the 'political capture' of the state, whereby 'democratic institutions notwithstanding, powerful elites are able to use overwhelming political muscle to protect and project their economic interest, effectively sidelining or simply ignoring discordant voices' (Ibid, p.1). This, however, is no recent phenomenon in Peru. Rather, Peru 'stands out as an example of a country in which the influence of dominant elites over the political sphere has been particularly manifest and without significant opposition' (Ibid, p.1). As we will see in the next sections, this notion of political capture from dominant elites can also be extended to other influential institutions such as the IMF, WB and IDB, and is helpful as backdrop to understand the future changes in the discourses and practices around early childhood within the government.

Social inclusion as a state policy

For much of the twentieth century, government policies in Peru oriented to tackle ingrained patterns of poverty had been largely based on charitable giving. It was only in the 1990s, under president Alberto Fujimori (1990 -2001), that government social policy gained greater salience in addressing problems of poverty and deprivation (Crabtree and Durand 2016, p.132). However, this remained clientelistic and highly inefficient, lacking any sort of transparency in the ways it operated and accountability on the outcomes it produced. Social policy was only relevant as a tool of legitimation and political dominance (Ibid, p.134). Despite efforts made by the following governments of Toledo (2001-2006) and Garcia (2006-2011) to change the ways in which social assistance schemes were administered, with an accent on building notions of citizen rights and improving effectiveness, social programmes continued to be subservient to the political interests of the ruling parties.

The elections of 2011 brought new promises and discourses into play around social policy. With a progressive rhetoric that represented social policy as a mechanism to establish rights ('Gana Peru', Plan de Gobierno, 2011), and following the example of

other Latin American countries such as Brasil and Ecuador, Humala placed social policy at the centre of his political agenda. His 'Great transformation' was grounded on a human rights perspective in which the individual becomes the end, and, consequently, he proposed a social policy 'oriented to secure the exercise of rights by all citizens in Peru, universally, in order to fully develop their capacities and potential' (p.160):

The proposed social policies, in order to overcome poverty, must be comprehensive, and more than relief policies, they must be enabling policies that contribute to expand opportunities, break barriers and constrains, and create favourable conditions for people and families to tackle their own development and become agents of the decisions that affect them ('Gana Peru', Plan de Gobierno, 2011, own translation).

With that goal, Humala's 'Great transformation' claims that an education revolution, led by a civic movement, is needed to increase coverage and improve quality. Similarly, health is conceived as a democratic right of the population and not a commodity for those who can afford it. Equity is a core approach traversing Humala's 'Great transformation', in that 'it seeks to attend, with specific policies, the different factors of discrimination and exclusion affecting our society' (Ibid, 160). According to the plan, these should be grounded on a territorial, rather than sectorial approach, and follow a life cycle approach. In addition, Humala's plan prioritizes three groups historically excluded: the indigenous and peasant population in rural areas, children and the elderly. In this way, social policy is conceived as encompassing government action through, on the one hand, universal social services, such as education, health, housing, water, drainage, social protection; and, on the other, social programmes targeted to groups in poverty or exclusion.

Crucially, the party's vision of development and its underlying human rights approach assumes a different way of understanding poverty; one which considers 'its multiple dimensions, that is, not only the economic, but also constrains in the access to basic living conditions, constrains in the full development of ones capacities and opportunities to perform adequately, as well as constrains in its possibilities of individual and collective participation in society' (Ibid 160). In the same line, the Plan stresses the need for a new, shared understanding of the concept of rural in order to have better institutions and policies that address the challenge of these areas. In other words, Humala's 'Great transformation' poses a critique not only to the neo-liberal model from an economic perspective, but mainly to the foundations, values and concepts grounding and sustaining the neo-liberal project. In doing so, it introduces

new and recycles old discourses and values intended to trigger the 'great transformation' of Peru.

In order to accomplish his ambitious agenda on development and social inclusion, Humala announced the creation of the new Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) during his electoral campaign. The initial ideas for MIDIS were largely inspired in Brasil's Ministry of Social Development (MDS), the first of its kind in Latin America, whose president at that time, Lula Da Silva, was a close friend and supporter of Humala. However, as Humala's support began to increase, a group of intellectuals from the moderate left decided to support him in the conceptualisation of the new ministry, and in particular of some of the social programmes that later became emblematic of Humala's government such as 'Cuna Mas', 'Beca 18' and 'Pension 65' (Interview with Carolina Trivelli, February 2018).

Once in government, Humala assigned to his Minister of Production; Kurt Burneo, the task of leading the design and development MIDIS. Burneo put together a team made up of both the leftist intellectuals already supporting Humala and technocrats with experience in public policy, whom together translated Humala's electoral promises into a Law proposal. In record time, Law 29792 was passed in Parliament, creating the first Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion in Peru with the overarching goal to 'improve the quality of life of the population, promoting the exercise of rights, the access to opportunities and the development of competencies, in coordination and articulation with the diverse entities of the public sector, private sector and civil society' (www.midis.gob.pe).

Law 29792 was the result of intensive negotiations within Parliament where two very different perspectives regarding the scope of MIDIS prevailed. On one hand, there was a maximalist approach according to which all policies and interventions targeted to the poor should be managed by MIDIS. On the other hand, the minimalist perspective saw MIDIS role limited to policy making and coordination with no implementation of programmes. In the end, an intermediate position prevailed, with MIDIS having a 'political arm' to 'formulate, plan, direct, coordinate, implement, supervise and evaluate national and sectorial policies on development and social inclusion oriented to reduce poverty, inequalities, vulnerabilities, and social risks', in charge of the Vice Minister of Policies and Social Evaluation, and an 'operative arm' to 'design, implement and manage social programmes within MIDIS, as well as to promote and articulate social interventions within the private sector and civil society',

in charge of the Vice Minister of Social Services (Law 29792, own translation). The international cooperation played a crucial role during the negotiations with Parliament and in the development of MIDIS's proposal (Interview with Carolina Trivelli, February, 18).

There was an initial inspiration that was the MDS of Brazil, as the first social ministry in the region, which had already around 6 years. This became the main model to emulate. However, the MDS doesn't have that structure of an operative arm and a policy one, but something more mixed. That came largely from the cooperation, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) had much inherece in this idea of separating the space of coordination, the learning from policies, the use of evidence, from the space of operations.

The creation of MIDIS set a landmark in Peruvian social policy. For the first time, a government had created a national institution responsible for development and social inclusion policies encompassing all government agencies in the three levels of government (department, province, and district). Burneo and his team were expected to take over the conduction and implementation of the new ministry. However, Burneo was not member of the ruling party but of the former government's party, and hence, it was perhaps not politically smart to give him the 'gem' of the new government. Also, Humala's partisans began to press for a party member to lead the emblematic new ministry. In this context, Humala decided to appoint Carolina Trivelli, an independent and well renowned economist from the think tank Institute of Peruvian Studies as first Minister of Development and Social Inclusion. I happened to know Carolina, both personally and professionally, though we were not especially close. To my surprise, she called me one day and ask to meet with me.

This was late October 2012, I had recently returned from maternity leave to work in an international NGO on projects in nutrition and social development and had no interest or intention in working in the government. However, in our meeting at my house, she told me about her ambitious project for MIDIS and how she needed people she could trust. She then asked me if I would be interested in being part of her team, as advisor in early childhood, one of the main pillars of Humala's campaign. I remember telling her that I was no expert in early childhood and had no experience in the government. My background was as Economist, although I had worked both in research and practice in social policy, in particular around nutrition and health, as well as democracy and social capital. Like Carolina, I had no political allegiances, and was seen as an independent and technocrat. Despite all these reasons to say no, in the

end of our conversation, I agree to join her. This decision was driven largely because since I became mother, and especially during my years as parent in an early childhood institution inspired in the Reggio Emilia philosophy, I had become more and more interested in children and their learning and was looking for a chance to work in this field.

Along with the two Vice Ministers, who did have a long trajectory working in the public sector, I was among the first to join the new Ministry. In the following week, the Ministry, the two Vice Ministers, two other advisors and myself began meeting in the premises of the Institute of Peruvian Studies (at that point the Ministry still did not had an office) to brainstorm about the vision and mission of the Ministry, its strategic objectives and how it should be organised. Three main ideas were at the heart of these initial conversations. First, it would be a Ministry for citizens, not for the poor: 'a Ministry with services for citizens, not services for poor, although attention would be prioritised for citizens in poverty, in particular extreme poverty, of high vulnerability, we needed to guarantee that services would be for citizens, not for poor' (Interview with Carolina Trivelli, February 18). This was understood as quality services, based on a rights and human development approach, and citizen-centred, where users could expect and claim for their quality. Second, it would a Ministry based on evidence, with a strong focus on evaluation. And finally, a Ministry that would be held accountable, 'that would be able to show that its doing something, that has a result; it's not enough to just do and think we are doing good, besides evaluating programs there must be something to say that it's happening because this Ministry exists, something that before did not happen and now happens' (Ibid).

These ideas later translated into the creation of an emblematic population, the 'population in process of development and social inclusion (PEPI)', a new term used to describe the population who live in households with at least three of the following four characteristics: rural household, household with a women with incomplete primary education or less, household with a spouse with native mother tongue, and, household in the lowest quintile in the national distribution of per capita expenditure; which is estimated in 4.8 million people (16% of the entire population) according to the National Household Survey (ENAHO 2010). Further, the conceptualisation of the PEPI helped articulate a discourse whereby given the enormous task at hand, the Ministry would start with 'those that are more lagged behind, that cannot take advantage of the benefits of economic growth, those that are invisible to policies' (Interview with Carolina Trivelli, February 18). However, there was also a need to

consider development alongside inclusion in order to avoid criticism from some groups which saw the new Ministry as an institution of gifts. The goal was to include them now so one day they would no longer need MIDIS.

Two things are important here in terms of Foucault's notion of population and management of population –biopolitics. First, the use of statistics to identify, characterize and create a new population for the Ministry to target. In relation to this, Koopman (2014, p.102) argues that 'population is a concept that can be elaborated only through statistical, therefore informational, techniques'. That is to say, population is only intelligible once it has been brought into the gaze of knowledge and calculation. Secondly, the need to make visible 'those that are more lagged behind, that cannot take advantage of the benefits of economic growth, those that are invisible to policies' (Interview with Carolina Trivelli, February 18), so 'one day they would no longer need MIDIS' (ibid). That is, as long as the PEPI lacks the necessary faculties of and for responsible self-government, bio-political interventions are justified. This evinces a particular kind of optimizing (and constraining) bio-politics and imposes a normalizing gaze over sections of the population (the PEPI), which are defined as incapable of self-management. As Dean (2007, p.118) emphasizes, 'liberal forms of governing necessarily entail forms of categorization of subjects that provide it with subject or dependent populations who simply cannot, or cannot yet, be governed through freedom'. This relates back to the pastoral discourse of needs and social problems mentioned above.

Over the next month, a group of around 20 professionals, mostly economists and lawyers with high expectations and enthusiasm, but in some cases like myself, limited experience in the public sector, had already joined the Ministry. Many of us would eventually undertake the Direction of a Social Programme or of an Office within the Ministry, therefore our work involved an intense process of exploration, research and design. We met as a group every week, now in a rented old building in the historic city centre, to report on our progress and receive feedback from the Ministry and Vice Ministries. Additionally, each of us had bilateral meetings with the Vice Ministries and the Ministry on a regular basis to provide a more detailed account about our work. Despite the many uncertainties at that point, it was expected both by the MEF and MIDIS that MIDIS social programmes would be designed following a performance-based budgeting approach, constituted as the 'gold standard' in policy making. This implied identifying the existence of a specific policy problem (mainly through the use of statistics), understanding the causes of the problem (based on scientific evidence),

selecting those factors the intervention would directly address (based on evaluation literature), and defining indicators to measure so that, it was hoped, every resource spent could be traced back to a measurable outcome, much in the same way that both IDB and WB constructed and justified the policy problem of low early childhood development in the documents examined in the previous chapters.

This approach to policy making and management was part of a broader reform of the public sector led by the MEF during the previous administration. In effect, since 2008 Peru gradually implemented a performance-based budgeting approach within the public sector, starting with five strategic pilot programmes and involving all levels of government. By 2014, 41 percent of the overall public budget was formulated under this method. Moving this reform forward, Humala's government created an integrated financial management system and performance monitoring system of performance-based budgeting programs, called 'Resulta', to promote budget transparency and accountability. Ironically, considering Humala's anti-privatisation rhetoric, this tool has long been employed by business in order to improve performance by clearly defining and aligning objectives within and across organisations.

In order to fulfil government demands of evidence-based policies, MIDIS requested support from a range of institutions, including local and international NGOs, multilateral and bilateral agencies, and even the private sector, all eager to shape and influence in one way or another the newly created Ministry. In particular, the WB and the IDB played a crucial role providing financial resources to pay for consultancies and 'looking out' trips, access to international networks of experts and government officers, and technical assistance, besides the regular loans to the government. In effect, several WB and IDB delegations from Washington, most of them Economists working in the social sectors, regularly met with different representatives of MIDIS and the MEF. In addition to supporting the design and organisation of MIDIS, both the WB and the IDB provided substantial support for the development of new social programmes within MIDIS and the redesign of existing ones. To avoid duplicating efforts, each social programme was assigned to an institution based on that institution's expertise and interest to position a specific topic in the government's agenda. This was the case of the relationship between 'Cuna Mas' and the IDB, which as mentioned before, has a major interest in advancing early childhood development in the region. The main interests of these organisations in Peru were twofold: to lend resources to the new government to pursue its social agenda (which is the core 'business' of these multilateral organisations), and, to influence and shape

policymaking and products in Peru. Indeed, IDB and WB loans to the Peruvian government for their social and economic reforms were conditioned to improving pre-determined outcomes. Again, we see signs of political capture here, whereby the agenda of these organisations shape the agenda of the 'assisted' countries.

In all these, I would argue that the economics background of MIDIS's team facilitated the relationship with these international organisations, as in many instances, both shared a common language and vision on social development and inclusion. This was articulated in terms of inclusive economic growth, or as Carolina noted, 'include to grow', and evidence-based social policies; far away from the more radical proposals of the 'Great transformation'. As expected, the government's imperative of performance-based budgeting was welcomed and enhanced by these organisations, which later participated in the design and funding of some of the impact evaluation studies of MIDIS programmes. Again, this is an example of how the neo-liberal rationality behind much contemporary instruments and methodologies for policy making has become normalised and taken for granted. Here, it is interesting to note the increasing importance, in terms of presence and power, economists have gained within the social sectors historically lead by educators, doctors and social protection specialists, both in the public and private spheres. In relation to this, Foucault argues in 'The Birth of Biopolitics', that the reintroduction of labour or work into the field of economic analysis as human capital by neo-liberal economists, and the need to understand how is this capital made up, 'made it possible, through a sort of acceleration or extension, to move on to the economic analysis of elements which had previously totally escaped this' (Foucault, 2004, p. 226).

The vision of an inclusive economic growth and preliminary ideas of the purpose and role of MIDIS in achieving this was presented in December 2011 during the Annual Conference of Executives in Peru, the largest event in the year gathering the most important business leaders and policy authorities. Here, Trivelli outlined MIDIS policy orientations under the motto 'So together we build a country that grows for everyone'. After showing that Peru had made some progress on reducing poverty, Trivelli claimed that Peru still had a long way to go to reduce social inequalities, with 86% of families in extreme poverty living in rural areas. She stressed that 'the goal of social policy is to achieve outcomes', and that MIDIS 'should support and facilitate this task'. Importantly, improving social indicators was not seen exclusively as MIDIS role, rather the message conveyed was that 'this is a task of all'. In this way, Trivelli places social inequalities as 'the problem' and makes a call for action from the private sector.

In order to achieve the different outcomes attached to the programme, Trivelli claimed that 'we need to do things differently'. This 'doing things differently' involved:

- having clear objectives (the people),
- designing specific strategies for each social group served by MIDIS,
- delivering quality services and products,
- using innovative coordinating mechanisms such as incentives,
- assessing, learning and adapting 'best practices', and
- getting to know our users (rural, disperse, but with projects and initiatives).

Again, the need to 'know our users' in order to design 'specific strategies for each social group served by MIDIS' can be seen as a form of bio-political intervention. Here, the term 'users' as opposed to 'beneficiaries' or 'clients' is intentionally chosen to represent the groups affected by social policies and programmes not as passive recipients or private consumers, but rather as agentic subjects who are free to choose to participate. Indeed, Trivelli's presentation included a video showing testimonies of women savers in Cusco whom had learned how to save money thanks to the 'Proyecto Capital' implemented by IEP and created by a group of international and local intellectuals, including Trivelli. This practice of including the voices and images of ordinary people became common practice in the presentations by the Minister and Vice Ministers and a strategy to reinforce MIDIS's vision of creating 'policies with a human face' and enhancing agency in historically excluded populations. However, in reality, many of these groups, in particular children, women and the elderly had no option of opting out of programmes such as 'Juntos' (conditional cash transfers to women households), 'Pension 65' (cash transfers to people over 65) and 'Cuna Mas' (early childhood services), which illustrates the complexities and contradictions of policy making and policy analysis.

Early childhood in the government's agenda

Until 2011, early childhood in Peru had been unevenly addressed through specific policies and programmes led by different Ministries and organisations, with no national entity taking full responsibility for it. However, during his presidential campaign, Humala made clear that early childhood would be a priority in his government and that if elected, he would personally be in charge of it:

We will work with civil society, with the organisations that come from abroad that want to solve, in these five years, the problems on early childhood. I promise to defend the flag of early childhood; that is the commitment I have (own translation).

(<http://inversionenlainfancia.net/blog/entrada/noticia/545>).

Here, early childhood is constituted as a problem but at the same time as something that can be fixed with the help of foreign entities. In Humala's original governmental plan (the 'Great transformation'), he emphasised the need to build a common agenda to mobilize citizens and the state in favour of early childhood as a priority. In particular, attention was to be placed on providing a comprehensive service to address chronic malnutrition, maternal and neonatal health, improve learning outcomes, and reduce child abuse. At this point, no reference to the concept of early childhood development nor to the 'Cuna Mas' programme was made. In contrast, in 'The roadmap', Humala's main proposals included the designation of a high commissioner to articulate policies in support of early childhood; the universalization of preschool; the reduction of chronic malnutrition, the strengthening of the 'Wawa Wasis'²⁹ (home-based day care), and the creation of a new programme –'Cuna Mas', among others.

Unlike the emphasis on early childhood development and its crucial role for social and economic prosperity in the global early years discourse, Humala's concern for early childhood was articulated in terms of an obligation of the state and a right of the people:

We all know that raising children is fundamental. I wonder why the state is not concerned with early childhood. In this country, education, health and nutrition are a privilege, not a right. That is why we have set the goal of fighting chronic malnutrition, from within the schools, with breakfasts and lunches (...) We will create the 'Cuna Mas' programme so that working mothers can leave their children under three in adequate places and with professional staff. Milk, food and diapers will be provided for free. (<http://inversionenlainfancia.net/blog/entrada/noticia/545>).

Further evidence of Humala's apparent 'ignorance' of the global early years discourse is that, unlike the significant evidence supporting much of the early childhood interventions advocated in the global policies examined before, Humala's proposals

²⁹ The first 'Wawa Wasi' (which in quechua means 'The house of children') were created in the late 60s in Puno, with the support of international NGO Caritas, as a grassroots initiative to provide home-based day care in the houses of women from the community. By the early 1970s, the initiative had been taken and given official endorsement by the Ministry of Education and in 1995, the government transferred the programme to the Ministry of Women and Social Development.

were not explicitly grounded on any kind of research evidence. In effect, there is no evidence that providing breakfasts in schools reduces chronic malnutrition, nor is there evidence that providing milk and diapers increases early childhood development. In the specific case of 'Cuna Mas', Humala's main concern was to provide working mothers living in poverty a secure place where to leave their children while at work. With that aim, and influenced by his experience living in France, Humala envisioned 'Cuna Mas' as a *creche* that would provide comprehensive childcare for the most vulnerable children. Perhaps in part as a result of the lack of evidence supporting Humala's proposals on early childhood development is that different organisations within civil society such as 'Inversión por la Infancia', as well as the international cooperation were eager to participate and support the design of 'Cuna Mas'.

Once Humala assumed the presidency, three different groups started working on the preliminary design of the programme as there was still no certainty of who would be in charge of it. A first group, led by the Ministry of Production -one of the main authors of Humala's government plan and voiced as future Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion during the campaign; a second group within the Office on Preschool Education of the Ministry of Education, and a third group led by the Director of the National Programme 'Wawa Wasi' who expected to be appointed as Director of 'Cuna Mas'. While all three group proposals shared similar goals in terms of promoting early childhood among vulnerable children under three (that is to say, the 'what' of 'Cuna Mas'), they presented some differences on the design process, and on how to achieve these goals.

In the case of the Ministry of Production, interviews with experts on early childhood and representatives from international NGOs such as Unicef, Care, PAHO and World Vision were held to learn from their experiences in the field and to 'have them as important allies of the programme from the start' (Report written by Balbuena, 2011). In relation to this, World Vision and Unicef were willing to share their 'know-how' and offered generous contributions for the design and future implementation of the programme. In addition, several meetings with the Ministries of Education and Health, with whom the programme would have to coordinate closely for the delivery of its services, as well as with the director of the 'Wawa Wasi' programme were arranged. According to Balbuena (2011), in contrast to the openness and support received from the international organisations and the Ministries of Education and Health, the 'Wawa

Wasi' programme was less collaborative given rumours about its disappearance and adherence to 'Cuna Mas'.

In this process, the group led by the Ministry of Production received support from the MEF, who funded two studies, including a systematic revision of the literature on the determinants of early childhood development and effective interventions, and the elaboration of guidelines for the design of the programme based on this research-evidence. This initial interest of the MEF on early childhood development grew overtime, providing constant support both in the design of the programme and of its impact evaluation through their participation in different technical teams and funding. This was largely driven by advocacy from the IDB to position early childhood development as a policy problem in the government's agenda, and in particular, home visiting interventions as an effective policy solution. No similar explorations were made in the case of the Ministry of Education and the 'Wawa Wasi' programme, which seem to have a clear idea of how 'Cuna Mas' should look like.

In regard to the 'how', both the Ministry of Production and the Ministry of Education considered a combination of strategies that included working directly with families to strengthen their caring and supporting practices and working with the communities to promote healthy and challenging environments. To that end, they considered three modalities: home visits, group sessions and day care services. However, they differed on their pedagogical approaches: whereas the former emphasised more structured and targeted evidence-based interventions, the latter was concerned with respecting children's and families' knowledges and beliefs drawing on their previous experience with the PEAR project (Education project in rural areas) implemented by the Ministry. On the other hand, the 'Wawa Wasi' programme focused exclusively on creating a 'multiservice' type of children centre that included day care, health, protection services, as well as children's playgrounds. However, none of these proposals prevailed in the end, in part given their failure to win the support of the presidential couple, and also because new actors came into the scene.

