Norma Rudolph

An Autoethnographic Study of Post-Apartheid South African Policy for Young Children

Hope for a Convivial Society

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND
PSYCHOLOGY

Norma Rudolph

An Autoethnographic Study of Post-Apartheid South African Policy for Young Children

Hope for a Convivial Society

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Cover: Maple, my writing companion through the changing Finnish seasons.
Photo by Norma Rudolph

ABSTRACT

This study concerns the potential of early childhood policy to construct flourishing sociabilities and to bring about liberatory change for children, their families and communities in post-apartheid South Africa. The thesis combines a decolonial project with a poststructuralist policy analysis and reflexivity as genealogy with autoethnography as a call to action. The autoethnography draws on my experience in South African early childhood policy and practice over several decades, as well as public policy documents and my personal archive of reports, correspondence and notes from that period. The thesis develops a series of arguments. First, that the South African government constructs early childhood services narrowly as preparing young children for school and work in a capitalist society on the assumption that this can change their economic circumstances. Second, the stated intention of policies to address poverty and inequality, has been thwarted by the uncritical acceptance of taken-for-granted global discourses, such as narrow notions of evidence, western child development, understanding the child as return on investment and referencing urban middle-class contexts and values. Third, continual colonial thinking has constructed knowledge and power hierarchies and has silenced debate and diverse constructions of childhood and society that might inspire radically different futures. As a call to action, I flag appreciative dialogical strategies that have attempted to resist the government problematisations. To employ reflexivity as genealogy, I deconstruct my own problem proposals in autobiographical vignettes. I identify the tensions between my liberatory intentions and the requirements of post-structuralist deconstruction as the most difficult challenge throughout my study. I identify as a wayfarer on this research journey and briefly introduce some of the exciting post-humanist and new materialist theoretical strands that have sustained and nurtured me on the latter part of the journey and that offer potentials for opening up a territory for future wayfaring that might lead to a plethora of alternatives energising pluriversal politics, and many possibilities for flourishing sociabilities (including more-than-human sociabilities), in which all enjoy harmonious lives of meaning and dignity.

Keywords: early childhood, autoethnography, policy analysis, knowledge and power hierarchies, decoloniality, South Africa

TIIVISTELMÄ (ABSTRACT IN FINNISH)

Tutkimuksessa selvitetään, voidaanko varhaislapsuuteen liittyvien politiikkojen avulla rakentaa kulttuurienvälistä yhteiseloa sekä saada aikaan lasten, heidän perheidensä ja yhteisöjen emansipaatiota apartheidin jälkeisessä Etelä-Afrikassa. Väitöskirja yhdistää dekolonialistisen projektin jälkistrukturalistiseen politiikka-analyysiin ja refleksiivisyyden genealogiana autoetnografiseen toimenpide-ehdotukseen. Autoetnografiassa hyödynnän vuosikymmenten mittaista kokemustani Etelä-Afrikan varhaislapsuutta koskevista politiikoista ja käytänteistä sekä julkispoliittisia asiakirjoja ja henkilökohtaisia arkistojani, jotka sisältävät raportteja, kirjeenvaihtoa ja muistiinpanoja kyseiseltä ajalta. Väitöskirjassa kehitetään joukko väittämiä. Ensinnäkin Etelä-Afrikan hallitus tulkitsee varhaislapsuuden palvelut kapea-alaisesti. Niiden katsotaan valmistavan pikkulapsia kouluun ja työhön kapitalistisessa yhteiskunnassa olettaen, että tämä voi muuttaa heidän taloudellisia olosuhteitaan. Toinen väittämä on, että politiikan tavoitteeksi määritelty köyhyyteen ja epätasa-arvoon puuttuminen on tehty tyhjäksi hyväksymällä kritiikittömästi globaaleja diskursseja, jotka liittyvät esimerkiksi rajoittuneisiin käsityksiin näytöstä, länsimaisiin näkemyksiin lapsen kehityksestä, lapsen näkemiseen tuottona sijoitetulle pääomalle sekä urbaaneihin, keskiluokkaisiin konteksteihin ja arvoihin. Kolmanneksi esitetään, että yhä jatkuva kolonialistinen ajattelu on tuottanut tieto- ja valtahierarkioita ja vaientanut keskustelun sekä monimuotoiset tulkinnat lapsuudesta ja yhteiskunnasta, jotka saattaisivat siivittää olennaisesti erilaisia tulevaisuuksia. Toimenpide-ehdotuksena korostan arvostavia dialogisia strategioita, joilla on yritetty vastustaa hallituksen problematisointeja. Käytän refleksiivisyyttä genealogiana purkamalla omat ongelmanasetteluni autobiografisina vinjetteinä. Tunnistan, että emansipatoristen päämäärieni ja jälkistrukturalistisen dekonstruktion vaatimusten väliset jännitteet ovat suurin haaste tutkimuksessani. Tutkimusmatkallani esittelen lyhyesti kiehtovia jälkihumanistisia ja uusia materialistisia teoriasuuntauksia, jotka ovat kannatelleet minua matkani jälkipuoliskolla. Ne avaavat myös mahdollisuuksia tuleviin löytöretkiin ja sitä kautta moniin vaihtoehtoihin, jotka voivat synnyttää pluriversaaleja politiikkoja ja kukoistavaa yhteisöllisyyttä (myös ihmistä laajemmasta näkökulmasta), jossa kaikilla on oikeus harmoniseen, merkitykselliseen ja arvokkaaseen elämään.

Asiasanat: varhaislapsuus, autoetnografia, politiikka-analyysi, tiedon ja vallan hierarkiat, dekolonisaatio, Etelä-Afrikka

Author's address   Norma Rudolph
                            Department of Education
                            P.O. Box 35
                            FI-40014 University of Jyväskylä
                            Email: normarudolph610@gmail.com

Supervisors   Professor Maarit Alasuutari
                            Department of Education
                            University of Jyväskylä

                            Professor Zsuzsa Millei
                            Faculty of Education and Culture
                            University of Tampere

Reviewers   Dr Radhika Viruru
                            Clinical Professor
                            Department of Teaching, Learning and Culture (TLAC)
                            Texas A&M University

                            Professor Karin Murris
                            Professor of Early Childhood Education
                            University of Oulu (Finland) and
                            Emerita Professor of Pedagogy and Philosophy
                            University of Cape Town (South Africa)

Opponent   Dr. Radhika Viruru

APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE

TABLE

ACRONYMS

AfECN	African Early Childhood Network
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECDAN	Early Childhood Development Action Network
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
Grade R	pre-school programme for children in the year before entering the first grade of primary school
Grade RR	pre-school programme for children in the year before Grade R
HRAP	Human Rights Approach to Programming
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
LETCEE	Little Elephant Training Centre for Early Education
NCF	National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four
NCRC	National Children's Right's Committee
NELDS	National Early Learning Standards
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NGO	non-government organisation
NIECDP	National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy
NIP	National Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Development in South Africa (2005-2010)
NPO	non-profit organization
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
RTO	Resource and training organization (includes non-government organisations and government institutions)
SASO	South African Students' Organization
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNESCO	the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WPR	What is the problem represented to be?

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Sub-study I

Rudolph, N. (2017). Hierarchies of knowledge, incommensurabilities and silences in South African ECD policy: Whose knowledge counts? *Journal of Pedagogy / Pedagogický Casopis, 8*(1), 77-98. https://doi.org/10.1515/jped-2017-0004

Sub-study II

Rudolph, N., Millei, Z., & Alasuutari, M. (2019). Data practices and inequality in South African early childhood development policy: Technocratic management versus social transformation. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 9*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.756

Sub-study III

Rudolph, N. (2021). Revealing colonial power relations in early childhood policy making: An autoethnographic story on selective evidence. *Journal of Childhood, Education & Society, 2*(1), 14-28. https://doi.org/10.37291/2717638X.20212158

The author of this thesis is the sole author of the first and third publications and the first author of the second publication. The second and third authors of the second article are both supervisors of the first author. The author conceptualized the thesis based on three decades of experience in the field, undertook all the analysis, reviewed the literature, wrote and rewrote the thesis, including the three publications, based on direction, advice and comments from supervisors as part of an article-based doctoral study.

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background, motivation and direction

1.1.1   The legacy of colonialism and apartheid

This study investigates the potential of early childhood policy as a tool for social change. I analyse how complex power and knowledge hierarchies produced policy for young children since the official end of apartheid in South Africa. When the African National Congress (ANC) came to power in South Africa through the first democratic election in 1994, it set out to address the legacies of apartheid, especially poverty and inequality. Early childhood policy was identified as one strategy to build an equitable, convivial society. However, government policy has not delivered on this promise. Although some gains have been made, South Africa is now one of the most unequal countries in the world and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequality, hunger, and fear. Although the primary focus of this study is early childhood policy in the period after 1994, a few significant historical events are offered here for orientation, given the significance of the historical power and knowledge hierarchies emerging from colonialism and apartheid.

The Dutch East India Company established a permanent station on South African shores in 1652 and initiated the process of dispossession, plunder and subjugation (South African History Online, 2011b). During the Napoleonic Wars, when European imperial powers were forming coalitions, the British annexed the Cape Colony and officially started a settlement in 1820 (South African History Online, 2011a). Conflict followed between British, Boer Republic and indigenous peoples with increasing dispossession of land, livestock and labour. South Africa formally achieved its independence from Britain in 1910 with the establishment of the Union of South Africa, which ended when it became a republic and left the Commonwealth in 1961 (Makin, 1997).

The National Party ruled South Africa from 1948, when it officially instituted Apartheid, the policy designed to enable a minority of the nation's population (classified as white) to dominate the country. This policy has its roots in colonial history from as early as 1788, when Dutch colonizers started separating 'white settlers'[1] and 'native Africans' (Facing History and Ourselves, 2021). Before the ANC came to power in 1994, the 'white' minority owned most of the land and enjoyed political power and the lion's share of government funded services. There were unequal schools, health services and virtually no early childhood services for those classified as 'non-whites' (History.com, 2020).

Alongside many other colonized countries, South Africa has suffered "brutal dispossession of human and more-than-human worlds and a vicious extraction of human and more-than-human labor" (Povinelli, 2021, p. ix). This unequal relationship between western imperial and colonized countries persists long after the colonizing countries have withdrawn and lives on in hierarchies constructed within the colonized country. Imperial political and economic systems have constructed what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls the 'abyssal line' (Santos, 2007). This imaginary line divides historically colonized worlds, constructing those on the other side of this line as 'not-yet' beings and confining them to suffering "unremitting dehumanisation and social invisibility" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 124). Global histories of colonization have subjugated indigenous peoples and their ways of knowing and being. Peoples in South Africa have been pushed off their ancestral land and the capitalist economy has taken resources, land and labour from people without consideration of damage or the consequences of intergenerational trauma. Priorities of connectedness and collaboration have been displaced by priorities of 'growth', 'progress', greed and individualism, giving birth to unequal power and knowledge hierarchies inherent in liberalism, capitalism and patriarchy.

Resistance to apartheid took many forms over the years, from non-violent demonstrations, protests and strikes to political action and eventually to armed resistance. Three important movements challenged apartheid, the African National Congress (ANC) founded in 1912, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) that broke away from the ANC in 1958 and the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) formed in the 1960 and became known as the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) (Lissoni, Soske, Erlank, Nieftagodien, & Badsha, 2012). Apartheid formally ended in 1994 with the first election in which all adults had the right to vote. The ANC was elected to power and Nelson Mandela became the first black president of South Africa. This peaceful transition was accompanied by much relief and euphoria. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was an important step towards healing the wounds of apartheid (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998). However, the fundamental policy agreements of the negotiated settlement perpetuate hierarchies and do not go far enough in acknowledging and making reparations

---

[1] Double inverted commas are used for direct quotations. Single inverted commas are used to identify 'scare quotes' as suggested by Bacchi, where the contingency of a term is not immediately visible (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016).

for ancestral catastrophes of dispossession, extraction and subjugation (Madlingozi, 2017; Ramose, 2014).

International and regional organisations, donors and early childhood policy actors in South Africa, have also contributed to colonial thinking since the end of apartheid. In the 'pre-election' period, when the international boycott had ended, it was possible for South Africans to engage with organisations such as UNICEF and UNESCO and participate in networks such as the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Although UNICEF could at that time not yet work with the apartheid government, it partnered with the National Children's Right's Committee (NCRC) and jointly published a situation analysis with an agenda for action decided at a conference in June 1993 (September & Mokgoro, 1993). The NCRC was an initiative of the National Liberation Movement, together with selected NGOs. The conference participants were all urban middle class professionals. The meeting expressed the intention to have a bottom-up approach, acknowledging the diversity in the country and the need for the children's movement to be as inclusive as possible. It also suggested that the gaps in the data of the situation analysis should be filled with 'grass roots' input. The keynote address identified the need to "change the normative arguments about development" and recognise that poor people should no longer primarily be seen as "passive beneficiaries of commodities and transfers, but as key actors in poverty alleviation" (September & Mokgoro, 1993, p. 4).

> The seemingly useful engagement of scientific economists on what can and should be done is challenged by ethical arguments that are based on a dream about the possibilities of a future world ... a dream about rights people should have (September & Mokgoro, 1993, p. 4).

Despite these commitments to change the narrative and a presentation on an action-oriented Human Rights Approach to Programming (HRAP) (Jonsson, 2003), the primary commitment was to the "legal and constitutional defence of children" (September & Mokgoro, 1993, p. 47). The legal approach to rights has increasingly side-lined early childhood community-based action-oriented approaches over the past three decades.

Since then, a number of South African professionals and organisations have participated actively in a range of international networks and internationally sponsored research that have promoted the dominant global early childhood discourses. The 1990 Jomtien Declaration (UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section, 1990) contributed towards the current dominant construction of Early Childhood Development (ECD)[2] primarily as preparation for primary school. By identifying Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as an important first step in the campaign for universal access to education, the 1990 Declaration elevated the global policy priority of early childhood. At that time there was still a strong recognition of the need to support families and

---

[2]   I use both ECD and early childhood, preferring to use the broader concept 'early childhood' when it does not refer specifically the concept used in South African or other international policy.

communities to achieve wellbeing through decentralized, innovative and integrated approaches as set out in the statement that ECCE arrangements could involve "families, communities, or institutional programmes, as appropriate" (UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section, 1990, p. 76). The 1990 Declaration also acknowledged the need firstly for "international solidarity and equitable and fair economic relations in order to redress existing economic disparities" and secondly, that "(a)ll nations have valuable knowledge and experiences to share for designing effective educational policies and programmes" (UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section, 1990, p. 77). By constructing ECCE as an integral part of basic education the subjugation of the care component began. The trend, since then, towards institutional provision with a decreasing decision-making role for communities can be seen in South Africa. Despite the establishment of regional and pan-African, political and economic, as well as early childhood organisations and networks, that strive for well-being on the continent, African early childhood policy continues to be strongly influenced by international 'experts' and organisations.

1.1.2   Colonial thinking constructs and perpetuates hierarchies

Colonial thinking and dominant global discourses have perpetuated hierarchies initiated by colonialism and apartheid. During apartheid in South Africa all children were constructed as empty vessels to be filled with information and Christian values. In the 1950s, Verwoerd, the then Minister of Education, drawing on the science of eugenics said that Africans were meant to be 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' and consequently needed to be filled with a different kind of information in their own separate education system in line with their economic futures (South African History Online, 2011c). After the end of apartheid in 1994, the possibility of a more equal society and childhood flickered briefly, with the end of apartheid and the promise of new education and other policy. However, despite the introduction of universal suffrage with the end of apartheid, economic hierarchies and spatial inequality has persisted.

Despite the promise of social justice in and through education this has not materialised. In addition to the separate systems of privately and publicly funded schools, there is a hierarchy within the public school system. The geographic location and economic status of families, determines which school their children can attend. School governing bodies are allowed to charge fees to supplement the human and material resources provided by government (Christie & McKinney, 2017; Marais, 2011). While some schools in the geographic areas previously classified as 'white', enjoy high teacher child ratios and excellent physical resources, young children have drowned at school in poorly built and maintained pit toilets in rural areas.

In 2020, Amnesty International reported that

the South African education system is characterised by crumbling infrastructure, over-crowded classrooms, inequality and is failing too many of its children, with the poor

16

hardest hit. The result of this modern-day South Africa is that a child's experience of education still very much depends on where they are born, how wealthy they are, and the colour of their skin (Amnesty International, 2020).

Early Childhood Development (ECD) services are even more inequitable, as they are unevenly funded and rely primarily on user fees. The 1996 Interim policy for early childhood development, introduced the term 'Early Childhood Development' and defined it as "an umbrella term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially" (Department of Education, 1996, p. 3). The definition of the new term ECD intentionally included children from birth to nine years to flag the need for a safety-net of integrated services, including education, care and health, for the wellbeing of the entire age-range. Since 1994, however, early childhood policy has prioritised extending the schooling system downward with a single-year pre-school programme for children in the year before entering the first grade of primary school, referred to as Grade R. This has been "systematically introduced and expanded" as the primary focus of ANC government ECD policy "with the intention of preparing children from low socio-economic status communities for primary schooling" (M. Samuels et al., 2015, p. 1). The introduction of Grade R as a bridge between home and school is significant for this study. It marks a decision to prioritise teaching and learning outside the home (mostly in schools) rather than flexible comprehensive services that support families and communities to ensure the holistic well-being of young children. This thesis argues that the selected approach has proved to be a dismal failure in terms of equity. The only children who might be benefitting are those who are already most advantaged (Biersteker, 2018). This could be expected, given the inequality across the school system and the continued spatial segregation in post-apartheid South Africa.

Early childhood policy after the end of apartheid has been driven mostly by urban middle-class officials and experts, who have themselves succeeded in an education system dominated by the colonial narratives of 'progress' and 'development' (Ebrahim, 2014). This elite now promote global economised discourses with narrow goals of school readiness and return on investment. Early childhood services are seen as the panacea for poverty and other social ills, by way of improving school outcomes for 'poor black children'. This means that ECD policies continue to help translate large scale and long-held power-matrices of the post-colonial South African society into problems located in black communities. Instead of addressing structural poverty and power relations, these elite policy makers rewrite entrenched power-hierarchies into new reasonings. Many years after the imperial powers left our country, many cling to the perceptions of people as 'backward', 'behind', or 'beneath' that were used in the colonial era to justify conquest and civilizing projects (Wenzel, 2009).

1.1.3 Possibilities for a convivial society: Research task and questions

Given this sorry state-of-affairs, in South Africa, with increasing poverty, inequality and fear, I-investigate the potential of early childhood policy as a tool for change by analysing policy for young children. I bring to the study my personal experience of participating in early childhood policy making in South Africa over the past nearly four decades. As an active participant in early childhood policy in different positions, including government and non-government organisations, I want to understand why we have not made more progress in building a convivial society.

Using an autoethnographic approach, I analyse South African early childhood policy to reveal its potential to achieve change and enable all to thrive and flourish. While my primary focus is South Africa, this research might also have international relevance. I investigate what kind of policy and services could inspire radically different visions of the future, that lead to collaborative action that might produce food sovereignty, energy sovereignty and educational sovereignty for all.

Motivated by my concern about persistent poverty and the large number of children who are still hungry and afraid decades after apartheid has ended and the ANC government promised to redress the legacy of inequality, these questions guide the research:

- How have complex colonial legacies, such as power and knowledge hierarchies, relations and discourses produced policy for young children since the official end of apartheid?
- What is the potential of early childhood policy as a tool for social change?
- How does the selection and promotion of certain kinds of knowledges produce different kinds of change?
- How can the discussion of diverse constructions of childhood and society promote action for liberatory social change?

Through reading, writing, thinking and conversation, I have honed my reflexivity (Pillow, 2015). I draw on Bacchi's Foucauldian post-structural approach (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) to reveal policy assumptions, 'problems', silences and implications. I started the study with my own tendencies towards a normative mindset and have struggled with my hard-wired assumptions as I grapple with the possibilities of other visions of childhood and society for decolonisation and liberation for young children, their families and communities.

I develop a decolonial conceptual framework, drawing on 'pluriversal politics' (Escobar, 2020), as one possibility to resist the progress narrative. Pluriversal politics links Ubuntu with Buen Vivir, the social philosophy inspiring movements in South America. It offers a vision of a just world and includes the more-than-human in the same sociability to enable all to enjoy a good life and to "fight for lives of joy, meaning and dignity" (Escobar, 2020, p. xxvi). I reflect on the possibilities of meshworks of collectives and communities weaving together many possibilities for convivial futures (Escobar, 2020, p. xxvi).

1.2 Critical policy analysis: Unravelling complexity and contestation

Policy analysis and policy making are complex subjects of much debate (Rizvi & Lingard, 2013, p. 131; Stevens, 2011; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997). Policy analysis seeks to understand and unravel the complex relationships in policy making. Politics, economic and social forces, institutions, people, interests, events and chance all interact in sometimes unexpected ways in policy making (Taylor et al., 1997). Basic belief systems or paradigms based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions determine how one understands any construction, including policy. I view policy as a messy, non-linear process emerging from and generating contested relationships (Rizvi & Lingard, 2013). It is interactive, multi-layered, and much more than the text in official legislation or other public policy pronouncements. Policy includes both the production of text and the practices that derive from the text and feed into its formulation, along with all the complex influences in each context and stage. Policies are 'assemblages' rather than discrete things (Shore & Wright, 2011). The term 'actants' is used to ascribe agency through which policies shift action and interact with other agencies in dynamic and interdependent and unpredictable ways (Shore & Wright, 2011). Policy constructs "temporary settlements between diverse, competing and unequal forces within civil society and the state itself and between associated discursive regimes" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2013, p. 5). Expressed slightly differently, policies are constructed through engagements, including state, civil society and the economy (Taylor et al., 1997).

Policy both creates and reflects the worlds in which it is embedded and serves as an organising principle or way of conceptualising social relations. Analysing policy, involves consideration of prior history of significant events, particular ideologies, political, social and economic context as well as particular individuals, as they all change the form and outcomes of policies (Taylor et al., 1997). Power and knowledge hierarchies influence the policy process forged through contestation between different interests. Tensions exist in each context of the policy process and may be overt or more subtle.

While making, implementing and evaluating policy are not discrete steps, these interlinked activities can provide a framework for discussing the policy process by foregrounding contexts, such as, influence, policy text and production, as they all generate interactive, synergistic sets of relationships that constitute policy (Rizvi & Lingard, 2013). These contexts include a range of different people and institutions, as well as social and economic forces. Complex relations emerge between government and civil society as well as within government and civil society. Since policy is not rationally made, but achieved in incremental steps each of which involves exercise of power, there can be no simple answer to the question, 'Who makes policy?' Policy is a process in which "actors, agents, technologies interact in different sites, creating or consolidating new rationalities of governance and regimes of knowledge and power" (Shore &

Wright, 2011, pp. 1–2). There are a range of individuals and groups that participate or should be considered in policy making, including issue networks, that include academics, consultants and interest group representatives.

Similarly, questions about the production of policy are complex, given that process consists of key events, such as the enactment of legislation. There is an on-going tension between what government believes to be possible or expedient and what interest groups believe they can persuade government to do. It is these on-going tensions between the contexts that are of interest. Legislation is frequently the "suturing together and over competing interests and values" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2013, p. 6). In the publication of policy documents, political speeches or press releases, a government seeks to present an "imagined future in the public interest" that represents the public good and in so doing, masking "whose interests they actually represent" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2013). Policies are not necessarily responses to perceived problems, as the 'problem' can be constructed to give legitimacy to the policy's intentions (Rizvi & Lingard, 2013, p. 6). Bacchi (2009) alerts us to consider the way that the 'problem' is represented, as frequently the way it is represented might be quite different from the way that policy beneficiaries experience those problems. The way that governments view the problem frequently reflect a party-political agenda or the dominant global discourses.

While this study does not explicitly concern policy implementation, this too is never straightforward and can have unintended as well as intended consequences. Resource allocation is a key influence on the potential gap between the intention and action. Sometimes government policy pronouncements are symbolic and there is no intention to implement. The exclusions and silences are also relevant. Policy can also be used to exclude certain issues. This discussion of policy analysis that follows delves deeper into different policy contexts.

1.2.1   Policy, power and political transformation

Policy offers a way "to study processes of political transformation" (Shore & Wright, 2011, p. 11). By creating links between agents, institutions, technologies and discourses, policy "brings all these elements into alignment" thus making it "analytically productive" (Shore & Wright, 2011, p. 11). Foucault's conception of 'discourse', 'power' and 'subjectivity' guides this study (Foucault, 1991a). Foucault explains that "power exists only as exercised by some on others" and "only when it is put into action" (Foucault, 2000, p. 340). Power does not act "directly and immediately on others" but "acts on their actions" (Foucault, 2000, p. 340). Therefore, although power is "inscribed in a field of sparse available possibilities underpinned by permanent structures", a 'relation of power' opens a "field of responses, reactions, results and possible inventions" (Foucault, 2000, p. 340). I understand that discourses and power are entangled in many ways. While discourse is an instrument that effects power, it can also be a hindrance that initiates an opposite strategy. "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it

possible to thwart" (Foucault, 1998, pp. 100–101) Different knowledge and power hierarchies construct and resist different 'problems', assumptions and silences in policy making and analysis. Examining the constructions of problems, assumptions and silences in early childhood policies, reveals the way power works through discourses and knowledge hierarchies.

1.2.2   Entangled colonial hierarchies and the abyssal line

South Africa's colonial history has left a legacy of inequalities that persist long after the colonial and apartheid administrations have been dismantled. Decolonial theorists such as Walter D. Mignolo, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Mogobe Ramose and Tshepo Madlingozi explain that the colonial matrix of power produces an "entangled set of hierarchies" (Christie & McKinney, 2017, p. 164). These can be drawn together as four main domains:

> control of economy (land appropriation, exploitation of labor, control of natural re-sources); control of authority (institution, army); control of gender and sexuality (fam-ily, education) and control of subjectivity and knowledge (epistemology, education and formation of subjectivity) (Mignolo, 2009, p. 19).

Colonial thinking constructs entangled hierarchies in contemporary South African society, while decolonial thinking can stimulate resistance by delinking from "modern rationality and building other possible worlds" (Mignolo, 2007, p. 498). Dis-entangling these hierarchies helps to explain the ongoing intractable inequalities in South Africa as different cosmologies "exist in complex and entangled power relations in the present" (Christie & McKinney, 2017, p. 165). For example, young children living in poverty in rural areas and informal settlements are rendered invisible by early childhood policy, as the popular centre-based approaches do not respond to their specific needs and circumstances. Many children in rural areas need to walk long distances and face dangers to reach the nearest ECD centre. The families of many children in the greatest need cannot afford the minimal fees to enable their children to attend an ECD centre although urban middle-class policy makers insist that people will not appreciate services if they do not pay anything for them. Revealing subjugated knowledges and accommodating different visions of childhood and society might produce different early childhood policy discourses that can respond to diverse circumstances and resist inequity.