With the creation of MIDIS in October 2011 and the appointment of Carolina Trivelli as Minister, it was decided that 'Cuna Mas' would be designed and managed by MIDIS. This involved redesigning existing 'Wawa Wasi' day care services, mostly on urban areas and on which 'Cuna Mas' would built on, as well as creating a new service for rural families living in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty to which the government's social inclusion agenda was aimed at (the idea of this new service came

from the IDB, although other institutions like 'Inversión por la Infancia' and Unicef were also strong supporters of a rural service). That is 'Cuna Mas' was not starting from scratch; it was building on an existing programme which had a long history (more than twenty years since its creation as a community-based home day care service) and was strongly embedded within the local communities. Also, 'Wawa Wasi' had an existing infrastructure of home-based and centre-based centres, as well as regional and local teams and Community Management Committees empowered across the whole country. As will be explored in the section 'Policy paradoxes', these two services, with different population targets and different aims, not only translated into different modalities of provision with different curriculums and pedagogical proposals. Rather, two different children and parent subjects were produced.

As advisor to the Minister on early childhood, I received the studies and proposals written by the three groups referred to above as an input to design 'Cuna Mas'. Given that I was no expert in early childhood, I spent most of the first months at the Ministry reviewing the academic literature on the field, learning about the different national and international early childhood programmes and interventions, and talking to local and international experts. These included representatives from Unicef, Open Society Foundations (OSF), the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), Van Leer Foundation, IDB, WB, the German cooperation –GIZ, academics, public servants from the Ministries of Education, Health and Economics and Finance and 'Wawa Wasi' staff.

Each provided different kinds of expertise and support and were interested in different aspects of 'Cuna Mas'. For instance, Unicef had broad experience working in rural areas in Peru and was particularly interested in strengthening the community management component of the programme for both services, by strengthening the Community Management Committees and the Vigilance Councils. OSF's main expertise was on centre-based early childhood education, and therefore focused in supporting the redesign of the 'Wawa Wasi' services. They provided significant support in building skills among caregivers on diversity and social justice in the context of early childhood education through international experts, as well participated in the elaboration of a framework of Principles Quality Pedagogy for 'Cuna Mas' day care centres. PAHO, on the other hand, had created an indicator to measure child development and was interested in having the programme use this to evaluate its outcomes upon child development. Emphasis was also placed in children's motor development, and they drew on research evidence showing the strong correlations

between motor development and child development. GIZ's strength was on facilitating the processes of designing and writing policies, and therefore offered to support the design of 'Cuna Mas' as a performance-based budget programme and fund consultants to write the policy documents needed to operate the programme. However, without doubt, the IDB was the key player in defining the 'what' and 'how' of 'Cuna Mas' new rural service, providing technical assistance through its experts on social protection from Washington, and financial assistance to fund studies and 'looking out' trips. Crucially, the IDB served as 'broker'; a 'nodal actor' or 'boundary spanner' between us and international experts and governments, allowing us to connect and learn from other experiences across the region.

Through this networking we were able to have video conferences with civil servants from the governments of Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Brasil and Chile to discuss about their early childhood policies and programmes. The Colombian and Chilean experiences were particularly interesting given they comprehensive approach to early childhood. In addition, the IDB funded 'looking out trips' to other countries to learn 'in-situ' about their early childhood policies and the challenges phased, as well as academic trips. Through this, I was able to participate as panellist or speaker in International Conferences on early childhood development such as the 'Conference on Early Childhood Development and Human Capital Accumulation', organised by University College of London, the 'International Seminar: Early childhood development programmes' in the Dominican Republic and the Workshop 'Analysis of the Modalities of Family Support in Programs target to vulnerable populations or in condition of poverty', organised by the IDB and the Ministry of Social Development of Uruguay. Interestingly, different discourses and understandings of early childhood, and kind of peoples, circulated within these events. Whereas the UCL Conference was mainly organised by economists for economists and focused on presenting experimental studies on the impact of early childhood interventions, the event at Uruguay had a more diverse group of professionals from different disciplines and was led by the Education specialists within the IDB, which had a different perspective of early childhood from the economists working in IDB's social sectors.

During this early phase, we held several meetings in the IDB premises (usually refer to as 'BIDIS' from the combination of BID³⁰ and MIDIS). Here, the IDB presented their research agenda on early childhood development, which compromised three main

³⁰ The Spanish Acronym for Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo.

areas: construction on indicators to measure early childhood development, analysis of the impact evaluations of different early childhood development interventions, and cross cutting themes. At the same time, we discussed the country's challenges regarding early childhood and started thinking about the main goals of 'Cuna Mas', the target population and the kinds of services it would provide (Aide Memoire, 14th November, 2011). Throughout this process, the IDB drew on evidence from international early childhood interventions, some of them funded by the IDB and produced through randomised controlled trials, which showed that early childhood stimulation through play, reading and talking to the child was the most 'cost-effective' intervention to improve early childhood development, and that this strongly correlated with future school performance, labour productivity and economic growth. In particular, the IDB advocated for the use of Sally Grantham-McGregors' psychosocial curriculum based on the rigorous evidence supporting this model of intervention. Grantham-McGregor was Emeritus Professor of International Child Health at the Institute of Child Health, University College London, chair of the Steering Committee for the Lancet series on Child Development in Developing Countries, and one of the leading researchers behind the Jamaican home visiting programme, an intervention focused on supporting mothers to promote the development of their children based on a structured and cognitively oriented curriculum.

The IDB had hired Grantham-McGregor to design and implement a pilot intervention in Colombia adapting the Jamaican curriculum and given the positive and significant impacts on early childhood development, were advocating a similar intervention in Peru. With that aim, the IDB offered to hire Grantham-McGregor and two other consultants to support the design and implementation of 'Cuna Mas'. In addition, the IDB pushed for a randomised controlled trial (RCT) impact evaluation of the programme in order to assess 'rigorously' the outcomes of the intervention in early childhood development and parenting practices. This was particularly important for the IDB in order to, on one hand, position themselves as producers of knowledge in the field, and, on the other, leverage this knowledge to advance their agenda on early childhood development and shape future interventions.

To that end, both the faithful adaptation of the Jamaican curriculum and the tight implementation of the programme according to its original design were set as conditions for IDB loans to the Peruvian government, and were part of the negotiations between IDB, MEF, MIDIS and 'Cuna Mas'. In practice, this implied that once established the rolling out of the programme at national level, no changes could be

made to guarantee the robustness of the experimental design (Aide memoire, 5th June 2012). Again, this shows this will to 'truth' undergirding much evaluation studies where the notion of 'rigor' has become synonymous of quantitative experimental studies. Embedded in the research-evidence advocated by the IDB was an understanding of early childhood development as a cumulative and universal process where the child follows pre-determined biological stages to become a productive adult. A sense of urgency to act was conveyed in the evidence that showed the irreversibility of the effects of not attending early childhood development. However, as in the documents of the WB and the IDB discussed before, the main concern is not on the child 'per se'. Rather, the child is constructed as a means to achieve a 'higher' end; the desired economic growth.

This narrow view of the child clashed with the image of the child that I brought from my experience as mother and parent in a Reggio Emilia inspired preschool. Here, I had learned to see the child as competent and strong, co-constructor of knowledge and protagonist of his own learning. There were no fragmented standardised assessments of children or references to the economics of early childhood development; children were seen holistically and valued in the here and now. Likewise, the concept of early childhood stimulation was taken as an interruption in and a threat to the child's 'natural' growth and development. That is to say, two different child-subjects were in tension here, produced by different discourses of the child, and I started feeling trapped in that tautness. I began to experience a sense of unease, and to start questioning my own views and beliefs about children and childhood. I found myself troubled by the language and rationalities used to ascertain the need to invest in early childhood development, while at the same time attracted by the power that this knowledge had on influencing others, in particular those in a position to support the programme with additional resources such as the MEF, international cooperation and businesses. At some point, I considered interrupting our work with the IDB to follow a different path in our programme design.

But not only had I felt disturbed with this way of understanding children. The adaptation of an 'imported' curriculum also faced resistance from the Ministry of Education, which advocated a naturally paced motor development and free movement and uninterrupted play; as well as from some groups within 'Cuna Mas', in particular those with prior experience working in the Ministry of Education and in rural settings, which is another example of discursive confrontation articulated by different sorts of actors, with different expertise and technologies of practice. Despite of this,

the apparent robustness and clarity of much of the evidence aforementioned, which provided me some sort of security about the potential 'success' of the programme, alongside MIDIS and MEF mandate to use a performance-based budgeting approach to design new interventions, was determinant for deciding to continue working with the IDB in the design of 'Cuna Mas'.

However, as an attempt to include other perspectives and understandings of children and childhood, and reconcile my own tensions, we commissioned two ethnographic studies in Puno (Vargas, 2011) and Ayacucho (Céspedes and Paredes, 2011), (paradoxically funded by the IDB), to learn directly from potential beneficiaries of the new rural service. Specifically, the studies aimed to learn from families, in particular women, about their needs and expectations regarding state support in areas related to child care and development; their perceptions about the advantages and disadvantages of different types of interventions (i.e. home visits, group sessions, day care), frequency and duration; the characteristics home visitors should have in order to be accepted by the community (i.e. education, experience, membership in the community, mother tongue, female, mother, age); and to map the supply of other early childhood interventions (public and NGOs), and existing community centre's where the programme could operate.

55 people were interviewed in Ayacucho (27 mothers, 4 fathers, 2 pregnant women, 4 early years teachers, 7 local authorities, 2 regional authorities, 5 health staff, and 4 NGOs staff) and 100 in Puno (73 female, 8 male, 6 members of NGOs, 6 health staff, 6 teachers and 1 NGO staff). The main findings of the study showed that women's main concerns regarding their children were how to feed them and stimulate them properly. Interestingly, many of the activities women were already doing with their children such as playing, singing and cuddling were not seen by them as stimulation. Rather, for these women, stimulation was something that they had to learn from others, mainly experts on child development and growth, which is another way in which certain knowledges are subjugated. Also, women in the Andean regions were not willing to leave their children in day care centres before the age of 3 as they carried their babies to the field where they worked all day and continued breastfeeding until the child turned three. This was stronger in Ayacucho, whereas in Puno, some women preferred having a place where to live their children to have time for work and for themselves as many were single mothers.

Based on these findings, the studies recommended that 'Cuna Mas' should provide home visits focused on feeding and childrearing practices by well-trained mothers from the community who spoke both Quechua (the local dialect) and Spanish, thus in a way validating some of the recommendations made by IDB based on international evidence, in particular those related to targeting rural populations and providing early stimulation through home visits. Women's concerns and needs for access to food and feeding practices was disregarded, largely based on Grantham-McGregor's study that showed that early stimulation was far more effective in improving child development than providing food to the child. Also, concerns about having 'Cuna Mas' doing too many things with no quality and impact at all contributed to deciding for a more targeted intervention. Again, this shows how knowledge produced by experimental designs, such as those by Grantham-McGregor's is used to validate certain interventions (child stimulation) to the exclusion of others (food provision). That is, what we see at play here is a mix of discipline, governmentality and biopolitics.

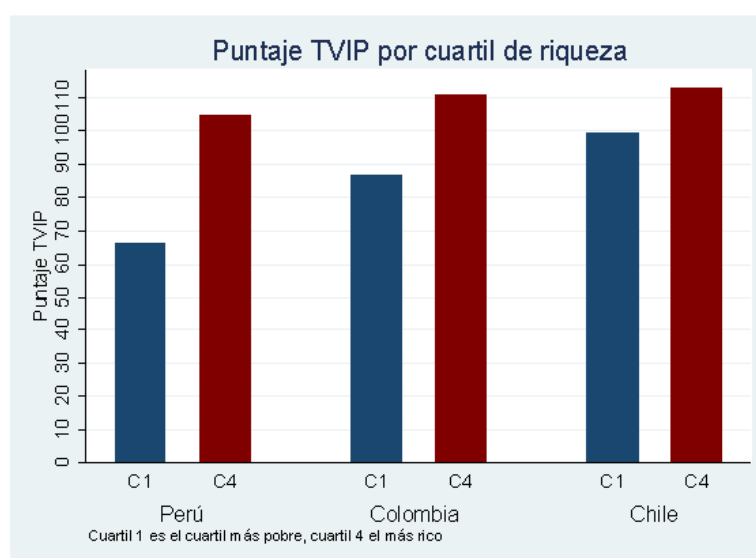
Drawing on both the international evidence on early childhood development and, partially, on the ethnographic studies undertaken in Puno and Ayacucho, 'Cuna Mas' rural service was conceived as a targeted parenting intervention that would provide weekly home visits to families with children under the age of three living in poverty and extreme poverty in rural areas. Its goal would be to improve parenting practices by teaching parents how to play, interact and talk with their children in order to close existing gaps in children's cognitive, socio-emotional, language and motor development. In other words, initially conceived in the context of an electoral campaign as a day care service to help poor working mothers, over time, 'Cuna Mas' came to be rationalised and justified in public discourse as a critical intervention to increase early childhood development and promote social mobility. In this process, the role of the IDB and of the research evidence on early childhood on which it drew was crucial. This illustrates the ways in which the 'why' and 'how' of an early childhood intervention evolve over time as a result of a combination of circumstances such as a strong presence and power of multilateral organisations alongside the establishment of a technocracy within the state, both with common values, beliefs and knowledges.

With the aim of sharing the diagnostic and preliminary design of 'Cuna Mas' and receive feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders, we held a workshop on January 2012 with representatives from local and international NGOs and agencies, other governmental agencies and local and regional authorities. GIZ provided financial and technical support in the preparation and facilitation of this workshop, as

well as with the documentation and analysis of the inputs gathered. The agenda was organised as follows: first, I would present a diagnostic of the situation of early childhood in Peru and the government's proposal to address it through the 'Cuna Mas' programme, and then, participants arranged in small groups would discuss and work to improve the analysis of the identified problems and its causes, and of the goals and interventions proposed.

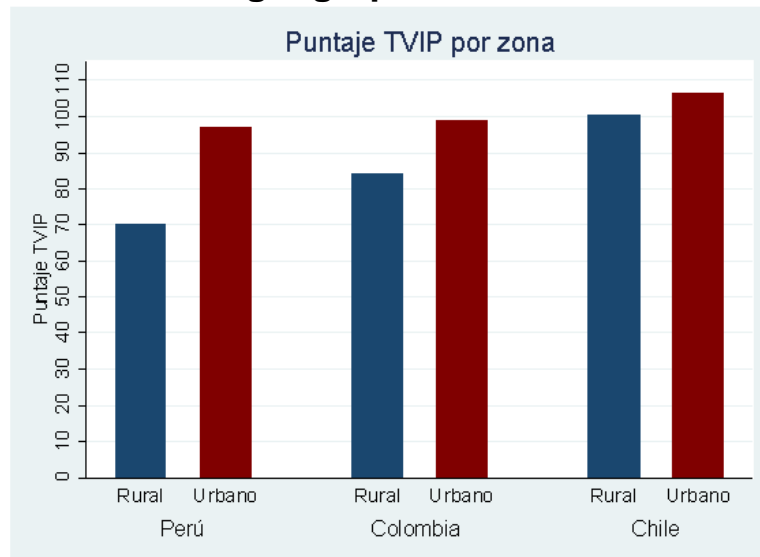
Retrospectively, I can see how my presentation followed a similar discursive strategy as the one in the IDB and WB documents examined earlier. I started with the question: Why to invest in early childhood development? and drew on evidence from neurosciences and economics, as well as the evaluation literature to demonstrate the significant impact of early childhood in a wide range of social and economic indicators. Using several indicators on child health, development and education, I demonstrated the existence of significant gaps between children by socioeconomic status (equivalent to 1 year and 10 months) and place of residence (equivalent to 1 year and 7 months), as well as significant delays among children in Peru compared to other countries in the region with similar GDP levels (see figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) by poverty quintile



Source: GIZ workshop, February 2012

Figure 2: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) by geographic area



Source: GIZ workshop, February 2012

Then, I described different parenting interventions across Latin American, paying attention to their impact on cognitive, physical and social development, school performance, child nutrition and maternal mental health. In this way, I managed to articulate a coherent narrative that served to rationalize the need for government intervention in early childhood. My aim was to persuade the audience that a parenting programme was the best solution to the problem of developmental delays and gaps, and therefore that this is what 'Cuna Mas' should do.

With inputs from the workshop, we adjusted the preliminary design and started working on the presentation for President Humala and his wife, who would give the final approval. After several rehearsals with the Vice Ministers, the Minister and her advisors, we went to the Government's House in early March to make the formal presentation of 'Cuna Mas' to President Humala and his wife, Nadine Heredia. The first slide of the presentation showed the image of the brain of a child with normal development (with multiple dendrites) next to the brain of an extremely neglected child.

Figure 3: Brain of a normal child and child with extreme neglect



Source: Power point presentation to President Ollanta Humala, February 2012

To my surprise, the President was unable to recognise which referred to the normal brain, therefore I had to further explain, arguing that 80% of the human brain size develops during the first three years of life and that the development of cognitive capacities are strongly shaped by the quality of the environment and quantity of early stimulation and access to learning opportunities. Next to the images, a bar graph showed the large socioeconomic gaps in cognitive development, measured by the Peabody Test, which meant that a child from the poorest quintile had a delay of 1 year and 10 months compared to a child from the richest quintile. The graph also showed significant delays in cognitive development in Peru compared to other countries in the region like Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. Our message was 'powerful': the first years of life are crucial for human, social and economic development, and Peru is significantly delayed compared to countries with similar GDP levels. This despite the significant resources already invested in social initiatives related to chronic malnutrition, education and childcare (1,340 million of dollars).

Again, through the strategic use of statistics and research evidence, I managed to tell a story about children; one that positioned them as vulnerable, delayed, and at risk; and their families as 'incompetent' and 'uncaring', which in turn served to constitute the low levels in early childhood development as a 'policy problem' in need of

intervention. My presentation was no different from the stories articulated in the WB and the IDB. As Gillies et al. (2017, p.2) argue

These brain scans picture have become iconic, a key motif in political and thinktank reports concerning children's upbringing and outcomes from across the spectrum. It provides a graphic visual image for assertions that poor parenting causes lasting damage to babies' and young children's brain development.

The 'evidence' captured in the MRI scans image thus provides a potent moral to call for intervention to take place in the early window of opportunity in a child's life, before it's too late and their brains are hard-wired for failure through deficient parenting.

Against this background, the next slides presented an alternative, a policy solution represented in the 'Cuna Mas' programme. It's goal; to improve early childhood development in children under the age of three living in poverty and extreme poverty. To achieve this purpose, 'Cuna Mas' would provide family support through weekly home visits to rural families with children under the age of three and pregnant women living in poverty and extreme poverty, as well as re-design 'WaWa Wasi's' home-based day care into centre-based quality day care for poor urban families, including care, education, nutrition, and health. The family support intervention was justified drawing on the international evaluation literature which showed that parenting interventions based on a structured curriculum had positive and significant impacts on increasing early childhood development. However, towards the end of my presentation, a different image of children was portrayed, one more attuned with that of the competent child. That is, again, two different child subjects are in tension here, the passive and dependent faulty child, against the strong and autonomous rich child.

During the presentation, both Humala and his wife asked several questions. They were shocked to learn about Peru being the next-to-last country in Latin America in terms of early childhood development. This fact was decisive in convincing the presidential couple of the urgent need to 'catch-up'. After three hours of presentation and discussion, we had succeeded in convincing President Humala and his wife that 'Cuna Mas' should focus on rural children under the age of three through home visits instead of the French inspired 'creche' he had advertised during his campaign. From this moment, President Humala and his wife became strong allies of the programme, joining me in many of 'Cuna Mas' public events.

Broadly speaking, this was the political and social context within which 'Primera Infancia Primero'³¹ and 'Cuna Mas' were embedded and rationalised. This section has illustrated how global policy discourses inform and even transform local discourses and agendas, as was the case of the shift in the government's plan for early childhood from a 'mother centred' to a 'child centred' one. The next section examines in more depth specific policies in the early childhood sector showing how these, for the most part reproduce, but at times also transgress, global narratives, opening new possibilities for thinking, speaking and acting differently about children and childhood.

The context of policy text production

This section focuses on two specific policies produced during Humala's administration to address early childhood development: 'Primera Infancia Primero' and the national programme 'Cuna Mas'. The goal here is two-fold: to explore how children and childhood are constituted in the national policies examined and the extent to which these constructions are informed and shaped by global discourses, and to explore the political and economic rationale underpinning the production of policies within the state. On the one hand, this involves examining the ways in which policies make up and make possible particular sorts of children (and parents) subjects and tracing the discursive origins in both 'Primera Infancia Primero' and 'Cuna Mas'. On the other hand, it is to understand how policies are produced, rationalised and justified within the state. I have decided to begin my exploration of early childhood through the analysis of policies and legal frameworks following James and James (2004) in that Law, understood in a generic way, is 'integral to the production, regulation and reproduction of childhood over time' (p.64), shaping particular ideas of 'the child' and 'childhood' and thus playing a central part in children's different experiences and subject positions. That is, by looking at these policies we can explore how nations not only define and understand but also regulate and seek to protect children and childhood.

Considering the vast number policy documents written in relation to these two policies, I focus here on four sets of policy texts (see Appendix 1): (i) 'Lineamientos para la Gestión Articulada Intersectorial e Intergubernamental para promover el desarrollo infantil temprano "Primera Infancia Primero"' (RS N° 413-2013-PCM); (ii) the Law which creates the National Programme 'Cuna Mas' (DS MIDIS-2012) (iii) the technical

³¹ Early Childhood First.

document justifying its creation and describing its components ('Anexo 2. Contenidos mínimos de un programa presupuestal con enfoque de resultados'); and (iv) 'Lineamientos para los Acompañantes Técnicos y Facilitadores del Programa Nacional Cuna Más', aimed at helping 'Cuna Mas' staff and community home visitors implement the programme's 'Family Support Service (FSS)'. I have chosen these different documents, written at different points in time, by different professionals and with different intentions, because I believe they offer a set of entry points to examine the complex, iterative and multidirectional nature of policy making.

Importantly, the work of crafting parts of these policies started early in the policy cycle. In effect, alongside the initial work that involved explorative research, 'looking out', networking, advocacy, sharing, and many meetings and discussion, already described in the context of influence, we started writing down key concepts to consider in the programme's design. 'Targeted', 'evidence-based', 'technical', 'accountable', and 'results-oriented'; very much in line with the new public management discourse, as well as pedagogical concepts like 'child-centred', 'socioconstructivist', and 'developmentally appropriate'. Even preliminary designs of 'Cuna Mas', as well as some drafts of the Law to create it, had been written by the three groups mentioned above before I started working in the Ministry. This attests to Bowe et al.'s (1992) notion of policy cycle as non-linear, interactive and multi-directional.

Policy paradoxes

'Primera Infancia Primero' is the first national policy to directly address early childhood development as a policy problem in Peru. It was written to establish the National Guidelines for the Inter-sectoral and Inter-governmental Articulated Management to promote Early Childhood Development; one of the five axes of the 'Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social'³² (ENDIS) elaborated by MIDIS. Three main approaches are explicitly acknowledged as underpinning the policy. A rights approach, to 'guarantee children's and youth's full exercise of their rights through the actions undertaken by the State, the community and the family'. According to this, human rights are 'based on the intrinsic dignity and equal value of all human beings; are inalienable and must be exercised without discrimination' and its exercise is seen as 'increasing children's capabilities, guaranteeing their protection, and expanding their options, thus, enhancing their liberty of choice'. A gender approach, to 'uncover

³² National Strategy for Social Development and Inclusion.

the social inequalities and asymmetric relationships of male power in detriment of women grounded on biological differences and eradicate them'. And, an intercultural approach, used as an 'analytic, methodological and political tool to construct equitable, fair and respectful relationships between cultures'. It is asserted that 'the recognition of differences and specific requirements made by women and ethnic-cultural groups should not imply the creation of new inequalities through policies that are partial and stigmatizing; rather, it must contribute to the reduction of existing inequalities without eliminating or disregarding the differences' (Ibid, p.7, own translation). This recognises the right of different groups to have different rationalities and cultural perspectives which might express in diverse forms of organisation, systems of relations and visions of the world.

Based on these broad approaches, seven child-specific guiding principles are considered:

- Superior interest of the child
- Comprehensiveness
- Progressive development
- Child participation
- Family as fundamental institution for human development
- Equality of opportunities
- Trans-sectoral

According to these, 'the child' is constituted as a subject of rights, which must be respected and guaranteed by the family, State and society. These rights must prevail over any other interest in all decisions of public policy, thus recognising the superiority of the rights approach. Here, children are conceived of as 'original and unique beings', with a particular process of development and rhythm of maturation. As such, children are not to be seen simply as the 'sum of fragmented functions' or an 'inventory of temporal or permanent capacities or incapacities'. Rather, 'the child is to be addressed in all its dimensions and perspectives' (Ibid, p.8).

At the same time, children are seen as competent beings who have the right to participate in society and be listened to by their families, State and society, and 'whose ideas, emotions, desires and needs must be taken into account when making decisions that affect their lives and that of their family and community members' (Ibid,

p.8), albeit this is explicitly recognised only for those who are capable of expressing their opinion. Families, in turn, are seen as the 'indispensable support for the psychic, physical, social and intellectual development of children'; responsible of 'guaranteeing the material, affective, social and cultural conditions for each of its members' (Ibid, p.10). Their role is to provide care and facilitate the comprehensive development of the child, and they must be a democratic institution free of violence, where dialogue prevails and the development of each of its members is supported. Finally, it is claimed that the State must provide equal opportunities for the access to public interventions by all children. Overall, the vision of the Commission is 'that children in Peru enjoy a good health and nutrition; have critical thought; are proactive and effective communicators; emotionally secured, autonomous and socially competent; with full exercise of their rights; living a happy life, free of violence, with equal opportunities and in permanent respect of their particularities' (Ibid, p.10).

Apparently then, a very different version of children and childhood is constructed in 'Primera Infancia Primero' as against those of what I have called the global narrative; one that foregrounds democracy, social justice and potentiality. Taking these approaches at face value would suggest the privileging of the rights approach and the value of children in their own right. However, the application of these approaches and principles in the elaboration of the guidelines is not straightforward; rather we can identify tensions and contradictions, with different ideas of the child and childhood coexisting throughout the document. In effect, the ideal of the superiority of the human rights approach is soon curtailed in the forward, where a rather different image of children as 'human capital' and 'profitable investments' is portrayed:

Today, we have a different perspective of children as subjects with civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that must be recognised. At the same time, the knowledge achieved in the last decade is conclusive: investment in early childhood development is the most profitable social investment for a country. The reason: the foundations of development, prosperity and sustainability of society are established in the first years of life of their children (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.5, own translation).

Here, a double discourse is articulated whereby on one side, children are constituted as subjects of rights, and valuable in their own right; and, on the other, children are defined in terms of their futurity, worthy today to the extent that they become responsible and productive adults capable of taking care of themselves, their families and contributing to society's prosperity. The human rights perspective seems to go hand-in-hand with the human capital argument. Not surprisingly, the shift from the

notion of the child as subject of rights to the child as object is seen as natural; these arguments complement and reinforce each other in 'harmonious' way. Knowledge, or more specifically a particular kind of knowledge, again plays a crucial role in the construction of this narrow understanding of children.

However, in what follows, we can see once again, the dominant investment narrative (the child as object) collapsing the human rights approach (the child as social actor). Out of the eight bullet points mentioned to justify the relevance of early childhood development and the need for government intervention, only one refers to children's rights, the other seven are informed by human capital theories. According to these, the first years of life are crucial for a person's development because the foundations of one's biological, cognitive and social potential are established in this stage:

It is in this early stage, when the capacity of an individual to deploy his/her potential, in adulthood, as a responsible and productive citizen for him/herself, his/her family and society, is in great measure defined (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.11, own translation).

Childhood is valued as a foundational phase, in which future potentialities are installed, and upon which private and social outcomes depend. Neurological research is used to demonstrate the importance of this stage for the normal development of the brain and for the consolidation of socio-emotional skills, as well as to reinforce the notion of irreversibility of early adverse experiences:

In this period the basic brain architecture consolidates, given that the greatest accelerations in its development take place in the first years. Between 0 and 36 months of age 700 neurological connections per second are made, and from the age of 5 a pruning of some of them takes place. At the same time, in this phase the capacity of children to interrelate and communicate with others positively, to take initiative based on their motor competencies and to solve problematic situations is fostered. (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.11, own translation).

The links between early childhood development and later outcomes are further supported with causal evidence that shows that an inadequate early childhood development manifests in youth and adulthood through effects in physical and mental health, education and learning, and employability and wages. Once again, the investment narrative surfaces.

A child who does not receive adequate support for a healthy development early on, sees his or her integrity affected in the present and faces a higher

risk of dropping school, getting involved in illicit acts and needing support from the State through social programmes in adulthood. Children from low income households that receive adequate attention in childhood have less probability of involving in crime or inadequate behaviour in school (Burr and Grunewal, 2006). Inadequate development in early years has effects in the risk conduct and decisions (Heckman, 2006) (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.11, own translation).

The needs of productivity and efficiency are prioritised over and against those of children. In this way, the vast body of literature documenting the impact of early childhood on future economic and social outcomes serves to construe the 'foundational paradigm' as an unquestionable truth. Evidence from developing countries is also used to demonstrate that early childhood development is a strong determinant of school progress irrespective of socioeconomic factors:

Cognitive outcomes in preschool - a component of early childhood development- are directly correlated with school enrolment and performance in secondary school irrespective of the mother's education, age, gender and socioeconomic status (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p12, own translation).

Within this neo-liberal discourse of childhood, early childhood is also conceived of as a phase of vulnerability and great risks. Indeed, failing to achieve one's full potential in the early years can have irreversible consequences in the child's future wellbeing as well as threaten society's prosperity. Here, childhood would be identified as potentially 'the site of key social problems' (James and James, 2004, p.193).

Paradoxically, this too is the most vulnerable stage from the effects of the environment and the quality of the experiences that children accumulate since conception to their early years. The negative adverse effects can be irreversible and will accompany individuals for the rest of their lives (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.12, own translation).

Thus, early childhood development is textured with both a discourse of economic competitiveness on one hand and a more pastoral discourse of needs and social problems on the other, in that way creating the 'conditions of possibility' for the governing of childhood.

Further evidence of the incoherencies and contradictions embedded in the policy document, and the different discourses and knowledges informing it, is that despite the explicit recognition of children's right to participate and be consulted in decisions

that directly affect them, 'Primera Infancia Primero' was itself written with no participation from children or their families. In other words, the document portrays a conceptualization of children as competent social actors who have the right to participate in society and the agency to shape their own live experiences; however, children are not listened to or included in any way in the formulation of the guidelines that define and affect them. In the same vein, the dominance of Western conceptions in the constitution of early childhood development throughout the document plays against the policy's intercultural approach which 'recognises the right of different groups to have different rationalities and cultural perspectives which might express in diverse forms of organisation, systems of relations and visions of the world'.

This section has illustrated the ways in which a single policy text, informed by different approaches and paradigms, can position and produce children (and parents) as different kinds of *policy subjects*. Different narratives of children and childhood are articulated which also shape what it means to be a child in different ways. On the one hand, some sections of the official documents follow a similar discursive strategy as that of the WB and IDB documents combining a human rights approach with a human capital perspective, and drawing on a particular body of scientific knowledge –that produced within the neurosciences and evaluation literature- to demonstrate the importance of the first years of life for the future development of human beings and society. Here, as in the global early childhood discourse, children and early childhood are objectified and constituted as delayed and in need of repair. On the other hand, other sections articulate a very different understanding of children and their parents, as social actors, competent and protagonist of their own learning and development, and valuable in their own right.

However, based on the analysis of the official documents, I would argue that the human capital perspective prevails over the human rights approach. This would be suggesting that a human rights approach, which advocates for children's wellbeing today is a necessary but not enough condition to guarantee society's commitment with early childhood. An economic argument, in this case the high economic and social returns of this kind of investment which considers the value of money in the future is needed to gain public support for an unprecedented and ambitious government agenda in early childhood. Brown and Lauder (1997, p.7-8) have called this the 'human capital development policy consensus', which has accompanied neo-liberal globalisation.

In other words, despite the specificity and uniqueness of 'Primera Infancia Primero' in relation to the culture and politics of Peru, this creativity relies on the tools and possibilities of the global early years discourse (at a textual level) and models of child development (brain + environment) and evidence-informed policy (at a discursive level). That is, only certain statements can be regarded as true. As Ball et al (2011, 618) puts it, 'Policies work to exclude statements which they characterise as false and they keep in circulation those statements which they characterise as true'. This in Foucauldian terms is discourse or a discursive formation – an epistemology of policy. With these I am not suggesting that the acknowledgement of children's competence and rights and the need to foster their participation are employed solely as rhetorical devices. Rather, I seek to illustrate the complex and often contradictory ways in which children are simultaneously positioned as objects, subjects of rights, and social actors, and the role that different discourses, knowledges and disciplines play in shaping how childhood and children are constituted in policy discourse. This is incoherence and uncertainty – Ozga's 'muddle', but also a pragmatically approach to policy; a tactic of legitimation. From my own experience, it is also tension. And fear.

The 'Cuna Mas' problem-space of government

The national programme 'Cuna Mas' was created as a targeted social programme with the goal of 'improving early childhood development in children under 36 months of age in areas of *poverty and extreme poverty* to overcome the *gaps* in their cognitive, social, physical and emotional development' (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS) (emphasis added). To achieve this goal, the programme's specific objectives include:

- a. To increase cognitive, social, physical and emotional development of children under the age of 36 months in areas of poverty and extreme poverty,
- b. To improve knowledge and practices of families for the caring and learning of their children under the age of 36 months,
- c. To strengthen the emotional bond between mother/father/caregiver and the child.

From the programme's objectives, we can see that a problem with early childhood development, defined as one of low outcomes and gaps, is fabricated, and that this is seen as mainly caused by lack of knowledge and inadequate practices by families, and a weak mother-child bond. Importantly, this is a problem that only concerns the poor and rural (highly intertwined in Peru). Thus, 'Cuna Mas' is created to 'manage'

this problem. It acts as a bio-political and governmental site which centres on the 'poor and extremely poor' as the object of its practices and problematisations. Once again, as in the global policy documents, statistics are deployed to demonstrate the existence of a 'problem'. In fact, it is through the deployment of statistics, that children from disadvantaged families are mainly made visible:

According to the Unit of Quality Measurement of the Ministry of Education, it is evident that there exist significant gaps between children from urban and rural areas in terms of their performance in tests on reading comprehension and mathematics in second grade, with an average gap of around 28 and 10 percentage points for reading comprehension and mathematics, respectively (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS, own translation).

The programme presents and solicits this problem as an issue concerning the vitality of the disadvantaged child, and society, more generally. This includes their material conditions of disadvantage, but also their present and future conduct and their aspirations, that is, 'their habits, disposition and character' (Dean, 2007, p. 190). This is typical bio-political problem and fabrication of (neo-) liberal government: a security threat in the form of a perceived lack of actual or potential capacity for present and future responsible self-government among sections of the population (Bailey, 2015). In effect, the decision to create of 'Cuna Mas' is justified in terms of a 'national interest':

That, in light of the above and in the frame of the legislation mentioned above, it is of *national interest* to create the National Programme 'Cuna Mas' based on the National Programme Wawa Wasi, reorienting and reformulating it as a *targeted* social programme under the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion with the objective of providing comprehensive attention and *improving early childhood development* in children between 0 and 36 months of age in *condition of poverty and extreme poverty*, promoting the articulation between government sectors and levels, organisms and programmes that share or complement its objectives (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS, own translation, emphasis added).

In this way, the law provides a window onto the bio-political processes and mechanisms operating within the programme: the reference to neuroscientific evidence on the criticality of the early years, 'Cuna Mas' and its concern with developmental delays; the statistical rendering of populations during the opening paragraphs, and the risks associated with these gaps, which informed, and were informed by, concerns for health and economic vitality. By considering early childhood development a matter of national interest, government intervention to guarantee

children's proper development is seen as a duty and a goal in itself, in particular for vulnerable social groups:

According to article 4 of the Constitution of Peru, it is a goal of the community and the State to provide protection to those social groups considered vulnerable, in particular children and their mothers (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS, own translation).

Importantly, however, 'Cuna Mas' does not just 'create' these problems nor the solutions it provides. Instead, 'Cuna Mas' is constituted by and operates within a wider field of bio-political and governmental force relations. It is just one of a number of *dispositifs of security* which 'aim[...] at the mass phenomena characteristic of a population and its conditions of variation [and] ... to prevent or compensate for dangers and risks that result from the existence of a population as a biological entity' (Lemke, 2011, p. 37). Within this narrative, investment in early childhood by itself is considered an effective strategy to eliminate existing socioeconomic gaps. In other words, the problem of social inequality is reduced to a problem of developmental gaps; as if only by fixing these all other problems would be eliminated.

On top of the above, children in condition of poverty face biological, psychosocial and contextual risks that demands that the State and society promote the conditions of comprehensive attention that help them and their families build the foundations for the development of capabilities and learning that eliminate existing gaps with their counterparts in better social and economic condition (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS, own translation).

This approach to addressing systemic problems through individualised interventions is not only 'naïve and reductionist' (Moss, 2013, p.369), but also reinforces a narrative whereby the individual, in this case families and even children themselves, are held responsible for changing the precarious situation in which they live through developing their own capabilities and learning.

Again, evidence plays a central role in all these. The new disciplines of neurosciences are used to assert the criticality of early childhood development, reinforcing the urgency to invest in early childhood development:

Several studies on neurosciences largely demonstrate that the first years of life are decisive for the development of individuals and, from conception, the process of brain development and multiplication of synaptic connections takes place, reason why attention to children during early childhood is crucial for society and the State (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS, own translation).

Also, evidence from evaluation literature on the higher impact of parenting interventions vis-a-vis day care services, alongside an economic argument, namely the larger efficiency and effectiveness of early interventions compared to later ones, are used to justify the creation of 'Cuna Mas', and in particular of a home visiting service.

International evidence shows that interventions targeted to children under 6 months of age living in poverty and extreme poverty are more efficient and effective than in later ages and that home visiting programmes have larger impact upon the development of children than day care programmes; (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS, own translation).

Perhaps more crucially, evidence on the impact of 'Cuna Mas' upon predefined outcomes is taken as a measure to decide the continuity (or not) of the programme:

The National Programme will have a time frame of 05 (five) years, after which the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion, with a previous impact evaluation, will propose, if that's the case, its formalisation as a public policy through its institutionalisation and progressive decentralisation (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS, own translation).

This is another example of how power/knowledge operates in that specific evidence about changes in child development indicators, in this case derived from experimental evaluations, is considered sufficient in the decision to continue a social programme, meanwhile, the beneficiaries' perspectives and perceptions regarding the programme are not taken into account. Finally, the decree establishes that MIDIS will design 'Cuna Mas' according to the methodology of performance-based budgeting. As mentioned earlier, this was a requisite for all new social programmes as part of a broader reform agenda of the MEF to guarantee an 'effective' use of public resources, which mirrors the global managerial practice of evidence-based policy and performance-based budgeting; both regarded as exemplars of 'good practice', and which are increasingly being adopted by many state and local governments based on the belief that this will help them 'meet set priorities, meet their goals and deliver the best possible value to taxpayers' (Budgeting for Results Commission Report, 2014).

Performance-based budgeting: An epistemology of policy

As mandated by the MEF and the MIDIS, both 'Primera Infancia Primero' and 'Cuna Mas' had to be designed following a performance-based budgeting approach. With that aim, in the case of 'Cuna Mas', a multidisciplinary team including staff from 'Cuna Mas', MIDIS, and MEF was created. Under my leadership, and with the facilitation of

GIZ, the team met weekly for three months to work on the elaboration of 'Annex 2. Minimum requirements for a performance-based programme', a specific format created by the MEF to ensure that every new programme followed a performance-based budgeting methodology. Meanwhile, the task of writing the Guidelines 'Primera Infancia Primero' was initially entrusted to two independent consultants (University professors of Economics, close to the Vice Minister of Policies and Social Evaluation within the MIDIS, also an Economist), whom drafted a preliminary version largely based on the developmental and evaluation literature informing much global policies, with no participation from others sectors.

However, with the appointment of a new Vice Minister of Policies and Social Evaluation (a Doctor with postgraduate studies in anthropology and public health, and more than 25 years of experience working in the public sector), a Multi-sectorial Commission integrated by the Ministries of Social Development and Inclusion; Economics and Finance; Education; Health; Women and Vulnerable Populations; Housing, Construction and Drainage; Justice and Human Rights; Culture; Labour and Employment Promotion; and, Energy and Mines, as well as representatives from the municipal and regional level was created, constituting an unprecedented collective effort to promote early childhood development in Peru. The main goal of the Commission was 'to create a space to discuss and define collectively national guidelines that reflect the multidisciplinary and multi-sectorial nature of early childhood development' (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.6, own translation). According to the Commission, the multi-sectorial and participatory approach undertaken in the elaboration of the guidelines, as well as the outcomes-based management logic fundamentally based on evidence, 'provides the document with legitimacy and rigorousness' (Ibid, p.6, own translation).

Now, to write a policy following a performance-based budgeting approach implies using a systematic approach to elaborate the problem-solution frame in relation to the phenomena addressed by the policy, and through that, provide an economic and political rationale for government intervention. In the case of early childhood development, this involved: (i) defining the prioritised outcomes and factors that need to be addressed by the State and society for ensuring early childhood development; (ii) identifying the interventions that must be implemented in order to achieve the desired changes in the factors that condition early childhood development outcomes; and, (iii) establishing the indicators for the supervision and evaluation of child development outcomes (Ibid, p.5).

That is, the identification of the existence of a problem in itself is not sufficient for the government to address it. Rather, a conceptualisation of the phenomena in question is required, as well as uncovering the mechanisms through which the identified problem is created and reproduced using causal models. Only through such an exercise will it be possible to identify the most 'effective' interventions to solve the problem. According to Annex 2, 'a problem is defined as a gap in access or the need of a specific population that the programme aims to address', and therefore must be 'expressed as a negative condition in the population, necessarily quantifiable in terms of its magnitude, temporality, population group and location' (Annex 2). In all these, evidence plays a crucial role in that the existence of a gap or the need in the population, as well the causal models explaining the problem must all be documented rigorously. This is grounded on the assumption that the policy problem, its causes, alternative solutions, and the relationship between the policy and its final outcomes must be (and can be (straightforwardly)) all documented with evidence.

Crucially, not all evidence has equal value. Rather, the notion of rigorousness is based on the nature of the source of information and the methodology used to produce it. According to Annex 2, evidence can be categorised and hierarchised as follows:

Level A:	
A.1	Systematic revision using meta-analysis
A.2	Systematic revision without using meta-analysis
A.3	Detail of experimental designs of high methodological quality
Level B:	
B.1	Well-designed cuasi-experimental studies
B.2	Cuasi-experimental studies with limitations
B.3	Cohort studies
Level C:	
C.1	Observational studies with a degree of biases control
C.2	Other type of non-controlled studies with an evaluation of possible contextual factors
C.3	Regressions without biases management
C.4	Multivariate analysis
C.5	Correlations
C.4	Cross tables

C.4	Systematization of administrative data
Level D	
D.1	Qualitative studies with methodological rigor
D.2	Systematization of experts' opinion and perspectives
D.3	Theoretical frameworks recognised by the international academic community

Source: Annex 2. Minimum requirements for a performance-based programme

That is, quantitative studies, especially those using meta-analysis and experimental designs are considered more valid and reliable whereas qualitative studies score last. This clearly illustrates the superior value given to quantitative evidence over other forms of knowledge and expertise within this policy framework. Under this classification, 'norms, laws, national and international agreements, descriptive documents of problems without methodological rigor, non-expert opinions, and isolated points of view or opinions without adequate systematization' are not considered scientific evidence (Annex 2, p.25). In other words, people's beliefs, perceptions and needs such as those gathered in the ethnographic studies that informed 'Cuna Mas' preliminary design are not given equal value as data produced by experimental studies.

This hierarchisation and exclusion of knowledge turned out to be very problematic, as many people involved in the programme saw the data and the insights derived from the qualitative studies as extremely relevant and useful for the design process. Also, the lesser value given to people's ideas and needs clashed with the MIDIS view of a Ministry 'of the people, for the people' (ENDIS, 2012). This, I would argue, is another form in which certain knowledges become subjugated and, hence, marginalised from the spaces where policies are made. It is one level at which discourse operates –the rules or principles that make it possible for some statements to be regarded as true. A 'will' to a particular kind of scientific and data-driven policy knowledge.

Using the 'best existing evidence' (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.25, own translation), two conceptual frameworks on early childhood development (one for 'Primera Infancia Primero' and the other for 'Cuna Mas') were elaborated, which served to define the main goals on child development (outcomes), prioritise the factors (causes) to be addressed, and identify the interventions and indicators required to accomplish and evaluate results, respectively, all of which can be 'neatly' represented in a grid (see

appendix 2). Outcomes, factors, interventions and indicators are in this way assembled to give coherence and legitimation to the interventions proposed by the government. Within these frameworks, early childhood development is defined as ‘a progressive, multidimensional, integral and opportune process which translates into the construction of gradually more complex capacities that enable the child to be competent based on his or her potentialities to achieve a greater autonomy in the interaction with the environment and in full exercise of his or her rights’ (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.10, own translation). Child development is thus configured as a transitional stage towards more complex capacities, and as resulting from the interaction between genetics and environment, which resembles the notion of development as progress and a biosocial phenomenon articulated in the global documents. Also, it is assumed that early childhood cannot be observed directly but must be inferred through children’s behaviour, in particular, children’s motor skills, language, cognition and socio emotional skills. Thus, given the lack of data on early childhood development for children under three, and the understanding of child development as a cumulative process, existing data on children’s development and education achievement, as well as children’s access to child services at later stages are used as proxies of the situation of younger children. For example, data from the longitudinal study ‘Young Lives’ are used to document the existence of delays and gaps in early childhood development:

On average, children at age five have a delay of 11 percentage points in their vocabulary³³ compared to the international standard, and this deficit increases significantly up to 28 percentage points for children in the poorest quintile (Annex 2, p.6, own translation).