To recognise different ways of knowing and the diversity of experiences that enable the transformation of the world, Boaventura de Sousa Santos suggests we pay attention to the 'abyssal line'. The imaginary 'abyssal line' helps us understand colonial hierarchies and aids in engaging in a paradigm shift (Santos, 2007). Modern western thinking is a system of visible and invisible distinctions that divide social reality into two realms that make what is in the other realm (or on the other side of the line) invisible or non-existent. Santos identifies the interlinked domination of capitalism with the ideologies of colonialism and

patriarchy. Colonial powers, as imperialist winners have degraded the knowledges of the losers by refusing to recognise them as valid.

Western universities that use the six modern European and imperial languages derived from Greek and Latin claim that their knowledge is universal (Mignolo, 2013). These universities mostly teach the dominant knowledge on the assumption that it is the totality of understanding of the world and consequently creates ignorance about all other knowledges. The dominant epistemology serves capitalism as it divides society into the metropolitan sociability and the colonial sociability, making it possible to treat some people as sub-human. The mechanistic view of the earth under the control of humans supports the capitalistic ideology of growth and linear progress that relies on extraction. Decolonial theories challenge this western episteme and its universalising perspective that fails to acknowledge the multiple power relations that have enabled "some perspectives to be imposed on other parts of the world" (Christie & McKinney, 2017, p. 165).

1.2.2.1   Ubuntu philosophy

One of the consequences of the universalising perspective of colonialism is the subjugation of the ways of knowing and being of the colonised peoples. South African 'indigenous and local knowledge' is described in the literature as "ubuntu philosophy' (Ramose, 2015). Although the precise content of the concept 'ubuntu' is contested, it features in current academic and ethical discourses. I use ubuntu philosophy to refer to the South African indigenous cosmology. "Ubuntu is a lived and living philosophy of the Bantu-speaking peoples of Africa. It is a philosophy with a past, a present and a project in the future" (Ramose, 2014). As set out in (Rudolph, 2017) African philosophy and thinking is rooted in two fundamental concepts: ubuntu (connection and belonging) and the significant role that ancestors play in maintaining social harmony (Eagle, 2005; Mji, 2012). From this perspective, there is not a clear binary relationship between mind and body or the 'dead' and the 'living'. The dead continue to live on as 'shades' and play a very important part as guides and mentors in the family with elders as future ancestors acting as mediators between the living and the dead (Rico, 2016). Relational constructions of 'identity' are collective rather than individualistic (Keane, Khupe, & Muza, 2016). Maintaining 'harmonious relations' is critical for good health (Mji, 2012). 'Harmonious relations' refers not only to relations among humans (living and dead) but all dimensions of material and spirit worlds. My understanding of this construction acknowledges that conflict of different kinds is inevitable in all contexts. Consequently, 'harmonious relations' does not assume an absence of conflict, but a world-view based on interdependence. Harmony is sought through paying attention to dreams and messages from the spiritual world as well as conversation, guidance from elders and negotiation. It is about listening to the 'outside' and the 'inside' and accommodating multiple perspectives that can co-exist as equal.

Margaret Somerville presents a similar Australian indigenous multidimensional notion of 'Country', that is "sentient" and "consists of people,

animals, plants, Dreamings; underground, earth, soils, minerals and waters, surface water, and air" (Somerville, 2014, p. 184). Authors referred to in this section and others promote similar frameworks for distinguishing between indigenous and western ways of thinking and negotiating our participation as the human species in complex ecological systems. Somé (1995) describes western knowledge as "stiff and inflexible" on account of being "wrapped in logical rhetoric" (Somé, 1995, p. 204) and vividly portrays the institutional racism and exploitative economies of colonialism.

Since ubuntu philosophy can serve all of humanity not only in Africa, Ramose promotes dialogues among all philosophies (Ramose, 2015). While ubuntu philosophy and western philosophy are different, this does not necessarily mean that one is better, but western philosophy assumes that it is universal and can explain everything. Ubuntu philosophy, like other indigenous knowledges, accommodates multiplicity. From an ubuntu perspective, everything is connected and relational. Knowledge is a way of being. Time is relational and does not march forward in a line from moment to moment with 'progress' and 'growth' as the ultimate goals.

Understanding this entangled hierarchy of power and knowledge helps explain the legacy of inequality in South Africa. For example, indigenous people were dispossessed of their livestock and ancestral lands, through "different forms of labour control, (which) were put in place in coercive ways long before apartheid institutionalised these" (Christie & McKinney, 2017, p. 162). Indigenous knowledge has been subjugated in the entire South African education system. By analysing the different discourses of the South African liberation movement, Madlingozi (2017) argues that the particular assimilationist discourse of the ANC reconfirms hierarchical social structures that "perpetuate an anti-black bifurcated society" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 129). The historical discourses of African nationalist struggle for decolonisation reveal differences in the positions of the ANC and other liberation movements, specifically, the PAC and BCM (Madlingozi, 2017). This in turn informs the ANC policy choices in the new South African Constitution and its potential for social and economic change.

1.2.2.2   1996 Constitution: opportunity or barrier to change

Social exclusion in South Africa continues nearly three decades after the end of apartheid. Economic and spatial segregation persists and large numbers of people are dehumanised and suffer racial discrimination (Gentle, 2011). Many people living in remote rural areas or shanti towns, known as informal settlements, are banished to the other side of the 'abyssal line', while most white people have been joined by the new 'black' middle-class on their side of the 'line'. Some argue that the 'transformation' of society since 1994, does not represent a fundamental rupture with the inherited colonial social configuration and that the majority remain excluded and impoverished (Madlingozi, 2017).

The 1996 South African Constitution, that emerged from the negotiated settlement that ended Apartheid, has been acclaimed internationally and is heralded by the ANC as the birth of the 'rainbow nation' and the master frame

for social emancipation. However, this view is not held by all (Gentle, 2011; Madlingozi, 2017; Ramose, 2010) and it is seen as complicit in perpetuating hierarchies, separation and unequal social relations inherited from colonialism.

Ubuntu philosophy (Ramose 2010) and the 'abyssal line' (Santos, 2007) reveal the role of the Constitution in perpetuating colonial hierarchies. Ramose (2014) points out that ubuntu only featured as an 'endnote' in the South African Interim Constitution of 1993 and was then excluded entirely from 1996 Constitution. He explains that through the compromise the ANC leadership made with the corporate sector before 1994, historical injustice became legal injustice protected in the new legal system. The compromise "exonerated the white corporations and the white citizens from the part they played in the exploitation and deprivation of blacks" and "enabled whites to transfer almost all their accumulated wealth … almost intact to the new South Africa" and also enabled the ANC to "implement a policy of black elite formation" (Ramose, 2014, p. 122). Ubuntu philosophy takes motion as the principle of being, as everything is in constant flow and perpetual exchange and implies being in constant change while the constitution generates a form of arbitrary finality.

This can be viewed as the Constitution failing to dismantle the "elite compromise and its neo-colonial structure" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 128). Humanitarians, academics and activists assume that social justice discourses can bring about the necessary change, since the constitution commits to "recognising and incorporating the historically oppressed and marginalised through a programme of social justice" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 128). Looking back at the different African responses to colonial defeats of the nineteenth century, reveals the "deepening contradictions between the assimilationist politics of social justice and the post 'abyssal line' politics of liberation" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 130). Some African chiefs and kings converted to Christianity and sought western education while others resisted colonization, choosing instead African and black nationalism (Mostert, 1993; Ramose, 1998). The ANC accepted the "sovereignty and legitimacy of the settler-created state" and wanted the humanity and rights of Africans to be recognised (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 131). The ANC demanded that all adults have the right to vote in a multiracial transforming country with equality and fair distribution of resources. However, the ANC construction of the human in 'human rights' is the humanity imposed during colonization. In contrast, according to the PAC, achieving national independence required a programme of national consciousness through which Africans were to reclaim their humanity for themselves, build a multi-ethnic African unity, destroy white supremacy, and struggle for the dissolution of the settler-state through the restoration of the sovereignties of subjugated kingdoms and the return of dispossessed land (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 132).

It is not possible to go back in time, to know how the outcome might have been different had the ANC position not prevailed and had the democratisation paradigm not triumphed over the decolonial paradigm. However, it is helpful to examine these different discourses to better understand the possibilities for future change. From a decolonial perspective, the constitution has not produced

a fundamentally different society as the inherited separation persists and the majority remain silenced and dehumanised on the other side of the abyssal line. The current "oppressive bifurcated political and social system has obscured and narrowed the question of emancipation" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 130). Giving attention to the ANC discourses, decolonial theorists such as Ramose (Ramose, 1998, 2010, 2014, 2015) and Madlingozi (2017), reveal that the 'social justice' narrative is not as straightforward as many, and I too, had assumed for many decades. Attending to the identity of the promoters of the constitutional social justice programme, I now see that the contemporary realm of social justice is dominated by professional NGOs made up of middle-class officials who accept the legitimacy of the post-1994 dispensation. They are in "a conflictual but civil relation with the state, and mainly pursue a recognition-incorporation-distribution agenda" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 144). Social justice has been depoliticized with an emphasis instead on litigation that seeks to hold government responsible for its obligations in terms of the Constitution. The focus on individual rights has deflected attention away from "institutional racism and systemic marginalization" (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 145).

The implications of ANC discourses on rights, reveals more insight into the current situation. The unequal education system has continued, despite the ANC's recognition of education as an important basic right. Despite the promise of the Freedom Charter, to open the doors of learning for all, they "remain firmly shut to the majority of South Africans" (Badat & Sayed, 2014, p. 127). The ANC legislated for free basic public schooling and committed to paying for a standard number of teachers for all schools. However, by allowing school governing bodies to determine fees for additional costs, the schools in previously advantaged areas were able to offer much better schooling at a higher cost to those who could afford to pay. Only a small minority of the previously disenfranchised population, that had the financial means to relocate to the previously advantaged racially segregated areas, today enjoy better services, including schools. Some families have the resources to transport their children to schools in wealthier neighbourhoods. However, the vast majority remain in rural areas or have moved to informal urban areas, which lack services and adequate schooling (Goldberg, 2009).

1.3 Change through ECD policy: Constructions of knowledge, power, childhood and society

The way that the purpose, values and priorities are viewed in early childhood policy determines the kind of practices that emerge and the possibilities for social change. Talking about aims provide criteria to judge policy choices (Noddings, 2003). Complex power and knowledge hierarchies all play a part, including the actants, the selection of knowledges and different constructions of childhood and society. This thesis considers early childhood policy as a tool for change,

including ideas about how ECD is conceptualized and how it can initiate social change. Consequently, arguments about selecting and promoting particular knowledges and constructions of childhood and society are all relevant to the framing of the thesis.

All families and communities want to live in 'convivial' and 'flourishing' societies, in which their children can thrive. Critical questions revolve around what this means and how it can be achieved. All theories and concepts of childhood are social constructions that change across time and place and can be considered in relation to gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and other categories. Merely acknowledging that childhood is contextual and situated does not ensure recognition of multiple perspectives from different contexts. While consensus continues to grow within the global early childhood literature about the 'irrefutable' scientific evidence for investment in early childhood services, there is less attention given to debates about what kinds of change should constitute the aims of policy for young children and what kinds of services might then achieve the desired aims (Morabito, Vandenbroeck, & Roose, 2013).

A major tension can be found in approaches to bringing about change through early childhood policy. On one side, international consensus promotes a narrative of simple solutions and on the other side, there is the view that the kind of change that is needed is complex and requires attention to power and knowledge hierarchies and the inclusion of different constructions of childhood and society. The notion of 'prefigurative' practice is proposed as one way to challenge the single narrative, by anticipating the change we want to see through practicing the forms of social relations, decision-making, culture and human experience that are the goals of the kind of democratic society we seek (Fielding, 2007, p. 544). From this perspective, it is not only early childhood services and schools that need to change, but also all forms of public provisioning and decision-making strategies for children. Those promoting reconceptualising early childhood policy, propose that public policy is understood "as ethical and political endeavours that require explicit choices about who we think children are, what is good childhood and the purpose of public provision for children" (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 2). More importantly they suggest that constructions of childhood that could contest dominant and singular constructions should be "produced in the social arena rather than essential truths revealed through science" (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 2). In this way, services for children become sites for democratic and ethical practice involving critical thinking and "might contribute to the political project of influencing the direction change takes" (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 2). Services can become open-ended projects in which communities take responsibility for the education of their children through processes of democracy, experimentation and research (Fielding & Moss, 2010). Provision understood in this way "may come to shape an uncertain future rather than being shaped for a predictable and predetermined future" (Fielding & Moss, 2010, p. 64). Acknowledging an uncertain future generates an important mind-shift that encourages possibility rather than seeking to replicate only what has been tried and tested.

1.3.1 The power of data as policy actants

The way data is understood and used, is also significant in different positions about early childhood policy. For example, the dominant approach to data collection and analysis for policy aims at objectification and dismisses the role of ideology in its production (Vandenbroeck, 2020). However, history shows how these apparent objectifications are in fact ideological choices that veil the intended agenda. More importantly, looking more closely at the particular data that is put forward in this attempt to objectify education, reveals that "this agenda is deeply individualistic and fit to serve a competitive capitalist society" (Vandenbroeck, 2020, p. 1). Given that these choices will always be ideological rather than objective, the proposal is that we need more ideology, not less, and that policy should be the result of transparent debate.

The dominant approach to 'standards' also minimises the need for policies that respond to complexity and diversity of education systems. One reason given is to promote national economic strength and individual financial success (Noddings, 2003). The use of standards, testing and benchmark studies present one component of information as though it can represent the whole complex endeavour. This is an example of a 'scopic system' which functions "like an array of crystals that collects and focuses light on one surface" taking fragments (partial understandings) of knowledge about complex education processes and presenting them as a "fractals (a smaller versions of a whole)" (Robertson, 2012, p. 10). These fractals or disguised fragments then act as a proxy or shorthand and disguise the complexity in the policy challenge (Robertson, 2012, p. 10). Prioritising standards with the resulting emphasis on economic implications, reveals an example of the inherent contradictions in the standards setting agenda in educational practices that frequently "neglect education for personal life and for happiness in our occupations" (Noddings, 2003, p. 343).

Based on the understanding that democratic decision-making and collaborative action at the local level can generate space for change and possibility that takes into account diversity in culture and perspective, a shift is proposed in perspective from children's services to 'children's spaces' (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 2). These 'spaces' could be viewed as ethical and political undertakings or collaborative learning places

> capable of many many possibilities, including constructing knowledge (learning), identities, values; providing family support; building community solidarity; sustaining cultures and languages; improving health and well-being; developing the economy; promoting gender and other equalities; resisting injustice and exclusion; challenging and deconstructing dominant discourses and creating new ones; practicing democracy and active citizenship (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 2).

The outcomes could not be set at the outset as the process would require experimentation and "explicit choices about who we think children are, what is good childhood and the purpose of public provision for children" so that these multi-functional services can be responsive to their local communities (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 2). There is a shift from provision as static "technical and

disciplinary undertakings" to an emphasis on process, that creates "relationships and solidarities between children, between adults and between adults and children" (Moss & Petrie, 2002, p. 2). This construction of 'children's spaces' is helpful for the analysis of policy for young children in South Africa in relation to the potential contribution to the radical social change promised in the Freedom Charter and Constitution. This perspective challenges the dominant influence of neo-liberal modernity on policy for children (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Fielding, 2007; Fielding & Moss, 2010; Moss, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002). This reconceptualization is in sharp contrast with the dominant discourses promoted by international organisations.

1.3.2   International organisations and frames

As discussed in section 1.1.1, international organisations, such as UNICEF have played a significant role as policy actors in South Africa from the early 1990s. By defining policy issues in specific ways, international organisations can affect the processing of political ideas and demands and their subsequent expression in policy choices. The 'policy frames' "portray particular meanings and organize experience according to some logics" (Millei & Jones, 2014, p. 70). Different international organisations generate different frames that sometimes compete. UNICEF uses the 'child rights' frame to advocate for consensus to mobilise resources.

UNICEF's role in South African early childhood policy since 1990 has changed over time, depending on the perspectives of the international officials appointed to the Pretoria office at that time. However, an important constant has been advocacy for a unified voice to mobilise resources using definitions of issues generated in the New York UNICEF office. Some argue that while the resources are indeed needed, this kind of international consensus building might undermine debate and recognition of multiple constructions of childhood and society (Morabito et al., 2013).

International organisations, such as UNICEF and UNESCO play a major role in promoting early childhood policy globally through networks and publications. Their frames and positions are frequently accepted as universal 'truths' without sufficient debate and acknowledgement of different contexts and circumstances. The tendency to 'essentialise' childhood is constructed through uncritical stereotyping and promoting assumptions that certain characteristics are intrinsic and universal. The dominant positions of 'the international community' "armed with international conventions, a body of knowledge and specialists, media spectacles and an array of symbolic goods" can be contrasted with "the fragmentary, fleeting and contradictory ideas and practices that are part and parcel of the business of real-life people crafting a future for the next generation" (Nieuwenhuys, 2010, p. 292). Simple streamlined solutions frequently silence complexity and diversity.

Another force that unifies views on childhood is the child rights perspective which has had an important yet contradictory influence on the way that children's entitlements and agency are understood. Ratification of the Child

Rights Convention (1989) offered a global definition of 'the child' "irrespective of culture, nationality, gender, class and race" (Nieuwenhuys, 2010, p. 293). As discussed in the previous section, the 'creed of human rights' arose in the context of the expansion of colonization, with the primary focus on the rights of the settler invaders (Madlingozi, 2017, p. 136). Rights are conceptualised as rights of individual humans within western philosophy. In 2018 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly voted in favour of the Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas. Five countries, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Sweden, Hungary and Israel voted against the declaration with objections to expanding individual rights to collective rights (United Nations General Assembly, 2018). Attempts to delink rights from the global universalist definitions, have not gained traction.

An action-oriented rights-based approach was introduced as a 'Human Rights Approach to Programming' (HRAP) by UNICEF in the early 1990s (Jonsson, 2003). This approach can be used to elicit and support multiple constructions of childhood and society (Liknaitzky & Rudolph, 2003). For example, HRAP is promoted as an alternative to standard message-based communication strategies.

> People adapt and change their survival and coping strategies as the communication buzz around them makes new information available or places it in a different context. They make decisions by assessing their situation, analyzing its causes, and acting, which leads to a situation that must then be re-assessed, continuing the cycle (Ford, Odallo, & Chorlton, 2003, p. 601).

Community conversations, enable all possible options to be identified, through analysing their situation and discussing issues both amongst themselves and with outsiders and continuing to communicate "when they translate analysis into action" (Ford et al., 2003, p. 601). Instead of assuming that poor people need to be told what is best for them, this approach assumes that what they need is the space, tools and support to solve their own problems collectively. Some problems can be solved with resources from within the community, bigger problems need additional resources from outside the community and, in some situations, advocacy is needed to change policy leading to collaboration across communities or sites. However, in all cases, the process is driven by local conversation or dialogue. In the early 2000s, UNICEF Pretoria commissioned a team to contextualise HRAP to the South African context, produce a guide and introduce it through facilitating participatory processes. Several processes were initiated in a few provinces and then the approach seems to have been abandoned internationally by UNICEF. Since then, a legalistic approach to rights has dominated, with litigation selected by professional child rights activists.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, adopted July 1990, has potential but is "not a panacea to the many problems that African children face" (Kaime, 2009, p. 185). The potential lies in the "collaboration, participation and innovation of all involved in child work, including children themselves' in order to have an acceptable discursive framework (Kaime, 2009,

p. 185). This kind of action-oriented approach engages families and communities in promoting and protecting the rights and welfare of their children so that,

> (p)arents no longer see the children's rights discourse as a conspiracy drawn up by misguided government types intended to spirit away their authority over children, and children learn to develop the kind of self-confidence that any nation would require of its future leaders (Kaime, 2009, p. 183).

International organisations continue to play a major role in determining early childhood policy, especially in previously colonised countries, like those on the African continent. They draw on standard, universal, static and consensual constructions of childhood based on developmental progression, as this quotation illustrates:

> Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is increasingly recognized around the world as an essential element in realising a wide range of educational, social and economic rights. International evidence finds that the development of cognitive, language, physical and socio-emotional skills during the early childhood period provides the critical foundations to enable children to develop to their full potential in school and life (UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section, 2021, p. 6).

Despite acknowledging that young children's requirements include a "combination of good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, security and safety", children from vulnerable households and communities are identified as standing to gain most from "access to quality early learning opportunities, including pre-primary education" (UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section, 2021, p. 6). Learning in pre-primary classes is prioritised especially for those classified as vulnerable to improve overall educational achievement and enhance social equity. In addition, this kind of policy campaign is accompanied by promoting monitoring and evaluation for "better accountability, planning and policymaking" guided by "collective standards which have been agreed to at international and national levels" (UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section, 2021, p. 8). These directives are based on middle-class western constructions of early childhood and society as illustrated by these examples from the UNICEF Early Childhood Development Index 2030

> Do an activity, such as colouring or playing with building blocks
> Fasten and unfasten buttons without help (UNICEF, 2021).

African consultations, such as the current campaign to strengthen governance for effective Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) service delivery in Africa, does not mention decoloniality, indigenous knowledges or include service users in the consultation.

1.3.3 Western constructions of ECD, childhood and child development

The construction of child development is a crucial element in policy for young children (Burman, 2007; Mayall, 2013; Woodhead, 2008). Infant studies in the

early nineteenth century emerged from an interest in the concept of development from the perspective of the individual child and evolution, considering the nature versus nurture debate in terms of the relationship between genetic endowment and environmental experience (Burman, 2007; Mayall, 2013). In the mid- to late-nineteenth century, child-study societies began to observe, weigh and measure children. It is not surprising that the 'scientific' age, generated the "careful and methodical investigation of child nature, by men trained in scientific observation" (Woodhead, 2008, p. 18). Services, such as nurseries, that brought children together provided an excellent opportunity for this kind of investigation. These studies also informed the establishment of first early childhood institutions to look after street children and the 'feeble minded'.

Within urbanized and industrialized societies, psychology was directed at meeting social concerns. Child nurses, teachers and paediatricians, who were the new 'child experts' wanted tools that could be applied in rearing, training and teaching the large numbers of children who started attending nurseries, schools and clinics (Burman, 2007; Woodhead, 2008). At this time, kindergartens or nurseries increasingly provided for the "naturalisation and normalisation of children" and researchers were interested in the movement from infancy to adulthood. Testing was linked to the notion of the 'normal child'. This field of study was "dominated by men with a *scientific* detached gaze" (Mayall, 2013, p. 4).

From the early twentieth century, three major priorities could be identified in child development research. Firstly, describing the main developmental milestones using observation methods. Secondly, explaining and theorising these patterns of development in terms of maturation (genetically encoded development plan) or environment (emphasising learning and experience) and thirdly, measuring the impact of environmental factors in shaping individual difference (Mayall, 2013).

One of the significant current priorities, relates to the way that neuroscience has been entangled with human capital theory in terms of the way young children, their families and services are governed. In current international early childhood discourses, 'brain research' makes the child's mind visible through both technological means and standardized development measures (Adriany & Newberry, 2021). Neuroscience makes the case for 'quality' early education to stimulate synaptic growth (Millei, 2015). Expert knowledges and human capital theory are tied together to argue for "individuals to become 'useful' members of their society and to facilitate the nation's economic goals" (Millei, 2015, p. 23). The 'authority' of neuroscience simplifies complex findings into linear causality. There is a strong critique of the World Bank's uncritical promotion of brain research that emphasises the mother's responsibility (Penn, 2012). The role of parents is increasingly governed through the emphasis on the sensitive period for brain development in the first 1000 days from conception. Parenting education for people who are socially or economically disadvantaged target them as inferior and needing to learn about what their children need to become optimal citizens. Neuroscience has become the truth that hides societal issues such as

structural poverty within the care context and promotes regulation and surveillance (Adriany & Newberry, 2021; Penn, 2012).

The way in which childhood is understood has shifted over time and been influenced by developments in related disciplines and perspectives, such as sociology, history, anthropology, ethnography, geography, feminism, and the rights movement.

1.3.4 Multiple knowledges and realities

Significant epistemological and ontological shifts in the academic fields of childhood studies, education and early childhood, including a recognition of the problem of human exceptionalism and coloniality are relevant for this study. Despite the attention to power in knowledge production in childhood research, a larger critique is yet to take place (Spyrou, 2018). The critique of both development psychology and socialisation theory, the new social studies of childhood "has not theorised sufficiently on its own knowledge practices" (Spyrou, 2018, p. 21). A more radical decentring of the child might reinvigorate the early childhood research agenda as well and "engage more critically with the wider empirical and theoretical worlds of knowledge" specifically in terms of the ontological turn with its attention to relationality and materiality of social life and posthumanism (Spyrou, 2018). Feminists, indigenous, decolonial and new materialist theorists and many others draw attention to examining the legacies of imperialism, such as hierarchies of power and knowledge. These approaches, while not new or homogeneous, are relevant for challenging the dominant single narrative in early childhood policy. They also align more closely with ubuntu philosophy, than discussions of ontology in traditional western philosophical perspectives. This wide range of theorists are not concerned with essences but assume that the world is constituted through social relations. This leads to concerns about what "things are and what they could become as a result of their relational encounters with the world: entities do not pre-exist their relations" (Spyrou, 2018, p. 24). Importantly, these social relations are not limited to humans, but include the more-than-human. The way that posthumanism decentres the human has important implications for well-being and sustainability. The focus of attention and analysis shifts to larger interconnected material and discursive forces, challenging binary thinking by investigating the way that categories are constructed (Murris, 2021a).

The constructions of the 'pluriverse' introduces possibilities for many worlds to co-exist simultaneously. References to 'pluriversalism' can be found in some recent education publications (Christie & McKinney, 2017; Filho, 2017; Zembylas, 2017a, 2017b). Decolonial theorists insist on the "acceptance of a pluriversalist, rather than universalist approach, one that recognises that different cosmologies exist in complex and entangled power relations in the present" (Christie & McKinney, 2017, p. 165). 'Pluriversal politics' promotes meshworks of collectives and communities that "fight for lives of joy, meaning and dignity" and can weave together many possibilities for convivial societies (Escobar, 2020, p. xxvi). The notion of prefigurative practice, and the

reconceptualising ECD literature's call for telling other stories about early childhood policy and practice (Fielding & Moss, 2010; Moss, 2014), fit well with pluriversal politics. Escobar identifies the "prefigurative" value of his intention to open "the collective imagination to the idea that a certain kind of politics … is indeed gaining ground in many world settings today "(Escobar, 2020, p. x). For example, a number of different streams of literature, debate and practice, including black radical thought and black Latina feminist thought in USA, Latin American decolonial feminism, the decolonial thinking of authors such as Mignolo, as well as "critical thinking emerging from indigenous intellectuals" (Escobar, 2020, p. xxx).