The same is true for children living in rural areas³⁴ where children between five and six have a one year ‘delay’ in their level of vocabulary compared to their urban peers when they enter school. (Annex 2, p.6, own translation).

These developmental gaps are taken as explaining current low levels of school achievement among children in second grade, and in particular the existence of achievement gaps between urban and rural children (28% in communication and 10% in Mathematics), thus reinforcing the link between early childhood outcomes and school progress. In addition, statistics on access to early childhood services showing

³³ As measured by the Peabody Pictures Vocabulary Test.

³⁴ Poverty and area of residence are strongly intertwined: 56 per cent of the population in the rural domain lives below the national poverty line, compared to only 18 per cent in the urban domain (INEI, 2012).

that less than 2 per cent of children under the age of three has access to any kind of education service, and that 1 in every 5 children suffer from chronic malnutrition (2 out of 5 in the case of rural children) are also used to reinforce the argument of the existence of a problem with early childhood, in particular among poor and rural families.

Based on this evidence, the policy problem is framed as 'low levels of early childhood development in children under the age of 36 months living in condition of poverty and extreme poverty in rural areas' in the case of 'Cuna Mas' (Annex 2, p.1), whereas 'Primera Infancia Primero' also considers children under the age of five and in both rural and urban areas. Now, importantly, for these set of child indicators to be translated into a policy problem, certain truths need to be in place. On one hand, the existence of a norm which prescribes how children are supposed to develop such that children growing and developing below this benchmark of 'normality' are automatically classified as underdeveloped and delayed. On the other hand, there needs to be a consensus on what early childhood development is and on how to measure it in order to be possible to compare different populations.

To identify the potential population in the case of 'Cuna Mas', it is assumed that all children under the age of three living in rural districts with an incidence of poverty over 50% and chronic malnutrition over 30% are affected by the problem or 'are' the problem. This criterion was determined arbitrarily by 'Cuna Mas' and the MIDIS. A key aspect in defining this was the need to think in terms of districts and not individuals. That is, the programme would deliver its services progressively to the entire population within targeted districts, and not specific individuals. This was crucial for the randomised control trial impact evaluation of the programme in order to preserve the control groups intact as there could be no 'contamination' between the control and intervention groups, again showing the asymmetric power relations and the prevalence of certain demands (IDB's request for rigour) against other 'less' important claims (the populations immediate needs).

Once the policy problem and the target population are defined and quantified, the next and most demanding task consists of building the conceptual framework of early childhood development and the causal models that explain development delays. This involves a thorough, though not exhaustive, review of the literature on the determinants of early childhood development, as only certain studies are considered adequate according to the criteria of quality evidence described above. Based on this,

conceptual frameworks of early childhood development were developed for both 'Primera Infancia Primero' and 'Cuna Mas', which draw on two main theories: the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1987), and the risk factors approach (Walker et al., 2007, 2011). The ecological systems theory examines how the inherent qualities of a child and his environment interact to influence how he will grow and develop, stressing the importance of studying the child in the context of multiple environments. These include from the most intimate home ecological system moving outward to the larger schools' system and the most expansive system which is society and culture, all of which inevitably interact with and influence each other in every aspect of the child's life. On the other side, the risk factors approach stresses that there are several biological, psychosocial and contextual risk factors associated with adverse outcomes in early childhood development, which in general occur simultaneously and persist over time, thus creating a situation of exposure to multiple and accumulative risks. According to Walker (2011), the effects of these risks in child development varies according to individual and environmental characteristics.

The process of child development is arbitrarily defined as taking place from conception until the age of five and comprising critical periods in which changes in growth and development follow a non-linear trajectory characterised by the progressive integration and development of competencies and abilities in interaction with the environment (RS N° 413-2013-PCM). During these first five years of life, the main developmental trajectories are grouped in four dimensions: motor, socio-emotional, thought and communication. Like in the WB and IDB frameworks, specific milestones are identified for each trajectory:

Since birth, objective manifestations of the beginnings of the trajectory of motor development are observed, which progresses in successive and rapid refinements of skills to control the body until walking with no support by 18 months. Essential precursors of this trajectory are head control, standing without help and grabbing objects (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.14, own translation).

The beginning of the trajectory of communication development is seen as manifesting as early as 4 months, when the child is capable of discriminating sounds and, soon after that, of using gestures to communicate. Before the first year, the child is expected to use some pre-words and words, which intensifies during the second year to reach an effective verbal communication by the age of 3. Meanwhile, the socio-emotional trajectory begins with secure attachment considered foundational for later milestones such as the construction of identity and empathy. Finally, the most

significant manifestation of the beginning of the cognitive trajectory is the recognition of the permanence of the object, which is the foundation for the baby's relationship with objects by 9 months and the representation of everyday situations by 18 months (Ibid).

The interdependence and interconnectedness between these developmental trajectories are considered the most relevant aspect of child development given its high correlation with more complex capacities crucial for humans growth, development and learning such as planning, setting goals, solving problems and adapting to the environment (Ibid). For instance, 'secure attachment influences all developmental trajectories, while motor skills together with advances in the use of communication forms enables the child to build the symbolic function' (Ibid, p.15). Finally, it is asserted that children exposed to inadequate family and community environments, as well as adverse experiences during the periods of higher acceleration in the developmental trajectories suffer significant delays in the development of such trajectories and in their integration. Adverse environments and experiences are defined as follow: low levels of education of the mother, father or main caregiver; child physical abuse; permanent absence of parental care and restricted social interaction, again positioning parents from disadvantaged households as less able and responsible for their children's 'delay'.

This understanding of child development as compromising changes in physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive dimensions at specific time frames, with precise developmental milestones and norms established in order to assess children's normal development serves to classify the child as 'normal' or 'at risk'. This is, as Foucault (1979, p.5) puts it, 'the primary and fundamental character of the norm', as a standard that unifies practices. Power/knowledge relations operate here to produce the phenomenon to which they are addressed –the developed child. Thus, the 'normal child' emerges as a subject of development in relation to the norm, in an orthogonal relationship of distributions across the population and over time. From this knowledge derives the concept of 'windows of opportunity'; that is, the idea that there are critical periods in a child's life where external interventions can enhance the full development of human potential. As noted earlier, this framing of development conveys the irreversibility of the effects of early experiences, ultimately positioning children from disadvantaged backgrounds with low developmental outcomes as destined to failure, unless specific actions are undertaken to remediate and compensate for their 'deficiencies', and those of their families. Finally, families are placed as the

fundamental socialising space, 'where the main affective bonds are established, and the opportunities for relationships and communication, regulation of emotions, coexistence and interdependence, and beliefs and values develop' (RS N° 413-2013-PCM, p.19, own translation).

Based on this research evidence, 'Primera Infancia Primero' prioritizes a group of risks factors and develops their causal chains of accumulative effects organised around seven main child outcomes considered sufficient to ensure child development: adequate health, adequate nutritional status, secure attachment, walks without help, effective verbal communication, regulation of emotions and behaviour, and symbolic function. Each outcome is described in detail and specific targets are set for each. For example, the outcome 'secure attachment' is defined as the specific relationship the child establishes with a 'significant adult' which 'enables the child to build an intimate and permanent emotional bond that serves as the basis for the development of autonomy, emotional security and subsequent relationships the child will develop throughout his or her life' (Ibid). According to the problem-solution frame, the milestone for this outcome is that children by the age of 12 months should have developed a secure attachment with a primary caregiver.

The main risk factors identified as inhibiting child development relate to the mother and the child and are usually associated with 'deficient' parenting practices. Risks associated with the mother include women's inadequate nutritional status, women's infections, preeclampsia, youth pregnancy, exposure to any form of violence and changes in emotional state due to depression, anxiety or stress, this last one considered as the most relevant. This is in line with studies that illustrate how the twentieth century saw a predominance of the psychological conditions of both children and mothers (Hendrik, 1997; Rose, 1985, 1990). For example, Burt's moral psychology gave pre-eminence to the mental conditions over the economic, arguing that 'nearly every tragedy of crime is in its origins a drama of domestic life' (quoted in Wooldridge, 1995 in Hendrick, 1997, p.52). In turn, and as a direct consequence of the exposure to the risks outlined above, children are seen as facing a number of risks to their development and growth throughout the course of their early years. For example, for the outcome 'adequate health status', women's inadequate nutritional status (mainly iron and acid folic deficiencies) before conception is considered the main risk factor for the child being born with low weight or prematurely, a condition that according to evidence has dramatic and long lasting effects: it increases by 70% the risk of attention deficit; by 20% the risk of having conduct problems; by two to four

times the risk of brain paralysis; by two times the risk of having an IQ lower than 85 and higher risk of experiencing delays in motor and language development, as well as being correlated with lower scores in reading and maths.

In that sense, the life of the baby is seen as inexorably connected and dependent on the mother; a dependency that rarely attenuates during the early years of life. In effect, the main risk a child faces is not developing a secure attachment, considered a direct effect of 'bad quality interactions' with his or her mother or main caregiver. Failing to develop a secure attachment is seen as having detrimental impacts on the child, causing 'toxic stress' which transforms the architecture of the brain to the point of shaping the neuronal connectivity responsible of the regulation of emotions. In addition, it is associated with attention deficit, delays in language and problem-solving abilities, and higher risks of exhibiting antisocial conducts and violence, and chronic and mental diseases. These links between early care and adult conduct are not new. Rather, as illustrated in the following quote, they have long been a concern especially in relation to political stability:

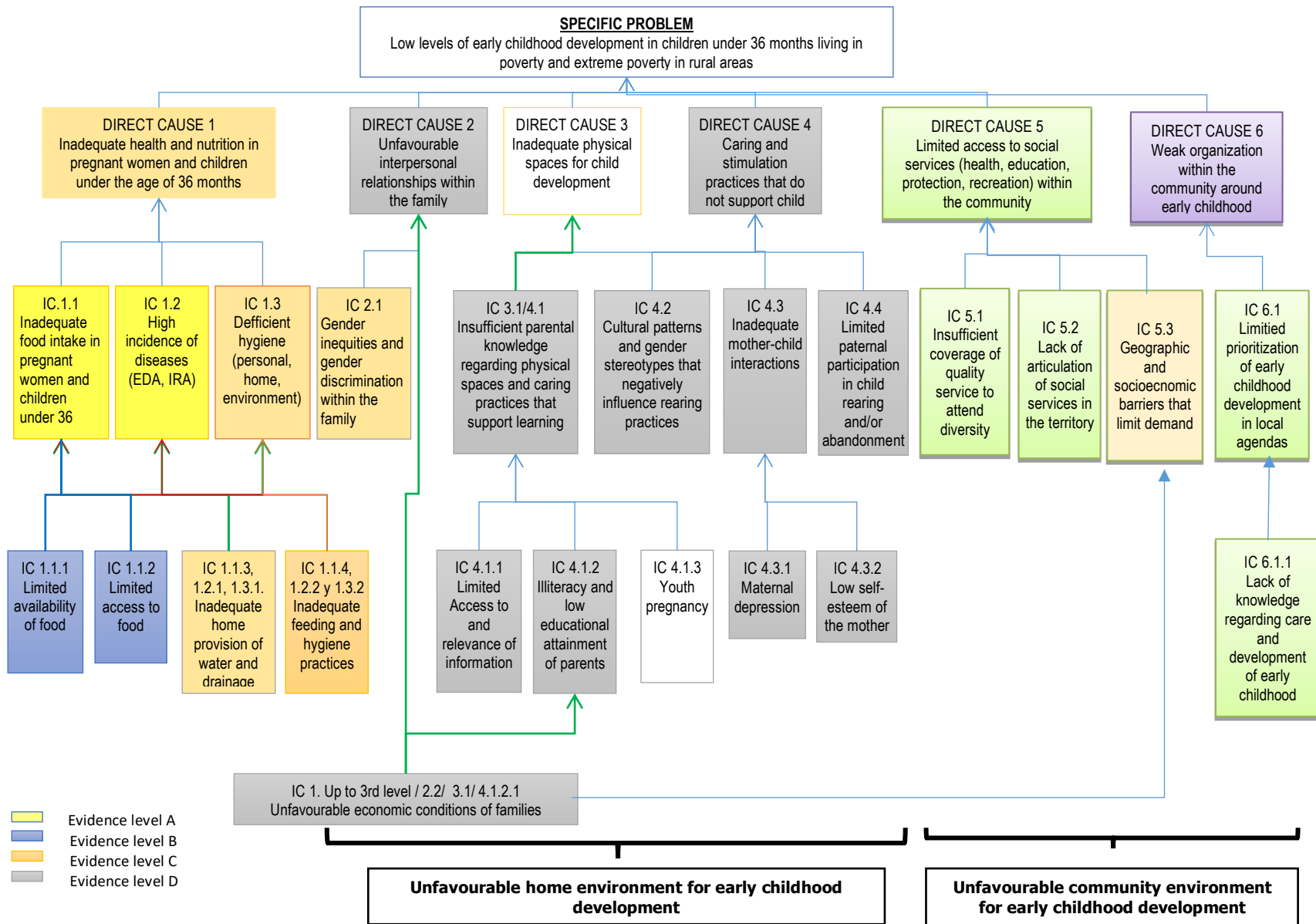
The neglected toddler in everyone's way is the material which becomes the disgruntled agitator, while the happy contented child is the pillar of the state (quotation in Urwin and Sharland, 1992, p.191 in Hendrick, 1997, p.52).

Essentially, then the family functions 'merely as a relay or transmission belt between the child's body' (here also mind) 'and the doctor's technique' (Foucault, 2003, p. 251-2): 'And now the psychoanalysts are saying "It's ours, the body of pleasure is ours"' (Ibid, p. 258). All of this might be seen as a contemporary epistemic shift from developmental psychology to neuroscience, parallel to the shift from moralisation to the medicalization of childhood masturbation in the eighteenth centuries. That is, rather than what Foucault (2003) describes in relation to the child 'at risk' from sexual behaviours- 'a loud fanfare blares out and a sudden noisy chattering starts up that does not stop for more than a century'-, here, the risk is of the child not becoming the productive and socio emotionally 'fit' individual capable of contributing to society's socio-economic prosperity.

In the case of 'Cuna Mas', six direct causes are seen as explaining the problem of low levels of child development. Cause 1 is directly associated with the mother-child coupling, causes 2 to 4 relate to the home environment and causes 5 to 6 relate to the community environment:

1. Inadequate health and nutrition in pregnant women and children under the age of 36 months,
2. Unfavourable interpersonal relationships within the family,
3. Inadequate physical spaces for child development,
4. Caring and stimulation practices that do not support child development.
5. Limited access to social services (health, education, protection, recreation) within the community
6. Weak organization within the community around early childhood.

For each direct cause, a number of indirect causes are identified based on existing literature, which in turn have several indirect causes. Depending on the quality of the evidence (considering the criteria to assess evidence described above), each cause receives a different colour. A description for each cause, an analysis of the evidence that justifies the relation of causality with the policy problem, statistics and quantitative data measuring the magnitude of the cause, and a description if the programme will address the cause and how are included. The causal model is synthesised in the following problem tree:



The use of 'quality' evidence to elaborate the conceptual framework on early childhood can be seen in Foucault terms as a table, standing for a particular kind of scientific discourse. Here, table is understood as 'a *tabula*, that enables thought to operate upon the entities of our world, to put them in order, to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designate their similarities and their differences — the table upon which, since the beginning of time, language has intersected space' (Foucault, 1994, xvii).

Building on the 'Problem tree', a 'Means tree' is elaborated to determine the specific outcome the programme will address, and through which means, which basically consists of translating the problem and its causes into positive terms. That is, the policy problem 'Low levels of early childhood development in children under 36 months living in poverty and extreme poverty in rural areas', when rephrased as a mean, changes to 'Improve early childhood development in children under 36 months living in poverty and extreme poverty in rural areas'. Following the same process, six direct means are identified, each addressing the direct causes described earlier:

1. Adequate health and nutrition in pregnant women and children under the age of 36 months.
2. Favourable interpersonal relationships within the family.
3. Adequate physical spaces for child development.
4. Caring and stimulation practices that support child development.
5. Access to social services (health, education, protection, recreation) within the community.
6. Strong organization within the community around early childhood.

Then, based on an analysis of the effectiveness of alternative solutions according to evidence, and considering 'Cuna Mas' competencies, mean 4 is prioritised, while the other means will be addressed indirectly. Finally, the alternative solutions examined are translated into products; specific services or deliverables that the programme will provide to the targeted population in order to overcome the policy problem defined previously:

- Product 1. Family support in the care and learning of their children under the age of 36 months living in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty in rural areas, which in turn includes three activities (i) home visits, (ii) groups sessions, and (iii) training to home visitors and supervisors, and

- Product 2: Community support to generate actions that promote early childhood development in children under the age of 36 months living in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty in rural areas, which in turn includes four activities: (i) organization of community intervention, (ii) training and technical assistance to the programme's Management Committees and Vigilance Committees, (iii) Communication campaigns, and (iv) Articulation with other services for early childhood development in the field.

In this way, following a systematic and apparently coherent process, an objective and measurable policy problem is identified; from which causals models are built to understand the factors producing it and propose alternative solutions. Within this process, specific kinds of evidence, that which fulfils certain standards of 'quality', acts as a 'regime of truth'. Crucially, in deciding which factors or causes to address and through which means or alternatives, an economic rationale prevails. That is, given scarce resources, the programme must prioritize among competing alternatives. This is what, according to Foucault (2004, p.222), neo-liberals consider economic analysis should consist of:

Now; for the neo-liberals, economic analysis should not consist in the study of these mechanisms, but in the nature and consequences of what they call substitutable choices, that is to say, the study and analysis of the way in which scarce means are allocated to competing ends, that is to say, to alternative ends which cannot be superimposed on each other. In other words, we have scarce means, and we do not have a single end or cumulative ends for which it is possible to use these means, but ends between which we must choose, and the starting point and general frame of reference for economic analysis should be the way in which individuals allocate these scarce means to alternative ends.

As Foucault (Ibid p.223) concludes 'Economics is not therefore the analysis of processes; it is the analysis of an activity. So, it is no longer the analysis of the historical logic of processes; it is the analysis of the internal rationality, the strategic programming of individuals' activity'. Drawing on Foucault again, the analysis in this section has tried 'to bring to light the calculation- which, moreover, may be unreasonable, blind, or inadequate- through which one or more individuals decided to allot given scarce resources to this end rather than another'. In doing so, it has shown how this calculation is grounded on economic principles and supported by specific kinds of evidence. This all seems very rational and neat and efficient. Based on this, we could argue that 'Cuna Mas' is yet another example of *policy as discourse*, reproducing dominant discourses of early childhood development, performance-based management, and cost-effectiveness.

However, different perspectives and increasing tensions started to emerge over time within 'Cuna Mas', as well as with the Ministry of Education, whom claim ownership of education issues. It is in the next sections that I set out to explore in more depth some of these alternative perspectives, as well the tensions between speaking subjects and discourse.

The hundred languages of children

In contrast to the construction of children as passive, delayed and potential human capital underpinning the law that creates 'Cuna Mas', a very different understanding of children as protagonists, competent and valuable in the 'here' and 'now' is articulated in the various documents and artefacts developed by 'Cuna Mas' staff to enact the programme's services in the field. These different ways of thinking about children, beautifully represented in Malaguzzi's metaphor of 'the hundred languages of children', emerged gradually as a number of voices within the programme began to question the 'technical' approach towards the 'problem' of early childhood and the negative image it produced of both children and parents.

Some of these voices came from a group of professionals working in 'Cuna Mas' office in Lima, which had formerly been involved in the 'Project of Education in Rural Areas' within the Ministry of Education, while others came from abroad. For instance, Open Society Foundations advocated the need to educate caregivers in issues of social justice, equality and diversity, training groups of 'Cuna Mas' caregivers on these themes and contributing to the elaboration of 'Cuna Mas' principles of quality pedagogy. However, the event that marked a more systematic process of rethinking 'Cuna Mas' conceptualisations of children and early childhood was my trip to Reggio Emilia, Italy, to participate in the annual Latin American Study Group organised by Reggio Children, an international organisation created to promote the Reggio Emilia approach to education worldwide.

For one week, I visited Reggio's municipal preschools and *nidis*³⁵, listened to the *pedagogistas* and *atelieristas* reflecting about Reggio founding principles, and even met with Carlina Rinaldi, educator and founder of Reggio Children to talk about 'Cuna Mas' and explore opportunities for collaboration between both institutions. Here, the language used to talk about children, education, and learning was very different from what I had

³⁵ Day care centres for children from 3 months until 3 years.

encounter both in the literature on early childhood development and many of my discussions with the IDB. Not once the concept of early childhood development was mentioned, or how profitable investment in early childhood was for society. Nor were there concerns among teachers about measuring changes in specific indicators of child development. Instead, conferences by the *pedagogistas* and *atelieristas* of Reggio Emilia municipal preschools and *nidis* navigated around issues of community, participation, democracy, relationships, and environment. This was a different policy network, with different values, beliefs and practices about children, childhood and education.

In effect, the political and cultural dimension of education is at the centre of Reggio Emilia's educational system. As Malaguzzi, elementary schoolteacher and founder of Reggio Emilia municipal preschools and *nidis* recalls in an interview with Lella Gandini, Reggio schools had its origins in the aftermath of World War II:

Word had it that at Villa Cella, the people had gotten together to put up a school for the young children; they had pulled out the bricks from the bombed-out houses and had used them to build the walls of the school. Only a few days had passed since the Liberation and everything was still violently topsy-turvy. I asked my comrades for confirmation. No one was sure (..) That is why I got on my bicycle and rode out to Villa Cella. I got confirmation from a farmer just outside the village; he pointed out the place, a long way ahead. There were piles of sand and bricks, a wheelbarrow full of hammers, shovels and hoes. Behind the curtain made of rugs to shield them from the sun, two women were hammering the old mortar off the bricks. The news was true, and the truth was there, for all to see in this sunny spring day, in the uneven but stubborn hammering of these two women. One of them looked up at me and waited; I was a stranger, someone from the city, maybe they could tell from the part in my hair or my low-cut brown shoes. "We're not crazy. If you really want to see, come on Saturday or Sunday, when we're all here. Al fom da boun l'asilo (we're really going to make this school!)"

I went home. My feelings of wonder, and the sense of extraordinary were stronger than my happiness. I was an elementary school teacher. I had been teaching for 5 years, and had done 3 years of university. Maybe it was my profession that hampered me. All the little models were laughingly overturned: that building a school would ever occur to people, women, farm laborers, factory workers, farmers, was in itself traumatic. But that these same people, without a penny to their names, with no technical offices, building permits, site directors, inspectors from the Ministry of Education or the Party, could actually build a school with their own strength, brick by brick, was the second paradox.

Be it trauma or paradox, it was, nevertheless, true, and I liked it. I was excited by the way it all overturned logic and prejudices, the old rule governing pedagogy, culture, how it forced everything back to the beginning. It opened up completely new horizons of thought (...) All we needed to do was to follow the same path (quoted in Edwards et al 2012, p.27-28).

These ideals and principles are still in play today in Reggio's preschools and *nidas*, and made intentionally visible in the school's walls, in their documentation, and numerous publications and public encounters. Reggio's identity and goals are articulated around the idea that 'education is everyone's right, of boys and girls and therefore, is a responsibility of the community' (Reggio Children 2011, p.7). Education is here understood as 'an opportunity for the individual and the collectives to grow and emancipate, a resource for understanding and coexistence, a place of encounter where liberty, democracy, solidarity and peace can be promoted' (Ibid). Bruner's notion of 'no place is any place', and the idea of 'not a school, but a community'; or of the school as a political and social space where children's competencies are made visible ground Reggio's philosophy to education. Values such as co-responsibility, trust and sense of belonging are shared among teachers, parents and students. Unlike most educational proposals where architecture plays an instrumental role, at Reggio's schools, architecture and pedagogy are intertwined and dialogue to make possible a school conceived of as an experience of relationships.

Crucial to the endurance of Reggio's high-quality educational experience is the participation of the entire community, not only parents. Organised in 'Councils of Infancy', parents, teachers, and other members of the local community encounter to advise the Municipality on a wide range of issues. At the heart of these meetings are questions such as 'what kind of school do we want' and 'what kind of world do we want our children to live in'. That is to say, an open rather than close school is envisaged, which recognizes political contestation and values rather than outcomes and technical solutions. Accordingly, a serious and genuine interest in welcoming and enhancing diversity informs Reggio's decisions regarding school organization, funding and teachers' professional learning.

Among the plurality of cultural, *ideological*, political and religious conceptions, education lives from *listening*, dialogue and participation; it is bounded to respect, and to value the different identities, competencies, and knowledges that each individual possess, and, because of that, it is constituted as secular, open to comparison and cooperation (Reggio Children 2011, p.7).

Undergirding these values, beliefs and principles is Loris Malaguzzi's notion of 'the hundred languages of children', a metaphor of the competence and strength of children:

No way. The Hundred is There.

The child
is made of one hundred.
The child has
a hundred languages
a hundred hands
a hundred thoughts
a hundred ways of thinking
of playing, of speaking.
A hundred always a hundred
ways of listening
of marvelling, of loving
a hundred joys
for singing and understanding
a hundred worlds
to discover
a hundred worlds
to invent
a hundred worlds to dream.
The child has
A hundred languages
(and a hundred hundred hundred more)
but they steal ninety-nine
The school and the culture
separate the head from the body.
They tell the child:
to think without hands
to do without head
to listen and not to speak
to understand without joy
to love and to marvel
Only in Easter and Christmas
They tell the child:
to discover the world already there
and of the hundred
they steal ninety-nine
They tell the child:
That work and play
Reality and phantasy
Science and imagination
Sky and earth
Reason and dream
Are things
That do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child
That the hundred is not there.

The child says:
No way. The hundred is there.

Loris Malaguzzi (Edwards et. al. 2012)

I returned from Reggio Emilia inspired and motivated to work to create something as powerful and meaningful in my own country. Together with 'Cuna Mas' staff and the support of 'La Casa Amarilla', a Reggio inspired educational organization with more than five preschools, (where my daughters attended), we began to reflect on our own image of children and education and how this would guide our work with families and children. Several workshops with our staff and educators from 'La Casa Amarilla' were held where we explored our understandings of children and childhood and started articulating an image of the child and a set of guiding principles. This was a very intensive and emotional process. We were questioning and confronting many engrained practices and beliefs about children which constituted them as blank slates and passive recipients with no voice and agency. In a way this also implied questioning how we had been brought up and/or how we were raising our own children. We were able to understand more about ourselves and to reflect about the kind of society we wanted to help create and the place of children in it. By the end of the first day, we were able to construct what we considered a positive image of children as:

Competent, because they build their own learning and are proactive.

Citizens, because they can express themselves and dialogue with their culture, with nature and their reality.

Resilient, because they can confront adversities.

Happy, because they are valued.

(Guía de Cuidado Diurno, 2014, p. 13, own translation)

Aligned with this image of children, we constructed an image of early childhood education and care services as spaces:

Promoters of well-being and respect, because they take care of children's comprehensive health and value relationships.

Of learning and permanent research, that materialize in the permanent documentation.

Organised, based on the cooperative and supportive teamwork.

Of an intercultural democratic culture, that helps to build an image of the local context and culture to which they belong.

Integrated and that dialogue with their communities and natural environment.

With safe, beautiful, warm and challenging environments that create diverse experiences and interactions.

Referent of quality in their communities.

(Guía de Cuidado Diurno, 2014, p. 14)

This positive image of children and of early childhood education and care, in turn, produced a different kind of parent subject and of communities as:

Promoters of the quality of life for everyone, because they design and enact strategies that look after the common good and live in harmony with their environment.

Organised, because they know how to co-manage their institutions and connect the different social actors,

Democratic and participative, because they care for the collective well-being and mobilize to solve their problems and make decisions peacefully,

Committed to early childhood, because they recognize and value children as people and subjects of rights.

In order to guarantee coherence between 'Cuna Mas' image of the child, children's centres, the community and practice, as well as to promote quality services, the programme formulated a set of eight 'Principles for the Comprehensive Attention of Children'. These principles would ground 'Cuna Mas' work in the field and help enact these images of children, centres and communities consistently throughout the national territory:

Principle 1: The programme promotes healthy, competent and happy children:

We believe that children are born competent, are active constructors of their own learning, and must live in a state of wellbeing, security and happiness. In 'Cuna Mas' we contribute with children's adequate health and nutrition through the promotion of healthy practices and environments, monitoring their growth and development and providing them healthy and pertinent food. Similarly, we promote experiences of dialogue with the environment that surrounds them, where they can explore with all their being, dig deeper in that which they are interested to understand and build trusting relationships with other children and adults.

Principle 2: Caring moments as a source of affection and learning:

We understand caring routines as rich opportunities for learning for children and their families. Through caring routines, affective relationships are strengthened, healthy family practices are valued and enhanced, and children construct a positive image of themselves.

Principle 3: An environment that promotes wellbeing:

We see the physical environment as a language that communicates a set of values to whom inhabit it, and that shape the interactions within it. For our programme, the environment responds to competent children that explore with all their bodies and are part of a culture. That is why our environments are generative of multiple experiences and characterised for being challenging, safe, beautiful, clean and culturally relevant. Likewise, the environment invites children and adults to interact, feeling part of it and responsible for taking care of it.

Principle 4: A close relationship with families, main educators of children.

Families are the main educators of their children and the basis in the process of their growth and development. Because of this, our programme provides quality services in co-responsibility with families. We support and guide them in their role, providing them with the tools and opportunities to develop and strengthen their caring practices and emotional bond with their children. The adults that work in our programme establish trusting relationships with families, they know and value their reality, rearing practices, styles of interaction and foster their commitment with their children's growth and development.

Principle 5: A teacher that listens and responds respecting the individuality of every child.

The learning experience begins with an adult that listens with interest, respect and all his senses each child. It is an attentive listening that seeks to connect with the child's emotions and discoveries. Listening to understand and then, give back a gesture, question or challenge that helps them enrich their play, interact with others, self-regulate and learn about his environment. An adult that responds, attends, intervenes according to the need, temperament and individuality of each child.

6: An adult that observes, documents and plans.

The adults observe attentively, record children's actions and words and then analyse these to design significant learning experiences. Adults share with families these

records were children's learning and adults' reflections about how children learning are made visible.

Principle 7: A community that participates to build a democratic culture.

'Cuna Mas' offers its services in co-management with the communities organised in Management committees. For this, the programme strengthens the capabilities of community members and provides permanent technical assistance. In addition, the community organised in Vigilance committees is responsible of supervising the quality of 'Cuna Mas's' services, guaranteeing financial transparency. 'Cuna Mas's' centres promote children's interest in their environment and community through research projects. In this way, the local and cultural context enters the centre to be studied and recreated by children. Through this constant relationship, children construct their image of the world and citizenship that they exercise and will exercise.

Principle 8: A programme that values and includes diversity and promotes the inclusion of all.

Our centres are places where we value and recognize the diversity of our homes, community and country. For this reason, we integrate in our centres local diversity and seek that every child feels recognised and competent, irrespective of their background. We relate with every child and family with respect and dignity.

(Lineamientos del Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias del Programa Nacional Cuna Más, p.2-3, own translation).

These were very ambitious principles, especially considering the programmes' small budget and the high levels of poverty of the communities addressed. However, two principles were crucial in mobilizing families, local authorities and 'Cuna Mas' staff: to 'promote healthy, competent and happy children', and 'a community that participates to build a democratic culture'. The statement that children were competent and powerful was novel to many deprived families used to being told that their children were malnourished and/or delayed. Further, recognizing that children were competent may had also helped reconceptualise the images parents had of themselves as 'bad' parents. Thus, a different kind of parent subject is also produced here, a 'good' parent, competent and knowledgeable of what's best for their own child. Similarly, that communities were asked to give consent for the implementation of the programme and invited to participate in the co-management and vigilance of the programmes' services, positioned them as

competent and valuable. This was not common practice in the state and thus helped building trust between the programme and local communities. As explained in the 'Lineamientos del Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias del Programa Nacional Cuna Más', the objective of the co-management model was 'to strengthen the capacities of community members represented by the Management Committees and the Councils of Vigilance' (p.8, own translation).

These alternative understandings of children and childhood can be situated within an emergent literature which seeks to challenge the dominant language for speaking about early childhood and education (Walkerdine, 1984; Canella, 1997; Dahlberg et al., 2007; Rinaldi, 2006; Youdell, 2006a), itself part of a larger movement among scholars, activists and practitioners to 'trouble and challenge accepted knowledge' (Canella and Viruru, 2004) and generate new possibilities and ways of being. Common to this literature has been the problematisation of the dominant discourses of childhood development and education and of how these are inscribed in different paradigms and affected by prevailing discourses on race, gender, class, among others.

For instance, in contrast to the stable, coherent model of the child implied in the modernist understandings of childhood, scholars influenced by post-structuralist ideas understand the 'child as a "subjectivity" in a constant process of re-construction', evading any definite explanation. Thus, rather than seeking a new consensus that 'This (not that) is who the child is', post-structuralists say 'this is how the child can be', leaving the possibilities open (Mac Naughton et al., 2010, p. 56). From a socio constructionist perspective, researchers and practitioners choose to understand the child as competent from birth, as co-creator of knowledge and as 'having surprisingly and extraordinary strengths and capabilities' (Malaguzzi, 1993, p. 73); which contrasts with the negative image of the child as poor, deficient and fragile, over and against striving, competitive and demanding as made up of talents in need of development.

Mayall (1996) argues that these new understandings of childhood have been emerging as a result of a number of interrelated developments -social constructionist and postmodernist perspectives within philosophy, sociology and psychology; the problematizing of developmental psychology, and the increasing influence of the comparative movement within psychology' (quoted in Dahlberg et al., 2005, p. 48). In particular, work in sociology and social psychology on the social construction of subjectivity; namely, that while social structures, relations and prevailing discourses prescribe and constrain the subject positions available, at the same time in every day

conversations people constantly reconstruct and negotiate these positions (Henriques, 1984).

Thus, we can see how a very different construction of children, families and communities was also embedded in 'Cuna Mas' policy documents, which coexisted with a more instrumental and rational one. This alternative narrative about children was stronger in the day care service, which was largely inspired by the Reggio Emilia experience, and which given its comprehensive nature (health, nutrition, education and safety), saw the child in a broader and more holistic way. Also, the technical assistance of OSF in designing the day care service provided a different perspective for thinking about children, which emphasised diversity, context and social justice. Importantly, this service already existed from the previous 'Wawa Wasi' programme, and therefore there was no need to justify its creation. Here, no impact evaluation on child outcomes was considered, nor were there emphasis on quantitative evidence to justify its provision. In contrast, the new family support service, was subject to more expectations and pressures from within the government (MEF, MIDIS) and the international cooperation, to be designed following a specific methodology and using scientific evidence. However, as will be explored in the next section, alternative discourses and voices also emerged within the new service which advocated for a more contextualised and comprehensive approach.

The context of practice

In the previous section I examined two policies initiated and written during Humala's government to put forward the agenda on early childhood development, 'Primera Infancia Primero' and the national programme 'Cuna Mas', in order to explore the 'what' of early childhood policy in Peru and the ways in which the possibilities for action are constructed within discourses as sets of conditions which enable and constrain 'the socially productive "imagination"' (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 34 quoted in Ball et al., 2011, p.611). In this section, I want to focus on the 'Cuna Mas' Family Support Service (FFS) in order to explore the 'how' and 'who' of policy and the ways in which policy practitioners 'do' policies. I draw on Braun et. al.'s (2011a) work on policy enactments in schools to make sense of early childhood policies in process. On the one hand, this is to examine the ways in which 'Cuna Mas' staff 'come to understand new policy ideas through the lens of their values and pre-existing knowledge and practices, often interpreting, adapting, or transforming policy messages as they put them in place' (Coburn, 2005, p. 477 quoted in Braun et.al, 2011b, p.581). In doing so, I explore the tensions and

contradictions among and within different actors -international 'influencers', national policy makers and practitioners- and discourse. On the other hand, it is to emphasise the role of context in shaping policy processes, that is, how it forms, frames and limits interpretative and practical responses to policy (Braun, 2011b, p.581).

In contrast to most national policies which serve as broad framework, and where therefore enactment tends to be heterogeneous across the field, with some institutions such as schools selectively choosing what to focus on, 'Cuna Mas' is a centrally planned programme that operates nationally through regional offices, with very specific guidelines on how services must be delivered and local teams closely supervising provision on the ground to guarantee 'fidelity'. In particular, the FSS includes a structured curriculum that instructs home visitors on how to deliver the content, as well as standardised protocols and guidelines for local teams on how to train and supervise home visitors. Therefore, one would expect to observe strong similarities between different regions in both structural aspects such as frequency and content of the visits, and process elements like how the content is delivered and the nature on interactions between home visitors and families; and that these closely resemble the national curriculum and guidelines.

However, as I will illustrate below, there are some important differences in how the programme is enacted in practice and received by communities and local authorities. On one hand, these are mediated by a variety of contextual factors such as local support, migration and material aspects like infrastructure and staffing, which limit, distort or facilitate responses to policy (Braun et al, 2011b). On the other hand, they are the result of processes of interpretation and meaning making involved in policy enactments. By looking at the tensions between local values and beliefs and the dominant discourses 'imported' through international networks, and the emerging forms of resistance, I identify 'Cuna Mas' staff as both policy subjects and policy actors of the policy process. This is in line with Ball's understanding of 'policy as process, as diversely and repeatedly contested and/or subject to "interpretation" as it is enacted (rather than implemented) in original and creative ways within institutions and classrooms' (Braun et al 2011a, p.586).

Policy enactment involves creative processes of interpretation and translation, that is, the recontextualisation –through reading, writing and talking- of the abstractions of policy ideas into contextualised practices.

The analysis draws on two kinds of data: i) programme documents, including the home visiting curriculum, Aide Memoires, terms of reference and official reports written by 'Cuna Mas's' staff on the pilot implementation of the FSS in Ayacucho and Cajamarca

and by the IDB on the quality of the home visits at national level; and, ii) interviews with the FSS manager, the former coordinator of the FSS in Ayacucho, and other staff from 'Cuna Mas', gathered in a case study of the programme by Ponciano del Pino, as well as my own direct experience as Director.

Mediation and translation of policy

'Cuna Mas' s' FFS was conceptualised as a parenting intervention based on the research evidence supporting this model of intervention. However, a parenting intervention can take many forms, from providing guidance and resources to parents by professional staff in children's centres to para-professional home visits focused on nutrition and/or cognitive stimulation. The decision to use Sally Grantham-McGregor's psychosocial intervention was largely based on the government's mandate to design social programmes following a performance-based budgeting approach, along with IDB's influence and power as funder and technical assistant of the programme. Grantham-McGregor's original psychosocial intervention (1986) involved weekly home visits by trained community health workers who encouraged and instructed mothers on how to play and interact with their children following a structured curriculum. The specific goals of the intervention were to: (i) improve the skills of the mother to educate his or her child; (ii) improve the child's cognitive skills and abilities to manage his or her life; (iii) increase mother's self-esteem; (iv) increase the child's self-esteem and develop a positive image of him or herself; and (v) create a joyful experience between mother and child (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2010). Here, two strong assumptions were made: that mothers lacked the skills to educate their children, and that mothers and children had low self-esteem.

Informed by developmental psychology, Grantham-McGregor's curriculum defines child development into three distinctive levels: level 1 encompassing the development of the baby from 6 to 12 months; level II on the development of the child from 12 to 24 months; and, level III considering the development of the child from 2 to 4 years. Within each level, shorter periods are identified with specific milestones of what the child is capable and expected to be able to do, such as seating without help between 6 and 9 months or clapping between 9 and 12 months. That is, the 'normal' child is seen as progressing through pre-determined stages of development within specific time frames. Considering these milestones, developmentally appropriate activities with increasing complexity are scheduled for each week, including a combination of games, books to read, puzzles, literacy, and drawing, which the home visitor must perform with the mother or caregiver and the child for one hour.

In order to instruct home visitors on how to perform the activities and relate to the mother and child, the curriculum includes specific guidelines. According to these, home visitors initially are expected to model and lead the activities with the child, while the mother passively observes. Eventually, however, the mother is expected to lead the activities under the supervision of the home visitor, who will then provide feedback. Over time, the 'trained' mother should reproduce these activities during the rest of the week with the child, without the presence and guidance of the home visitor. In this way, the intervention seeks to produce durable changes in the mother's parenting practices with the overarching goal of enhancing the development of his or her child. As Grantham-McGregor puts it, 'the success of the project in the long term depends on the child's mother' (Institute of Fiscal Studies 2010, p.32). In that sense, the programme seeks to change not only mother's parenting practices, but who they are; their beliefs, values and expectations about children and childhood. The production of the 'good mother' is premised on the belief that if mothers have high expectations of their children and stimulate them accordingly, children will successfully develop.

Experimental evidence that demonstrates the short-term impacts of the project in terms of improving children's cognitive development (Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007), as well as longitudinal studies documenting the long-term impacts on adult education and earnings after 20 years (Gertler et al., 2014), has served to position this particular model of parental intervention, with several adaptations implemented in countries such as Bangladesh, Jamaica, Colombia and Peru. As stressed in the Terms of Reference for the 'Implementation and adaptation of the curriculum of Cuna Mas home visiting program' (PE-T1254):

This intervention has been motivated by encouraging evidence from Jamaica, Colombia and Ecuador that suggest that programs that build parenting skills through regular home visits can be effective in improving early childhood development outcomes through higher-quality, more stimulating interactions between children and their caregivers.

Therefore, both the IDB and Grantham-McGregor were particularly interested in supporting the design and implementation of 'Cuna Mas' considering that for the first time in the world, this psychosocial stimulation intervention would be implemented by a government on scale. Within 'Cuna Mas', however, there was much less enthusiasm about adopting a foreign curriculum, especially amongst the staff in charge of designing and implementing the home visiting service in the field. In particular, the structured

curriculum with predefined learning activities (such as puzzles, matching cards, classification, lotteries with images, and reading books) that have to be performed sequentially each weekly visit and the directive instructional approach favouring early stimulation as opposed to exploration and free play were contested by 'Cuna Mas' staff. Overtime, this became a critical point of dispute between the international consultants and the local team, whom advocated for a broader and more flexible curriculum which included a pool of activities on which the home visitor could draw for each visit based on her assessment of where the child was, as well as messages on caring, feeding and health practices. Grantham-McGregor justified these aspects of her intervention in these terms:

Our approach is more structured than most programs run in developed countries because it is designed for much poorer, less educated mothers and less educated/trained home visitors than usually found in developed countries. But it has been successful in desperately poor situations (Notes on adapting the Jamaican curriculum, 2012).

The narrower understanding of child development in terms of cognitive and socio-emotional development; and the implicit image of the child as delayed and of parenting as deficient embedded in the psycho-social approach clashed with the image of a competent and strong child, and of parents as knowledgeable and caring, that the programme aimed to enhance. Furthermore, many of 'Cuna Mas' staff in charge of the FSS had previously worked in the rural education department within the Ministry of Education, and thus were particular sensitive to the need to design curriculum and materials pertinent and respectful of local and cultural knowledges, beliefs and practices, and that responded to the specific needs of the families and children addressed. So context is important in two senses here, at least, the context work in relation to Peru (both a material and cultural and ideological one) and context work in relation to the objects of policy – poor and rural families.

Grantham-McGregor's psycho-social intervention was also questioned by the Ministry of Education. At that point, the Ministry was very much under the influence of Emmi Pikler's theories on infant education, which argued that children should not be stimulated or 'pushed' to develop, instead, adults should await their development patiently, only creating the conditions for children's naturally paced motor development through free movement and uninterrupted play. According to this approach, babies are viewed as active participants rather than passive recipients of care, therefore, carers should take a

cooperative approach in all their interactions with babies such as talking to babies every step of the way, so they know what is about to happen and are given the option to help.

Initially, then, the programme's staff opposed to adopting Grantham-McGregor's in its original version. Thus, I had to have several discussions with my team in order to convince them of the benefits of having Grantham-McGregor and the IDB supporting the design and implementation of our programme. After all, there were high expectations within the MIDIS, the MEF and the presidential couple regarding 'Cuna Mas'. Also, I had to convince Grantham-McGregor and the IDB to allow some changes in the original curriculum in order to adapt it to the local context. After several attempts to reconcile these tensions, our team agreed to use Grantham-McGregor's curriculum only if significant changes were made. On Grantham-McGregor's side, she gave permission for the use and adaptation of her curriculum to the Peruvian context provided that she would supervise this process. The political work of the programme's leadership is decisive here for the enactment of policy. To some extent, then, the programme's leadership 'act as agents of policy, policy enforcers, or as "suitably fitted leaders"' (Buckles, 2010; Wright, 2001 quoted in Ball et al., 2011, p.613).