By linking pluriversal politics to the construction of Ubuntu and Buen Vivir, Escobar introduces the Latin American activist epistemology of 'sentipensar', a way of knowing that does not separate "thinking from feeling, reason from emotion, knowledge from caring" (Escobar, 2020, p. xxxv). This aligns closely with ubuntu philosophy as a way knowing and being that I understand to extend beyond the connectedness of all humans, to include the living-dead, (frequently referred to ancestors), the yet to be born and everything else (Ramose, 2014). I understand this to include the more than human and this understanding consequently informs my agreement with recent new materialist, ecofeminist or posthumanist literature that decentralises the human. The spiritual dimension is inherent in ubuntu and the pluriverse that emphasizes love, healing and the care for the nonhuman world and offers "the best possible antidote to the metaphysics of separation and isolation" (Escobar, 2020, p. xxxii). The radical relationality that emerges in this kind of political space makes it possible to "reweave community out of the existing fragments" on the journey toward dismantling colonial capitalist patriarchy (Escobar, 2020, p. xxxii).

1.3.5 South African early childhood dominant discourses

I shift my focus more sharply to early childhood literature that relates more directly to South African policy. There is a strong influence of the international frames and western constructions of childhood and society discussed above. This literature is marked by norms and discourses of standards, expert evidence and certainty. Dominant global economic discourses feature prominently, as seen in the uncritical borrowing of evidence-based measurement strategies and deficit constructions of families living in poverty (Biersteker, 2018; Biersteker & Dawes, 2019; Dawes et al., 2004; Richter, 1999, 2017; A. Samuels, Slemming, & Balton, 2012; M. Samuels et al., 2015; Spaull, 2013a; Viviers & Lombard, 2012). Another discourse that features strongly reflects a desire for certainty and the prioritising of expert-driven evidence. Strategies for improving education in South Africa are most frequently discussed in neo-liberal technical terms with reference to performance-based benchmark testing and solutions (McCarthy & Oliphant, 2013; Spaull, 2013b). The assumption is that change can be achieved through doing the same thing better rather than seeking innovation and new possibilities. While the 2012 review of the situation, policies, programming and service provisioning for young children in South Africa from an early intervention

perspective, argues for systemic and rights-based approaches, it still does not explicitly acknowledge other possibilities such as diverse worldviews and cultures (A. Samuels et al., 2012).

Examples of this limited view of 'good' early childhood education are numerous. As an example, the four-year Sobambisana research supported by Ilifa Labantwana[3] generated evidence for programming and scale-up through conducting testing of young children in interventions such as, community playgroups, family home visiting and ECD sites in five rural and informal communities in four provinces (Biersteker, Dawes, & Hendricks, 2012). Children in Sobambisana programmes were followed into Grade R and compared with children from the same communities who had not been exposed to any ECD programme. Effects of the interventions on parental care and stimulation, child development, and the quality of ECD site programming were measured at baseline and follow-up. The main child outcomes that were measured included cognitive and language development, numeracy and readiness to learn (Biersteker et al., 2012). Findings from this initiative are being used to build an evidence-base for effective, scalable ECD projects and improve access and quality of ECD across South Africa through Ilifa's influential position as both a major grant-maker and implementer. Discussion is absent about the selection of indicators and how 'quality' is understood.

Some studies point out the shortcomings of the current approach to ECD. A comprehensive and insightful analysis of scaling-up of ECD provisioning in South Africa over approximately 15 years, with primary focus on Grade R, concludes, that "there is enormous will and resource provision towards Grade R achieving universal coverage" (Biersteker, 2010, p. 57). The report points out that despite evidence from around the world showing that 'disadvantaged' children benefit most from early education interventions, it acknowledges that "Grade R alone, while an important component will not be a sufficient platform to address compromised early childhood development" (Biersteker, 2010, p. 58). Lessons from the Grade R rollout for the expansion of services for 0-4-year-olds, conclude that it is a far more complex endeavour and while there are similar challenges, the disposing factors for Grade R do not exist for other categories of provisioning (Biersteker, 2010). Some of the envisaged challenges lie, for example, in targeting the 2.5 to 3 million poor children, given that "some of the vulnerable groups are vaguely defined, and there is a lack of data disaggregated to local level to define the target population more precisely" (Biersteker, 2010, p. 62). State capacity constraints are identified in relation to budgeting, procurement and monitoring and evaluation on account of the tendency of delivery agents to be "fragmented and small-scale" (Biersteker, 2010, p. 64). The findings of this analysis are significant in the light of subsequent developments over the past decade. The

---

[3]   Ilifa Labantwana is a South African early childhood development (ECD) programme that works to secure an equal start for all children living in South Africa, through universal access to quality ECD. It was established through a strategic partnership between three major early childhood funding organizations, DG Murray Trust, the ELMA Foundation and the UBS Optimus Foundation. It plays a significant role in policy making.

policy for services for children under four years old was published in 2015 (Republic of South Africa, 2015). Although it promised an integrated approach, the primary focus has continued to be through the provision of ECD centres and more than five years after publishing the legislation, government has still not developed a funding strategy.

Most reports about evaluating and diagnosing issues related to ECD, rely on a very specific deductive notion of evidence which is provided mostly as statistical data. Some theorists challenge the construction of data as 'givens' that can be 'collected' and 'coded' and suggest other ways of teaching qualitative analysis that is not 'deductive' but 'abductive' (Brinkmann, 2014). Abductive research that is driven by "astonishment, mystery, and breakdowns in one's understanding" opens new possibilities for understanding (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 720). There are also questions about who collects, analyses and holds data, as all data are partial and depend on the way they are constructed in terms of conceptualization, recording and use. Dialogical approaches to data engage research subjects in conversation about the data and analysis (Kelly & Noonan, 2017). This generates research driven by the needs of communities and stakeholders seeking to inform themselves and drive change (Godt, Agyepong, Flores, & Sen, 2017). Yet different constructions of 'data' are generally not contested in the dominant South African early childhood research.

There is limited acknowledgement of the tension between the need for the ECD system to be responsive to the needs of young children in different circumstances and the reliance on standard evidence-based practices. Firstly, indicators for evaluation are usually determined based on previous experience before the study begins. Secondly, log-frame implementation approaches, require the intended outcomes to be predetermined, so that the 'results' can be measured only in relation to the intentions. Neither of these approaches allow for innovation or surprise. A glimmer of recognition of this tension is expressed in the concern that the need to draw on a "solid evidence base" as "necessary for effective and efficient delivery" only allows for "a measure of flexibility in responding to local conditions" (Viviers, Biersteker, & Moruane, 2013, p. 37).

While it is established that "participation of all stakeholders, including the recipients of services, in the design, implementation and monitoring of the service" is regarded as essential for good governance, it remains unclear what the scope of that participation might be, given that the authors only suggest that what is needed is "good quality child and service data that can be disaggregated to the local level to identify service needs and gaps as well as effective interventions"(Viviers et al., 2013, p. 37). Viviers and colleagues' analysis draws on the international literature such as research by (Britto, Yoshikawa, & Boller, 2011) to argue for "access to services of sufficient quality to promote positive outcomes for children" without discussing their constructions of 'quality' or 'positive outcomes' (Viviers et al., 2013, p. 38). Norms and standards for efficient and effective delivery are both assumed and emphasized.

The search for simple solutions permeates the dominant ECD research in South Africa. Despite the unequivocal diversity and inequality existing in society

and among families and children, South African policy seeks simple universal solutions, frequently influenced by the frames of international organisations. Policies following these solutions in turn operate as scopic systems (Robertson, 2012) to lever policy by focusing on imagined single problems, such as poor school outcomes for black children, and make other problems disappear from public and bureaucratic views. In this way other issues and problems, such as inequality and diversity are "produced as absent" and disappear (Robertson, 2012). Since both state and non-state actors use these powerful systems for governing education, it is important to interrogate the actors and interests involved in scopic systems to reveal "the values that are being advanced, the ways in which authority to govern is generated, and whether and how the processes are open to, and visible to, wider publics and public debate" (Robertson, 2012).

1.3.6 Challenging dominant South African early childhood stories

In more recent years a smaller group of authors, such as, Hasina Ebrahim, Karin Murris, Robert Serpell and Korfi Marfo, (Ebrahim, 2010b, 2012; Ebrahim & Muthukrishna, 2005; Marfo, Pence, LeVine, & LeVine, 2011; Murris, 2019, 2021a, 2021b; Okwany & Ebrahim, 2015; Serpell, 2011; Serpell & Marfo, 2014) have started challenging the dominant South African early childhood discourses, from a decolonial or African perspective. They draw attention to the rich source of African constructions of childhood and society. Although the constructions of pluriversality might not be mentioned specifically, their direction is relational rather than universal. By interpreting globalisation in relational terms as the "interdependence and intermingling of global, distant and local layers" these types of studies have a better chance of accounting for the "greater hybridisation and perforation of social, economic and political life" (Robertson, 2012, p. 14). The literature discussed in this section, challenges South African early childhood policy and pedagogy. I include considerations for integrated approaches that involve meaningful participation of a range of actors, including families and communities. They acknowledge different knowledge systems, go beyond standard best practice approaches to include the relational ontologies and more-than-human sociabilities.

Ebrahim identifies three historical phases in early care and education in South Africa: 1) engineering unequal early care and education; 2) reforming through educare; and 3) transforming to early childhood development (ECD) (Ebrahim, 2010b). She highlights the role of shifting discourses in the stories of policies for young children that have their roots in the apartheid policies of the Nationalist Party (Ebrahim, 2010b). The history of one non-governmental resource and training organisation, Little Elephant Training Centre for Early Education (LETCEE)[4] illustrates the struggle to adopt more relational approaches

---

[4]   LETCEE is an Early Childhood Development (ECD) not for profit organisation that works in the impoverished, rural communities of the Umzinyathi district, KZN. https://www.backabuddy.co.za/charity/profile/letcee.

in the context of the shifting ECD policy terrain in the decade between 1991 and 2001 Peter Rule (2005). LETCEE "has been shaped by the increasing formalisation of the field, on the one hand", and its own "evolving understanding of ECD as part of community development on the other" (Rule, 2005, p. 121). LETCEE is faced with contrasting models and philosophies of ECD provisioning. By embracing an action-oriented rights-based discourse that can respond to the context in communities in which it operates, there are "implications for the organisation's sustainability in terms of financial security and beneficiary legitimacy" (Rule, 2005, p. 135). Rule proposes an important role for non-government organisations (NGOs) as advocates for "strengthening community-based provision within an integrated system, which utilises capabilities of both civil society and state formations" (Rule, 2005, pp. 135-136).

Drawing on her experience of investigating 'non-centred models' of early childhood, such as LETCEE, and other related South African studies, Ebrahim examines "early childhood programs that aim at paying attention to local ways of knowing and doing early childhoods" (Ebrahim, 2012, p. 80). The three areas identified to illustrate the tensions between global and local perspectives are: 1) community involvement, 2) child participation, and 3) non-centre based ECD (Ebrahim, 2012). Notions of 'community' inform home-visiting programmes that have emerged in response to families who could not otherwise access centre-based ECD services (for example, on account of cost or distance). NGOs make community development visible in South Africa by using African traditional values, for example, "through the revival of old concepts such as ubuntu (mutual reciprocity, obligation and solidarity)" (Ebrahim, 2012, p. 83). Changing contexts and modern discourses, such as human rights, according to Ebrahim, can contest the "collective nature of child rearing in communities" (Ebrahim, 2012, p. 83). The contrast between the global United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) notion of 'child participation' and local understandings of children's participation in community is worthy of consideration. For example, child-to-child approaches are consistent with the African cultural practice of pre-adolescent children taking care of young children (Ebrahim, 2012; Serpell, 2009) . Approaches that use homes and neighbourhoods as sites for ECD generate opportunities for intergenerational learning, inclusion and belonging. There is an argument for "recognition and respect for diverse worldviews, philosophical systems and structures that shape multiple childhoods" (Ebrahim, 2012; Okwany, Ngutuku, & Muhangi, 2011). An example of diverse African constructions from focus groups held in Botswana with rural and urban grandmothers argues that each of these groups have different expectations of young children and early childhood services and the values of neither group fits with the imported values and goals of the preschools (Tsamaase, Harkness, & Super, 2020)

Ebrahim seeks to stimulate policy debate in relation to the knowledge transfer from the minority world by foregrounding silences in the 2009 South African National Early Learning Standards (NELDS) for birth to four years (Ebrahim, 2012). She notes that as ECD has received more attention as a public

service in South Africa, concerns have shifted to returns on investment and that the early learning development standards are "efforts to define expectations for children's development for use of school readiness and monitoring" (Ebrahim, 2014, p. 68). Through her participation in the NELDS development process from 2003 she attempted unsuccessfully to generate awareness about the uncritical knowledge transfer from the American version of developmentally appropriate practice through suggestions about how South Africa might think about "taking into account aspirations of families for their children, cultural values and the need for a new citizenry in South Africa" (Ebrahim, 2014, p. 72). By highlighting weaknesses in policy development and specific imported constructions of childhood, she argues that the NELDS is a "normative administrative model with a Euro-American base of child development" (Ebrahim, 2014, p. 73) . The discourse of private entrepreneurs and their staff in two private sector ECD centres are used to argue that their "business approach, viewing parents as customers, is narrow and limiting" and "downplays diversity" (Ebrahim, 2010a, p. 39).

By calling attention to dominant Euro-American narratives in early childhood literature, Ebrahim asks researchers and policy makers to take account of African "settings, child rearing practices, customs, traditions and how they interact with globalised influences" (Ebrahim, 2014, p. 74). Caution is also raised about confusing cultural values and moral values as this can result in what cultures do becoming the norm (Murris, 2014). This also raises interesting questions about assumptions made about African beliefs. The representation of the African "child's place" being "to serve the extended family, with obedience" (Penn, 2005, p. 110) could be a misunderstanding of the indigenous constructions of 'interdependence', 'connectedness' and 'mutual reciprocity' based on a western assumption of 'subservience'. Similarly, the assumption that African societies are all patriarchal (Penn, 2005) can also be contested. The Balobedu people of the Limpopo Province, in South Africa are a matrilinear society. The debate about when and how patriarchy was imported into Africa is beyond the scope of this study. What is significant, is that modern colonial thinking and publicly expressed beliefs in Africa are separate from African indigenous cosmology and philosophy.

Agreement is expressed in the characterisation of dominant South African early childhood discourses, as universalist, child-centred and strongly influenced by developmental psychology (Murris, 2019; Okwany & Ebrahim, 2015). Murris (2019) points to the narrow unilinear approach to school readiness with emphasis on individual success in a neo-liberal future through preparation for a capitalist economic workforce. The science of child development with its roots in a Western 'civilising' imperative constructs an image of deficiency (Pence, 2013). Similarly, concerns are raised about the dominant narrative placing the locus of poverty on "poor children, their caregivers and their low-income 'unstimulating' homes, while ignoring the deficits in global and national structures that generate poverty, exclusion and inequality" (Okwany & Ebrahim, 2015, p. 437).

One alternative is to "argue for the imperative of decentring universals and the recognition of a multi-polar world and plurality of voice and space within both the Eurocentric and Afrocentric narratives" (Okwany & Ebrahim, 2015, p. 432). In calling for Afrocentric ECD practice and research, this argument is not for 'an additive epistemology' but for a "dialogue between the dominant and marginalized knowledge in ECD practice and research and an epistemological shift in representations" (Okwany & Ebrahim, 2015, p. 434). This position acknowledges power relations, the need to capacitate African researchers and encourages situated research, including expanding the scope of outcome assessment beyond cognitive and academic domains by using contextually relevant instruments (Okwany & Ebrahim, 2015).

Another response to the dominant narrative, is to adopt a different philosophical framework for thinking about children's capabilities and child development (Murris, 2019). From this posthumanist perspective, "Child is not an entity bounded by her or his skin and in a particular position in space and time that precedes relations, but child e/merges as a result of these human and more-than-human space–time relations" (Murris, 2019, p. 65). In this posthuman relational ontology, there is a shift from the discursive to the material-discursive and the human and non-human always exist in entangled intra-active relations (Murris, 2019).

This study responds to the challenge to "use marginalised theoretical perspectives for systematic investigations of ways of knowing and doing ECD" (Ebrahim, 2012, p. 92). I agree that listening to knowledges and perspectives frequently subjugated (on account of the assumption that they do not qualify as scientific knowledge) can offer better understandings of how interventions operate. These marginalized perspectives give important and needed insights into political dynamics, subtle processes of negotiation and consensus building to reveal the potential of early childhood policy as a tool for change.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 A call to action

Two decades after the first democratic election, South African early childhood policy, prominently featuring dominant global economic discourses and colonial thinking, has not been able to deliver on its good intentions to build a flourishing sociability. I seek a body of knowledge that can destabilise this dominant policy narrative and bring new possibilities into view. My theoretical framework evolved though my search for theory that can help to answer the questions posed in this study and promote action for liberatory change.

I use a decolonial relational framework, drawing on ubuntu philosophy (Ramose, 2014) and 'epistemologies of the South'(Santos, 2007, 2014) to challenge universalism and argue for 'pluriversal politics' (Escobar, 2007, 2020) as discussed in section 1.1 and 1.2. I draw on the notion of 'prefigurative practice' (Escobar, 2020; Moss, 2015) and theories from the Reconceptualising Early Childhood Education literature to elevate experimentation and debate rather than consensus. I wish to challenge the colonial view of time and progress by finding new ways to think about time that "make strange our understandings of pasts, presents and futures" and imagine the possibility of past frustrated hopes motivating action in the present (Craps et al., 2017, p. 502). Epistemologies of the south, offer a way of knowing that does not separate "thinking from feeling, reason from emotion, knowledge from caring" (Escobar, 2020, p. xxxv). I understand this way of knowing and being to extend beyond the connectedness of all humans, to include the living-dead, (frequently referred to ancestors), the yet to be born and everything else. I understand this to include the more than human and consequently I align with the posthuman literature that decentres the human (Murris, 2019). The spiritual dimension is inherent in Ubuntu and the pluriverse that "emphasizes love, healing and the care for the nonhuman world" (Escobar, 2020, p. xxvii) and offers "the best possible antidote to the metaphysics of separation and isolation" (Escobar, 2020, p. xxxii). The radical relationality that emerges in this kind of political space makes it possible to "reweave community

out of the existing fragments" on the journey toward dismantling colonial capitalist patriarchy (Escobar, 2020, p. xxxii).

Similarly, my research method evolved through the process of analysis, reading, writing, conversation, re-reading and re-writing. I selected autoethnography as a "call to action" (Gannon, 2017) as I understand it has the potential to materialise new possibilities. My understanding of autoethnography deepened through the period of study with shifts in my positionality. I realised the potential of autoethnography to promote political change requiring a shift from a personal to a collective approach (Gannon, 2017; Holman Jones, 2005; Spry, 2018). The personal text can be an intervention in social, political and cultural life by creating space for dialogue (Holman Jones, 2005). I began to recognise autoethnography as a form of dialogue, similar in many ways to my previous research engagement in community, but in this context the community is mostly virtual and includes potential readers and those who have engaged with my published articles.

While autoethnography first appeared in the work of American anthropologists in the 1970s, by the 1990s it began to appear as a qualitative research method with wide disciplinary scope including education (Gannon, 2017). While autoethnography is used across all levels of education, I have found only a few examples of autoethnography in early childhood research (Henderson, 2018; Millei & Gallagher, 2017; Sekhukhune, 2013). The benefits for education research are extensive and include the potential in relation to emancipatory and transformative pedagogy and the importance of self-reflection for educators (Belbase, Luitel, & Taylor, 2013; Chang, 2008; Starr, 2010).

Autoethnography offers a commitment to justice as it "identifies, intervenes and offers a possible utopia" (Spry, 2018, p. 1104). Spry uses the construction of 'utopia' as a verb, suggesting it is a tool to (re)build community through redoing and renewing. It involves reflecting on who we want to be with Others. She views autoethnography as "a simultaneous rejection and recuperation of who we can be with Others" (Spry, 2018, p. 1104). I understand this to mean that action is inevitable for gaining insight into our cultural selves and others through the work of autoethnography and in this way autoethnography is political. Autoethnography is not just about my own memories and work but encourages listening "deeply to the research of others personally, professionally, politically" (Spry, 2018, p. 1104). Through remembering, reading, analysing and writing, I look forward and back, forward and back to "my own dis-ease, my own feeling of methodological awkwardness" (Spry, 2018, p. 1081). By attentively weaving the intricate connectedness into my own story, I invite the reader to bring the same attention to the context of their own lives (Holman Jones, 2005). Autoethnography "assumes a stance of incompleteness of the self, of the other and of the relationship" and invites the reader into the conversation (Spry, 2016, p. 110).

Politicised autoethnography is created in dialogic reflexivity and I am forced to take personal accountability for my own situatedness in systems of power and privilege (Spry, 2018). Reflexivity is an important feature of my

methodology. It is not an easy story to tell, as I struggle to think differently to avoid falling into my own trap by using the same language and categories I reject. I avoid claiming 'truths' or offering a confessional tale and constantly challenge my own authority. I strive to move towards what Pillow refers to as 'reflexivity of discomfort' by working "within and against parameters of comfortable research" (Pillow, 2003).

> (R)eflexivity is at once subject, method, and product explicitly, embracing the first-person "I" to acknowledge myself as the human instrument of research and to signal that my subjectivity (sometimes called bias) is not something to be rooted out, but to be acknowledged and made transparent as part of the inquiry (Pillow, 2015, p. 2).

Pillow suggests considering ontological and epistemological questions surrounding reflexivity by thinking about how we mobilise reflexivity in our work (Pillow, 2015). I describe my reflexivity as a 'genealogical' approach as I seek to "unsettle contours of knowledge and power" (Pillow, 2015, p. 426). My approach to reflexivity is teased out further in my use of discourse analysis. I seek to think 'otherwise' and my conclusions remain provisional and always in process.

2.2 Method

2.2.1 Data sources

The data for this study was constructed through combining policy analysis with personal experience. It draws on selected theory and several decades of experience in engaged practice with marginalised community groups as well as in policy making processes. The analysis and construction of knowledge were undertaken in a dialogical fashion with constant reference backwards and forwards to theory (Brinkmann, 2012). This study differs from most autoethnography as it is a desk review that did not require the collection of fresh field data specifically for this study using participant observation or interviews. The primary focus of analysis is South African early childhood policy between about 1984 and 2015. I participated actively in many of these policy processes. The study started with compiling an archive of relevant documents for analysis. Recent policy documents and literature could be found on the internet, but I also searched through the archives of fellow early childhood practitioners and researchers in dusty garages, storerooms and attics. In addition to the relevant academic publications, the archive includes different kinds of documents, including, public and internal government publications and communications, reports, as well as personal communications and reflections. This archive includes many of my own authored or co-authored reports and publications. All three of my relevant major employment roles during that period are documented in a series of academic writings (Rudolph, 1993, 1996; Rudolph & James, 2015). The period with the most comprehensive archive is the period I was employed

in the Gauteng Department of Education (1995 to 2001) as I have copies of almost all the early childhood legislation, draft policy and discussion documents, strategic planning and other reports, training materials, circulars, departmental memoranda and correspondence. This includes internal and external communication, particularly relating to the Impilo Action Research pilot project in Gauteng province. In addition, I have my own journals and notes on meetings.

The ongoing process of reading and writing generated data through the process of analysis, reading, writing and rewriting. The three published articles generated data that has in turn been analysed to generate further data.

2.2.2   Ethical considerations

In developing and maintaining an ethical framework for this study, I have drawn on a variety of relevant guidelines and my previous experience of shepherding a number of research projects through university research ethics review. While the ethical guidelines in social sciences are generally regarded as universal, there is some debate about how they should be applied in different contexts and research methodologies. Even within the literature specifically directed to ethics in self-study, different theoretical frameworks generate different ethical considerations (Brandenburg & Gervasoni, 2012; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Hamilton & Pinnegar, 2000; Jackson & Mazzei, 2008; Keightley, 2010).

I fully understand that the strict codes and guidelines set out by universities are designed to protect the researcher and the wellbeing of research participants and research institutions. However, these ethical codes are also moral and political statements that must be interpreted in relation to the context of the study. I have maintained respectful ethical relations in all aspects of the thesis. In my study, all of the public recent data (within the past ten years) is available on the internet. The UNICEF Pretoria office provided assistance to me in order to scan public historical data (from earlier than 10 years ago) and I have made that available on the South Africa Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Policy Action Network website   https://policyaction.org.za/. It is the personal communications and retrospective 'memory stories' in my study that raise particular ethical questions. Most importantly, by drawing on my own experiences I do not only implicate myself, but also those included in my memories and analysis (Ellis et al., 2011). However, it is not feasible to mask location and identities in my narratives since context is all-important. In the approach I adopt, my narratives locate the self in relation to others in order to reconstruct my positions within the complex power relations in the particular framework of historical, social, cultural and policy interactions. As a consequence, participants' identities in my memory stories are easily recognizable even if disguised. Therefore, to avoid making a claim that persons are as I have remembered them with the purpose of teasing out power relations, I write my memories from my own perspective, noting always that this is my process, and these are my memories.

Remembered narratives cannot be judged by the same criteria as history, however the analysis requires the same standards of research rigour and ethical

stance to protect participants. As discussed in the section on the theoretical framework, reflexivity is an important tool for considering the potential consequences of research choices. In terms of Keightley's (2010, p. 55) conceptualisation of memory as a "methodological tool and as an object of research" the potential of my memories lies at the heart of the "relations between public and private life, agency and power". My purpose then is to explore the way "relations of power and discursive constraints produce certain interpretations" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 311). Consequently, veracity is not the aim of my remembered narratives as I seek to study the negotiations of discourses rather than seeking to present a 'truthful' account of persons. Therefore, I only reveal as much about the participants as is needed, reconstructing memories with rich narratives that portray the power relations in operation, as opposed to claiming that my pictures of individuals are veracious in a historical sense. I continuously analyse and confront power relations through vigilance, curiosity and questioning knowing. In order to avoid framing the participants in my memories through my own politics and intentions, stereotypes, tropes, prejudices, scientific constructions, binaries etc. etc., I constantly interrogate and clarify my role and intentions as researcher with "transparency and scrutiny" (Keightley, 2010, p. 67). I reveal my data sources and discuss my decisions about inclusions and omissions. By telling my own story ethically with clear memories and recording feelings about 'successes' and 'failures', I hope to "open the gaps and produce different knowings" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p. 314) and prompt others to analyse power relations and question the 'knowings' in their own stories.

2.2.3 Thinking differently about 'problems'

Some of the broad parameters of the post-structural approach relevant for the analysis in this study, include questioning "(e)nlightenment assumptions concerning reason, emancipation, science and progress, and disquiet regarding connections between this thinking and social inequality" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 4). I am interested in constructions of knowledge and progress and the kind of "hierarchical and inegalitarian forms of rule it produces" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 4). In this approach, the possibility of challenging and changing the realities we live becomes apparent through recognizing that different knowledge practices can create different realities and that politics has an important role to play. I use 'politics' in the same expansive sense that Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 4) use it to mean the "active shaping or making of the taken for granted". The study concerns the potential of early childhood policy to construct flourishing sociabilities. A post-structural perspective is helpful in analysing how specific rules and regulations "bring into play a wide range of professional and 'expert' knowledges that have a significant role in how we are governed and in producing the kinds of 'subject' we are encouraged to become" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 5). Once we accept that knowledge is constructed it becomes possible to challenge the 'certainties' of conventional policy approaches.

I analyse early childhood policies to reveal the way problems are conceptualised or constructed in relation to the different possible outcomes in terms of the potential for liberation. Within the classic rationalist approach, Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) identify two broad traditions. Firstly, comprehensive rationalism produces the policy cycle model with its 'evidence-based' emphasis. This tradition assumes that there are 'real' problems that exist and need to be solved. Secondly, political rationalists produce interpretivist approaches that place the emphasis on managing problems rather than interrogating how they are conceptualised. In other words, policy makers using this approach concentrate on managing competing perspectives rather than interrogating how the problems have been constructed. Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) explain that the approach to knowledge is evident in the way governing officials name problems and 'expert' analysts collect and report on what works. This approach assumes that independent problems that need fixing actually exist. In this situation political contestation about how problems are constructed, and what the meaning and interpretation of 'evidence' might be, is silenced. Within economic frames, the emphasis shifts instead to what is feasible, rather than what might produce the most just outcome.

The task lies in analysing how 'problems' are made rather than a 'problem-solving' activity or an evidence-based practice. Bacchi and Goodwin point out that "(i)f the very nature of a 'problem' is in dispute, any suggestion that all that is required is evidence about how to solve 'it' seems to be sadly inadequate" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 39). Indeed, this is the challenge I raise through the study. Post-structural policy analysis seeks to critically interrogate the way government has constructed the 'problems' rather than merely trying to avoid debate, as Bacchi and Goodwin put it, the "intent, in effect, is to trouble, rather than to cultivate, consensus" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 39).

2.2.4   Combining autoethnography and poststructural policy analysis

In everyday language, the word 'discourse' refers to written or spoken communication or debate. However, Foucault and Bacchi use 'discourses' to include both language and practices. Petersen's (2015) explanation of the way Foucault uses the concept discourse emphasises that discourses do not merely describe things but make them (Petersen, 2015). From a post-structural perspective, "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" (Foucault, 1991b, p. 75). For example, the concept 'Early Childhood Development' (ECD) was originally conceived as applying "to the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially" (Department of Education, 1996, p. 3). However, the concept has been distilled to its abbreviated form, 'ECD', in all languages and diverse contexts across the country and used to refer specifically to ECD centres or similar services, where groups of children are brought together primarily for learning. This construction of ECD, is being promoted as part of the international early childhood discourse by organisations

such as ECDAN[5]. There is an assumption that the same standardised constructions of problems, evidence and benchmarks can be used across countries when we discuss ECD (Richter, 2017; Richter et al., 2018).

This research about South African early childhood policy, analyses how and why various things (behaviours, phenomena, processes) become a problem. The analysis also reveals how these actions, processes, phenomena, gestures, and words were gathered together, characterized and treated as the concept 'early childhood development' or ECD. I reveal how early childhood or early childhood development was conceptualised and made 'real' as a specific kind of phenomenon. In this way, I produce objects of thought as the focus of my study. For example, by looking at the 'practices' in early childhood policy, we can see how the actors (for example young children, families and experts) and services were conceptualised or constructed and treated in specific ways. Bacchi (2018) refers to the process of producing objects of thought as 'problematisation' and this is central to her approach. The conventional view of policy assumes straightforward cycle through which policy makers identify a problem, develop a policy to address it, implement that policy and then evaluate the implementation (Ball, 1994; Petersen, 2015). This approach, views public policies as responses or reactions to problems that sit outside the policy process, waiting to be discovered and solved. Bacchi challenges this conventional approach by arguing that,

> …. in the WPR approach, governments do not react to problems that are presumed to be self-evident. Rather, they are seen to be involved in the creation or production of 'problems' as particular sorts of problems, with particular parameters, causes, effects, and remedies. There is no suggestion of manipulation in this proposition; rather, it is a description of the way in which policies do their work (Bacchi, 2018, p. 5).

Given that what we plan to do about something, reveals what we think needs to change, all policy proposals implicitly contain the problem they intend to address. In this way, policies contain implicit representations of the 'problems' emerging from the direction of change in their proposals. These problem representations enact 'problems' as particular sorts of problems, thus becoming a crucial part of how governing takes place. Bacchi suggests that the proposed change in any proposal (which can include official policies and a wide range of other kinds of texts as well as phenomena that are not strictly textual) reveals the problem embedded in the proposed change (Bacchi, 2018).

The political implications of this approach are significant. According to Foucault (1997), problematisation determines the role of politics and ethics in the way a phenomenon is established as a domain of scientific knowledge and how that construction plays out in political and ethical practices. It does not prescribe political positions or describe desirable futures but reveals why particular positions and visions of the future occur to us. WPR ('What is the problem

---

[5]   The Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) and its 'Nurturing care framework worldwide' has a strong influence on African early childhood policy through The African Early Childhood Network (AfECN) and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) established by the African Union (AU).

represented to be?') draws our attention to the ways in which things become 'evident' and "helps to identify the boundaries of acceptability for claims to the truth" (Bacchi, 2018, p. 11). This is particularly helpful in my study in relation to analysing "evidence-based policy discourse"(Bacchi, 2018, p. 7). WPR offers a way of thinking that is more than mere policy analysis and provides opportunities to identify lines of fracture or "consolidation of regimes of government" (Bacchi, 2018, p. 8). WPR is particularly helpful for analysing the "full range of governmental and knowledge practices" (Bacchi, 2018, p. 3). Since, governing early childhood involves a wide range of actors and agencies, including experts and professionals and the knowledges they produce, WPR is helpful in revealing power relations. As Petersen (2015) explains, Foucault draws our attention to the relations of power and knowledge by explaining that the way realities are formed through discourses has implications for what is deemed desirable or appropriate (Petersen, 2015). In this way truth is produced through power and we exercise power though the production of truth. Petersen (2015) continues, "…. institutions, material objects, social behaviours or spatial arrangements, for example, are discursive in the sense that they are entangled in historically and culturally contingent power/knowledge relations" (Petersen, 2015, p. 64).

The three sub-studies were published across a period of four years and form a coherent compendium of similar, discrete, but interlinked scholarly publications. They all deal with policy for young children in South Africa after the first democratic election in 1994. The first sub-study (Rudolph, 2017) focuses on the 2015 National Curriculum Framework (NCF) (Department of Basic Education, 2015) which accompanied the 2015 National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECDP) (Republic of South Africa, 2015). The second sub-study (Rudolph, Millei, & Alasuutari, 2019) focuses on the proposed NIECDP policy itself. The focus of analysis in the third article (Rudolph, 2021) is the Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development (Department of Education, 1996) and the early policy processes of ANC governance after the 1994 election.

All three sub-studies combine policy analysis and autoethnography, and draw on a similar conceptual framework, which became more complex and theorized through the process of reading, writing as well as presentations and discussion in international conferences and forums. While all the articles draw on personal experience, the first and third included personal vignettes, and the second drew indirectly on engagement in participatory policy processes. As my understanding of relationality deepened, the autoethnographic method evolved with a shift from the individual 'I' to the collective 'we'(Spry, 2016). All three sub-studies use Bacchi's WPR ('What is the problem represented to be?') approach and the discussion that follows uses the WPR approach more explicitly and systematically (Bacchi, 2000; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). In response to Bacchi and Goodwin's challenge that as policy workers, we "reflect on the role we play in governing practices" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 6) we include the additional steps that problematise our own problematisation. 'Reflexivity', which features prominently in the conceptual framework and method for all three articles,

evolved throughout the study and produced shifts in the way it is put to use moving towards what Pillow (2003) calls 'reflexivities of discomfort'.

Problematising the governing of early childhood in South Africa is a key feature in all three of the published articles of this thesis. Problematisations produce objects of thought as the focus of study by showing how behaviour, phenomenon and processes become a 'problem'. This means that it is through our language and actions we produce problems of a particular kind. I use 'discourses' to include language and action. In the third sub-study, the focus is on the policy-formation process and reveals the ways in which power operates and discourses are used to make the chosen direction of change seem more obvious and acceptable.

Section 3 summarises the three sub-studies and is followed by Section 4, in which I systematically apply Bacchi's six WPR questions (Bacchi, 2018, p. 5) to the sub-studies followed by a self-problematisation of my own arguments or proposal in the sub-studies and analysis. Table 1 provides a list of all the questions that guide the analysis.

TABLE 1   WPR guiding questions

What's the Problem Represented to be? (WPR Approach to Policy Analysis)

Question 1:   What's the problem of early childhood represented to be in the specific proposals in this article?

Question 2:   What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions (conceptual logics) underlie this representation of the "problem" (problem representation)?

Question 3:   How has this representation of the "problem" come about?

Question 4:   What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently?

Question 5:   What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"?

Question 6:   How and where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated, and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced?

Problematisation of my own constructed problems as part of study

Step 7:   Apply this list of questions to your own problem representations

Question 7.1: What is my proposal in this analysis? What do I represent the problem to be in the specific proposals in my analysis?

Question 7.2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions (conceptual logics) underlie this representation of the "problem" (problem representation)?

Question 7.3: How has this representation of the "problem" come about?

Question 7.4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently?

Question 7.5: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"?

Question 7.6: How and where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated, and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced?

Source: Adapted from Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, p. 20)

3 PUBLISHED OUTPUTS

3.1 Article 1: Hierarchies of knowledge, incommensurabilities and silences in SouthAfrican ECD policy: Whose knowledge counts?

This article, published in the Journal of Pedagogy (Rudolph, 2017), explores the power relations, knowledge hierarchies and discourses of childhood, family and society in the South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four (NCF) (Department of Basic Education, 2015a) and how these relate to children's everyday contexts. I examine the curriculum discourses in relation to the diverse South African settings, child rearing practices and worldviews, and how they interact with normative discourses of South African policy and global early childhood frameworks. The NCF acknowledges indigenous and local knowledges and suggests that the curriculum should be adapted to local contexts.

I argue that the good intentions of these documents to address inequities are undermined by the uncritical acceptance of global taken-for-granted discourses, such as narrow notions of evidence, western child development, understanding of the child as a return of investment, and referencing urban middle class community contexts and values. These global discourses make the poorest children and their families invisible, and silence other visions of childhood and good society, including the notion of 'convivial society' as proposed in the 1955 Freedom Charter. To describe the contexts of children's lives, I use an autoethnographic method and outline the different visions of childhood and society that are present in these different contexts, as I had encountered them, through living and working in remote rural villages and informal settlements.

To highlight the ways in which power operates through policy, I use, what Carol Bacchi (2000, 2009, 1999) and others refer to as 'policy-as-discourse' analysis. Bacchi (2000, 2009, 1999) challenges the traditional view of policy as solving identified problems and suggests that 'problems' are generated in the

kind of change implied in particular policy proposals. From this perspective policy can be viewed as a strategic and political process in which concepts and categories are used to influence ongoing practices. I respond to Cross's (2015) call for 'epistemic reflexivity' and 'relational thinking' to point to taken-for-granted assumptions and unhelpful dichotomies. I look specifically at how 'family' and 'indigenous and local knowledge' are talked about in the NCF to throw light on power relations, silences and possible implications in the context of extreme diversity in South Africa. I draw on my experience in a variety of different local contexts and my understanding of the interplay of policy, action, experiences and the different forms of knowledge.

Following Bacchi's approach to policy analysis, I trace how this representation of the 'problem' further unfolds in the curriculum, and with the help of the autoethnographic stories I disrupt them (Bacchi, 2009, p. 2) to create spaces for alternative understandings. With my analysis of the NCF, I argue that the way the 'problem' is identified in the national policy support for ECD in South Africa, ironically undermines its intention to reduce poverty and promote equity. In the absence of debate about the purpose of education and the kind of society we want, positioning ECD as a strategy for improving taken-for-granted 'evidence based' education outcomes, subscribes to a western and middle-class view of childhood and society. Drawing on autobiographic stories, I point to the wide diversity in the experiences of children in South Africa in terms of the complex relations of space, race, class and culture, and flag the urban middle-class bias of the NCF. I contrast the NCF construction of 'identity' and 'belonging' with another view based on an African holistic and inclusive notion of 'relatedness' that extends beyond the material world into the spirit world. I flag some of the taken-for-granted 'truths' that normalise one image of childhood and society leaving many children and their families invisible, unacknowledged and unappreciated, thus marginalising them further. My argument does not seek to judge or privilege one knowledge or worldview, but rather aims to create spaces for alternative worldviews by uncovering silences and highlighting the implicit hierarchy of knowledge in the NCF that claims to create an equal, just and 'convivial society' set out in the 1955 Freedom Charter.

3.2 Article 2: Data practices and inequality in South African early childhood development policy: Technocratic management versus social transformation

This article, published in the South African Journal of Childhood Education (Rudolph et al., 2019) explores how policy texts based on, and with the use of, certain data practices, establish 'truths' about childhoods and society, construct families and communities, and determine forms of provision to address inequality. In 2015, the South African government published the National Integrated Early Childhood Policy (NIECDP). The acclaim for the long-awaited

integrated early childhood services and increased government funding promised in the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECDP) (RSA 2015) overshadowed critical response to the specific policy choices and programme options that are defined and delivered on particular presentations of data. By relying solely on centralised planning, the NIECDP constrains space for beneficiaries to contribute more refined data generated through decentralised participatory processes at the local level to guide a responsive integrated approach. The use of data practices, while also providing needed information, prioritises solutions that proceed in technocratic ways instead of facilitating social change.

Using a critical discourse analysis of policy texts and the introduction of alternatives, the analysis seeks to highlight the power and knowledge hierarchies that construct the policies of NIECDP. We analyse the kinds of data practices promoted in the 2015 South African NIECDP and argue that the current dominant global discourses, with a propensity for measurement and a particular kind of data use, undermine the stated policy intention to address poverty and inequality. By revealing the underlying policy discourses and power relations that shape the collection, administration and use of data, we aim to stimulate debate about different data practices and constructions of evidence in current early childhood policy in South Africa.

We focussed on how policies construct the problem, by firstly identifying particular policy statements that allude to a problem. We explore the possible meanings implied in a given statement, including the categorisations and binaries it constructs, the way it positions certain people, how it creates and shapes personal and institutional relationships, and draws on stereotypes, notions of equality, justice and injustice, and politics. We scrutinise how different actors, such as children, communities and experts, are constructed and how power relations and hierarchies are produced through these statements. We explore how discourses and described practices align with or subjugate particular understandings of childhood and early childhood education. We relate this to other discourses, concepts and frames mobilising available and dominant discourses, such as global consensus on the benefits of early childhood education and care and systematic data practices.

The notion of 'government of poverty' used by Du Toit (2017) to argue that evidence-based policymaking discourses undermine local decision-making in marginalised communities holds true for the NIECDP, which in a similar manner prioritises and adapts the globalised neoliberal discourses and practices of measurement experts to the constructed problems of the government. In this article, we demonstrate how, through systematic data practices the NIECDP 'governs poverty' by objectifying and constituting a large section of the population as vulnerable, thus needing intervention into their lives. Part of this form of governance is to place the power to make decisions about resources in the hands of measurement experts rather than engaging the service providers and beneficiaries in ongoing reflection and action.

Standard systematic data practices erase local differences and act as an arbiter between competing claims to truth. Kelly and Noonan (2017) suggest 'edifying practices' to grapple with complex conditions and reveal data through "patient engagement" with local conditions in non-judgmental and attentive dialogue with local stakeholders (Kelly & Noonan, 2017, p. 885). Conversation generates receptiveness through curious and sympathetic dispositions to compel the search for other perspectives. We show the ways in which systematic data practices in South African early childhood policy brush over complex conditions, legitimate their own use and silence less-dominant knowledges of local communities. If governments are truly concerned about inequality and the future of their countries, instead of governing poverty, they could engage in dialogue with families and communities about the kind of society they want for themselves and their children and find out what help they need to build that kind of society. This article takes a first step to open spaces for this type of engagement by inviting the readers to think about power relations and data practices prevalent in and proposed by the NIECDP to better understand: who benefits, who speaks and who is silenced.

3.3 Article 3: Revealing colonial power relations in early childhood policy making: An autoethnographic story on selective evidence

In this article, published in Journal of Childhood, Education and Society (Rudolph, 2021), I combine autoethnography with policy analysis drawing on my own experience in South African early childhood policy making. I argue for a fresh decolonial debate about early childhood policy to replace dominant imported evidence-based narratives. I pay attention to power relations and examine, not only the content of evidence, but who has authority to speak (Mignolo, 2007).

I examine ANC policymaking for young children since the first democratic election in 1994 and invite debate about how policymaking might need to change to achieve President Ramaphosa's recommitment to the pre 1994 ANC goals of building a convivial society. I analyse power relations, dominant discourses and subjugated attempts to tell a different story. As an example of the primary focus of ANC early childhood policy and financing, I trace the introduction and expansion of the extension of primary school downward, through what is referred to in South Africa as Grade R. South Africa is poised to introduce Grade RR, thus adding an additional compulsory year before Grade R and entry into the formal primary school system, despite acknowledging that in the past 20 years Grade R has increased inequality rather than decreased it.

I introduce the bottom-up appreciative participatory dialogical policy making used in the Impilo Action Research project (1996 - 2000) (Rudolph, 1998), as one attempt to resist the dominant policy trajectory, and show that local

networks, that can inform policy making and resource allocation though conversation and action, emerged from this experience.

In light of the expressed intention of South Africa's President's messages during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 to address inequality and forge a new economy, I argue that it is time to consider other options to the single story that has dominated early childhood policy. I pose the following questions to restart conversations: Can we learn from the uncertainty of COVID-19 in ways that open up debate and encourage a more democratic deliberation? Can government acknowledge missteps and be open to proposals from service users? How can we extend the notion of evidence, and include in our conversations early childhood theorists who have long been calling for the reconceptualization of early childhood policy, such as Peter Moss (2015) who promotes hope through contestation? Can we imagine another way of knowing, being and communicating that does not advantage the privileged few with devices, unlimited airtime and data packages? Can we rebuild livelihoods and solidarity through recognizing the agency and voice of communities? Can we all work together towards the vision of a convivial society set out in the 1955 Freedom Charter? This article invites urgent inclusive policy debate that expands choices and can produce cumulative worthwhile change and new learnings to birth a better society

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Using Bacchi's (2018) guiding questions as set out in the methodology, I explore the three sub-studies, with particular reference to specific articles only when necessary, with a view to revealing: what the 'problem' is represented to be, what deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underly this representation of the 'problem', what gave rise to this representation, what was left unproblematic, what effects were produced, and what are the possibilities for disruption?

4.1 Early childhood services constructed as preparation

Policy for young children in South Africa is based on a construction of early childhood services as preparation for school, formulated under western dominated expertise and discourses that have subjugated and sidelined indigenous knowledges and philosophies resulting in a very narrow, centre-based, school-readiness approach for younger and younger children. This construction has not been successfully disrupted despite evidence that poverty has not been alleviated and schooling has not improved in the decades following its introduction.

High drop-out and failure rates in the schooling system, viewed from a deficit perspective, dominated the early ANC policy negotiations before the first election (Biersteker, 2018). Alongside the broad definition of ECD in the 1996 Interim Policy and the promise of an integrated approach for children from birth, the policy proposed introducing an additional year of provisioning within the primary school system that emphasized 'school readiness'. Implementing and expanding this form of provision, referred to as Grade R, has been the principal focus of government early childhood policy.

As discussed in the first and second sub-studies, the 2015 policies continued to prioritise the narrow focus on learning and preparation for school despite the explicit intention to provide a package of integrated services. The 2015 NIECDP and NCF emerged in the context of the National 2030 vision and 2011 National

Development Plan (National Planning Commission, 2012) that once again identified the broad problem of poor school outcomes of 'black' children living in poverty. The NIECDP identified the more specific early childhood problem as the dire need for ECD services to eliminate poverty and inequality. The intention was to establish "comprehensive, universally available and equitable ECD services" (Republic of South Africa, 2015, p. 8) that target the underlying social and economic causes and consequences of known risk factors.

Despite this broad intention, the NIECDP and NCF construct early childhood services primarily as school-like places where children under the age of four years learn as preparation for school and work. Poor families and their children are constructed as problems. This narrow construction has continued to emphasise the 'centre-based' model of services that consequently subjugates more integrated and innovative approaches.

The NCF similarly responds to the 'problems' set out in National Vision for 2030 and the 2011 National Development Plan identified as "delays in cognitive and overall development before schooling" (National Planning Commission, 2012). This specific problem falls within the broader problem of poverty and inequality resulting from apartheid. The purpose of the NCF is described as "improving children's learning experiences" and preparing young children for schooling (Department of Basic Education, 2015, p. iii).

4.2 'Universal' assumptions reproduce colonial thinking

Extending primary school downward by introducing Grade R, was intended to solve the problem of poor school outcomes by providing a bridging period to prepare children for school and thus redress poverty and inequality by improving school achievement. Several linked assumptions underlie this construction of early childhood services as preparation. The first assumption is that by focussing narrowly on the child's potential to succeed at school, it is possible to improve the child's economic future. The second, is that the perspectives of the experts, who design national policies, as well as manage and assess implementation, should be prioritised over the views of families and communities. The related assumption revealed in the NIECDP is that inequality within and between populations has its origins in poor early childhood experiences and that ECD services can reduce key developmental challenges, particularly poverty and inequality. This is closely related to the assumption that the risks of individual children can be identified, measured and remedied.

The policy assumes that the primary risk of all children relates to family income levels. This assumption is entangled with deep-seated presuppositions about a causal link between low income and poor parenting and consequently that parents with low income primarily need information to improve parenting. To determine the level of investment, the policy proposes using big data sets to identify the location and kind of services that should be funded by government. This requires categorising children based on their geographic locations, which

are classified according to poverty indicators. Consequently, an evidence-based policymaking discourse is mobilised calling for the collection of data generated from an autocratic and bureaucratic point of view. Population-based planning, and centrally devised measures are assumed to be the best means to determine how early childhood services should be established and scaled up. Only services offering 'quality' programmes can access government funding. To qualify for funding, services are monitored by external experts, primarily measuring the cognitive development of individual children, using slightly modified internationally validated instruments. Despite the explicit policy intention of the NCF to include indigenous and local knowledges in the curriculum, the conspicuous middle-class urban bias fails to adequately acknowledge the diverse circumstances of children living in unequal circumstances.

The experts who make the policy, uncritically borrow frameworks from wealthy imperial countries, including, narrow notions of evidence, western child development and understanding the child as a return on investment. They assume these perspectives to be universal and the discourses used to characterise indigenous and local knowledges are based on colonial ethnic binary categories and disregard the profound understanding of the key features of indigenous knowledges, ubuntu philosophy and African cosmology. The curriculum set out in the NCF reveals the assumption that western philosophy is universal and consequently the policy reproduces colonial thinking by prioritising expert scientific knowledge, as the only body of knowledge that can bring better outcomes for children and their communities.

The third sub-study (Rudolph, 2021) identifies apartheid experts as proponents of the 'school readiness' problem representation piloted before 1994, that displaced more innovative approaches pioneered by the non-government sector. This dominant representation of the problem came about from the interplays of colonial thinking and power relations, a charismatic storyteller (Padayachie, 1993) and a 'chance' intervention during the 1992 ANC Education Policy Consultation (Rudolph, 2021).

Padayachie recommended a proposal that carried the least uncertainty and circulated discussion documents based on a deficit model of parents (particularly those living in poverty), who are assumed not to know what is best for their children. These assumptions resonated with the perspectives of the education experts who had established their authority during apartheid. A hastily prepared resolution in the dying moments of an ANC consultative conference sedimented the introduction of Grade R as the main early childhood intervention. This persisted for the first two decades of ANC rule.

4.3 Dominant international discourses silence all other voices

The NIECDP emerged from the exclusive reliance on dominant international early childhood discourses, which align closely with the broader ANC government representation of the problem of poverty across many policy sectors

in South Africa. This strategy objectifies and constitutes a large section of the population as vulnerable, thus needing intervention into their lives. Du Toit (2017) and other policy analysts argue that this approach was designed to merely manage the consequences of rising unemployment and inequality, rather than achieve the kind of meaningful social change promised by the ANC before 1994. During the past two decades, the ANC policy commitments and principles continue to be diminished, including the commitment to wide participation in policy making. Part of the current form of governance places the power to make decisions about resources in the hands of measurement experts rather than engaging service providers and beneficiaries in ongoing reflection and action. Following global measurement trends, the policy links cognitive achievement of individual children to assessment of the quality of service and determines the development of measurement tools and the selected data practices.

The NCF draws exclusively on the same dominant discourses and does not include in the references any of the vast literature arguing for reconceptualising early childhood as discussed in section 1.3.4. The NCF fails to recognise knowledge hierarchies and by prioritising the perspectives of the expert policy makers and particularly, their specific constructions of what counts as evidence, the majority of family members and citizens are silenced. The knowledges of this group of citizens, particularly those living in poverty are assumed to lack legitimacy, thus they are rendered invisible. Similarly, the policy proposal reveals an unconscious urban middle-class bias of the policy makers.

The good intentions of the 2015 NIECDP and NCF to address inequalities are undermined by the uncritical acceptance of global taken-for-granted discourses that make the poorest children and their families invisible, and silence other visions of childhood and good society. The NIECDP is silent on the fundamental causes of poverty and inequality, and the real-life conditions of young children. The diverse visions of childhood and society are silenced in favour of the single narrative and in particular the normative urban construction of childhood that favours 'white', male, middle class, norms and values (Burman, 2007). The NIECDP draws on dominant economic rationalities and neoliberal ideologies. For example, systematic quality assurance and quality control practices use predefined measurement procedures to assess children in terms of predetermined outcomes and, in so doing, govern and normalise young children and their families in particular ways. This shifts attention away from the structural hierarchies onto shaming and blaming individual children and their families.