In order to adapt Grantham-McGregor's psycho-social intervention to the local context, both Grantham-McGregor and Martha Rubio, a Colombian economist working at the Institute of Fiscal Studies and who worked with Grantham-McGregor on the Colombian experience, were hired by the IDB. According to the terms of reference of the consultancy, the objective was to:

Advice the 'Cuna Mas' team in aspects related to the program implementation and adaptation of the curriculum to the Peruvian context as well as in the development of training guidelines for the home visitors and their supervisors. The curriculum to be adapted by 'Cuna Mas' was originally developed by Sally Grantham-McGregor for a well-known home-visiting intervention implemented in Jamaica in the 80s and has been rigorously evaluated since then. It has also been adapted and implemented in other countries such as Bangladesh and Kenya, and more recently in Colombia. 'Cuna Mas' is interested in adapting the Spanish version of the curriculum to the context of Peru (IDB, 2012).

A Peruvian expert on child development was also hired to work closely with the international consultants and 'Cuna Mas's' staff in the recontextualisation of the curriculum. From the start, there was consensus over specific features of the original design, including the one-hour weekly home visits, training members of the community as home visitors instead of professionals, focusing on parenting practices, using a play-

based curriculum and closely supervising deployment on the ground. However, increasing tensions began to emerge around the content of the curriculum, that is, what the home visitor would perform during the visit, and on how the service would be provided on the ground, either directly by the programme or through decentralised community management committees. One of the main concerns of 'Cuna Mas's' staff was that the curriculum reflected families and communities' culture and practices. With that aim, two versions of the curriculum, one for the Andean population and one for the Jungle were written and illustrated. Artefacts such as toys, games, and books, as well as the language used in each curriculum, were specifically designed to reflect these different contexts. Experience from previous programmes in rural areas by the Ministry of Education informed the contextualisation of the curriculum, and illustrations used in their intercultural materials (elaborated by an Ayacucho artist) were used in 'Cuna Mas' curriculum with permission from the Ministry. In the same line, 'Cuna Mas's' staff advocated for expanding the content of the curriculum, originally focused on play-based activities, to address issues related to caring and feeding practices. Although Grantham-McGregor was open to broaden the themes covered in the curriculum to include other aspects, she was sceptical about it:

There is no problem in adding health and nutritional messages if you want to, but I had thought that you were going to focus on child development. Keeping a note of immunisations and reminding mothers when they are due would be easy to add and we have done that in the past. Adding even more messages on caring etc is your decision and obviously could be incorporated but the more added the less attention paid to each one. And it is already difficult to improve children's development at scale. So, there is a fine balance between covering everything and effectiveness (Notes on adapting the Jamaican curriculum, 2012).

These illustrate the increasing tensions between an evidence-based discourse and a more holistic understanding of childhood. Once again, 'Cuna Mas's' staff position prevailed (partially), and a whole new section on 'Family Life' was included in the curriculum which provided activities and messages for the family about the importance of caring routines and family time. Accordingly, the FSS curriculum was structured around three key moments: i) Family life, ii) Learning through play, and, iii) Tell me a story. 'Family life' was fully developed by the local consultant and 'Cuna Mas's' staff since Grantham-McGregor's curriculum did not include such a section. However, here emphasis was placed on how to use daily routines such as changing diapers, bathing, feeding and putting the baby to sleep, as well as family gatherings and activities such as going to the market, as opportunities to promote children's cognitive and emotional development. Emphasis was placed on communication, that is, caregiver's

verbalisations during the different caring practices in order to promote the child's vocabulary and sense of self.

Thus, these daily routines, important on its own right, were to some extent instrumentalised for the purpose of improving child outcomes. This is interpretation understood as an agentic process limited by discourse.

Being the daily routines and family time everyday spaces, it is important that we take advantage of these moments to develop the babies/child cognitive and socio-emotional development. How to achieve it? Introducing language games to develop language, thinking and the self-image of the child from early on while strengthening the relationship of the child with her other and family ('Currículo del Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias', 2012).

Figure 4: Mother and child



Source: 'Currículo del Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias, 2012'

Figure 5: Family sharing stories



Source: 'Currículo del Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias, 2012'

With regard to service provision on the ground, being a new service, the implementation of the 'Cuna Mas's' FSS entailed a series of previous actions, such as hiring and training local staff, selecting and training home visitors, registering targeted children and families, identifying, restoring and equipping community centres for the group sessions, among others. In previous experiences with Grantham-McGregor's curriculum, control over implementation on the ground had been in hands of Grantham-McGregor and her local team, directly training and supervising home visitors. No previous work with local or community authorities had been made (or were considered necessary) in order to inform about the initiative and ask permission to intervene. Emphasis was placed on the curriculum and training the home visitors. Thus, both IDB and international consultants pushed for a centralised model where 'Cuna Mas' central and regional teams maintained direct control over execution on the ground, and that this focused on specific tasks oriented to guarantee quality in the delivery of the curriculum. The overall aim being to secure 'fidelity' in the implementation of the programme at national level. Also, there was no causal evidence that demonstrated that community involvement was more effective for achieving outcomes. In other words, building trust with the local communities and securing the sustainability of the programme in the future were not considered relevant under the evidence-based 'regime of truth' undergirding IDB's rationale, which is another sign of their narrower approach to child development and policy enactments.

In contrast, the staff of 'Cuna Mas', drawing on 'Wawa Wasi's' previous experience and other organisations work in rural areas, were convinced of the need to inform and engage local authorities and the community in the provision of the programme's services. To that end, the programme proposed the creation of Community Management Committees and Vigilance Councils integrated by members of the community, whom would be responsible for managing 'Cuna Mas' resources locally and organising the service's provision, as well as supervising the quality and finances of the service:

Knowing the experiences... communities work, they are organised, community life is respected. In that, we had no doubt it was going to work (Interview with Myriam Espinoza', quoted in del Pino, 2018, p, 7).

In the rural areas, if you do not have the support of the community, it is difficult to do anything. The programme doesn't have the capacity to have 'eyes' in the communities. The idea of the Vigilance Committees is that they assess the impact the programme is having upon children and supervise the use of resources by the Management Committees (interview to Andrea Portugal, June 2018, quoted in del Pino, 2018, p.6).

Again, the team in charge of the implementation of the FSS managed to persuade the MEF and the MIDIS that the community management model was the most pertinent and convenient way to introduce 'Cuna Mas' in the communities. Thus, the IDB accepted the programme's decision despite their initial scepticism. This, and the recontextualisation of the curriculum described above suggests a form of resistance by the local team to a decontextualised and narrow understanding of childhood and the complexity of policy work and policy enactments. It is an interpretation of a 'global' policy-home visiting programmes-which rejects simple adaptations of international policy 'solutions' and asks for 'contextualised policy responses'. In that sense, 'Cuna Mas's' FSS enactment offers a complementary perspective for understanding policy enactments.

Taking context seriously

Before expanding the 'Cuna Mas's' FSS at national level, a pilot was implemented in the Andean regions of Ayacucho and Cajamarca in order to 'test' the new service in the field. These involved validating different instruments and artefacts such as the curriculum, guidelines and fact sheets to collect information, but also organisational aspects such as the number of families per home visitor, the number of home visitors per supervisor, the feasibility of having one hour visit per week, the responses of local authorities and community members, among other things. After all, although there was international evidence supporting many elements of the FFS design, this had been produced within different contexts (Jamaica, Colombia, and Bangladesh) and thus, it was still uncertain how it would operate in the extremely diverse Peruvian context.

The evidence tells you that at least you need a local community member as home visitor that identifies with the family, instead of a professional, and that on average, its 10 families per home visitor (...) But the evidence doesn't tell you how many home visitors per supervisor. Neither how to organize the Management Committee. The pilot was for this (Interview with Sandra Manrique, quoted in del Pino, 2018).

The pilot was organised in two phases: the first one, starting in May 2012 in eleven provinces in Ayacucho, and the second one in July, in the province of Celendín, Cajamarca. Initially, the goal was to reach 14,164 children under 24 months of age by the end of the year based on official data on the number of children in the targeted districts. These two regions were chosen for the pilot for several reasons. Ayacucho is one of the regions with the highest rates of poverty (62% at that time) and chronic malnutrition (41.4% at that time) in the country. As a result, there has been different initiatives aimed at changing these indicators, mostly led by NGOs, creating a 'fertile'

ground for 'Cuna Mas' presence. Also, 'Wawa Wasi' had a small rural experience in Ayacucho, called 'Qatari Wawa', on which the FSS could build on. In the case of Celendin, this was an area new to the programme and with not much presence of local NGOs. Therefore, the decision to include it in the pilot had more to do with political reasons.

The pilot implementation faced several obstacles from the start which forced the team to adjust the initial goals and schedules. To start with, the number of children found during the field visits, especially in most dispersed areas, was significantly lower than the official data. Furthermore, registered children migrated with their families to other areas, not targeted by the programme, further reducing the number of children served by the programme. Therefore, the original goal of 14,164 children had to be adjusted to 8,315 children. This, in turn, had severe implications in terms of the costs of provision per child, as fewer children were being served by the same number of professionals (the minimum number of families to provide the service per Management Committee was 50). Broad geographical dispersion and limited access to some communities aggravated this situation and increased the workload of the local staff to the point that in some cases, the programme could not operate. Difficulties related to electing the Community Management Committees also delayed operations. For example, debts in the banking system by some of the community members elected disqualified them as representatives of the Committee and therefore new elections had to take place.

Another important constraint was the availability of community centres for the group sessions with families and children, which had to be borrowed from the community and equipped by the programme. The FSS Unit at central level had planned to implement 88 community centres, however, given the lack of local specialised staff, the existence of other community centres managed by the Local Authorities and the Ministry of Health, the inadequate conditions of some of the community centres offered, and limited supplied of local providers to equip the centres, the initial goal was lowered to 55. Partially because of these challenges to find community centres, the group sessions, originally planned every other week were reduced to one per month.

However, perhaps the biggest challenge was the hiring and retention of the local teams responsible for the coordination of all the activities required for delivering the programme's services on the ground. This included a Local Coordinator for each region, four administrative positions and 107 professionals (42 'Acompañantes Comunitarios' to work with the Management Committees and 65 'Acompañantes técnicos' to train and

supervise the home visitors). The profile required by the programme considered professionals from Sociology, Anthropology and Social Service in the case of the 'Acompañantes Comunitarios', and educators and psychologists in the case of the 'Acompañantes técnicos'. In addition, they had to have a least 5 years of experience. During the first hiring process, 9 out of 42 positions for 'Acompañantes Comunitarios' and 21 out of 42 for 'Acompañantes técnicos' were not filled. Therefore, in the next hiring round, the programme broadens the profile for both jobs to include professionals from related fields, as well as reducing the years of experience required to three.

To start with, we said that everyone are educators. Then, we opened to other professionals, then we had to lower it to 3 years, we didn't find people in the area that spoke the local language, then the programme had even to adjust the basics, including a technical degree (Dora Ruiz, former Manager of the FFS unit, quoted in del Pino, 2018, own translation).

Despite this, and dissemination in local radios and newspapers, only 76 out of the 107 positions offered in three hiring process were filled. Positions in Southern Ayacucho, an area characterised by geographical dispersion, difficult access and high transport costs, and the VRAE region, a 'red' zone (because of the presence of 'Sendero Luminoso'³⁶ militants) were not filled. In the case of Cajamarca, the position of local coordinator was not filled initially which delayed the implementation of the pilot in that region. The lack of enough staff implied an overload of work for the existing staff, thus affecting the quality of the trainings and supervision of the Management Committees and home visitors.

External factors also turned out to be critical in the programme's implementation. Historical conflicts between communities as well as socio-environmental conflicts related to the mining industry hindered the establishment of the programme and the creation of the Committees. This was significant in Cajamarca, where the reactivation of the long-standing conflict between the community and the Mining project 'Conga' made it impossible to implement the pilot. On the other hand, the presence and positioning of other private and public organisations working in the area, initially considered a positive factor, turned out to be a barrier in a few cases, as they showed some resistance against the programme's presence. For example, in the district of Vinchos, the pilot had to be postponed until further notice given difficulties to articulate and coexist with the existing Centres of Communitarian Vigilance, an initiative led by the Ministry of Health to monitor

³⁶ 'Sendero Luminoso', also known as the Shining Path and self-denominated as the Communist Party of Peru, was a political organisation which pursue social change through violence embarking on a 'people's war' against the state.

children's health status and reduce child malnutrition. The main issue at stake was that, whereas these Centres depended on the voluntary work of community members as health promoters, 'Cuna Mas' home visitors, also voluntary members from the community, received a monetary compensation for their work. This was seen as a risk to the sustainability of the Centres of Vigilance by these organisations.

In the end, the pilot served to validate many aspects of the FFS design, but also for 'Cuna Mas' staff to learn first-hand the complexities and challenges of working in rural areas such as the lack of professionals, high geographical dispersion and historical conflicts between communities, some of these unexpected by the central office in Lima. As a result of the pilot, adjustments to the original design were made in the central office by the team in charge of the FSS, with the Director's approval, including the transition from biweekly to monthly group sessions, the optional, as opposed to mandatory implementation of community centres, and a new job profile more attuned to the local context. The relevance of context was made even more evident during the scaling up of the programme. As documented in the report on the 'Impact Evaluation of "Cuna Mas" Family Support Service' (MEF, 2016), because of constraints deriving from both material and external factors, only 64% of children in the treatment group received the service. Also, among families receiving the service, the report observed a large variation in the number of effective visits. In effect, almost half (44.4%) of children in the programme received 49 visits in the evaluation period, rather than the 96 visits expected.

Overall, then, this section has helped illustrate the need to attend to contextual factors, both material such as infrastructure and staffing, and external such as geographical dispersion and historical conflicts in exploring policy enactments. In effect, as Braun et al (2011, p.587) observe, 'studies that foreground contexts in this way are surprisingly rare in education and policy studies'.

The context of outcomes

'Cuna Mas' was created as a targeted program with the aim of 'improving early childhood development in children under 36 months of age in condition of poverty and extreme poverty in order to close that gaps in their cognitive, social, physical and emotional development' (DS N° 003-2012-MIDIS). The main mechanisms to achieve this goal were through home visits (in the case of rural areas) and comprehensive day care services (in the case of urban areas). These were the explicit policy outcomes written in the law that created 'Cuna Mas' and in the technical documents justifying it (Annex 2), and upon

which the programme's impact and continuity relies. However, often times, policy effects go beyond, and fall short of, their intended outcomes. They have the potential to shape and produce discourses, subjectivities and identities in unexpected ways that may play against those initially intended to benefit.

This section sets out to explore the extent to which the programme was successful in achieving its own articulated goals, what Ball refers to as first-order policy effects, while at the same time paying attention to the 'Cuna Mas' second-order effects, that is, the impact of policy as practice (later enactment) upon political matters such as social justice, equality and freedom. For example, whether 'new' or 'foreign' discourses and practices on early childhood development advanced by the programme limits children's freedom or reproduces existing inequalities. This requires some 'articulation of social justice to which we are committed as policy analyst', that is, 'a more normative assessment framed by the analyst's construction of social justice' (Lingard and Sellar, 2013, p.266).

First order effects

Even before the creation of 'Cuna Mas', it was mandated that the programme would have an impact evaluation to assess its effectiveness in achieving expected outcomes. On one hand, this was driven largely by the public sector reform of performance-based budgeting, a strategy of public management aimed at linking the allocation of public funds to the achievement of outcomes, of which independent impact evaluations are considered an instrument that provides information about the performance of public interventions for policy making based on evidence. On the other hand, there was also interest (and pressure) from the IDB, who had agreed to support the government's social inclusion agenda, and the 'Cuna Mas' programme in particular, to assess the effects of the programme using an experimental impact evaluation. This was a unique opportunity for the IDB in that for the first time in the world, the effects of a parenting intervention at large scale would be assessed through an experimental design. As a result, the Law that creates 'Cuna Mas' specifies that the programme will have a duration of five years, after which MIDIS, based on the results of the impact evaluation, will propose whether the programme will be formalised as a public policy or close down.

In November 2011, the year before 'Cuna Mas' was formally created, a technical team including the Office of Quality of the Public Expenditure of MEF, the General Office of Monitoring and Evaluation of MIDIS, and the IDB was created to design the programme's impact evaluation and coordinate its implementation. In the first official meeting on March

28th, 2012, six days after the creation of 'Cuna Mas', it was agreed that the team 'would work cooperatively and would meet weekly to move forward in the definition of the methodological proposal and the activities required for the collection of the baseline' (Aide Memoire, 28th March 2012). Initially, there wasn't consensus between the IDB and the Peruvian team (represented by MEF and MIDIS) regarding the methodology of the evaluation. Whereas BID advocated for an experimental design, more specifically a randomised controlled trial (RCT), considered 'gold standard' within the evaluation literature, MEF and MIDIS were more open to a quasi-experimental design, in that they saw it as more realistic given the political nature of a social programme like 'Cuna Mas'.

However, in the end, it largely depended on how the programme's leadership and the team responsible for implementing the FSS decided to target and scale-up its services in the field. The experimental design required a randomised selection of the targeted districts by the programme (out of which some would be assigned as 'treatment' and others as 'control'), and a rigorous compliance in the expansion of the programme's services according to the planned schedule. Within 'Cuna Mas', it was agreed by the Executive Committee³⁷ that a randomised selection of the targeted districts was more objective and transparent and would help prevent future claims by local authorities and community leaders of political preferences for serving some districts first. After all, there was a 'technical' criterion behind the selection of the areas of intervention and the services gradual expansion. The strict expansion of the programme following the original schedule was harder to follow in the event of operational challenges, such as settling on areas of social conflict or with difficult access. Therefore, in order to minimise these risks, the programme's leadership and the FSS area decided to exclude from the evaluation a group of districts in which these challenges would be significant.

With the guarantees that the gradual expansion of the programme would follow the scheduled randomisation of districts as 'treatment' and 'control' to secure the evaluation's robustness, the technical team responsible for designing the impact evaluation opted for an experimental design. In addition to deciding the methodology for the evaluation, there were other particularities around the impact evaluation that required discussion and decisions among the technical team. For example, how to measure child development as there was no unique indicator that captured this, which were the best instruments to measure changes in child development (self-report questionnaires,

³⁷ This was integrated by the Executive Director of Cuna Mas and the Managers of the different areas.

guided observations, tests applied on the child, etc.) and how best to train the observers that would apply these instruments with families.

However, perhaps most important, were aspects of quality related to the implementation of the programme, over which the team members had no control, but that were crucial to guarantee the rigor of the impact evaluation. In particular, the 'fidelity' with which the original design was 'implemented' in practice in order to guarantee similar positive and significant effects as those achieved in other countries with similar parenting interventions. Thus, as director of 'Cuna Mas' at that time (and hence 'guarantor' of the above), I was invited to participate in specific meetings, the main goal being to inform the technical team regarding operational challenges faced during the programme's implementation on the ground (for example, lack of professionals in the field to train and supervise home visitors, geographical dispersion of communities and political pressures to expand the service to communities in the control group, among others). In line with the programme's objectives, the main goal of the impact evaluation was to measure the effects of the FSS upon children's cognitive, language, motor and socio-emotional development. However, considering that the direct action of the FSS was on the mother, the impact evaluation also considered the programme's effects upon mothers' behaviours and practices, and on the availability of spaces that enhance child development within the home environment, the two mechanisms to improve child development according to the programme's design.

This section examines the effects of the 'Cuna Mas' FSS on these two outcomes: child development and parental behaviours as reported by two studies: 'Resultados de la evaluación de impacto del Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias del Programa Nacional Cuna Más' (2016) (unpublished), written by the IDB with collaboration from MEF as part of the impact evaluation of 'Cuna Mas', and *Effects of Early Childhood Development Interventions on Parental Behaviour: Evidence from a Home-Visiting Programme*, written by Juan Francisco Castro as part of his PhD thesis (Castro, 2014). The former presents the effects of the FSS on cognitive, language, motor and socio-emotional development in children under 36 months of age, the final expected outcome of the programme, whereas the latter focuses on the intermediate effects on the programme, namely those related to parenting practices.

In order to assess the impact of the FSS, IDB's study compares data on child development and other variables collected from two surveys: the baseline, gathered between April and July 2013 before the implementation of the programme, and the

follow-up survey. Using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires -3 (ASD-3), the baseline gathered information from a sample of 5,375 children under the age of 24 months in 360 'centros poblados'³⁸ in 180 districts (120 with treatment and 60 for control) on five dimensions of the child's development: i) language skills, both expressive (what they can speak) and receptive (what they can understand), ii) gross motor coordination, iii) fine motor coordination, iv) problem solving and v) socio-emotional development, which focus on children's autonomy and interactions with others. To measure the quality of the home environment, a questionnaire based on the HOME and Family Care Indicators questionnaires was collected. Two years later, between May and November 2015, a follow-up survey was collected among the same sample of children and households. This time, however, in addition to the Ages and Stages Questionnaires-3 (ASD-3), the Baileys Scale of Infant Child Development, considered the 'gold standard' in assessing child development, was applied on a smaller sample of younger and less indigenous children that received higher number of visits to 'analyse the robustness of the results obtained with the ASQ' (MEF, 2016, p.3).

Results indicated that the FSS has produced significant and robust, but moderate, impacts in all four outcome indicators of 'Cuna Mas', with larger effects on cognitive and language development. More specifically, the impact upon children who received at least one visit from the programme is 0.098 standard deviations for cognitive development, 0.122 standard deviations for language development, 0.094 standard deviations for fine motor and 0.102 for socio-emotional development. Or to put it in more simple terms, children who received at least one visit from the programme increased their cognitive development by 9.8%, language development by 12.2%, fine motor by 9.4% and socio-emotional development by 10.2% compared to those who did not receive it. According to the report, 'these are not small impacts' (p.3). They are equivalent to closing the socioeconomic gap between the richest and the poorest quintile by 18% in problem solution and 35% in communication. The impact of the programme upon child development becomes larger (0.295 standard deviations on cognitive development and 0.193 on language) and more robust within the smaller sample of children assessed through the Baileys Scale of Infant Child Development.

The study measures if the programme has heterogeneous impacts for different sub-groups of the sample by looking at specific characteristics of the child or mother, such

³⁸ Defined as a concentration of at least 20 adjacent houses in a rural area within a district.

as age, sex, income level, maternal education, chronic malnutrition, maternal depression, breastfeeding and domestic violence. For none of these variables, the study found any significant differences. That is to say, at first glance, it would seem that the effect of the programme upon child development is not mediated by any of the above indicators. However, for the small sample measured through the Baileys, Scale, results indicate that the impacts of the program are larger among children from poorest households and with mothers with less education.

The theory of change behind the FSS is that better parental knowledge and practices improves child development. This is grounded on the belief that better knowledge about the processes of child development and its importance for the child's progress and growth improves parental interactions with the child, and that this in turn, improves child outcomes. This is supported by evidence that shows that parent-child interactions are crucial in shaping child development during their first years of life (Huberman and Mendelsohn, 2012) and that 'parental engagement in educational play activities with their children is a crucial input for child development' (Fiorini and Keane, 2012 quoted in Castro, 2104, p.1). In effect, four systematic reviews of early childhood interventions in the developing world provide strong evidence to support that the home visiting model is effective in producing improvements in early childhood development (Walker (2011), Engle et al. (2011), Baker-Henningham and Lopez-Boo (2010), Engle et al. (2007)). Therefore, the impact evaluation of 'Cuna Mas' aimed to measure effects in these two aspects.

The study also tried to assess change in parental practices. Parenting is a broad concept that can include factors ranging from how parents talk and play with children to how they discipline and praise them. Within the evaluation literature on home visits, parental practices are traditionally assessed through instruments that capture the quality of the home environment. This is the case of 'Cuna Mas' impact evaluation, which uses an adapted version of the Family Care Indicators (FCI, Frongillo et al., 2003), developed by UNICEF, and a subset of indicators from the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME, Bradley, 1993). The indicators taken from the FCI questionnaire include measures on the number of toys with which the child plays (by type –bought, homemade, house objects, and use –play music, paint, write, build, role play, read, etc), number of adult books, magazines and newspapers, frequency in the play activities between caregivers and children, if the child was left alone in the house, and disciplinary practices and praise of good behaviour, which were collected through observations and self-report of the mother, whereas the indicators from the HOME

questionnaire assess the warmth and harshness of parent-child interactions observed during the interviews to the caregivers.

Analysis of these data shows that the three main mechanisms through which the programme would have improved child development are the higher frequency in the play activities between caregivers and children (an increase in 20%), the larger access to homemade toys (an increase in 8%), and the reduction in violent disciplinary practices such as yelling and swearing (a decrease in 3.8%) and hitting the child with a belt (a decrease in 2.4%). According to these results, we could argue that the programme has been effective in changing some parenting practices and behaviours. For one, now parents play more with their children and provide them with more toys. However, it is not clear if this behaviour is driven by a change in parent's perceptions regarding the importance of play for their child development, or the presence of a home visitor who engages them in play activities with their children during the visit.

Likewise, the increase in access to homemade toys could be the result of changes in parents' perceptions about the importance of play, and thus, of having more toys, or just a consequence of the provision of toys by the programme, and of materials and instructions on how to produce them. Regarding the reduction in violent disciplinary practices, which are measured through caregiver's self-report, this could also be a consequence of changes in parents' beliefs about how to discipline children, or an underreport by parents who are now more aware about what is expected from them in terms of 'correct' and 'incorrect' behaviour. Overall, then, it is less clear whether the observed changes in parenting practices and behaviours are driven by changes in parents' perceptions and beliefs, or by other rather more instrumental reasons.

Parental knowledge can also be considered a broad and contested notion, as it can refer to a large set of expectations, beliefs and conceptions regarding how children learn and develop, how important are the early years in the child's growth and wellbeing and in his future development and success in life, and what role do parents play in shaping a child developmental trajectory. In the follow-up study, parents' knowledge is assessed using a subset of items from the Knowledge of Infant Development Inventory (KIDI, MacPhee 2002), which gathers information on parental knowledge about child development and infant behaviours of children under five, along with a cluster of questions about caring and stimulation practices that the programme expected to develop in mothers. Results indicate that the programme had no significant impact on parental knowledge. In other words, this would be confirming the hypothesis that change in parental behaviours is not

explained by changes in parents' knowledge and beliefs about child development, but rather, it has more to do with the incentives provided by the programme to change behaviour.

In addition to measuring direct impacts on parental knowledge and practices, the impact evaluation also sought to explore the extent to which the programme increased enrolment in early childhood education and decreased chronic malnutrition, despite these two not being specific goals of the programme. Improvement in these two areas would provide further evidence of changes in parenting practices as a result of the programme. On one hand, it would suggest that messages related to childrearing would have produced changes in feeding and caring practices by parents, and, on the other, that exposure to stimulation activities would have led parents to value more education and hence, enrol their children in early childhood education after the end of the programme. To that end, the follow-up survey gathered information about children's enrolment in early childhood education among children older than 36 months that had graduated from the programme, as well as measures on chronic malnutrition among children benefiting from the intervention. Results indicate that the programme had a significant impact upon early childhood enrolment rates, with an increase by 8.5% in the treatment group compared to the control group. With respect to chronic malnutrition, the programme had small effects in global malnutrition (a reduction in 0.012%).

On the other hand, Castro's (2014) study provides new insights to understand the changes in parenting practices and beliefs described above. Using a questionnaire to collect information through caregivers' reports or enumerators' observations during the interview, Castro collected data from 600 caregivers (out of which 300 are in the 'treatment' group and 300 in the 'control' group) in 40 rural districts on parenting practices, physical spaces and caregivers' expectations regarding the importance of parent-child interactions for child development. To assess parenting practices, Castro build a quality of the home environment index (with values ranging 0-1) on the basis of four aspects: (i) interaction and play activities, which measures the variety of caregiver-child interactions during basic care and variety of play activities offered to the child); (ii) responsiveness and control practices, which assesses caregiver-child interactions in terms of communication and affection and how the caregiver disciplines the child; (iii) play material and home conditioning, which refers to the variety of play materials present at home and the conditions of the child's play area; and, (iv) personal care and hygiene, which looks at the overall child and caregiver appearance in terms of hygiene (Castro, 2014).

Meanwhile, caregiver's expectations about the importance of parent-child interactions were assessed through a structured interview, where caregivers are asked about the ideal educational attainment and occupation they would like their child to achieve, and, immediately afterwards, they are asked to answer the extent to which they agree or disagree with the eight statements that make reference to these goals and how their accomplishment relates to early childhood as a sensitive period for development, caregivers' role during this period, and caregivers' engagement in educational play activities.

1. Now that (NAME) is a small child is an important stage if he/she is to achieve () education and become (...).
2. It does not depend on you that (NAME) achieves (...) education and becomes (...).
3. (NAME) will start learning only after he/she enrolls in school.
4. If you spend more time playing with (NAME), you will help him/her to achieve (...) education and become (...).
5. You are more important than school teachers for (NAME) to be able to achieve (...) education and become (...).
6. Now that (NAME) is a small child it is better if he/she learns on his/her own.
7. It is useless to tell stories to (NAME) because he/she does not understand them.
8. Now that (NAME) is a small child he only needs to be clean and well fed (Castro 2014, p. 37).

Results of the study show that the effects of the FSS on the quality of the home environment are positive, statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and have a size ($d = 0.5$) comparable to that found for other interventions of much smaller scale and efficacy trials conducted in the developing world. In particular, responsiveness, control practices, play material and home conditioning showed the largest increases. To measure the effect of the FSS on caregivers' behaviour, the study focuses on caregiver-child interactions happening in addition to the home visit, specifically (i) the number of types (or variety) of interactions during basic care and play; and (ii) the number of types (or variety) of play activities offered to the child. Results show that the intervention has caused an increase in the number of types (or variety) of interactions during basic care and play (e.g. verbal communication that happen during feeding, bathing and clothes change routines), which take place independently of the home visit; and in the number of types (or variety) of play

activities offered to the child by the caregiver in addition to those occurring during home visits.

Further analysis reveals that increased stimulation offered to the child (additional to that occurring during the home visit) is occurring through greater caregiver involvement in play activities rather than through the introduction of more or new types of play activities. Three types of activities (out of seven) explain most of the effect on the variety of play offered to the child by the caregiver: telling stories to the child (10 percentage point increase), singing songs to or with the child (12 percentage point increase), and playing with the child and her toys (16 percentage point increase). This is of particular interest because it is related to activities with a direct and explicit stimulation purpose, which were at the centre of the intervention. All these would be suggesting that the programme is changing parenting behaviours and practices towards their children.

Crucially, the study examines the mechanisms behind caregivers' behavioural change to understand the reasons for not adopting the practices promoted by the programme. It focuses on two variables affecting caregiver's behavioural change: caregivers' educational attainment and household wealth. As mentioned earlier, strong emphasis on 'parenting skills' in most parenting interventions implicitly assumes that caregivers' lack of knowledge and ability is the major binding constraint. This is especially the case of less privileged families. Therefore, analysing whether the effects of the intervention upon caregivers' behaviour are mediated by caregivers' education is relevant because this variable reflects parental skills. A large effect of caregivers' educational attainment would be consistent with the hypothesis that the lack of 'parenting skills' is the major binding constraint. Meanwhile, the wealth index provides a broader view of the degree of scarcity faced by the household and can capture if deprivation, in general, is affecting caregivers' engagement in play activities with their children. This can be relevant if such engagement requires parents to invest resources of their own besides their skills.

Results show that constraints limiting the effect of the intervention appear to be related to household wealth but not to caregivers' educational attainment. In effect, the author argues that 'low levels of wealth can render the intervention ineffective in changing caregivers' behaviours and expectations' (Castro 2014, p.1). These results are significant for the concerns of this thesis. As mentioned earlier, early childhood development interventions are premised and rationalised based on the assumption that low levels of child development are caused by lack of parenting skills, which has the effect of bracketing out material restrictions faced by most disadvantaged families.

Castro's study, in contrast, reveals that income, rather than parental education, plays the major role in explaining the extent of caregivers' behavioural changes, which places the question of income and social justice back into the centre of child development.

Regarding caregivers' perceptions of the importance of parent-child interactions during early childhood for the development of their children and their future success, the study shows mixed results. Despite the programme not having an explicit objective in terms of caregivers' expectations or beliefs about the importance of parent-child interactions for child development, home visitors were expected to offer messages about the importance of parenting practices for the child's wellbeing (PNCM, 2013). Thus, one would expect that exposure to these messages would have an effect in parents' beliefs. Further, under the premise that parents try to provide what they believe is best for their children, it would be reasonable to assume that changes in these perceptions should result in changes in observed parenting practices. In effect, Bornstein and Putnick (2012, p.57) demonstrate that the 'variation on childrearing philosophies, values and beliefs mediates differences in childrearing practices vis-à-vis local and larger physical and social environments' (quoted in Castro, 2014).

Results show a partial correlation between the scores obtained in the eight-item scale used to measure caregivers' expectations, and those obtained in the quality of the home environment index used to measure parenting practices. Thus, the study does demonstrate the existence of a relationship (not causality) between parents' beliefs and practices. In terms of differences by socioeconomic status, measured by caregivers' education level and household income, the study shows that parents of lower socioeconomic status believe they have less control over their children's outcomes and future goals. Lastly, with respect to the effects of the programme on caregivers' expectations about the importance of parenting activities for child development, the study concludes that there is 'no evidence of significant treatment effects' (Ibid, p. 23). In other words, according to the study, the programme would have been successful in changing parents' behaviours and practices without having any impact on parents' beliefs regarding the importance of the early years and parent-child interactions in child development. These results are interesting in that, on one hand, they would be suggesting that changes in parenting practices can occur without changing childrearing beliefs, and, on the other, that beliefs are harder to modify than practices. That is, in the face of external messages and resources, parents change some of their practices and behaviours, while maintaining their own values and beliefs about childrearing and the relationship between the early years and future outcomes. This could be seen as a more

subtle form of resistance, or at least a degree of conflict between firmly embedded local values and traditions and those advocated externally.

Importantly, these studies have been used differently by different actors. On the one hand, drawing of the results of the impact evaluation of 'Cuna Mas' upon early childhood development and parenting practices elaborated by the IDB, the General Director of Public Budget within MEF, in his report to the Vice Minister of Internal Revenue (2016), recommends that Cuna Mas' FSS should not be further expanded before improvements are made in the 'implementation, operations and quality of the service' (MEF, 2016, p.3). These include: (i) a revision of the community-based management model, seen as limiting the intervention's 'potential' to produce larger effects³⁹; (ii) strengthening the home-visitors competencies to engage families with their children; (iii) increasing fidelity in the implementation of the service (compared to the mandated curriculum), (iv) guaranteeing the frequency and length of the home visits within each area of intervention, (v) strengthening the curriculum and messages provided in the home visits and group sessions, (vi) designing strategies to reduce the high turn-over of 'Cuna Mas's' supervisors and community home visitors, (vii) redesigning and strengthening the training system of 'Cuna Mas's' supervisors, (viii) optimising processes of registration, report and analysis of data collected in the field; and, (ix) strengthening coordination between sectors and levels of government (MEF, 2016, p.4, own translation).

Additionally, the report suggests validating and calibrating the instruments used for measuring early childhood development and good parenting practices, as well as considering a research agenda that includes a longitudinal evaluation of the programme to assess its impact over time (Ibid, p. 5). On the other hand, the IDB has used the positive results of the impact evaluation study to continue advocating for larger government investments in early childhood development across the Latin American region. As part of these efforts, in 2014, they invited me to present the experience of 'Cuna Mas' to the government of Argentina, which is currently piloting their Argentinian version of 'Cuna Mas'.

³⁹ For example, difficulties in creating Community Management Committees in very disperse communities, an insufficient number of volunteers in the communities to work as home visitors and problems in the retention of home visitors.

Second order effects

This thesis has illustrated how knowledge, mainly produced within the 'psy' sciences and more recently by neuroscience, creates 'truths' about children and parents, namely that childhood is foundational and different from adulthood and that the family is the central institution for shaping childhood. At the same time, it has shown how knowledge produced within the evaluation literature (which draws heavily on Economics) has served to enhance and legitimate government intervention in early childhood grounded on an investment narrative. In all these respects, certain scientific evidence is regarded as truthful. At the same time, it has explored how real policies like 'Primera Infancia Primero' and 'Cuna Mas' draw on these knowledges and truths to justify its existence, define its goals, and target its population. Here I want to explore in more depth the implications of these knowledges and 'truths' through the lens of social justice, equality and freedom.

Truth #1: Childhood as foundational and different from adulthood. By reinforcing a particular model of 'the child' which emphasises children's needs and deficiencies, and which values children ultimately as future becomings, the paradigm of childhood as foundational constitutes childhood and development as passive rather than active and interactive, and therefore mono-linear. Thus, despite the explicit recognition of children's rights to participate in both 'Primera Infancia Primero' and 'Cuna Mas', there is a tacit understanding that children, in the present, are incapable of contributing to their families and societies with their knowledge, experience and ideas; a belief that clearly contradicts the principle of 'children as competent beings' also articulated in some parts of the policies. This has the effect of excluding children themselves from shaping the construction of childhood and undermines their capacity to exercise their right to speak and decide in matters that directly affect them. This is in line with James and James (2004), who argue that positioning children as being generically 'in need' renders them as passive recipients rather than as active participants.

Truth #2: Poor children as 'the problem'. By deploying statistics on child growth and development and universal standards of normal development, certain groups of children –rural, indigenous, poor- are constituted as developmentally delayed, malnourished, and therefore, less able than their 'normal' peers from more privileged backgrounds. The view of disadvantaged children as, on one side, 'at risk' of being delayed or malnourished, and, on the other, as 'risky', threatening society's sustainability (through the reproduction of poverty and inequalities and the increase in crime and government spending), operates as a governmental rationality to constitute poor children as the

'problem'. This has severe implications both for children and their families. On one hand, poor children become positioned in public discourse as deficient and incomplete, and therefore in need of reparation. Conceived only in negative terms, children from less privileged backgrounds are seen as having nothing to offer to society in the here and now. This way of constituting children has the potential of feeding the discourse of children from poor families as already disadvantaged, reinforcing the low expectations that parents and teachers have from them (Ball, 1981), and in turn, perpetuating existing inequalities. On the other hand, positioning poor children as delayed implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) constitutes families as deficient and incompetent in raising and educating their children. That is, their knowledges and practices are not recognised and valued, rather, they have to learn the 'correct' way of raising children from the 'experts' in the field: they have to play the games taught by the programme with the toys provided by it, and talk and touch their babies and children in the tone and with the words suggested by the programme. This is, in Foucault (1991a) terms, a disciplinary form of power in action. 'Discipline is a political anatomy of detail (Ibid, p.139). 'Precision and application are, with regularity, the fundamental virtues of disciplinary time (Ibid, p. 151). Discipline 'normalises and of course analyses and breaks down; it breaks down individuals, places, time, movements, actions and operations. It breaks them down into components such that they can be seen, on the one hand, and modified, on the other' (Ibid, p. 56). This clearly limits families' freedom to act according to their cultural and personal values, experiences and knowledges.

Truth #3: *Investment in early childhood as a profitable investment.* The dominant narrative articulated in both 'Primera Infancia Primero' and 'Cuna Mas' argues that investments in early childhood development are highly profitable as they deliver high returns including improved educational outcomes and increased productivity (the 'human capital' argument), as well as a reduction in a range of social problems (unemployment, criminality, young pregnancy and alcoholism). This creates a political rationale whereby public investment in early childhood development is constituted as a rational and 'smart' choice, which helps understand the neo-liberal emphasis on 'the first 1000 days'. The extreme version of this rationale is illustrated in the monetization of government's spending in children:

If we take into account the demands of profitability of public investment, it is considered that investments in human development during the early stages of life are highly profitable (between 4 to 9 dollars per each dollar invested). Indeed, the return of the investment made in human capital formation is higher in early childhood than in any other stage in life. The returns of

investments made in early childhood are reaped off throughout the years and increase the productivity of later investments, even more so when the skills acquired in the early years facilitate future learning (RS N° 413-2013-PCM p.12).

Again, this is another form of disciplinary power in that ‘discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience).’ (Foucault, 1991a, p. 138). Further, the use of the word ‘investment’ instead of ‘expenditure’ to refer to public funds allocated to childhood conveys the implicit construction of children as an asset on which time, energy, and/or matter is spent with the expectation of reaping future benefits within a specified time frame. As a result, children become objectified and instrumentalised for the purposes of economic growth and competitiveness and subjected to practices and interventions which have the potential of constraining their freedom. For example, the creation of specific play areas for the children to play within the houses, promoted by ‘Cuna Mas’, has the effect of restricting children’s movement to other areas inside or outside the house, thus limiting children’s freedom to choose where to play.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of the investment argument is closely tied to the quality of early childhood interventions, that is to say, the fidelity with which ‘successful’ interventions are replicated and scaled-up irrespective of the local context. This helps explaining the emphasis of international consultants and the IBD on the adaptation of a ‘tested’ curriculum to respond to a different context. As Moss (2013, p.371) observes

The investment case goes on to argue that high returns require ‘high-quality’ services, which is another way of saying that prescribed and standardised outcomes require the application of prescribed and standardised human technologies – or, as a leading researcher puts it, ‘very tightly defined programmes [produce] good results’ (Melhuish, quoted in House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee, 2010).

This affects and constrains children’s (and parents’) experiences and possibilities to experiment, explore and make mistakes, since every move and every dialogue has been pre-determined in advance. Lastly, the argument that investment in early childhood development, by itself, contributes to a countries’ economic and social progress renders invisible other crucial structural variables, simplifying the complex dynamics of social inclusion and individualising responsibility on families and even children.

Truth 4: Parenting interventions as a ‘silver bullet’ policy solution. The understanding of families as crucial in shaping child development, while at the same time deficient and

incompetent in providing the care required, positions them as targets of intervention. Research showing that parenting can indeed be improved through interventions further reinforces the construction of families as the solution. As a result, parenting programmes aimed at improving the quality of care and stimulation parents provide to their children come to be seen as a 'silver bullet' to address the 'problem' of low developmental outcomes. This has profound implications on how families are constituted and addressed in policy discourse. Perhaps the most significant is that parents, and especially mothers, are seen as ultimately responsible for their children's development and wellbeing, and by extension, for society's prosperity. Even before conception, how a woman takes care of her body and educates herself are seen as directly related to a child's health and physical, socio-emotional and cognitive development. That is, childhood is seen as almost exclusively the product of motherhood. This is, in Foucault's terms, a problem of security—the management of life:

Before conception, the main factor risk is the nutritional status of the women, in particular, the deficiency of two micronutrients: iron and folic acid. During pregnancy, micronutrients deficiency exacerbates even further in the first trimester, severely affecting the child's growth, which is extremely dependent on the nutritional status of the pregnant women and her adequate consumption of calories and proteins. Other factors that affect the foetus development prioritised by impact are: i) infection in the first trimester: urinary infections, sexually transmitted infections and HIV, ii) hypertension, partially due to calcium deficiency, iii) youth pregnancy, iv) changes in the mother's emotional status due to depression, anxiety, and stress, v) exposition of any form of violence (First Early Childhood, p.12-13, own translation).

That families are considered indispensable in children's development creates the conditions for childhood management, again affecting children's freedom. In effect, Foucault (1979) suggests that 'government' begins in the family; the word was first used in France to refer to social relations in the family and in *Discipline and Punish* he argues that the modern family is part of the 'carceral continuum'.

During periods of problematisation, governments were forced to either adapt their programmes or launch justifications for what they were doing. It is at these times that we often gain greatest insight into the mechanisms of government and the means used to resist them. These insights must focus on both discipline and governmentality, technologies that complement and dovetail with each other (Legg, 2005 p. 137 quoted in Foucault, 1979).

At the same time, positioning home visits as the main solution to the problem of developmental delays creates a discourse that individualises social problems and again places families as ultimately responsible for their children's development. This has

material implications in that structural inequalities, such as poverty, social class and parental education are bracketed out, removed from the policy picture, and considered almost irrelevant in shaping children's educational outcomes, thus erasing the interactive relationships between conditions of life and parenting (del Pino, 2011; Youdell, 2006b). Indeed, it is significant that despite the complexity and interconnectedness of the causal chains explaining child development in the 'problem tree' presented earlier, it is suggested, in a remarkably optimistic tone, that these risks can be minimised or even eradicated through interventions that address the diverse factors and risks at play from conception up to the age of three, none of which addresses structural conditions.

This, in turn, suggests that interventions that modify process factors (i.e. adult-child relations) can have positive impacts in child development irrespective of structural variables (i.e. organisation of labour). Thus, again we see how the conceptualisation of early childhood development in terms of factors directly related to the child and mother's body, psychic, and soul works to render invisible crucial variables such as poverty, unemployment and the organisation of labour in shaping and limiting the possibilities for children's development and well-being. This has the potential of reproducing and exacerbating existing inequalities in that other necessary structural reforms, such as the distribution of welfare through high taxation and progressive tributary policies, are set aside. In effect, as Moss (2013, p.371) contends, 'good ECEC⁴⁰ are products of more democratic, more egalitarian, more solidaristic societies – qualities which are themselves good for children and adults alike. ECEC certainly plays its part in enhancing well-being, but as one part of a strong welfare state that is enabled by political values and high taxation – one link in a complex chain'.

Truth #5: Early childhood as a 'shared' responsibility. The permanent reference to the importance of parents, along the several justifications given to legitimise government intervention in early childhood creates a sense of 'shared' responsibility between government and families for the care of children. However, to the extent that normative discourses about child-rearing are produced by experts and co-opted by the state to prescribe parents how to raise their children disregarding their knowledges, values and cultural practices, I would argue that the invocation to families as crucial in the child's development is a government strategy, often unconscious and unintended, to create an illusion of power and control among families over their lives which serves to align them along the superior economic goals of the state. As far as the role of the state as

⁴⁰ Early childhood education and care.

articulated in 'Cuna Mas', this is less clear. On one hand, the explicit purpose of the programme to promote and orient government investment in early childhood seems to suggest a greater role for the government. On the other, the emphasis on the environment, in particular, parenting practices would be suggesting that early childhood development is ultimately determined by what parents do in relation to their children. This, I would argue, is *government at a distance*. Interestingly, the role of the government in providing the social services to counteract the risks identified in the early childhood framework varies according to the nature of the risks.