4.4 Attempted resistance using dialogical approaches

After 1994 the way the ANC represented the 'problem' in early childhood policy sidelined the integrated bottom-up dialogical approaches pioneered by the non-government early childhood sector during apartheid. Diverse visions of childhood and society were silenced in favour of the international dominant early

childhood narrative. Several attempts have been made to disrupt this narrow construction of ECD, including in the 1996 Interim ECD Policy, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) Impilo Action Research project, and the Gauteng draft ECD Green Paper. The Interim Policy had introduced a broad definition of ECD as a relational umbrella term for a holistic process in the period between conception and at least nine years old. It also described in detail the alternative comprehensive participatory approaches drawing on the innovative work of a few non-governmental early childhood organisations using a conscientizing approach and described in the NEPI report (Taylor, 1992) as a 'developmental approach' (Department of Education, 1996). It was also disrupted by the Impilo Action Research Project (Rudolph, 1996, 1999; UNICEF, 1999) and other subsequent action research projects (Rudolph & James, 2015).

Impilo rejected the simplistic representation of the 'problem' as poor school outcomes, in favour of a plural and more complex, inclusive and consultative conceptualisation of education and care, childhoods, society, poverty and inequality. Impilo enabled dialogue to identify local needs based on diverse visions of childhood and society so that small groups could take responsible collaborative action, based on priorities and capacity. This approach acknowledged power relations and hierarchies of knowledge and invited inclusive respectful discussion, to experiment and imagine different futures. The emphasis was on conscientisation and learning together though cycles of conversation and action (Freire, 1985). The appreciative approach (Watkins, Mohr, & Kelly, 2011), started by asking what the group was doing well to support child-well-being. By asking for dreams and visions rather than problems, groups expressed strategies for action. The process enabled groups to categorise their action priorities, so they could start by taking small actions individually or in small groups, while they broke more ambitious actions into smaller steps. This enabled the group to celebrate small successes and generated energy for change. Collaborative action varied widely in response to local priorities and could include learning to build Lorena mud-ovens, start kitchen gardens or mobilise for accessible potable water. Strategies for dialogue were attentive to including everyone who had interest and/or influence. Users of the services, members of the communities in the geographic of the services, as well as the service providers responsible for those services were all invited, welcomed and encouraged to participate. All avenues for participation were explored and the conversation did not have to be limited to those people who could be in the same room at the same time. The approach aimed to put into practice the desired future of the group, what Michael Fielding refers to as 'prefigurative practice' (Fielding, 2007).

In 1999 in the absence of national legislation to resolve the legal complexities of the transition period, the GDE presented a draft ECD Green Paper to the provincial cabinet (Gauteng Department of Education, 1999). The proposal was well received, but a decision was made to delay taking it forward until the impending general election in June 1999. Significant changes were made to the provincial cabinet after the election and the new leadership was more inclined to follow the direction of the National Department of Education that

refused to accommodate the Gauteng provincial government's attempts to disrupt the national trajectory by redirecting early childhood policy based on the promising experiences of the Impilo Action Research pilot project. The different representations of the different dimensions of the similar problematisation have been widely disseminated.

In contrast, the dominant assumption of the 2015 policies is that marginalised families and communities need information delivered from experts in order to learn how to care for their children. These parent 'educators' are presumed to know more about the lives of those they are educating. The policy does not provide space for parents and community members to play a meaningful role in decision making about ECD service design or funding. The South African 2015 so-called 'integrated' policy fails to provide space for 'integrated working', as an approach that is flexible and deeply rooted in diverse communities which are constantly changing (Gordon, Peeters, & Vandekerckhove, 2016). 'Integrated working' assumes collaboration through a combination of bottom-up initiative and top-down support. The 2015 policy by contrast conceptualises integration as a centralised top-down approach with the primary focus on coordinating a finite set of predetermined services.

The problem could have been conceptualised differently, acknowledging diversity in South Africa, and drawing on a wide range of socio-economic theories and paradigms that do not reproduce poverty and inequality. In particular, and as I have argued, a genuinely integrated approach that accommodates multiple visions of childhood and society would generate complexity and open possibilities for stories and futures other than colonial progress based on an extractive economy.

4.5   Subjugation of indigenous ways of knowing and being

Despite recognising indigenous and local knowledges, the NCF only pays lip-service to the fundamental epistemology of African philosophy and cosmology. There is no mention of ancestors, ancestor rituals, funerals or of harmonious relations as the foundation of well-being, or that these relations include other than humans in the same sociability. The NCF is silent on the spiritual dimension despite using the 1996 definition of ECD that includes 'spiritual development'. The 2015 policies do not acknowledge indigenous relational or event-based constructions of time or seasonal changes in community activities and events. Centre-based services are prioritized and generally follow the school curriculum with regulation and rigid routines now being imposed on three- and four- year-olds with the introduction Grade RR.

Ramose (2014) explains that ubuntu philosophy and western philosophy are different and that western philosophy assumes that it is universal and can explain everything whereas ubuntu and other indigenous knowledges accommodate multiplicity. From an ubuntu perspective, everything is connected and relational, knowledge is a way of being, time is relational and does not march

forward in a line from moment to moment. Some early childhood experts (Biersteker & Dawes, 2019) discount the lived experience of millions of children, thus circumscribing and erasing from consideration the importance of incorporating and preserving indigenous knowledges.

4.6   A missed opportunity for meaningful social change

The representation of the problem in the national early childhood policy, as discussed, ironically undermines the stated intention of the policy to reduce poverty and promote equity. In the absence of debate about the purpose of education and the kind of society we want, positioning ECD as a strategy for improving education outcomes automatically subscribe to a western and middle-class view of childhood and society and miss the opportunity for early childhood policy to bring about meaningful social change. The problem of poor school outcomes is established as a taken-for-granted truth and government invites experts to offer evidence-based solutions to solve this problem. Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) argue that; "if the very nature of a 'problem' is in dispute, any suggestion that all that is required is evidence about how to solve 'it' seems to be sadly inadequate" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 39). The international emphasis in early childhood policy on 'what works', assumes the independent existence of a 'problem' that needs fixing. As discussed in the sub-studies, this is not the case. The way the 'problem' is represented in policy making, frequently generates new problems rather than improving the situation. The kind of evidence prioritised by government in South African early childhood policy, leads to policymakers exclusively using large population data sets and centrally devised measures in determining the set of early childhood services to be funded and scaled up instead of gathering local data in discussions with community stakeholders. As a result, there is insufficient detail about local conditions. By closing space for debate and discussion about the root causes of social problems, government limits the possibility of liberatory change (Freire, 1985; Madlingozi, 2017). Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) argue that policy workers should be troubling consensus, rather than cultivating it. By portraying policy as a 'problem-solving' activity that draws on evidence-based practice, the South African government denies the possibility of local innovative solutions and fortifies failed expert solutions.

This reliance on normative discourses and global early childhood frameworks in the NCF construct early childhood actors (experts, children, families and communities) and services in particular ways and influences who can speak, where and with what authority. Early childhood development is constructed as primarily taking place in early childhood centres where trained personnel focus primarily on teaching children to prepare them for school and work. A binary is created between professionals and parents and different roles are allocated to each group. Despite the diversity in world views in South Africa and the complex relations of space, race, class and culture, the policy takes for

granted global discourses and treats them as universal. This is particularly evident in the constructions of identity and belonging.

This problematisation continues to be promoted in dominant international early childhood discourses and has been reinforced in South Africa by the national evidence-based approach to policy making that permeates government through the strong influence of the National Planning Commission, with its exclusive commitment to outcome-based planning, monitoring and evaluation. Once this single story and implementation of a year of preparation for schooling, referred to as Grade R was implemented as the primary intervention for the first two decades of ANC rule, the assumption was that government had gone too far down the road to change course. Despite the recognition in 2015 that Grade R had deepened inequality, the government response was to add another year of preparation for Grade R, referred to as Grade RR. The policies adopted in 2015 consequently introduced interventions for children from birth to four years to prepare them for two years in centre-based settings (Grade R and Grade RR) before entering the first grade of formal schooling. The 2015 curriculum framework is firmly entrenched. It has been disseminated to all provincial departments of education and early childhood teachers and practitioners and informs the new university teacher training courses being developed.

In summary, early childhood services are narrowly constructed as preparing young children for school and work in a capitalist society. The dominant discourse is constructed by experts drawing on global narratives with insufficient engagement with different visions of childhood and society in diverse South African communities. Inclusive dialogue in communities might create more responsive integrated early childhood services. The primary problematisation of early childhood policy is that ECD services can change the economic circumstances of children by preparing them for school and work. This approach to the government of poverty permeates a wide range of South African policies (Rudolph et al., 2019), however, it does not take into account the way that the economy needs to change. A detailed history of inequality in South Africa and the forces that shaped its changing forms in different periods is beyond the scope of this thesis, but there is agreement that a "central feature of post-apartheid society has been the persistence of very high levels of structural unemployment" (Soudien, Reddy, & Woolard, 2019, p. 92). Given the absence of employment opportunities, children will remain trapped in poverty. The current system of schooling across Africa draws on competitive capitalist values, promoting an extractive definition of success. While the unschooled are stigmatizing as incompetent and incomplete, many students, who have successfully completed schooling are constructed as a surplus population when they are not needed for the global economy (Abebe, 2020).

4.7   Bringing my story to a close with self-reflection

Bacchi proposes a form of reflexivity that she refers to as the practice of 'self-problematisation' (Bacchi, 2018). She asks those of us using her approach to apply the same questions to our own proposals or proposed 'solutions'. I adapt her suggested questions (set out in Table 1 in section 2.2.4) to serve a heuristic function as I reflect on my entire study including my proposals in the three published sub-studies and my analysis in sections 4.1 to 4.6. The goal is to treat my own problem representations as problematisations that also require critical scrutiny. In this way, I take responsibility for the potential of my arguments and proposals for change in turn producing "deleterious consequences" (Bacchi, 2018, p. 10). I use the metaphor of the 'wayfarer' (Ingold, 2007) to frame this part of my story.

Ingold (2007, p. 75) distinguishes between two modalities of travel, 'wayfaring' and 'transport'. The path of the 'wayfarer' has no beginning or end, while 'transport' is destination oriented. On this research journey, I identify as the wayfarer, although I experienced much pressure to be more destination oriented and move more speedily to completing this study. As a wayfarer, I have to sustain myself, "both perceptually and materially, through an active engagement with the country" that opened up along my path (Ingold, 2007, p. 76). My engagement is with my broad research field, that includes scholarly connections in the world and achieved through reading, and different companions (human and more-than-human) and places that connect this study, such as, woods, lakes, cities and communities in South Africa, Australia and Finland. As a wayfarer, "I am my movement" (Ingold, 2007, p. 76) as I press on in an ongoing process of growth and development and self-renewal. Ingold draws on indigenous ways of thinking and being to describe the wayfarer, who is always on the lookout for nutrition. While the transported traveller's basic nature is unaffected, I have been deeply changed on my journey and have had to pause from time to time to wrestle with my entanglements. Although my decolonial theoretical framework draws on knowledges that go beyond the universal, in my analysis I too fall into the trap of drawing on discourses that construct childhood and society in particular ways that reveal binaries, potential generalisations, homogenisation, essentialisation and universalisation. For example, by writing about 'experts' and 'communities', as groups, I risk constructing homogenised groups and then binaries such as experts/communities. Indeed, there are many experts in marginalised community groups. As explained in section 2.2, my theoretical framework shifted along the way, determining what I could bring into my analysis and what had to be left outside.

Deconstructing all my problematisations in any detail would doubtless require yet another study. Here, I merely recount some of the struggles and headaches emerging from my on-going self-reflections on my doctoral journey. To complete my story, I refer specifically to some of my silences and misguided assumptions that weaken my problematisations. Most importantly, the three

published sub-studies lacked space to introduce the varieties of indigenous understandings of time, childhood and sustainable futures that exist, and which collide with western and 'expert' views on these issues. Moreover, these views would have necessitated greater decentring of the human in my analyses, with a view to expand imaginaries that communities might have about futures and mutual thriving.

The springboard for my study was analysing early childhood policies to reveal their potential to bring about change. The convivial society I envisaged was inhabited mostly by humans, only my personal stories reference plants, animals, soil, rocks, and the artificial world that sustain and intra-act with children in storied communities. I insert some of these stories in the Epilogue of this thesis to bring these participants into view in relation to policy for early childhood in South Africa. The first story, *Learning with the women in Sheridan* is about helping to establish responsive services for young children based on local circumstances. The second story, *Learning about 'development' at Mdukutshani* is about my first experience of living and learning in a remote marginalised community. Although it was not possible to include these stories in the published sub-studies, they were included in a silent way in my analysis.

While 'wayfaring', I met many new theories and ideas. For example, I was excited when Braidotti (2019) introduced me to posthumanism and the many other post-theorists. She helped me recognise the importance of decentring the human, while clarifying that posthumanism does not mean leaving behind humanism, but includes it, and with it, its gains. Reading, when I could, Barad and other significant theorists virtually with fellow wayfarers in the Decolonising Early Childhood Discourse: Critical Posthumanism in Higher Ed reading group (led by Karin Murris and Vivienne Bozalek) offered enriching conversation and pointed me in the direction of many insightful texts, virtual conferences, webinars and lectures. Barad's (2019) quantum field theory shifted many notions that had seemed so self-evident. My understandings of the notions of space, time, matter, and the void were all challenged: "Matter is not some given that pre-exists its interactions, and, the void is not determinately empty" (Barad, 2019, p. 528). Reflecting on the construction of 'the void' brought much colonial thinking into sharper focus. As a "much-valued apparatus of colonialism" the void is "a crafty insidious imaginary, a way of offering justification for claims of ownership in the 'discovery' of 'virgin' territory" (Barad, 2019, p. 529). Of course, constructing lands as 'empty' rather than plentiful spaces before they are settled opens the door to "colonialism, racism, capitalism, militarism, imperialism, nationalism, and scientism" (Barad, 2019, p. 529). Quantum Field Theory could have contributed to my problematisation through the understanding of the "multiple and diverse forms of injustice that must be addressed in their inseparability" (Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 21). I struggle to get my head around the notion of intra-action and try my best to follow Barad's ethics of response-ability, which resonates well with the indigenous knowledges I have been privy to, as I engaged with communities in South Africa. I come back again and again to remember that we increase our response-ability, which is really the same as our ability to

respond, in direct proportion to how open we are. This openness includes seeing and experiencing the entanglements of where we are, where we have been, as well as our future knowing and being. Objectivity and understanding emerge from entering into the complexity of where we are and not by standing at a distance.

Haraway's (2016) notion of making kin delights me and connects well with the ways in which I connect with and enjoy being adopted by my wayfarer companions as friend, sister, and 'ugogo' (grandmother). My most significant wayfaring companion is the land, it is the soil and life-giving capacities of the Earth (Gaia) which is in a critical state and needs more attention as a political, spiritual and agentic actant in our communities (Gan, Bubandt, Tsing, & Swanson, 2017). The idea of doing participatory research with more than humans (Bastian, Jones, Moore, & Roe, 2017) entices me and expands the horizon into new domains of policy analysis and collaborative research (Dowling, Lloyd, & Suchet-Pearson, 2017). With many decades of interest in methods that can reveal what matters to those traditionally excluded from dominant knowledge making processes, as well as "fostering techniques that challenge hierarchies in the hope of 'creating with' in ways that are ethical, socially just and epistemologically open" (Bastian et al., 2017, p. 5), it makes a lot of sense to move beyond human communities to include other entangled excluded beings and our Earth (Latour, 2018).

My interest in gaining new scholarly companions was intensified when the Corona virus entered our daily lives as a recognised actant and intensified hierarchies, inequalities and destitution. However, by the time I became interested in this important literature, my three sub-studies had already been published within a humanist frame and so I had to pull back and make strategic decisions about what could and could not be included in terms of my framework and completing the study. There were many other hard decisions on the journey.

Early on, when, I was introduced to autoethnography, which excited me, I had to think hard about how much of my personal life I could or should make public. I had many years of experience in the resistance against apartheid and had learned to be strategic about what I allowed myself to remember, let alone disclose publicly. When I started to engage with hierarchies of knowledge, I was challenged by my positionality as non-indigenous researcher. What authority do I have to speak about ubuntu philosophy? Afterall, although I am the second generation born in Africa, I am a descendant of settlers and I had enjoyed the privileges of being classified 'white' during apartheid. Ironically, I had first discovered indigenous knowledges when I lived with people of the Mohawk Nation in the Adirondack Mountains, North America in 1976. I became interested in the similarities of the ways of knowing and being across different indigenous or first nations peoples, such as, Aboriginals, Maori, Inuit, Sami and others. Interestingly, my wayfaring through the thesis led me to lands with activist indigenous populations. Indigenous ways of knowing and being are not what I inherited, but what I choose and seek. I had to think about acknowledging my positionality in relation to ancestors. I could find no mention of ancestors in the

South African school or early childhood curriculum. However, I do embrace ancestors and include many dead-friends who are not blood relatives in my ancestor family as 'kin'.

African cosmology, as well as Khoi and San perspectives, go beyond the adult-child binary and child-centred orientation embedded in post-apartheid South African early childhood policy. I encouraged a child-centred approach during the post-apartheid policy discussions. I understood this approach to elevate the interests, well-being and views of young children and welcomed a potential shift from authoritarian teacher-directed apartheid thinking. Now I see much more clearly the implications of human exceptionalism, in any form, including placing the individual child at the centre of early childhood policy and practice. Indigenous constructions of childhood are inextricably linked to constructions of time. A linear construction of time in western philosophy informs a wide range of constructions and practices, including progress and economic growth.

The linear notion of time is at the heart of justifications for colonisation. Inferior peoples, according to the imperialists, need to progress to the level of 'civilisation' to which the invaders assumed they themselves had already progressed. In a similar way, children were constructed as inferior to adults and some sub-categories of children are more inferior to others (Burman, 2007, 2008, 2019; Murris, 2021b; Murris & Kohan, 2020). The construction of time as linear is entangled with the construction of childhood and schooling. Schools have become places "to form children into civilized adults of the Enlightened society" and in this way schools have become "chronological institution(s)" (Murris & Kohan, 2020, p. 5). Like most countries, South African schooling and early childhood services are entangled with constructions of progress. Children are divided, grouped and classified on the basis of age. They must progress through stages and grades. They have to orientate towards a future for which they are doing child and schoolwork. There is a strong belief that testing cognitive 'outcomes' of individual children is a way to success. Young children are being prepared to live and work within the confines of the Gregorian calendar and the clocks of the capitalist and neoliberal labour force.

In African indigenous cosmology, time is non-linear, it is relational and cyclical, and transitions of the soul include physical and supra-physical realms. I suggest exploring the many visions that communities create for their children as a further research project which I could not undertake in this thesis. I share here a snippet from an unpublished animation, *Indlela Yokuphila*[6], in which one story about the soul's journey is told to a group of children by an isiZulu speaking Sangoma (healer) whose spirit family is the whale. The storyteller explains to the children that when your time comes you will join the ancestors in the ocean. Your soul travels along the river into the ocean following the songs of your great-great grandmothers and learning much and exploring on the way. It is an endless

---

[6] *Indlela Yokuphila* is an unpublished animation still in draft form directed by Marc Maynihan. The writer Dylan McGarry screened and discussed the film clip in a webinar, *Hydrofeminism and wild engagements with ocean/s: Towards a justice to come in South African contexts*, on 19 August 2021.

mysterious realm of knowledge, wisdom and wonder. When you arrive in the deep ocean, your ancestors are waiting to receive you with the greatest love, and they know exactly who you are and where you came from. You are welcomed by your great-great grandmother, and you become an ancestor. You spend a long time in the ocean until 'pressing matters' need your knowledge back on earth and you are called back to the physical realm by the song of your next mother. From this perspective, children are born with wisdom and experience of previous lives on earth and as ancestors. The primary role of caregivers is understood to be helping the child remember who she is and what she already knows. The emphasis is on listening to children and recognising them as spiritual beings. This does not exclude learning new skills and gaining new understandings. Bringing into view the rich and subjugated constructions of relational time and childhood offer alternative visions, understandings and new problematisations for early childhood policy to create a flourishing sociability.

The most difficult challenge for me throughout my study was the tension between my liberatory intentions and the requirements of post-structuralist deconstruction. I have been driven for most of my adult life by the desire to contribute to justice for all. I entered the early childhood field through mobilising community action. Focusing on the well-being of young children protected me to some extent from the attention of the security police during apartheid. Justice for all is a complicated matter, and activism and advocacy often need simplified understandings, and values and norms that are agreed by many, hence it is easy to fall into creating new understandings and norms that marginalise and exclude. Pre-figurative practice offers a propelling force, but its figurations need to be placed under close attention and deconstruction as the subject of collective dialogue. I struggled alone with my own constructions of social justice, and while wayfaring also met teachers – academic, personal and more-than-human kin. I understood with their insights how liberatory discursive practices operate, and I now understand that justice cannot be achieved, but that it is possible to strive for justice-to-come.

This point marks a moment of tension but not of completion. For the wayfarer there is always somewhere further to go, for wherever I am, and so long as life goes on, there remains much territory opening up for future wayfaring. It is not an individual journey and there are many wayfarers who are and have been singing and story-telling the world into existence through 'meshworks' (Ingold, Lefebvre, Escobar). Taken together these meshworks form a "tangle of interwoven and complexly knotted strings" ... "an open-work fabric of entwined threads and chords" (Ingold, 2007, p. 80). "The lines of the meshwork are the trails along which life is lived" (Ingold, 2007, p. 81). I hope my story contributes in some way towards offering insights into the plethora of alternatives that might energise pluriversal politics. As part of the meshworks of collectives and communities (including the more-than-human), we can continue to weave together many possibilities for flourishing sociabilities, in which all enjoy harmonious lives of meaning and dignity.

5   EPILOGUE

Learning with the women in Sheridan

I remember my time at Sheridan, Free State, South Africa, with much appreciation to the women who deepened my understanding about different visions of childhood and society. One winter afternoon in the late 198Os, I sat on the ground in a circle in the dust with about 15 of the women of Sheridan, the farm belonging to the Catholic Church that had recently been given to the workers to own and run as a collective. Although this was fertile farmland, in the Free State, not the eroded land I had got used to in Msinga, the workers still lived together on the far side of the property, and we met daily in the well-trampled area near their homes. The farm had a productive dairy-herd and exported asparagus. For a few weeks each year, there was an opportunity for every able-bodied person to earn cash wages harvesting asparagus. For women with young children this posed a problem and they wanted to start a centre they referred to as a 'crash' (crèche) to free them to take advantage of this important opportunity.

   When I first started working in early childhood, I engaged with several groups in different geographic areas to understand their visions of childhood and society. Through these consultations we started a non-government organisation we called Woz'obona ('come and see') and developed the curriculum collaboratively. As one of these first groups, Sheridan was a good place to start. Two good friends experienced in the Training for Transformation dialogical development approach (Hope & Timmel, 2014), Clare Stewart and Mme Tshepo (now with the ancestors) were both already based there. Mme Tshepo would assist me with translation and Clare, an agriculturalist, invited my young son, his dad and me to stay in her small worker cottage. I had set off to spend an initial 10 days learning with the women.

   As I remember, we were already into a routine of daily dialogue, talking about how young children learn. On that particular afternoon, I wanted to talk about what I had understood as a straight-forward distinction between what children learn on their own and when they might need help. So, when I asked

the question: "Do children need to be taught to walk?" I expected the answer to be "No", but the immediate and emphatic chorus was: "Yes!".

When I asked them to please tell me more they explained: "You can tie a cockerel to the child's ankle and if you don't have a cockerel, you can put the child on a termite heap."

Oops! I had not expected that response. So, I looked at my watch and saw it was 2pm. We usually finished at about 3pm. So, to give me time to process what I had just heard, I said: "Let's end early today and we will meet here again tomorrow morning at 10 am".

That night I asked Mme Tshepo: "Were the women serious about their answer?"

Her response: "We will have to ask them tomorrow."

So, we did, and I learned that if you have a child who is still being carried and another one is on the way, you have to make a plan to get the older one walking before the next one is born. That of course provided us with the entry point for lots of interesting discussion. Through the continued dialogue, agreement was reached about two services (permanent centre and temporary tent) that could respond to the needs of children of different ages. There would be a permanent centre-based service for children between the ages of three and six, before they started primary school. It would only function a few hours a day, so that the children could continue to enjoy their freedom and learn in the community. The mothers of children younger than three years-old would all work in the same field during asparagus harvesting. They would organise a tent and water and then take turns in caring for the children and could easily be called to breast feed as needed. There was agreement that the tradition of younger children being with their mothers should not be permanently disrupted for the sake of two weeks cash income.

We talked a lot about how ensuring all children should be welcome and that all family members should participate actively in whatever ways they could. Everyone who was interested could join the 'training' and help in the centre. There would not be a hierarchy between 'mothers' and 'teachers'.

One woman asked if all children should be welcome and referred to a young child on the farm who would scuttle by alone from time to time. He wore no clothes and a wild look. They explained that he had no friends as the other children laughed at him and he would not listen or wear clothes. We spoke more and agreed he should definitely be welcome and strategized how this might be possible.

The tent for asparagus picking was a great success. The centre for older children was started and I visited regularly to help set up the environment, demonstrate ways of using the activities, observe and reflect together and plan the next cycle of action. The centre was thriving when I last visited in the late 1990s. With Mme Tshepo's help there was a very productive vegetable garden and the most wonderful children size VIP-pit toilets. The tippy-tap and waiting-

stones (for taking turns on the swing made from an old tyre) were working well. The most heartening thing to see was the previously 'wild child' fully integrated into the service. He helped himself to food and washed his plate together with all the other children and laughed happily.

Learning about 'development' at Mdukutshani

My life at Mdukutshani, on the Tugela River was challenging and enriching. It was relatively easy to get used to sleeping on a grass mat on a mud and dung floor, living without electricity, running water or toilet. It was much more difficult to comprehend the breadth and depth of the hardships of my isiZulu speaking neighbours and friends in apartheid South Africa in the late 1970s. The memories that still overpower me include: an old woman pushing her skeletal husband in a wheelbarrow to the pay point on pension day; the children's drawings of guns and helicopters; the shrill fearful screams of children when a helicopter came overhead threatening another raid on a dagga crop; the children with bare feet on the early morning winter frost; the 'white' farmers who cut their own fences to steal the cattle that strayed back to the familiar water holes on the adjacent land from which their 'black' owners had been forcibly removed; the labour involved in building and then 'smearing' and maintaining a mud hut; the daily struggle to provide water, firewood and a little food for the household; the vision of a woman striding across the river waist deep with a roll of barbed wire on her head and a baby on her back, while I stumbled behind using two sticks to cross while carrying only a few loaves of bread and a jar of peanut butter in my knapsack; the dark shadow of conflict; the 'faction fights' initiated and exacerbated by South African government agent provocateurs; the reports of another murder, another kraal burnt during the night; the widow who incurred a lifetime of debt purchasing the slaughter animal for her murdered husband's funeral; the burden of poverty, starvation, illness and injustice. Mdukutshani provided my first experience of 'development work' and informed my conceptualization of Woz'obona.