Some risk factors are addressed through direct provision by the state, as in the case of supplementation of micronutrients to pregnant women and counselling on child-rearing and feeding practice, whereas in other cases, such as adolescent pregnancy and alcoholism and smoking, the mother is expected to manage these risks by herself or with support from the community. That is, she is expected to learn how to govern herself by herself, as this is a problem of 'conduct'. However, in any case, what we see is an increase and legitimisation of technologies of management and regulation over children and adults, as well as an intensification of mechanisms for the government of the private self. The growing emphasis on children's socio-emotional development, in particular, in areas labelled as self-regulation and control of emotions which leads to tighter and more punitive mechanisms of discipline is one example of this.

Truth #6: Scientific evidence as 'truth'. Both 'Primera Infancia Primero' and 'Cuna Mas' are articulated and supported by a specific kind of evidence; that produced using quantitative and experimental methods, usually within the 'psy' sciences, and more recently economics and neurosciences. This is regarded as high-quality evidence according to the quality evidence framework created to assess the nature of evidence. In contrast, evidence produced through qualitative studies within the disciplines of Anthropology, History, and Sociology, are considered of lower quality according to the same framework, and thus remain marginalised. The same is true of vernacular knowledges, values and practices, which are not even considered as evidence within the quality framework. Therefore, a hierarchy in knowledges is produced here regarding early childhood whereby what we could call the 'human sciences of neo-liberalism' occupy a privileged position whereas the 'human sciences of welfare' are silenced, or at least considered irrelevant. As Connell (2013, p.99) observes

We have not yet fully assimilated the profound consequences of the neo-liberal turn for the basic project of education (...) the wider effect of neo-liberalism on

the knowledge base: an increasing technicization of knowledge and knowledge production.

By stating that scientific knowledge is 'conclusive' (and more specifically, knowledge produced within certain disciplines), in the policy document 'Primera Infancia Primero', the authors leave no room for alternative knowledges; the techniques and models used to define early childhood and determine the social returns of investing in childhood are taken for granted. This has the effect of producing an ideal model of childhood and parenting –the middle-class Western model, which marginalises and stigmatises those groups unable to provide the conditions required for the 'adequate' development of children. In Rose (1989, p. xv1) words,

Once certain truths have been so established, certain phenomena have been brought into existence, they can be further explored, dissected, analysed, classified, and used to do things both within and outside the field of scientific practice. And the establishment of one set of truths about the world, the production of one set of realities and one family of descriptions of those realities, closes off the production of others, for research and investigation follows one path at the expense of others.

Acknowledging the politics – 'the economy of truth' - involved in the selection of legitimate knowledge could help us to understand the minor role played by the regional and local levels of government in the design of the guidelines 'Primera Infancia Primero' and of families and communities in the design of 'Cuna Mas'. In relation to this, there is a tension between the desire to involve actors from different regional and local levels to make the design process participatory, and the need to retain control over the outcomes of the interventions at the central level. For instance, the guidelines state that these must be applied by the entities of the national, regional and local levels, while the design of the guidelines and interventions is responsibility of the national government, in coordination with the regional and local levels.

Second, and related to the previous one, is the selection of interventions considered crucial to ensure early childhood development based on a 'what works' approach. Again, a strong assumption is made, this time in relation to the possibilities of translating a successful policy from one context (usually 'developed' countries, where the majority of evidence is produced) to another. This blind reliance on the unquestionable 'truth' of such evidence results in claims like 'the adequate and timing implementation of the following guidelines will translate in the shortest period of time into improvements in the quality of life, measured by the outcomes of children', which shows the rather simplistic

understanding of how early childhood development works and a reductionist view of quality of life in terms of set of indicators.

Finally, there is the claim that investment in early childhood is, according to the 'conclusive knowledge', the most profitable social investment for a country which has the effect of privileging a group of individuals, in this case children, over other groups such as youth, elderly, and women. Individuals are here construed as commodities with differentiated value, rather than as subjects with an intrinsic value that cannot and should not be quantified.

Discourse, agency and incoherence

This chapter has adopted a different analytical strategy, what Ball et al (1992) refer to a 'policy trajectory study', in order to understand the recent positioning of early childhood development in the Peruvian government's agenda, and examine how this has translated into practices, and with what effects. Here, my main concern has been in unpacking the 'why', 'what', and 'how' of early childhood policies in Peru. In so doing, I have been specially concerned with, on the one hand, examining the ways in which policies make up and make possible particular sorts of children and the extent to which these, and the related documents and artefacts produced to enact them, are informed and shaped by global discourses, and, on the other hand, with understanding the ways in which local policy practitioners interpret, translate and resist these discourses and practices in attempt to produce more authentic and contextualised responses. This has been referred to elsewhere as *policy as discourse* and *policy as text* (Ball, 2005). The implications of these different processes and actions upon the lives of children and families has been a main concern throughout this chapter and have been explored in more depth in the last section.

This kind of analysis has entailed a reconstruction, based on policy and administrative documents, as well interviews and my own experience as actor and subject, of the different contexts that have made up the policy cycle of early childhood policies: the context of influence, the context of policy production, the context of practice and the context of outcomes. Based on the analysis of these different contexts, we can draw some broad conclusions about how national policies are produced and enacted in practice. Both 'Primera Infancia Primero' and 'Cuna Mas' are very much informed and shaped by the globalised early childhood policy discourses, where a human capital approach to early childhood development prevails. This is particularly evident in 'Cuna

Mas', which was mostly thought and written within a network of international experts – 'epistemic communities'–, within which knowledge and experiences about early childhood development were exchanged, and where a particular model, the Jamaican stimulation intervention (promoted by the IDB), took force and was determinant in choosing a home visiting model for delivering 'Cuna Mas' service in rural areas.

However, there is also evidence of active adaptation or indigenisation of 'travelling policy' (Ozga and Lingard, 2007, p.72). In effect, alternative understandings of early childhood, alongside a concern for attending to context and indigenous beliefs and practices, have translated into creative adaptations and recontextualisations of globalised policy discourses and practices. For example, 'Cuna Mas' version of home visits is not an identical copy of the Jamaican Curriculum, as had been the case in Colombia and Bangladesh, where only minor changes were made. Rather, 'Cuna Mas' staff demanded significant changes to the original curriculum to respond to the local context. Similarly, the participation of the community in the provision of the programmes' services was more a 'political inheritance' from the 'Wawa Wasi' programme and the result of 'Cuna Mas' staff agency rather than of a focus on 'what works' and evidence-based policies.

This provides evidence of vernacular globalisation and of local and national history and politics mediating globalised policy discourses and their homogenising effects, which in turn captures the possibilities of early childhood politics and the simultaneously local and global development. At the same time, it reflects the 'localised nature of policy actions, that is, the "secondary adjustments" and accommodations and conflict which inflect and mediate policy' (Braun et al 2011, p.582). As Lingard (et. al., 2013, p.265) puts it, 'policy problems and solutions circulate through global discourses, but are always recontextualised within national policies and practices'.

On the other hand, the coexistence of very different understandings of children and early childhood within the same policies illustrates some of the incoherencies and contradictions, or policy paradoxes, inherent in many policies today that expand beyond the early childhood field. This can be understood as reflecting a growing tension between a globalised, economised agenda for early childhood development and a movement towards more localised and contextualised responses. At the same time, it may be signalling unstable and incoherent policy subjects, defined 'more by responsiveness than principle, pragmatism rather reflection, action rather than judgment' (Ball et al, 2011, p.617).

Clearly, the chapter evinces the decisive movement towards evidence-based or evidence-informed policy making, and how such processes constitute and shape local policy. Again, this reflects the effects of globalised policy discourses, in this case the so-called new public management and evidence-based policies. For example, although initially conceived of as an electoral promise to win a presidential campaign, and as such subject to political interests, 'Cuna Mas' was rapidly protected by a technocratic 'shield'. In effect, the appointment of a technocrat as Director of the programme, the technical assistance provided by the MEF and BID, the use of a performance-based budgeting approach to design the programme and the commitment to undertake an impact evaluation, are all manifestations of this technical approach to policy making. Crucially, evidence is restricted here. As illustrated in 'Cuna Mas' framework of quality evidence, only certain kinds of studies are considered valid and reliable. As Ozga and Ligard (2003, p.77) observe, 'research policy has been reframed by the desire of governments for clear and reliable evidence that can inform and support policy'. However, there are also signs of a departure or at least a relaxation of this evidence-based regime, such as the influence of Reggio Emilia philosophy in the day care services, which is another kind of global policy that travels and asserts a particular definition of the child and family, or the participation of the community in the service provision which, as mentioned above, are made possible through local politics and action. That is, globalisation too helps to foreground and revitalise local values and assumptions that may have been previously subdued.

Finally, the analysis captures Bowe et al's (1992) idea of policy cycle as non-linear, interactive and multi-directional, in that, the different contexts of the policy process overlap, with some of the production of policies taking place very early on during the 'context of influence' and with results from the 'context of outcomes' feeding back into the policy production context. However, it has also shown that in some contexts, like the 'context of influence', the presence and influence of global understandings of children and childhood, brought by the network of policy 'influencers', was far stronger than in other contexts, whereas during the contexts of policy production and practice, local voices and perspectives gained force, ultimately overcoming, in some instances, global dominant narratives.

Conclusions

This thesis has engaged in a critical analysis of contemporary early childhood policies, and more specifically, the formation of policy on early childhood development in a middle-income country. Its main concern has been to explore the emerging policy prioritisation of early childhood development, and to question the dominant understandings of children, their development and the related production of policy knowledge, with particular attention to the operation of global discourses. This has in part involved examining the different ways in which early childhood policy, and more generally children and ourselves, are governed; but also how this endeavour is rationalised, enacted and made operable, and with what implications for children from a social justice perspective. Hence, one of the aims of this thesis has also been to attend to the complexity of power relations and to explore the multi-modality and multi-dimensionality of power. On a more personal level, the thesis has been animated by a sense of unease and urgency to reflect critically about my own experience as policy maker and implementer, and to start thinking differently about myself and early childhood development. According to St. Pierre (2000, p.78), 'This is the hardest work that we must do, this work of being willing to think differently'.

A post-structural approach to policy analysis enables this kind of work. Its point of departure is the urgency of the present. It focuses on an immediate problem 'to see it in its historical dimension; how this problem turned out to be the way we perceive it today' (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 213). From this perspective, policy is an outcome and effect of various forces and relations that are historically contingent. At the same time, post-structural analyses are underpinned by a restless scepticism towards truth. Therefore, the aim is not to establish a final truth. In effect, this is an approach that has given up on finding out 'exactly' what is going on. It is sceptical of exactly that kind of question. Instead, post-structural analyses seek to trouble both discursive and material structures that limit the ways we think about the world, and our work, by offering a set of new lenses to examine any commonplace situation, any ordinary event or process, in order to think differently about that occurrence – to open up what seems 'natural' to other possibilities. Its main focus is on the productivities of power in its coupling with knowledge. However, it should be underlined that this kind of approach does not imply a rejection or negation of the present but a practical critique and possible overcoming of the universals one can trace their unilaterality and contingency. The point, therefore, is to subject the discourses that articulate what we think, say and do, to targeted and sustained critique.

But why is this work important, and what relevance (if any) does it have for both theory and practice today? Understandings of children as future potential and of early childhood interventions as profitable investments have become taken for granted, prevailing over and against an image of children as social subjects and valuable in their own right. Within this dominant discourse, early childhood education and care comes into focus as a critical site for the optimisation of children's development (or their reparation in the case of disadvantaged children); shaping and making the future independent, competitive, entrepreneurial subject of neo-liberalism. As I have tried to illustrate throughout the thesis, these dominant discourses are underpinned by a series of knowledges, values and beliefs, themselves underpinned by a neoliberal episteme, which governs scientific/policy discourse and determines what does and does not get taken seriously. For example, the thesis has exposed how particular kinds of knowledge (that produced by experimental studies) are considered valid according to specific quality criteria against which evidence is classified and ranked, which works to exclude other forms of knowledge from the policy picture. Based on this, I have made a claim for the need to broaden the knowledge base informing policies in general, and early childhood policies in particular. This is particularly relevant coming from someone who has been subjected to the demands and constraints of an 'evidence-based' policy regime.

However, with the help of genealogy, I have also shown that the dominant early year's narrative has a history of practices and discourses and has evolved in accordance with shifting historical circumstances and political rationalities. In other words, the ways we think and speak about children and early childhood development today are neither natural nor universal; rather they have been historically constituted and contingently articulated. Rendering this visible and explicit is important in that it helps us to question naturalised assumptions about early childhood development, opening up new spaces to think about it in a different way. This is the case of 'Cuna Mas' Principles of Comprehensive Attention, inspired by Reggio Emilia educational principles, which provide an account of how the programme was, to some extent, able to challenge the default neoliberal rationality underpinning early year's intervention and produce an alternative image of children as 'competent, citizens, resilient and happy', and of early childhood services as 'spaces of learning and permanent research, promoters of well-being and respect, organised, and of an intercultural democratic culture' (*Guía de Cuidado Diurno del Programa Nacional Cuna Más*, 2014, p.1). It is in this sense that the thesis has the potential to make an important contribution both to the study of current dominant discourses in early childhood policy and how they operate at the local level;

what researchers call 'glocalisation' or 'vernacular globalisation', and of the possibilities of resistance to the neoliberal, economic and positivist assumptions and values underpinning current dominant discourses in early childhood policies.

The thesis has also shown that concern over children's development, alongside 'expert' knowledge which prescribes a particular version of the child, may result in a re-emergence of more disciplinary and punitive technologies of governing children, constraining children's freedom to be and act in the world, as is the case of some aspects of 'Cuna Mas' home visiting intervention. In the same line, it has evinced how emphasis on parenting practices aimed at improving child outcomes positions families as objects of intervention and produces a discourse of the 'good' parent, which in turn shapes families' practices, limiting their freedom to raise their children according to their own values, knowledges and cultural practices. Crucially, it places responsibility for children's care and development with families, rendering invisible structural variables and material circumstances. In particular, policy discourses that link individual child development with broader social and economic outcomes, place the burden of society's prosperity on parents and children; negating the state's role as 'provider' and 'protector' of children's wellbeing. Further research could be directed to explore whether parenting interventions, by individualising risk, can potentially exacerbate existing inequalities.

By focusing on a specific location or site of policy performance –the 'Cuna Mas' programme, I have been able to render more visible the powers and forms of discourse, truth and knowledge which are brought to bear upon policy and its problems and solutions at particular times. More specifically, I have exposed those practices which divide populations in different ways, such as the identification and, hence, fabrication of those unable to manage themselves effectively. Here, I have discussed how scientific knowledge is strategically used to create norms and standards against which children are measured and classified; which fabricates early childhood development as a policy problem, and produces particular sort of subjects (the 'delayed' child, the 'incompetent' parent) and practices of state (parenting interventions) that seek to manage children to ensure that they develop 'appropriately'. In particular, children from less privileged backgrounds are positioned as delayed and in need of repair, and their parents as unable and incompetent. In this sense, the thesis has provided an entry point to explore how power operates in less direct and obvious ways, through the production of truth and knowledge. In this endeavour, Foucault's dual understanding of problematisation has been a key device to identify and question a number of problematisations. I would be interested to explore further how the discourse of some groups of children, namely

indigenous and rural, as already disadvantaged, and the policies which aim to reduce developmental gaps (such as 'Cuna Mas'), work to reinforce inequalities by making low early childhood development outcomes commonsense and rendering any alternative unrecognizable.

In examining the formation and implementation of 'Cuna Mas', and reflecting about my own previous experience as Director of the programme, a critical auto-ethnography has been deployed to reconstruct and analyse the different contexts and processes in which the programme was conceived, written, and implemented. This has involved not only a deep exploration of my personal archives, including policy documents, emails, videos and notes, but most significantly, a critical examination of myself; the actions taken, and the decisions made. At times, I have been at pains to acknowledge the multi-modality and multi-dimensionality of power, and my own role in reproducing this. However, different resources such the course on Reflexivity offered in the research programme of my doctoral studies, and extensive discussions with my supervisor and colleagues have provided important support to make sense out of this experience and learn from it.

A final word on the strengths and challenges of doing an auto-ethnography. As already mentioned, the insider perspective provides a unique position from where to broadly explore how policies are made and enacted, and, more specifically, to analyse the micro and macro dimensions framing the Peruvian policy turn toward early childhood development. However, there are also some limitations related to doing an auto-ethnography. By writing retrospectively and selectively about past events, experiences, and emotions; I have probably left out a high proportion of what I saw, heard and did over the course of the two years I spend managing the programme. Another researcher might have selected other themes and other issues to focus on. For example, my data could be analysed with greater attention to the processes of negotiation and mediation both within 'Cuna Mas' and with other Ministries or international organisations, or to describing and making explicit characteristics of 'Cuna Mas' culture and organisation. I could have also taken advantage of my privileged position as former director to interview 'Cuna Mas' staff at local level in order to explore whether the tensions and conflicts between the different understandings of children and child development I felt were also an issue in their daily lives. Furthermore, I could have, as initially intended, conduct ethnographic observations and interviews with families receiving 'Cuna Mas' services to trace the dominant discourses to practices at the level of families and better understand the effects and implications of the programme upon children's experiences and development, and in shaping or changing parents' beliefs, values and practices. In effect,

this is something I wish I could had accomplished but due to time and resource limitations I decided to focus on the existing data, including the various policy documents and my own personal experience. In hindsight, however, I am certain this was the right choice to make.

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Appendix 1: Policy documents and other artefacts revised

- Aide Memoire, 28th March 2012.
- Aide Memoire, 14th November, 2011
- Aide memoire, 5th June 2012.
- Anexo 2. Contenidos mínimos de un programa presupuestal con enfoque de resultados.
- Budgeting for Results Commission Report, 2014.
- Currículo de visitas domiciliarias. Institute for Fiscal Studies, Londres, Reino Unido, 2010.
- Currículo del Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias del Programa Nacional Cuna Más, 2012.
- DS N° 003-MIDIS-2012, Decree that creates the National Programme 'Cuna Mas'.
- Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO) 2010.
- Estrategia Nacional de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social (ENDIS), MIDIS, 2012.
- 'Gana Perú', Plan de Gobierno, 2011.
- Guía de Cuidado Diurno, Programa Nacional Cuna Más, 2014.
- IDB, Terms of Reference for the Implementation and adaptation of the curriculum of 'Cuna Mas' home visiting program (2012).
- Informe de avances y contactos del Programa Cuna Más, 2011.
- Law 29792 that creates the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion.
- Lineamientos para los Acompañantes Técnicos y Facilitadores del Programa Nacional Cuna Más, 2012.
- Lineamientos del Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias del Programa Nacional Cuna Más, 2012.
- Lineamientos para la Gestión Articulada Intersectorial e Intergubernamental para promover el desarrollo infantil temprano 'Primera Infancia Primero' (RS N° 413-2013-PCM).
- MEF (2016). Evaluaciones de impacto del sector 040 'Desarrollo e Inclusión Social' en el marco del Presupuesto por resultados (PpR).
- Notes on adapting the Jamaican curriculum (2012).
- PAHO/WHO 2012.
- Power point presentation during GIZ workshop (2012).
- Power point presentation to President Ollanta Humala, February, 2012

- Programa de Desarrollo Infantil Temprano para Beneficiarios de Familias en Acción.
- Resolución de Dirección Ejecutiva N° 032-2012-MIDIS/PNCM – Aprueba los “Lineamientos Técnicos de la Propuesta Piloto – Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias del Programa Nacional Cuna Más”.
- Resolución de Dirección Ejecutiva N° 122-2012-MIDIS/PNCM – Aprueba la Directiva N° 002-2012-MIDIS/PNCM “Lineamientos para la Constitución de Gestión Comunal – Servicio de Acompañamiento a Familias (Programa Piloto).

Appendix 2: Early childhood framework

ECD outcomes
1. Children born between 37 and 4 weeks of pregnancy and with adequate weight (over 2,500 g)
2. Children under 12 months with secure attachment
3. Children between 0 and 36 months with adequate nutritional status
4. Children between 9 and 36 months communicate verbally in effective ways
5. Children between 12 and 18 months walk by themselves
6. Children between 2 and 5 years learn to regulate their emotions and behaviours
7. Children between 2 and 5 years develop the symbolic function

Factors
1. Nutritional status of pregnant women and children under 24 months
2. Health status of pregnant women and just born babies
3. Mother emotional status
4. Mothers' life style (smoking and alcoholism)
5. Violence against women and children
6. Health status of children under 24 months
7. Health and nutritional practices
8. Quality of interactions
9. Physical and social environments

Interventions
1. Micronutrients (iron and folic acid) to fertile and pregnant women
2. Counselling and support on maternal sensitivity to pregnant women
3. Counselling on breast feeding to pregnant women in last trimester and women with children under 6 months
4. Screening, detection and treatment of depression, anxiety and stress on pregnant women and women with children under 5 years
5. Screening and treatment of urinary infections and HIV in pregnant women
6. Promote skin contact between mother and the new born
7. Delayed umbilical cord clamping of the neonate
8. Screening of disorder and delays in new born
9. Iron supplementation to children under 6 months
10. Micronutrient supplementation to children between 6 and 36 months
11. Anaemia treatment for iron deficiency to children between 6 and 36 months
12. Propose extending maternity license to 6 months

Interventions
13. Counselling on supplementary feeding to mothers/caregivers of children under 24 months
14. Counselling and support to parents/caregivers on motor development on children under 18 months
15. Counselling on hand washing to mothers/caregivers of children under 24 months
16. Educational sessions and support to parents/caregivers to promote reading to the child between 9 and 36 months in the mother tongue
17. Counselling and support parents/caregivers to promote adult-child interactions and improve children's communication capacities
18. Complete immunizations plan on rotavirus and pneumococci
19. Treatment of acute diarrhoea and acute respiratory diseases on children under 5
20. Screening and treatment of disorders and deficiencies in children under 5
21. Educational group sessions to parents to promote self-regulation and behaviour in children between 2 and 5
22. Educational group sessions to teacher to promote self-regulation and behaviour in children between 2 and 5
23. Develop free play between peers in services for children between 2 and 5 years
24. Exposition to significant experiences that promote learning in services for children between 2 and 5 years
25. Promote adequate rearing practices and positive discipline
26. Training and support to caregivers of children coming out of institutional care
27. Promote equal relationships between men and women within the community
28. Treat cases of violence against women
29. Provide water and sanitation and promote hygiene in household with no access to services or with access but poor hygiene practices
30. Improve physical conditions of households with cook with wood fire or have precarious homes
31. Counselling to parents/caregivers and institutions on organisation of physical spaces to provide autonomous activity and play of children

Own elaboration, based on the Guidelines 'Primera Infancia Primero'.