Through Church Agricultural Projects, Neil Alcock (Numzaan as he was known) accessed land on the border between 'white' Natal and 'black' Msinga and called it, Mdukutshani – isiZulu, for *Place of lost grasses*. Barren rock strewn Msinga in Kwa-Zulu is the product of the toxic labour tenant system and the 1970 Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act. The labour tenant system gave the land to 'white' farmers and the 'black' previous owners, and their family members were forced to work for the 'new owner' for six months each year to continue to live on their own traditional land. Then the apartheid policy ended the labour tenant system, deprived isiZulu speaking people of their South African citizenship and forcibly evicted those living in what were declared white areas. Too many people were pushed onto too little arid land in the 'Bantustan' called Kwa-Zulu[7].

---

[7]   In 1983 the SaraSoto Herald-Tribune reported that about 5 million people were living on approximately 31 000 square miles in Kwa-Zulu and only 11.5% of the land was

Numzaan was a charismatic man who spoke fluent isiZulu and people came from miles away to seek help of every kind. He had many ideas for improving the land and the quality of life for the people living in the neighbouring villages of Msinga. Most of the children could not go to school as their labour was necessary for survival either working on 'white' farms (for a pittance), taking care of the family goats or other domestic responsibilities. So Numzaan convinced the local government school to offer schooling in two shifts. One group of children would attend in the morning and work on the project in the afternoon and the others would join the afternoon shift. Families were persuaded to put their goats in a communal flock so that fewer children were needed at any one time to take care of them. It also provided an opportunity to introduce milk goats into the flock and persuade people to milk their goats. I got the job of being the first 'model' goat 'milker' and spent many hours chasing after 'my' goat that kept breaking its tether.

My primary responsibility was helping to make the children's 'work' more educational. The men responsible for different activities, such as building, only had experience of children working on 'white' farms and so they used them in a similar way in the project. So, for example, when I worked with the children in the building group, I helped the men consider the relationship between the size of rock that had to be moved and the weight and capacity of the children. We counted and measured together, and the children were paid by the project the same small amount they would have earned on a 'white' farm.

My days were filled with many responsibilities: In addition to helping the men make the children's work more educational I set up a home-schooling environment for Neil and Creina's young sons and was named as the 'qualified teacher' in case the 'white' school inspectors came to check; we initiated learning collectives in each village and facilitated intergenerational literacy, especially for those villages which were further from the school; I learned how to treat minor ailments like scabies and wounds and once a month drove the truck to the local hospital with everyone who needed more major medical treatment. I could speed up the process by taking medical histories beforehand, reporting to the nurses and then following up the treatment back in the villages. I also helped to communicate with the Black Sash when legal help was needed. I helped weigh and record the acacia seed and bone that was exchanged for mealie (maize) meal. Details of the people in the bone queue and their family circumstances were recorded as an indicator of hardship. Children as young as ten were frequently in the queue.

As an apprentice in the culture (with extremely limited Zulu language skills) I most enjoyed spending time with the youngest peer cohort (between about two and 8 years old) in activities such as harvesting edible green leaves or 'imifino'. This is a regular activity for women and girls when there has been rain. One of the older children would identify one variety and direct us all to collect the same variety on that day. As I learned to recognize more and more edible

suitable for crops. There were 25.8 people per hectare in Kwa-Zulu compared to 7.7 in white South Africa.

71

varieties, I was perplexed and could not understand why we only picked one variety as we could have picked much more if we picked all the edible varieties. After all, food was scarce! I pondered on this question for some time, until I understood that picking only one variety at a time helped the mother check for inedible varieties when she prepared them for the pot. It would have been much more difficult to identify the errors in a mixture of different varieties. In the imifino gathering cohort, the experts are older children who have mastered an understanding of edible varieties and I continue to be enthralled by this example of learning in the community.

YHTEENVETO (SUMMARY IN FINNISH)

Tutkimuksessa selvitetään, voidaanko varhaislapsuuteen liittyvien politiikkojen avulla rakentaa toimivaa kulttuurienvälistä yhteiseloa ja saada aikaan lasten, heidän perheidensä ja yhteisöjen emansipaatiota apartheidin jälkeisessä Etelä-Afrikassa. Väitöskirjassa yhdistyy dekolonialistinen projekti (Christie & McKinney, 2017; Santos, 2007) jälkistrukturalistiseen politiikka-analyysiin (Bacchi, 2000; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) ja refleksiivisyys genealogiana (Pillow, 2015) autoetnografiseen toimenpide-ehdotukseen (Holman Jones, 2005). Autoetnografiassa hyödynnän vuosikymmenten mittaista kokemustani Etelä-Afrikan varhaislapsuutta koskevista politiikoista ja käytänteistä sekä julkispoliittisia asiakirjoja ja henkilökohtaisia arkistojani, jotka sisältävät raportteja, kirjeenvaihtoa ja muistiinpanoja kyseiseltä ajalta.

Huolimatta ensimmäisen demokraattisesti valitun hallituksen (1994) lupauksesta tarttua apartheidin perintöön, erityisesti köyhyyteen ja epätasa-arvoon, Etelä-Afrikka kuuluu edelleen maailman epätasa-arvoisimpiin maihin. Varhaislapsuutta koskeva politiikka määriteltiin yhdeksi strategiaksi, jolla luodaan oikeudenmukainen, monikulttuurinen yhteiskunta. Tutkimustani motivoi huoli köyhyydestä ja lapsista, jotka vuosikymmeniä apartheidin purkamisen jälkeen yhä elävät nälässä ja pelossa, vaikka Afrikan kansalliskongressin (ANC) muodostama hallitus oli luvannut puuttua tilanteeseen. Seuraavat kysymykset ohjasivat tutkimustani:

- Kuinka monimutkaiset siirtomaaperinteet (esimerkiksi valta- ja tietohierarkiat sekä niihin liittyvät suhteet ja diskurssit) ovat vaikuttaneet lapsipolitiikkaan apartheidin virallisen purkamisen jälkeen?
- Kuinka varhaislapsuutta koskevilla politiikoilla voitaisi muuttaa yhteiskuntaa?
- Kuinka tietynlaisten tietorakennelmien valitseminen ja edistäminen tuottaa erilaisia muutoksia?
- Kuinka keskustelu lapsuuden ja yhteiskunnan erilaisista tulkinnoista voi edistää emansipatoriseen yhteiskunnalliseen muutokseen tähtäävää toimintaa?

Olen hionut refleksiivisyyttäni lukemalla, kirjoittamalla, ajattelemalla ja keskustelemalla (Pillow, 2015). Bacchin foucault'laista jälkistrukturalistista lähestymistapaa (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016) soveltamalla tuon esiin poliittisia olettamuksia, 'ongelmia', vaiettuja asioita ja seuraamuksia. Aloitin tutkimuksen omista taipumuksistani normatiiviseen ajattelutapaan ja taistelin olettamuksieni kanssa, kun pohdiskelin muita mahdollisia visioita lapsuudesta ja yhteiskunnasta, jossa edistetään dekolonisaatiota ja lasten, perheiden ja yhteisöjen vapautta.

Väitöskirjassa kehitetään joukko väittämiä. Ensinnäkin Etelä-Afrikan hallitus tulkitsee varhaislapsuuden palvelut kapeasti ikään kuin valmistamaan pikkulapsia kouluun ja työhön kapitalistisessa yhteiskunnassa ja olettaen, että tällä voidaan muuttaa heidän taloudellisia olosuhteitaan. Lisäksi politiikan tavoitteeksi on määritelty köyhyyteen ja epätasa-arvoon puuttuminen, mutta se on

tehty tyhjäksi hyväksymällä kritiikittömästi itsestäänselvyyksinä pidettyjä glo-
baaleja diskursseja, jotka liittyvät esimerkiksi rajoittuneisiin käsityksiin näytöstä,
länsimaisiin käsityksiin lapsen kehityksestä, lapsen näkemiseen tuottona sijoite-
tulle pääomalle sekä urbaaneihin, keskiluokkaisiin konteksteihin ja arvoihin.
Kolmas väittämä on, että yhä jatkuva kolonialistinen ajattelu on tuottanut tieto-
ja valtahierarkioita ja vaientanut keskustelun sekä monimuotoiset tulkinnat lap-
suudesta ja yhteiskunnasta, jotka saattaisivat siivittää olennaisesti erilaisia tule-
vaisuuksia.

Vaikka Etelä-Afrikan kansallinen opetussuunnitelma 0–4-vuotiaille lap-
sille (National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four, NCF; De-
partment of Basic Education, 2015a) tunnustaa paikalliset ja alkuperäiskansojen
tietorakennelmat, se antaa vain tyhjiä lupauksia afrikkalaisen filosofian ja kos-
mologian keskeisen tietoteorian suhteen. Siinä ei mainita lainkaan esivanhempia,
heidän rituaalejaan, hautajaisia tai harmonisia suhteita hyvinvoinnin perustana,
tai että näihin suhteisiin kuuluu muutakin kuin saman yhteisön ihmisiä. Opetus-
suunnitelmassa vaietaan henkisestä ulottuvuudesta, paitsi käytettäessä vuoden
1996 määritelmää varhaislapsuuden kehityksestä, johon kuuluu 'henkinen kehi-
tys'. Vuoden 2015 linjauksissa ei tunnusteta alkuperäiskansojen relationaalisia tai
tapahtumaperustaisia tulkintoja ajasta eikä vuodenaikavaihtelua yhteisön toi-
minnassa ja tapahtumissa. Päiväkodeissa tuotetut palvelut ovat etusijalla ja nou-
dattavat yleensä koulun opetussuunnitelmaa, johon on tullut mukaan sääntely ja
tiukat rutiinit 3- ja 4-vuotiaiden ns. RR-luokalla.

Ramosen (2014) mukaan ubuntu-filosofia ja länsimainen filosofia eroavat
toisistaan; länsimainen filosofia olettaa olevansa universaali ja voivansa selittää
kaiken, kun taas ubuntuun ja muihin alkuperäiskansojen tietorakennelmiin kuu-
luu monimuotoisuus. Ubuntun näkökulmasta kaikki on yhteydessä kaikkeen ja
relationaalista, tieto on tapa olla, aika on relationaalista eikä etene lineaarisesti
hetki hetkeltä. Jotkut varhaislapsuuden asiantuntijat (Biersteker & Dawes, 2019)
jättävät miljoonien lasten kokemukset omaan arvoonsa ja unohtavat, että on tär-
keää huomioida ja säilyttää alkuperäiskansojen tietorakennelmat.

Kaikki tämän artikkeliväitöskirjan kolme osatutkimusta yhdistävät poli-
tiikka-analyysiä ja autoetnografiaa. Niillä on sama käsitteellinen viitekehys, joka
kehittyi monimutkaisemmaksi ja teoreettisemmaksi prosessissa, johon kuului lu-
kemista ja kirjoittamista sekä osallistumista ja esiintymistä kansainvälisissä kon-
ferensseissa ja erilaisilla foorumeilla. Kaikissa artikkeleissa hyödynnetään oma-
kohtaisia kokemuksia. Ensimmäiseen ja kolmanteen artikkeliin sisältyy henkilö-
kohtaisia vinjettejä, ja toinen artikkeli perustuu epäsuorasti osallistaviin politiik-
kaprosesseihini. Kun käsitykseni relationaalisuudesta syveni, autoetnografinen
menetelmä kehittyi yksilöllisestä minä-näkökulmasta kollektiiviseksi me-näkö-
kulmaksi (Spry, 2016). Kaikissa kolmessa osatutkimuksessa käytetään Bacchin
'What is the problem represented to be?' (WPR) -lähestymistapaa, ja pohdinnassa
käytetään tätä WPR-lähestymistapaa eksplisiittisemmin ja systemaattisemmin
(Bacchi, 2000; Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Vastauksena Bacchin ja Goodwinin haas-
teeseen, että me politiikantekijöinä "miettisimme omaa rooliamme hallintokäy-
tänteissä" (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, s. 6), problematisoimme myös omaa

ongelmanasetteluamme. 'Refleksiivisyys', joka on selkeästi läsnä kaikkien kolmen artikkelin käsitteellisessä viitekehyksessä ja metodeissa, kehittyi koko tutkimuksen ajan ja sen käyttötapa muuttui lähestyen Pillow'n (2003) 'epämukavuuden refleksiivisyyttä'.

Varhaislapsuuteen liittyvän hallinnon problematisointi Etelä-Afrikassa on kaikkien kolmen julkaistun artikkelin keskeinen piirre. Problematisointi a tekee näkyväksi, kuinka tietystä käyttäytymisestä, ilmiöstä tai prosessista tulee 'ongelma'. Keskiössä on siten kysymys, miten juuri kielemme ja toimintamme – 'diskurssien' – kautta tuotamme tietynlaisia ongelmia. Käytän 'diskursseja' kattamaan sekä kielen että toiminnan. Kolmannessa osatutkimuksessa keskitytään politiikan muodostamisprosessiin ja osoitetaan, kuinka valta toimii ja diskursseja käytetään, jotta valittu muutoksen suunta saadaan näyttämään muita suuntia ilmeisemmältä ja hyväksyttävämmältä.

Vuoden 1994 jälkeen Afrikan kansalliskongressin (ANC) tapa esittää varhaislapsuuspolitiikan 'ongelmaa' syrjäytti integroidut, alhaalta ylöspäin suuntautuvat dialogiset lähestymistavat, joita hallituksesta riippumaton varhaiskasvatussektori oli alkanut toteuttaa apartheidin aikana. Monimuotoiset näkemykset lapsuudesta ja yhteiskunnasta vaiennettiin vallitsevan kansainvälisen varhaiskasvatusnarratiivin tieltä. Tätä rajoittunutta tulkintaa on yritetty kitkeä esimerkiksi vuoden 1996 varhaislapsuuden kehitystä koskevalla väliaikaisella politiikalla (Interim ECD Policy), Gautengin opetusministeriön Impilo-toimintatutkimusprojektilla ja varhaislapsuuden kehitystä koskevalla Gautengin asiakirjaluonnoksella. Väliaikaiseen politiikkaan sisältyi yleisluonteinen määritelmä varhaislapsuuden kehityksestä relationaalisena kokonaisvaltaisena prosessina, joka alkaa hedelmöityksestä ja jatkuu ainakin yhdeksän vuoden ikään asti. Siinä on myös kuvattu yksityiskohtaisesti vaihtoehtoisia, kokonaisvaltaisia ja osallistavia lähestymistapoja alan kansalaisjärjestöjen innovatiivisen työn pohjalta, jossa käytettiin tiedostuttavaa lähestymistapaa ja jota on kuvattu NEPI-raportissa 'kehittäväksi lähestymistavaksi' (Department of Education, 1996). Rajoittunutta tulkintaa pyrittiin kitkemään myös Impilo-toimintatutkimusprojektissa (Rudolph, 1996, 1999; UNICEF, 1999) samoin kuin muissa sitä seuranneissa toimintatutkimusprojekteissa (Rudolph & James, 2015).

Varhaislapsuuden palvelut tulkitaan kuitenkin kapea-alaisesti niin, että ne valmistavat pikkulapsia kouluun ja työhön kapitalistisessa yhteiskunnassa. Vallitsevan diskurssin luovat globaalien narratiivien pohjalta asiantuntijat, joilla on riittämättömät kytkökset Etelä-Afrikan yhteisöjen erilaisiin käsityksiin lapsuudesta ja yhteiskunnasta. Osallistava vuoropuhelu yhteisöissä voisi tuottaa paremmin tarpeita vastaavia, integroituja varhaislapsuuden palveluita. Varhaislapsuuspolitiikan ensisijainen ongelma liittyy käsitykseen, että pienille lapsille suunnatut palvelut voivat muuttaa lasten taloudellista asemaa valmistamalla heitä koulua ja työtä varten. Tämä lähestymistapa köyhyyden hallintaan on hyvin yleinen Etelä-Afrikan politiikassa (Rudolph ja muut, 2019), mutta siinä ei oteta huomioon, kuinka talouden tulee muuttua. Etelä-Afrikassa vallitsevan epätasa-arvon yksityiskohtainen historia ja ne voimat, jotka ovat muovanneet sen muuttuvia muotoja eri aikakausina, jäävät tämän tutkimuksen ulkopuolelle;

mutta siitä ollaan yhtä mieltä, että itsepintaisen korkea rakenteellisen työttömyyden taso on ollut apartheidin jälkeisen yhteiskunnan keskeinen piirre (Soudien, Reddy & Woolard, 2019, s. 92). Työllistymismahdollisuuksien puuttuessa lapset jäävät köyhyysloukkuun. Afrikan nykyinen koulutusjärjestelmä perustuu kilpailua ruokkiviin kapitalistisiin arvoihin ja suosii riistoon perustuvaa määritelmää menestyksestä. Kouluttamattomat leimataan osaamattomiksi ja epätäydellisiksi, mutta myös monet opiskelijat tulkitaan valmistuttuaan ylijäämäväestöksi, kun globaali talous ei tarvitse heitä (Abebe, 2020).

Toimenpide-ehdotuksena korostan arvostavia dialogisia strategioita, joilla on yritetty vastustaa hallituksen problematisointeja. Impilo-projektissa hylättiin 'ongelman' yksinkertaistettu esittäminen heikkona koulumenestyksenä. Sen sijaan suosittiin koulutuksen ja hoivan, lapsuuden, yhteiskunnan, köyhyyden ja epätasa-arvon moniarvoista, moninaista, inklusiivista ja neuvottelevaa käsitteellistämistä. Impilo mahdollisti vuoropuhelun, jolla tunnistettiin paikalliset tarpeet erilaisten lapsuutta ja yhteiskuntaa koskevien käsitysten pohjalta. Näin voitiin toteuttaa yhteisöllistä toimintaa pienryhmissä vastuullisesti, erilaisten prioriteettien ja kykyjen pohjalta. Tämän lähestymistavan avulla voitiin tunnistaa valtasuhteita ja tiedon hierarkioita. Se myös kannusti inklusiiviseen, arvostavaan keskusteluun sekä tutkimaan ja kuvittelemaan erilaisia tulevaisuuksia. Keskeistä oli tiedostaminen ja yhdessä oppiminen keskustelu- ja toimintasyklien kautta (Freire, 1985). Arvostava lähestymistapa (Watkins, Mohr & Kelly, 2011) alkoi kysymällä, mitä ryhmä onnistui tekemään lasten hyvinvoinnin edistämiseksi. Kun kysymykset koskivat unelmia ja visioita eivätkä ongelmia, ryhmät toivat esiin toimintastrategioita. Prosessin avulla ryhmät pystyivät luokittelemaan ensisijaiset toimet ja voivat ryhtyä toteuttamaan pieniä toimenpiteitä yksin tai pienryhmissä, kun kunnianhimoisempi toiminta jaettiin pienempiin osiin. Näin ryhmät saivat nauttia pienimuotoisista onnistumisista, mikä synnytti muutosenergiaa. Yhteisöllinen toiminta vaihteli suuresti paikallisista prioriteeteista riippuen, ja siihen saattoi kuulua lorena-saviliesien rakentamisen opettelua, keittiöpuutarhan perustamista tai juomaveden saatavuuden parantamista. Vuoropuhelustrategioissa kiinnitettiin huomiota siihen, että kaikki kiinnostuneet ja/tai vaikuttamaan pystyvät saivat osallistua. Mukaan kutsuttiin ja rohkaistiin osallistumaan kaikki palveluiden käyttäjät, palvelualueiden yhteisöjen jäsenet ja kyseisten palveluiden tuottajat. Kaikkia osallistumistapoja kokeiltiin, eikä keskustelun tarvinnut rajoittua samassa huoneessa samaan aikaan oleviin. Menetelmällä pyrittiin toteuttamaan ryhmän haluama tulevaisuus, mitä Michael Fielding kutsuu ennakoivaksi, tulevaisuuteen orientoituneeksi käytännöksi ('prefigurative practice'; Fielding, 2007).

Etelä-Afrikan varhaislapsuuspolitiikan apartheidin jälkeinen ongelma olisi voitu käsitteellistää eri tavalla tunnustamalla maan monimuotoisuus ja hyödyntämällä sosioekonomisia teorioita ja paradigmoja, jotka eivät toisinna köyhyyttä ja epätasa-arvoa. Kuten olen esittänyt, varsinkin aidosti kaikkia väestöryhmiä koskeva lähestymistapa, johon mahtuu monenlaisia näkemyksiä lapsuudesta ja yhteiskunnasta, synnyttäisi monimuotoisuutta ja avaisi mahdollisuuksia

muille tarinoille ja tulevaisuuksille kuin kolonialistiselle edistykselle, joka perustuu riistotalouteen.

Käytän refleksiivisyyttä genealogiana purkamalla omat problematisointini autobiografisiksi vinjeteiksi. Tunnistan, että emansipatoristen tavoitteitteni ja jälkistrukturalistisen dekonstruktion vaatimusten väliset jännitteet ovat tutkimukseni vaikeimmat haasteet. Tämän tutkimusmatkan tekijänä (Ingold, 2007) esittelen lyhyesti joitakin kiehtovia jälkihumanistisia ja uusia materialistisia teorioita (Barad, 2007; Barad & Gandorfer, 2021; Braidotti, 2019; Gan, Bubandt, Tsing & Swanson, 2017; Latour, 2018), jotka ovat kannatelleet minua matkani jälkimmäisellä puoliskolla. Ne avaavat myös mahdollisuuksia tuleviin löytöretkiin ja sitä kautta moniin vaihtoehtoihin, jotka voivat synnyttää pluriversaaleja politiikkoja (Escobar, 2020) ja kukoistavaa yhteisöllisyyttä (myös ihmistä laajemmasta näkökulmasta), jossa kaikilla on oikeus harmoniseen, merkitykselliseen ja arvokkaaseen elämään.

REFERENCES

Abebe, T. (2020). *Reflections on reimagining children's education and futures*. Paper presented at the Reimagining Childhood Studies webinar series. Youtube recording of online presentation in a webinar https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48szrdnVgvY

Adriany, V., & Newberry, J. (2021). Neuroscience and the construction of a new child in early childhood education in Indonesia: A neoliberal legacy. *Current Sociology*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392120985875

Amnesty International. (2020). South Africa: Broken and unequal education perpetuating poverty and inequality. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/02/south-africa-broken-and-unequal-education-perpetuating-poverty-and-inequality/

Bacchi, C. (2000). Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 21*(1), 45–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300050005493

Bacchi, C. (2018). Drug problematizations and politics: Deploying a poststructural analytic strategy. *Contemporary drug problems, 45*(1), 3–14. https://doi.org/10.1177/0091450917748760

Bacchi, C., & Goodwin, S. (2016). *Poststructural policy analysis: A guide to practice*. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-52546-8

Badat, S., & Sayed, Y. (2014). Post-1994 South African education: The challenge of social justice. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 652*(1), 127–148. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716213511188

Ball, S. J. (1994). *Education reform: A critical post-structural approach*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Barad, K. (2019). After the end of the world: Entangled nuclear colonialisms, matters of force, and the material force of justice. *Theory & Event, 22*(3), 524–550. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/729449

Barad, K., & Gandorfer, D. (2021). Political desirings: Yearnings for mattering (,) differently. *Theory & Event, 24*(1), 14-66. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/780766

Bastian, M., Jones, O., Moore, N., & Roe, E. (2017). *Participatory research in more-than-human worlds*. New York: Routledge.

Belbase, S., Luitel, B. C., & Taylor, P. C. (2013). Autoethnography: A method of research and teaching for transformative education. *Journal of Education and Research, 1*(0), 86–95. https://doi.org/10.3126/jer.v1i0.7955

Biersteker, L. (2010). Scaling-up early childhood development in South Africa: Introducing a reception year (grade R) for children aged five years as the first year of schooling [Working Paper]. https://www.brookings.edu/research/scaling-up-early-child-development-in-south-africa-introducing-a-reception-year-grade-r-for-children-aged-five-years-as-the-first-year-of-schooling/

Biersteker, L. (2018). Early childhood education and social transformation in South Africa: The emergence of early childhood education as a priority in South Africa. In J. L. Roopnarine, J. E. Johnson, S. F. Quinn, & M. M. Patte (Eds.), *Handbook of international perspectives on early childhood education* (pp. 296–310). New York and Abingdon: Routledge.

Biersteker, L., & Dawes, A. (2019). South Africa: Measuring Up—The Sobambisana Evaluation. In A.T Kjørholt, & H Penn, (Ed.), *Early childhood and development work: Theories, policies, and practices* (pp. 91–112): Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-91319-3

Biersteker, L., Dawes, A., & Hendricks, L. (2012). *The Sobambisana ECD evaluation: Lessons learnt from home visiting, playgroups and centre-based support in poor communities.* Paper presented at the Towards Carnegie III: Strategies to Overcome Poverty and Inequality, Cape Town, South Africa.

Braidotti, R. (2019). A theoretical framework for the critical posthumanities. *Theory, culture & society, 36*(6), 31–61. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276418771486

Brandenburg, R., & Gervasoni, A. (2012). Rattling the Cage: Moving beyond ethical standards to ethical praxis in self-study research. *Studying Teacher Education, 8*(2), 183–191. doi:10.1080/17425964.2012.692991

Brinkmann, S. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry in everyday life: Working with everyday life materials.* London: SAGE Publications.

Brinkmann, S. (2014). Doing without data. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20*(6), 720–725.

Britto, P. R., Yoshikawa, H., & Boller, K. (2011). Social policy report: Quality of early childhood development programs in global contexts: Rationale for investment, conceptual framework and implications for equity. *Society for Research in Child Development; Sharing child and youth development knowledge, 25*(2), 1-31.

Burman, E. (2007). *Deconstructing developmental psychology* (2 ed.). London: Routledge.

Burman, E. (2008). *Developments: Child, image, nation.* London: Routledge.

Burman, E. (2019). *Fanon, education, action child as method.* London: Routledge.

Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method* (Vol. 1). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Christie, P., & McKinney, C. (2017). Decoloniality and "Model C" Schools: Ethos, Language and the Protests of 2016. *Education as Change, 21*(3). https://doi.org/10.17159/1947–9417/2017/2332

Craps, S., Crownshaw, R., Wenzel, J., Kennedy, R., Colebrook, C., & Nardizzi, V. (2017). Memory studies and the anthropocene: A roundtable. *Memory Studies, 11*(4), 498-515. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698017731068

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (2007). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Languages of evaluation* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Dawes, A., Kvalsvig, J., Rama, S., Richter, L., Bray, R., & Kafaar, Z. (2004). *Going global with indicators of child well-being: Indicators of South African children's psychosocial development in the early childhood period: Phase 3 report for UNICEF South Africa.*

http://repository.hsrc.ac.za/bitstream/handle/20.500.11910/7360/2834
_Dawes_IndicatorsofChildren.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Department of Basic Education. (2015). *The South African National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four : Comprehensive version*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education.
http://www.education.gpg.gov.za/Documents/SAF_resources_ncfcom
prehensive.pdf

Department of Education. (1996). *Interim policy for early childhood development*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
https://www.gov.za/documents/early-childhood-development-
interim-policy-0

Dowling, R., Lloyd, K., & Suchet-Pearson, S. (2017). Qualitative methods II: 'More-than-human' methodologiesand/in praxis. *Progress in Human Geography, 4*(6), 823–831. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132516664439

Du Toit, A. (2017). Hyper-political anti-politics. *openDemocracy: Free thinking for the world*. https://www.opendemocracy.net/andries-du-toit/hyper-
political-anti-politics

Eagle, G. T. (2005). Therapy at the cultural interface: Implications of African cosmology for traumatic stress intervention. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy, 35*(2), 199-209. https://doi:10.1007/s10879-005-2700-5

Ebrahim, H. (2010a). Conflicting discourses of private nursery entrepreneurs in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 11*(1), 39–48.

Ebrahim, H. (2010b). Tracing historical shifts in early care and education in South Africa. *Journal of Education, 48*, 119–135.

Ebrahim, H. (2012). Tensions in incorporating global childhood with early childhood programs: The case of South Africa. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 37*(3), 80–86.
https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911203700311

Ebrahim, H. (2014). Foregrounding silences in the South African national early learning standards for birth to four years. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 22*(1), 67–76.
https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2012.738869

Ebrahim, H., & Muthukrishna, N. (2005). Research with under fours: some sense making moves. *Journal of Education, 37(1)*, 79–102.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Forum: Qualitative research, 12*(1), 1–19.

Escobar, A. (2007). Worlds and knowledges otherwise. *Cultural Studies, 21*(2–3), 179–210. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162506

Escobar, A. (Ed.) (2020). *Pluriversal politics : the real and the possible*: Duke University Press.

Facing History and Ourselves. (2021). Before Apartheid. In *Confronting Apatheid*. https://www.facinghistory.org/confronting-apartheid/chapter
1/introduction

Fielding, M. (2007). On the necessity of radical state education: Democracy and the common schools. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 41*(4), 539–557.

Fielding, M., & Moss, P. (2010). *Radical education and the common school: A democratic alternative.* New York: Taylor and Francis.

Filho, V. C., Ipiranga, A. S. R. & Faria, A. d. A. (2017). (De)coloniality in management education: Exploring limits and possibilities. *Education policy analysis archives, 25.* https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.25.2676

Ford, N., Odallo, D., & Chorlton, R. (2003). Communication from a human rights perspective: Responding to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in eastern and southern Africa A working paper for use in HIV and AIDS programmes. *Journal of Health Communication, 8*(6), 599–612. https://doi.org/10.1080/713852167

Foucault, M. (1991a). Politics and the study of discourse. In G. Burchell, & D. M. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault Effect: studies in governability* (pp. 53–72). Chicago: University of Chicogo Press.

Foucault, M. (1991b). Questions of method. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. M. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 73–86). Chicago, Il: University of Chicago Press.

Foucault, M. (1998). *The history of sexuality: The will to knowledge.* London: Penguin.

Foucault, M. (2000). Why study power: The question of the subject. *Power, 3,* 326–348.

Freire, P. (1985). *The politics of education, culture, power and liberation.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Gannon, S. (2017). Autoethnography. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education.* https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.71

Gauteng Department of Education. (1999). *Draft GDE ECD Green Paper.* Norma Rudolph archive.

Gentle, L. (2011). Poverty and social movements. In B. Maharaj, A. Desai, & P. Bond (Eds.), *Zuma's own goal: Losing South Africa's 'War on Poverty'* (pp. 359-380). Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Godt, S., Agyepong, I., Flores, W., & Sen, G. (2017). *Healthy lives for vulnerable women and children: Applying health systems research.* Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.

Goldberg, D. T. (2009). A political theology of race: Articulating racial southafricanization. *Cultural Studies, 23*(4), 513–537. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380902950955

Gordon, J., Peeters, J., & Vandekerckhove, A. (2016). *Integrated early childhood education and care: Results of a European survey and literature review.* https://www.academia.edu/35354971/Integrated_Early_Childhood_Education_and_Care_Results_of_a_European_Survey_and_Literature_Review

Hamilton, M. L., & Pinnegar, S. (2000). On the threshold of a new century: Trustworthiness, integrity, and self-study in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(3), 234–240.

Haraway, D. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the Chthulucene.* Durham and London: Duke University Press

Henderson, E. (2018). *Autoethnography in early childhood education and care narrating the heart of practice.* London: Routledge.

History.com. (2020). Apartheid. https://www.history.com/topics/africa/apartheid

Holman Jones, S. (2005). Autoethnography: Making the personal political. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.), pp. 763–791. CA: Thousand Oaks.

Hope, A., & Timmel, S. (2014). *Training for transformation in practice.* Rugby: Practical Action Publishing.

Ingold, T. (2007). *Lines: A brief history.* New York: Routledge.

Jackson, A. Y., & Mazzei, L. A. (2008). Experience and "I" in autoethnography: A deconstruction. *International Review of Qualitative Research, 1*(3), 299–318.

Jonsson, U. (2003). *Human rights approach to development programming.* New York: UNICEF.

Kaime, T. (2009). *The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: A socio-legal perspective.* Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press.

Keane, M., Khupe, C., & Muza, B. (2016). It matters who you are: Indigenous knowledge research and researchers. *Education as Change.* https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Moyra_Keane/publications

Keightley, E. (2010). Remembering research: memory and methodology in the social sciences. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 13*(1), 55–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570802605440

Kelly, S., & Noonan, C. (2017). The doing of datafication (and what this doing does): Practices of edification and the enactment of new forms of sociality in the indian public health service. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 18*(12), 872–899. https://aisel.aisnet.org/jais/vol18/iss12/3/

Latour, B. (2018). *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Liknaitzky, C., & Rudolph, N. (2003). *A challenging journey to protect child rights: Localising the programme of action for children in Gauteng.* Unpublished report. Gauteng Department of Social Services.

Lissoni, A., Soske, J., Erlank, N., Nieftagodien, N., & Badsha, O. (2012). *One hundred years of the ANC : debating liberation histories today / edited by Arianna Lissoni, Jon Soske, Natasha Erlank, Noor Nieftagodien, and Omar Badsha.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Madlingozi, T. (2017). Social justice in a time of neo-apartheid constitutionalism : critiquing the anti-black economy of recognition, incorporation and distribution. *Stellenbosch Law Review, 28*(1), 123–147. https://doi.org/10.10520/EJC-8b260f796

Makin, M. (1997). South Africa's departure from the commonwealth in 1961: Postmortems and consequences. *Kleio, 29*(1), 156–171. https://doi.org/10.1080/00232089785380081

Marais, H. (2011). *South Africa pushed to the limit the political economy of change*. London: Zed Books.

Marfo, K., Pence, A., LeVine, R. A., & LeVine, S. (2011). Strengthening Africa's contributions to child development research: Introduction. *Child Development Perspectives, 5*(2), 104–111. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2011.00164.x

Mayall, B. (2013). *A history of the sociology of childhood* London: Institute of Education Press.

McCarthy, J., & Oliphant, R. (2013). *Mathematics in South African schools: What are the facts? What should be done?* https://www.cde.org.za

Mignolo, W. D. (2007). Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality. *Cultural Studies, 21*(2/3), 449–514. http://ezproxy.newcastle.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hsi&AN=509820470&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Mignolo, W. D. (2009). Epistemic disobedience, independent thought and decolonial freedom. *Theory, culture & society, 26*(7/8), 159–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275

Mignolo, W. D. (2013). On pluriversality. http://waltermignolo.com/on-pluriversality/

Millei, Z. (2015). Governing the brain: New narratives of human capital in Australian early childhood education. In T. Lightfoot-Rueda & R. Lynn Peach (Eds.), *Global perspectives on human capital in early childhood education* (pp. 47–69). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Millei, Z., & Gallagher, J. (2017). Ad-hoc numbers forming provision and policy: Round and round of universal access in an Australian preschool. *Early Child Development & Care, 187*(10), 1528-1542. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1289926

Millei, Z., & Jones, A. (2014). The Australian early childhood curriculum and a cosmopolitan imaginary. *International Journal of Early Childhood, 46*(1), 63–79. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13158-014-0100-2

Mji, G. (2012). *The health knowledge utilised by rural older Xhosa women in the management of health problems in their home situation, with special focus on indigenous knowledge*. Unpublished Dissertation presented for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy in Family Medicine. Stellenbosch University. Provided by author.

Morabito, C., Vandenbroeck, M., & Roose, R. (2013). 'The greatest of equalisers': A critical review of international organisations' Views on early childhood care and education. *Journal of Social Policy, 42*(03), 451–467. https://doi.org/ 10.1017/S0047279413000214

Moss, P. (2007). Bringing politics into the nursery: Early childhood education as a democratic practice. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 15*(1), 5–20.

Moss, P. (2014). *Transformative Change and Real Utopias in Early Childhood Education*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

Moss, P. (2015). There are alternatives! Contestation and hope in early childhood education. *Global Studies of Childhood, 5*(6), 226–238.

Moss, P., & Petrie, P. (2002). *From children's services to children's spaces: Public policy, children and childhood*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Mostert, N. (1993). *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africas Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People: Evolution of South African Society and Its Central Tragedy, the Agony of the Xhosa People*. London, UK: Pimlico.

Murris, K. (2014). Philosophy with children as part of the solution to the early literacy education crisis in South Africa. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2014.970856

Murris, K. (2019). Children's development, capability approaches and postdevelopmental child: The birth to four curriculum in South Africa. *Global Studies of Childhood, 9*, 56–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610619832894

Murris, K. (2021a). Introduction: Making kin: Postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist research. In K. Murris (Ed.), *Navigating the postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist terrain across disciplines: An introductory guide*. New York: Routledge.

Murris, K. (2021b). The 'missing peoples' of critical posthumanism and new materialism. In K. Murris (Ed.), *Navigating the postqualitative, new materialist and critical posthumanist* (pp. 62–84). New York: Routledge.

Murris, K., & Kohan, W. (2020). Troubling troubled school time: Posthuman multiple temporalities. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2020.1771461

National Planning Commission. (2012). National Development Plan 2030: Our future–make it work. *Pretoria: Presidency of South Africa*. https://www.gov.za/NationalDevelopmentPlan2030

Nieuwenhuys, O. (2010). Keep asking: Why childhood? Why children? Why global? *Childhood, 17*(3), 291–296. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568210369323

Noddings, N. (2003). Aims of education. In N. Noddings (Ed.), *Happiness and Education* (pp. 74–94). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Okwany, A., & Ebrahim, H. (2015). Rethinking epistemology and methodology in early childhood research in Africa. In A. Farrell, S. L. Kagan, & E. K. M. Tisdall (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of early childhood research* (pp. 432–448). United Kingdom: Sage Publications Ltd.

Okwany, A., Ngutuku, E., & Muhangi, A. (2011). *The role of local knowledge and culture in child care in Africa*. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press.

Padayachie, R. (1993). *ANC education consultative workshop presentation*. Workshop presentation. Archive of Linda Biersteker.

Pence, A. (2013). Voices less heard: The importance of critical and 'indigenous' perspectives. In P. R. Britto, P. L. Engle, & C. M. Super (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood development research and its impact on global policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199922994.001.0001

Penn, H. (2005). *Unequal childhoods: Young lives in poor countries*. London: Routledge.

Penn, H. (2012). The rhetoric and realities of early childhood programmes promoted by the World Bank. In A. Twum Danso-Imoh & R. Ames (Eds.), *Childhood at the intersection of the local and global* (pp. 75–93). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Petersen, E. B. (2015). Education policies as discursive formations: A Foucauldian optic. In K. N. Gulson, M. Clarke, & E. B. Petersen (Eds.), *Education policy and contemporary theory: Implications for research* (pp. 63–72). New York: Routledge.

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 16*(2), 175–196.

Pillow, W. (2015). Reflexivity as interpretation and genealogy in research. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies, 15*(6), 419–434. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708615615605

Povinelli, E. A. (2021). *Between Gaia and Ground: Four Axioms of Existance and the Ancestral Catastrophe of Late Liberalism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Ramose, M. (1998). Justice and restitution in African political thought. In P. C. A. Roux (Ed.), *The African Philosophy Reader* (pp. 541–570). Oxfordshire, England, UK: Routledge.

Ramose, M. (2010). The death of democracy and the resurrection of timocracy. *Journal of Moral Education, 39*, 291–303. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2010.497610

Ramose, M. (2014). Ubuntu: Affirming a right and seeking remedies in South Africa. In L. Praeg & S. Magadla (Eds.), *Ubuntu: Curating the archive* (pp. 121–136): University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Ramose, M. (2015). On the contested meaning of 'philosophy'. *South African Journal of Philosophy, 34*(4), 551–558. https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2015.1124509

Republic of South Africa. (2015). *National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy*. Pretoria: Government Printers. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201610/national-integrated-ecd-policy-web-version-final-01-08-2016a.pdf

Richter, L. (1999). Parenting in poverty: Young children and their families in South Africa. In L. Eldering & P. Leseman (Eds.), *Effective early education: Cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 191-211). New York: Falmer Press.

Richter, L. (2017). Investing in the foundation of sustainable development: Pathways to scale up for early childhood development. *The Lancet, 389*(10064), 103–118.

Richter, L., Desmond, C., Behrman, J., Britto, P., Daelmans, B., Devercelli, A. E., . . . Yousafzai, A. (2018). G20's initiative for early childhood development *The Lancet, 392*(10165), 2695-2696.

Rico, A. R. (2016). Seeking balance: African autobiography as philosophy in Malidoma Patrice Somé's Of water and the spirit: Ritual, magic and initiation in the life of an African shaman. *Research in African Literatures, 47*(1), 76–94. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/seeking-balance-african-autobiography-as/docview/1790897123/se-2?accountid=11774

Rizvi, F., & Lingard, B. (2013). *Globalizing Education Policy* (1 ed.). New York: Routledge.

Robertson, S. L. (2012). Researching global education policy: Angles In/On/Out. In A. Vergner, M. Novelli, & H. Altinyelken (Eds.), *Global education policy and international development: new angles, issues and practices* (pp. 33–51). London and New York: Bloomsbury.

Rudolph, N. (1993). *The nurture of human nurture: Constructivist stepping stones guide the Woz' obona educare curriculum.* Unpublished BEd special project, Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand.

Rudolph, N. (1996). Building an educative community for early childhood development. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 4*(3), 61–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966976960040305

Rudolph, N. (1998). *The search for ECD policy in Gauteng: Getting Impilo ECD pilot project going in the first phase.* Document for discussion from Norma Rudolph archive. Gauteng Department of Education.

Rudolph, N. (1999). *Building an educative community for early childhood development.* (Master in Education). University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/14354/Rudolph%20N%201999-001.pdf?sequence=1

Rudolph, N. (2017). Hierarchies of knowledge, incommensurabilities and silences in South African ECD policy: Whose knowledge counts? *Journal of Pedagogy / Pedagogický Casopis, 8*(1), 77–98. https://doi.org/10.1515/jped-2017-0004

Rudolph, N. (2021). Revealing colonial power relations in early childhood policy making: An autoethnographic story on selective evidence. *Journal of Childhood, Education & Society, 2*(1), 14–28. https://doi.org/10.37291/2717638X.20212158

Rudolph, N., & James, M. (2015). Reconceptualising services for young children through dialogue in a South African village. In L. Newman & C. Woodrow (Eds.), *Practitioner research in early childhood : International issues and perspectives* (pp. 87-104). London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Rudolph, N., Millei, Z., & Alasuutari, M. (2019). Data practices and inequality in South African early childhood development policy: Technocratic management versus social transformation. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 9*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.756

Rule, P. (2005). Ten years of early childhood development: a case study of Little Elephant Training Centre for Early Education. *Journal of Education, 35*(1), 121–138.

Samuels, A., Slemming, W., & Balton, S. (2012). Early childhood intervention in South Africa in relation to the developmental systems model. *Infants & Young Children, 25*(4), 334–345.

Samuels, M., Taylor, S., Shepherd, D., van der Berg, S., Jacob, C., Deliwe, C., & Mabogoane, T. (2015). Reflecting on an impact evaluation of the Grade R programme: Method, results and policy responses. *African Evaluation Journal, 3*(1), 1-10. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.139

Santos, B. d. S. (2007). Beyond abyssal thinking: from global lines to ecologies of knowledges. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center), 30*, 45–89.

Santos, B. d. S. (2014). *Epistemologies of the south: Justice against epistemicide.*

Sekhukhune, C. D. (2013). *An ethnographic account of teaching and learning of the first Grade R programme in a developing school in 2010 in a black urban community.* (Unpublished Doctor of Education Psychology dissertation). University of Johannesburg, South Africa, http://ecdafricaresources.org/detail.php?id=1231&all_fields=South+Africa&author=&country=&year=&language=&submit=Search

September, R., & Mokgoro, Y. (1993). *An agenda for action: The launch of the situation analysis report.* Conference Proceedings. National Children's Right's Committee (NCRC).

Serpell, R. (2009). *Implications of developmental African esearch programme for the design of ECD in rural communities.* Paper presented at the 4th African International Conference, Dakar, Senegal.

Serpell, R. (2011). Social responsibility as a dimension of intelligence, and as an educational goal: Insights from programmatic research in an African society. *Child Development Perspectives:The Society for Research in Child Development, 5*(2), 126–133.

Serpell, R., & Marfo, K. (2014). Some growth points in African child development research. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 146*, 97–112. https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20075

Shore, C., & Wright, S. (2011). Introduction. Conceptualising policy: Technologies of governance and the politics of visibility. In C. Shore, S. Wright, & D. Pero (Eds.), *Policy worlds: Anthropology and the analysis of contemporary power* (pp. 1–26). Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books.

Somé, M. P. (1995). *Of water and the spirit: Ritual, magic and initiation in the life of an African shaman.* New York: Penguin.

Somerville, M. (2014). Entangled objects in the cultural politics of childhood and nation. *Global Studies of Childhood, 4*(3), 183–194. https://doi.org/10.2304/gsch.2014.4.3.183

Soudien, C., Reddy, V., & Woolard, I. (Eds.). (2019). *Poverty and inequality: Diagnosis, prognosis and responses.* Cape Town: HSRC Press.

South African History Online. (2011a). Britain takes control of the Cape. https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/britain-takes-control-cape

South African History Online. (2011b). The Dutch Settlement. https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/dutch-settlement

South African History Online. (2011c). Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd. https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/hendrik-frensch-verwoerd

Spaull, N. (2013a). Understanding education in South Africa: Inequality, outcomes and resources. Presentation at Equal Education Society @UCT https://nicspaull.com/presentations/

Spaull, N. (2013b). Poverty and privilege: Primary school inequality in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development, 33*(5), 436–447. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.09.009

Spry, T. (2016). *Autoethnography and the other: Unsettling power through utopian performatives* New York: Routledge.

Spry, T. (2018). Autoethnography and the other: Performative embodiment and a bid for utopia. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5 ed., pp. 1090–1128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Spyrou, S. (2018). *Disclosing childhoods: Research and knowledge production for a critical childhood studies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Starr, L. J. (2010). The use of autoethnography in educational research: Locating who we are in what we do. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education, 3*(1). https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3d05/8f7b19cd7f3a8cca4b09d563798ee b6ede7c.pdf?_ga=2.268809779.331844822.1596526085-241979400.1596526085

Stevens, A. (2011). Telling policy stories: An ethnographic study of the use of evidence in policy-making in the UK. *Journal of Social Policy, 40*, 237–255. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279410000723

Taylor, N. (1992). The National Education Policy Investigation: Early Childhood Educare. Cape Town, Oxford University Press/NECC.

Taylor, S., Rizvi, F., Lingard, B., & Henry, M. (1997). *educational policy and the politics of change*. London: Routledge.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (1998). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*. https://www.justice.gov.za/trc/report/index.htm

Tsamaase, M., Harkness, S., & Super, C. (2020). Grandmothers' developmental expectations for early childhood in Botswana. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 170*, 93–112. https://doi.org/10.1002/cad.20335

Tsing, A., Swanson, H., Gan, E., & Bubandt, N. (2017). *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section. (1990). *World declaration on education for all meeting basic learning needs (Jomtien)*. http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/efa/JomtienDeclar ation.pdf

UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section. (2021). *Right to pre-primary education: A global study*. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/UNESCO_right%20to%20pre-primary%20education_Global%20study_2021_en.pdf

UNICEF. (1999). South Africa: Helping children by helping families (Impilo). *The State of the World's Children 2000.*

UNICEF. (2021). *Early childhood development index 2030: A new tool to measure SDG Indicator 4.2.1.* https://data.unicef.org/resources/early-childhood-development-index-2030-ecdi2030/

United Nations General Assembly. (2018). United Nations declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas. https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/UN%20Declaration%20on%20the%20rights%20of%20peasants.pdf

Vandenbroeck, M. (2020). Measuring the young child: on facts, figures and ideologies in early childhood. *Ethics and Education, 15*(4), 413–425. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2020.1824096

Viviers, A., Biersteker, L., & Moruane, S. (2013). Strengthening ECD service delivery: Addressing systemic challenges. In L. Berry, L. Biersteker, A. Dawes, L. Lake, & C. Smith (Eds.), *South African child gauge* (pp. 34-43). Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

Viviers, A., & Lombard, A. (2012). The ethics of children's participation: Fundamental to children's rights realization in Africa. *International Social Work, 56*(1), 7–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872812459066

Watkins, J. M., Mohr, B. J., & Kelly, R. (2011). *Appreciative inquiry: Change at the speed of imagination* (2 ed.). San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Wenzel, J. (2009). *Bulletproof: Afterlives of anticolonial prophecy in South Africa and beyond.* Chicago, IL; Scotsville:: University of Chicago Press; University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Woodhead, M. (2008). Childhood Studies: Past, present and future. In M. J. Kehily (Ed.), *Introduction to childhood studies* (pp. 17-34). Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press.

Zembylas, M. (2017a). The quest for cognitive justice: Towards a pluriversal human rights education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 15*(4), 397–409. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2017.1357462

Zembylas, M. (2017b). Re-contextualising human rights education: Some decolonial strategies and pedagogical/curricular possibilities. *Pedagogy, culture & society 25*(4), 487-499. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2017.1281834

Appendix 1: Wayfaring notes - positions, responsibilities, fellow travellers, related policies and publications

2012 - 2021	Researcher and doctoral student
Responsibilities	<u>Major research activities</u> • Evaluation Catholic Institute of Education's Caritas Project, South Africa (2013 -2015). • Co-ordinating writing and teaching ECD module for Master Programme in Peacebuilding, Ulster University (2011-2014). • Contract (2012-2013) with Partnership for Reconciliation through Early Childhood Education and Development in Europe (PRECEDE) based in Serbia: Research design, policy review and action research training. • Evaluation of Ububele course, *Thinking about the early child* (2012).
Fellow travellers	Fellow travellers are only mentioned once in the period in which we first engaged, although many connections continue into the present.
Related policies and discussion documents[1]	Mji, G. (2021). *Oral presentation by Professor Gubela Mji, Director Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies at Stellenbosch University on behalf of Xanase rural community committee in Mbhashe Municipality, Eastern Cape Province.* Oral presentation to the parliamentary committee hearings on the Children's Amendment Bill. UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section. (2021). *Right to pre-primary education: A global study*. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/UNESCO_right%20to%20pre-primary%20education_Global%20study_2021_en.pdf DBE, DSD, & DoH. (2017). *Portfolio committee briefing on Early Childhood Development.* https://slideplayer.com/slide/12195554/ Davids, M., Samuels, M. L., September, R., Moeng, T. L., Richter, L., Mabogoane, ... Buthelezi, T. (2015). The pilot evaluation for the National Evaluation System in South Africa – A diagnostic review of early childhood development. *African Evaluation Journal, 3*(1), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.141 Samuels, M., Taylor, S., Shepherd, D., van der Berg, S., Jacob, C., Deliwe, C., & Mabogoane, T. (2015). Reflecting on an impact evaluation of the Grade R programme: Method, results and policy responses. *African Evaluation Journal, 3* (1), 10. The Presidency RSA (2015). *Strategic Plan of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation 2015-2020.* https://www.dpme.gov.za/publications/Strategic%20Plan%20and%20Annual%20Reports/DPME%20Strategic%20Plan%202 015-2020.pdf Republic of South Africa. (2015). *National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy*. Pretoria: Government Printers. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201610/national-integrated-ecd-policy-web-version-final-01-08-2016a.pdf

---

[1] Key documents and reports that informed policy discussion and consultation or were commissioned by government are also included under this heading

	Department of Basic Education. (2015). *The South African National Curriculum Framework for children from birth to four: Comprehensive version*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education. http://www.education.gpg.gov.za/Documents/SAF_resources_ncfcompr ehensive.pdf van der Berg, S., Girdwood, E., Shepherd, D., Van Wyk, C., Kruger, J., Viljoen, J., ... & Ntaka, P. (2013). T*he impact of the introduction of grade R on learning outcomes.* University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch. http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp- content/uploads/2014/06/Grade-R-Evaluation-1-3-25-Final-Unpublished-Report-13-06-17.pdf National Planning Commission. (2012). *National Development Plan 2030: Our future – make it work*. Pretoria: Presidency of South Africa. https://www.gov.za/NationalDevelopmentPlan2030 Richter, L., Biersteker, L., Burns, J., Desmond, C., Feza, N., Harrison, D., & Slemming, W. (2012). *Diagnostic review of early childhood development*.
Publications[2] / literature reviews / reports / presentations	Rudolph, N. (2021). Revealing colonial power relations in early childhood policy making: An autoethnographic story on selective evidence. *Journal of Childhood, Education & Society, 2*(1), 14–28. https://doi.org/10.37291/2717638X.20212158 Rudolph, N., Millei, Z., & Alasuutari, M. (2019). Data practices and inequality in South African early childhood development policy: Technocratic management versus social transformation. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 9*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.756 Murray, J. & Rudolph, N. (2019) Voices heard and lessons learnt: Exploring multiple knowledges and local participation in a community-based integrated early childhood development programme in rural South Africa *Journal of Pedagogy* 10(1), 13. doi:10.2478/jped-2019-0001 Rudolph, N. (2017). Hierarchies of knowledge, incommensurabilities and silences in South African ECD policy: Whose knowledge counts? *Journal of Pedagogy / Pedagogický Casopis, 8*(1), 77–98. https://doi.org/10.1515/jped-2017-0004 Rudolph, N., & James, M. (2015). Reconceptualising services for young children through dialogue in a South African village. In L. Newman & C. Woodrow (Eds.), *Practitioner research in early childhood : International issues and perspectives* (pp. 87-104). London: Sage Publications Ltd. Presentations at conferences and workshops Rudolph, N. (2019). *Merging policy analysis and autoethnography for a decolonial research method.* 10th annual New Materialist Conference Reconfiguring Higher Education. UWC, Cape Town 2-4 December 2019. Rudolph, N. (2018). Plenary session: *Postcolonial, indigenous, and theories from the South: Countering dominant perspectives in ECEC*. 26th RECE Conference, October 2018 Copenhagen. Rudolph, N (2016) *Children's rights as a tool of struggle for 'social justice.* ASAUK Conference 7-9 September 2016, Cambridge.

---

[2] Documents are listed chronologically according to their publication date although my involvement might have been earlier.

	Rudolph, N. (2014). *Policy for young children in the context of AIDS: Strengthening capacity for advocacy.* Children and HIV: Start Early, Start Now! Melbourne 18 & 19 2014.
	Rudolph, N. (2013). *Walking a tightrope: Consensus and debate in policy for young children.* 41st Annual Conference ANCIES, University of Newcastle, Australia 26-28 November 2013.
	Rudolph, N. (2013). *Relationship prosperity: The foundation of wellbeing.* International speaker, National and Regional conferences, Primera Infancia, Colombia, Bogota 11 October, Baranquilla 15 October, Cali 16 October 2013.
	Berry, L. and Rudolph, N. (2012). *At what cost? – Exploring unintended consequences in the pursuit of MDG 2 in SADC. How do we make schools ready for young children?* Trans-disciplinary conference on early childhood development and education Cape Town 18 July 2012.
2005 -2011	**Senior Researcher, Children's Institute (CI), UCT**
Responsibilities	Chief investigator and project manager for multi-year Caring Schools Action Research project (2005 -2011). Additional responsibilities: • Chief investigator and project manager for policy review and developing framework for Care and Support for Teaching and Learning (CSTL) for Southern African Development Community (SADC) • Develop modules for teacher diploma offered across Africa by REPSSI (2010-2011) • Develop, mark and revise two-week e-learning module for *Teaching and the AIDS Pandemic*, a capacity building course for teacher educators across Africa on behalf of University of Western Cape in partnership with Invent (2006-2007) • Organise a national ECD round table to initiate an ECD research focus in CI • Develop a research and funding proposal for an ECD action research project for CI • Develop modules for teacher diploma to be offered in Africa (2010-2011) comissioned by REPSSI • Chief investigator: Education based interventions for orphaned and vulnerable children in Swaziland, funded by Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (2008) • Participate in policy consultations
Fellow travellers	Lynette Mudekunye, Zsuzsa Millei, Mary James, Lori Lake, Lizette Berry, Carohn Cornell, Gubela Mji, Melanie Alperstein, Nontobeko Sithole, Janice Sealand, Jaclyn Murray, Linda Newman, Sonja Giese, Helen Meintjies, Brenda Sonn, Karen Collett, Jean Baxen
Related policies and discussion documents	RSA, 2011, *National development plan: Vision for 2030*, National Planning Commission (ed.), South African Government, Republic of South Africa. http://www.gov.za/issues/national-development-plan-2030. RSA. (2005). *National Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Development in South Africa (NIP) 2005-2010*. Pretoria: Government printers.
Publications / literature reviews / reports / presentations	Rudolph, N., Monson, J., Collett, K., & Sonn, B. (2008) *Champions for children Handbook: How to build a Caring School Community*. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa. Rudolph, N. (2009) Schools and communities: Building effective partnership. In Pendelbury, L. Lake & Smith (Eds) *South African Child Gauge 2008/2009*.

pp. 50-54. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Biersteker, L., & Rudolph, N. (2005). *Protecting the rights of orphans and vulnerable children aged 0-8: South African case study*. Unpublished report for ECD Network Africa (ECDNA).

Rudolph, N. (2005). Building a safety net to support child well-being in Hammanskraal and Temba. Unpublished background report to the South African Case Study for Early Childhood Development Network Africa (ECDNA), *Protecting the rights of orphans and vulnerable children aged 0-8: South African case study.* https://www.academia.edu/22795468/Protecting_the_Rights_of_Orphans_and_Vulnerable_Children_ Aged_0_-_6_Years

Presentations at conferences and workshops (international)

Rudolph, N. (2011). *Protecting the rights of young children, families and communities through integrated ECD in post conflict situations*. International Child Resource Institute seminar, Nepal, 20 April 2011.

Rudolph, N. (2010). *Why rights? Building capacity in the context of the AIDS pandemic.* World conference on ECD Moscow 29 September 2010.

Rudolph, N. (2010). *Mainstreaming care and support for teaching and learning: SADC policy review and development of framework and guidelines*. Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional steering committee meeting, Ezulwini, Swaziland, 22 November 2010.

Rudolph, N. (2009). *Innovative Approaches for Measuring Impact of Integrated ECD Programmes*. 4th African ECD conference, Dakar, Senegal.

Rudolph, N. & James, M. (2009). *Protecting the rights of young children, families and communities through integrated ECD in South Africa*. World Forum Foundation for Early Care and Education conference Belfast 2009.

Rudolph, N. (2009). *Making a difference: Protecting the rights of young children and communities through integrated ECD in South Africa*. Children and Families Research Centre, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

Rudolph, N. & James, M. (2009) *Building Networks of Care to protect the rights of young children, families and communities in South Africa*. The 6th African Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect: With focus on Early Childhood Development and Education 4 to 6 May 2009, Ethiopia.

Rudolph, N. (2008). *Seeking 'balance' for young children*. International Peace Building Working Group meeting Budapest, Hungary.

Rudolph, N. (2007). *Searching for 'social vaccine' through building shared vision of hope*. AIDSImpact, Marseilles 2007.

Rudolph, N. (2005). *Winds of change: Building a movement for peace and social justice*. Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) 3rd African International Conference on Early Childhood Development, ACCRA Ghana 2005.

Rudolph, N. (2005 and 2008). Series of presentations on Appreciative Inquiry and the Caring Schools Project including: Open Society Initiative Southern Africa (OSISA) conference Swaziland November 2007; UNESCO consultation, Botswana May 2007; Save the Children USA, Africa Area Education Programme Leader's meeting, Bilene, Mozambique 2006.

	Presentations at conferences and workshops (South Africa) Rudolph, N. (2012). *Evidence-based ECD Policy Development*. Keynote speaker Mpumalanga Provincial ECD Summit, Mbombela 7 June 2012 Rudolph, N. & Berry, L. (2012) *Looking back to look forward: Lessons from the past decade.* Early Childhood Development Conference hosted by Department of Social Development 29 March 2012, East London Rudolph, N. (2011). *Children as champions: Care and support for teaching and learning,* Keynote at Western Cape Department of Education 2011 Representative Council of Learners Interactive conference, Cape Town, 5 March 2011. Rudolph, N. & Smith, C. (2011). *Tracking Progress in Learning Empathy and Unlearning Prejudice using Persona Dolls*. Eleventh International Conference on Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations, Cape Town, 20-22 June 2011. Rudolph, N. & Berry, L. (2011) *Building an inclusive system of education from the start: A reflection on inclusive education policies across the SADC region.* Early Childhood Development Knowledge Building Seminar hosted by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 29 November 2011, Johannesburg. Rudolph, N. (2010). *What counts? Tracking expansion and improvement in comprehensive ECCE*. Education for All stakeholder meeting of the South African National Commission for UNESCO, Pretoria, 12 November 2010 Rudolph, N. (2010) *Tracking access to basic education for vulnerable children*. Department of Basic Education Care and Support for Teaching and Learning Inter-Provincial Forum, Johannesburg, 20 July 2010 Rudolph, N. (2010) *Care and support for teaching and learning: Implications for teacher development*. Early Childhood Development Colloquium, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 19 – 20 February 2010 Rudolph N (2010) *What is the situation in South Africa schools?* Launch of the Kwa Zulu-Natal Caring Schools Network, Durban, 18 February 2010. Rudolph, N. & Berry, L. (2009). *Integrated family and community based ECD: Ideas for Children's Institute (CI) work.* Internal presentation for CI planning meeting 26 June 2009. Rudolph, N. (2006). *Networks of care and support: Helping communities create a better future for children.* Western Cape Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation Workshop for HIV co-ordinators.
2000-2004	**Researcher**
Responsibilities	Major research activities • South African Action Research Programme, Protecting the rights of orphans and vulnerable children aged 0 – 9 years as part of ECDNA initiative *HIV/AIDS and the young child* (2003 -2005). • Review for Tanzania United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Medium Term Review (MTR) of the Country Programme 2002-2006, focusing on Learning Process and Outcomes. Commissioned by UNICEF Tanzania. • HRAP and Appreciative Inquiry training and conceptualising Safe Schools and Communities Pilot Project. Commissioned by UNICEF South Africa 2004.

	• Evaluation of the ELRU Family and Community Motivator Programme in Western Cape (2001 – 2002). • Evaluation of Masikhule Family and Community Motivator Project, Umtata 2004. • National audit of Life Skills Education in South Africa. Commissioned by UNICEF 2003. • Evaluation of Durban Children's Society Orphans Response Programme. Commissioned by Bernard Van Leer Foundation 2004. • Gauteng Programme of Action for Children (GPAC). Commissioned by Gauteng Department of Social Services (GDSS) to develop and test a process for taking the Gauteng Programme of Action to the local level (2001 - 2003). • Strategic direction through action research for Sekhukhune Educare Project (SEP). Building a multi-sectoral safety-net response to crisis of vulnerable children in context of the AIDS pandemic (2001 to 2003). • Chief investigator of technical review of the Integrated ECD Project in Uganda. Commissioned by UNICEF. • COUNT Family Maths and Science Project: Conceptualising project and strategic direction through action research (2001 - 2002).
Fellow travellers	Bharat Krishnan, Barnabas Otaala, Rozanne Chorlton, Neil Ford, Marta Arango, Alejandro Acosta, Maria Cristina Garcia, Manuel Manrique Castro, Eleanor Mearns, Siobhan Fitzpatrick, Pauline Walmsley, Ali Shaar, Kishor Shrestha, Ljiljana Vasic, Jaqueline Hayden, Diane Levin,
Related policies and discussion documents	DSD. (2005). *The Children's Act 38*. Pretoria: Government Printers. Pandor, N. (2005). Address by the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, MP. Early Childhood Development Conference, Birchwood Conference Centre, 28 February 2005. DoE. (2001). *Education White Paper No 5, Early Childhood Education: Meeting the challenge of Early Childhood Development*. Pretoria. https://sparrowportal.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/White-Paper-5.pdf DoE. (2001). *Report on the National ECD Pilot Project*. Pretoria: Department of Education.http://www.westerncape.gov.za/text/2003/national_report_ecd_pilot_2001.pdf Williams, T., & Samuels, M. (2001). *The Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa*. Pretoria, South Africa: The Department of Education.
Publications / literature reviews / reports / presentations	Porteus, K., 2004, The state of play in early childhood development, in L. Chisholm (ed.), *Changing class: Education and social change in post apartheid South Africa*, pp. 339–365, Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town. Rudolph, N. (2003). *Building a child rights advocacy strategy using an appreciative inquiry approach*. Unpublished report. Commissioned by Early Learning Resources Unit (ELRU). Liknaitzky, C., & Rudolph, N. (2003). *A challenging journey to protect child rights: Localising the programme of action for children in Gauteng*. Unpublished report. Gauteng Department of Social Services. Rudolph, N., & Liknaitsky, C. (2003). *A life-giving story about integrated ECD in Uganda.* Unpublished factitious story based on UNICEF ECD Action Research in Uganda. Rudolph, N. (2002). *Integrated Early Childhood Development: Using an Appreciative Approach in Uganda*.

	https://www.comminit.com/content/integrated-early-childhood-development-using-appreciative-approach-uganda
	Rudolph, N. (2002). *Evaluation of the Child-to child and Inclusion Projects: Gauteng Department of Education District D4 Tshwane South*. Unpublished report on evaluation. Commissioned by UNICEF.
	Rudolph, N. (2002). *ELRU Family and Community Motivator Programme: Unpublished midterm evaluation report.*
	Rudolph, N. (2001) It takes more than a school to raise a child. In J. Hofmeyer and H. Perold (Eds) *Delivering Africa's Education Renaissance in South Africa*. pp.30-35 Pinegowrie: Education Africa.
	Porteus, K. (2001). *Fighting the Dragon: Globalisation and Its Attack on Equity*. Wits Quarterly Review of Education and Training 8(2).
	Presentations at conferences and workshops (international)
	Rudolph N (2004) *Building a culture of peace and social justice*, World Forum Foundation for Early Care and Education conference Belfast 2004.
	Rudolph, N. (2003). *Ensuring education access for orphans and vulnerable children*, ADEA Sub-regional ministerial meeting on effective responses to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the education sector: From studies to action, Libreville, Gabon, May 27-29, 2003
	Rudolph, N and Mokgotjane, Y. (2003). *Community communication: Protecting child rights through social change*. International AIDS Conference, Durban 2003
	Rudolph, N. (2002). *Building partnership to protect the rights of young children in the context of the AIDS pandemic*. 2nd African ECD conference, Asmara, Eritrea 2002
	Rudolph, N. (2002). *The South African situation*. Protecting the rights of young children affected and infected by HIV-AIDS in Africa: Updating strategies and reinforcing networks 13-17 May 2002, UNESCO, Paris.
	Dalais, C. and Rudolph, N. (2001). *Young Children affected and infected with HIV-AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.* Report to the ADEA Working Group on ECD on the ECDNA research initiative, The Hague, Netherlands 2001.
	Thornton, L., Zungu, O., Rudolph, N., & Moll, I. (2001). *A sustainable Montessori education for Africa: Woz'obona curriculum*. Boleswa International Educational Research Symposium, Gaberone, Botswana.
	Rudolph, N. (2000). A road less travelled: The real potential for Woz'obona to support sustainable development. Woz'obona panel *A sustainable Montessori education for Africa: Woz'obona curriculum.* Boleswa Conference Gaberone, Botswana 2000.
1996 – 2000	**Chief Education Specialist, Gauteng Department of Education (GDE)**
Responsibilities	Responsible for ECD and Primary Education Policy, including: • Primary investigator for Impilo action research (including conceptualization and research design based on Northern Transvaal Action research). • Managing the development and consultation towards Draft GDE ECD Green Paper. • Established and facilitated an intersectoral forum of officials from all Gauteng provincial government departments engaged in ECD. • Participated in national and provincial policy processes, including curriculum, qualification framework and provisioning.

Fellow travellers	Cyril Dalais, Sibeso Luswata, Enver Motala, Andrè Viviers, Helen Penn, Margot Davids, Jill Sachs, Alan Pence, Carrie Pratt, Kim Porteus, Joan van Niekerk, Victoria Mokgatle, Vanessa Mentor, Maritjie Fourie, Thembi Malvern, Maureen Rabisowana, Kedi Mphahlele, Mpho Ditsele, Sophia de Beer,
Related policies and discussion documents	Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). (1999). *Draft GDE ECD Green Paper*. Unpublished discussion document prepared for GDE. *Interim policy for early childhood development*. Pretoria: Department of Education. https://www.gov.za/documents/early-childhood-development-interim-policy-0 DoE. (1996). *Interim policy for early childhood development*. https://www.gov.za/documents/early-childhood- development-interim-policy-0 Swart, T. (1996). *Suggested ammendments to the COTEP document, norms and standards for teacher education (1995). Discussion document for Adhoc Co-ordinating Committee for ECD (*CCECD). The Independent Examination Board (IEB). Mpati, C., Short, A., Rudolph, N., & Johnson, S. (1996). *The Early Childhood Development Sector (ECD) and the National Qualificatioons Framework (NQF).* Discussion document for National Dapartment of Education.
Publications / literature reviews / reports / presentations	UNICEF. (1999). South Africa: Helping children by helping families. *The State of the World's Children 2000*. UNICEF: New York. (The lead story is about GDE Impilo research). Rudolph, N., & Moiloa, N. (1999). *Requesting an urgent bilateral meeting with National Department of Education.* Internal report prepared for GDE. Rudolph, N. (1999). *Building an Educative Community for Early Childhood Development.* Unpublished thesis for Master's in Education by dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/14354/Rudolph%20N%201999-001.pdf?sequence=1 Rudolph, N. (1998). *Two-year Impilo Action Research Project: Transforming Early Childhood Development (ECD) Provisioning in Gauteng*. Cabinet Memorandum 9 September 1998. Rudolph, N. (1998). *The search for ECD policy in Gauteng: Getting Impilo ECD pilot project going in the first phase*. Discussion document. GDE. Swart, T. (1998). *Kathorus ECD Project: Combined research report of the action research project and the family-based project.* Kathorus Consuorium: HIPPY, ELRU, Katlehong Early Learning Resources Unit, Kathorus Collecge of Education, and Third Wave Human Development Enterprise. Gauteng Department of Education. Rudolph, N. (1998). *How can the NQF solve the problems of fragmentation and inequality in ECD?* Unpublished discussion document. GDE. Rudolph, N. (1998). *ECD Policy meeting the needs of young children in Gauteng*. Intrrnal report to the Gauteng Integrated Governmental Forum (GIGF) meeting 11 May 1998. Rudolph, N. (1997). *Summary of proceedings of inter-departmental workshop on early Childhood Development (ECD).* Boksburg 18 February 1997. Rudolph, N. (1997). *Searching for a new child-care policy - first steps in Gauteng*. Sabeleni Nathi, Cape Town: ELRU. Rudolph, N. (1997*). Early childhood Development (ECD) Policy: Meetng needs of young children in Gauteng*. Unpublished report. GDE.

1995 – 1996	**Research Officer, School of Public Development Management, University of Witwatersrand (WITS)**
Responsibilities	• Chief investigator ECD action research project in Northern Province (written up for Master's degree). • Participated in policy consultations. • Appointed as one of three education specialists on the CCECD, with responsibilities including drafting the *1996 Interim Policy for ECD* (see above).
Fellow travellers	Pru Ramsey, Eve Anneke
Related policies and discussion documents	
Publications / literature reviews / reports / presentations	Rudolph, N. (1996) *Promoting development through 'Guided Participation'*. Post-conference document. Qhubeka Conference Cape Town: ELRU. Swart, T. (1996). Helping parents build on natural learning. *Recovery, 1*(8), 10 - 22. Rudolph, N. (1996). *Building an educative community for early childhood development*. International Journal of Early Years Education, 4(3), 61-71. doi:10.1080/0966976960040305 Swart, T., Berman, L., Mahahlela, M., Mlonzi, L., Phakhati, L., & Sixako, L. (1996). Mothers' ideas of model offspring inform training. *Recovery, 22-26. Bonn, M., & Rudolph, N. (1995). *Small Beginnings: Report on problems in implementing training.* Project evaluation commissioned by funder. Renkema, F., & Rudolph, N. (1995). *Early Childhood Development Sector in South Africa.* Evaluation of Dutch assistance to ELRU and GAETT.
1987 - 1995	**Woz'obona Early Childhood Community Services Project**
Responsibilities	Founder and collaborative leader in participatory management, research, curriculum, training and fundraising, with additional responsibilities including • Member of the Early Childhood Educare Research Group, a project of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) that produced the NEPI Early Childhood Educare Report • Seconded to Gauteng Department of Education as co-lead of Gauteng ECD Task Team • Served as founder member on National Interim Working Committee (NIWC) that established the South African Congress of ECD (SACECD) in 1994. Responsible for consultation in Transvaal province. • Leadership positions in other national and provincial policy processes, such as, the Independent Development Trust (IDT)
Fellow travellers	Kalie Naidoo, Oumi Zungu, Yvonne Mokgotjane, Tom Swart, Lionel Berman, Carol Liknaitzky, Carol Kahn, Roy Padayachi, Marie Louise Samuels, Mary Newman, Eric Atmore, Helen May, Mary Metcalfe, Hugh McLean, Paula Nimpuno-Parente, Gerry Salole, Daniel Plaatjies, Joyce Siwani, Vernon Weitz, Tanya Vergnani, Nick Taylor, Mapitso Malepa, Jane Evans, Rene King, Marta Bonn, Elaine Davie, Lucy Thornton, Penny Smith, Sheila Drew

Related policies and discussion documents	Padayachie, R., Atmore, E., Biersteker, L., King, R., Matube, J., Muthayan, S., & Evans, J. (1994). *Report of the South African Study on Early Childhood Development: Recommendations for Action in Support of Young Children.* Johannesburg / Washington DC: Centre for Education Policy Development / World Bank. ANC. (1994). *A policy framework for education and training (draft discussion document)*. Johannesburg: ANC Education Department. September, R., & Mokgoro, Y. (1993). *An agenda for action: The launch of the situation analysis report*. Conference Proceedings. National Children's Right's Committee (NCRC). Padayachie, R. (1993). *ANC policy discussion document (draft 1): Early Childhood Educare. A*rchive of Linda Biersteker. Padayachie, R. (1993). *Invitation African National Congress: Early Childhood Educare policy workshop*. Archive of Linda Biersteker. Padayachie, R. (1993). *Presentation to the ANC Education Consultative Workshop*. Archive of Linda Biersteker. Mpati, C., Short, A., Rudolph, N., & Johnson, S. (1996). *The Early Childhood Development Sector (ECD) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF): A discussion document*. Commissioned by the IEB. Naidoo, K., & Rudolph, N. (1994). *Gauteng Early Childhood Development (ECD) task team report.* One of a series of task team reports *commissioned by the recently established GDE* to prepare for the post- apartheid transition. Gilmour, J. D. and C. A. Soudien (1994). *The Independent Development Trust and Educare: An analysis of the IDT in the educare field*. Kenton 21 Conference. Taylor, N. (1992). *The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI): Early Childhood Educare Report*. Cape Town, Oxford University Press/NECC. ANC. (1992). *Ready to Govern: ANC policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa, adopted at the ANC National Conference*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Policy Unit of the African National Congress. ANC. (1992). *Regional policy consultative conference - PWV region 9 -10 May 1992*. Archive of Mary Metcalfe. UNESCO. (1990). *World declaration on education for all: Meeting basic learning needs (Jomtien)*. UNESCO Early Childhood and Family Education Section http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/efa/JomtienDeclaration.pdf
Publications / literature reviews / reports / presentations	Rudolph, N. (1993). *The nurture of human nurture: Constructivist stepping stones guide the Woz' obona educare curriculum*. Unpublished BEd special project, Faculty of Education, University of the Witwatersrand.
1986-1987	**Co-ordinator, Montessori Society Outreach Programme**
Responsibilities	• Small situation analysis of educare in South Africa. • Design and implement action research project to adapt the Montessori approach for resource poor communities. The experience and contacts were carried forward for the establishment of Woz'obona after project closed prematurely.
Fellow travellers	Sarah Pretorius, Eve Anneke. Pru Ramsey, Marilyn Aitken, Jinny Richards, Linda Biersteker, Ann Short, Sally Hall, Jane Evans, Linda Richter

Related policies and discussion documents	Van den Berg, O., & Vergnani, T. (1986). *Providing services for preschool children in South Africa.* Report of an investigation conducted on behalf of the Southern African Association for Early Childhood Education: University of the Western Cape.
Publications / literature reviews / reports / presentations	Rudolph, N. (1986). *Proposal for establishment of Woz'obona*. Research findings from the situation analysis and appendix: *Learning in Msinga*. Rudolph, N. Workshop. *Montessori activities made from waste*. South African Early Childhood Educare (SAECE) Conference, Cape Town.
1985 -1986	**Environmental Developmental Agency (EDA)**
Responsibilities	Supporting integrated rural development in communal areas as a member of the collective
Fellow travellers	Mme Tshepo Khumbane, Nick Swan
1984 - 1986	**Several positions in teacher education**
Responsibilities	• Research Co-ordinator Science Education Centre: English for Science Project • WITS Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), Schools English Language Research Project (SELRP). Inservice training for teachers in Soweto to support the introduction of English across the curriculum in primary schools.
1979 - 1981	**Development Worker, Mdukustshani Church Agricultural Projects (Msinga).** **Adult Educator, Boiteko Women's Co-operative (Serowe, Botswana).**
Fellow travellers	Claire Stewart, Kathy Bond, Neil Alcock, Ann Hope, Sue Godt, Busele Simane, Jenny Evans, Shirley Pendlebury, Cheryl Walker
1972 - 1978	**Teacher in several primary and secondary schools.** **Teacher Developer in Wesley Teacher Training School.**

ORIGINAL PAPERS

I

HIERARCHIES OF KNOWLEDGE, INCOMMENSURABILITIES AND SILENCES IN SOUTH AFRICAN ECD POLICY: WHOSE KNOWLEDGE COUNTS?

by

Rudolph, N., August 2017

Hierarchies of knowledge, incommensurabilities and silences in South African ECD policy: Whose knowledge counts?

Norma Rudolph

Abstract: Policy for young children in South Africa is now receiving high-level government support through the ANC's renewed commitment to redress poverty and inequity and creating 'a better life for all' as promised before the 1994 election. In this article, I explore the power relations, knowledge hierarchies and discourses of childhood, family and society in National Curriculum Framework (NCF) as it relates to children's everyday contexts. I throw light on how the curriculum's discourses relate to the diverse South African settings, child rearing practices and world-views, and how they interact with normative discourses of South African policy and global early childhood frameworks. The NCF acknowledges indigenous and local knowledges and suggests that the content should be adapted to local contexts. I argue that the good intentions of these documents to address inequities are undermined by the uncritical acceptance of global taken-for-granted discourses, such as narrow notions of evidence, western child development, understanding of the child as a return of investment and referencing urban middle class community contexts and values. These global discourses make the poorest children and their families invisible, and silence other visions of childhood and good society, including the notion of 'convivial society' set out in the 1955 Freedom Charter.

Keywords: indigenous knowledges, subjugated knowledge, early childhood development, South Africa, authoethnography, curriculum, policy.

Introduction

Policy for young children in South Africa provides much to celebrate in 2017. Early Childhood Development (ECD) has slowly gained legitimacy during the 20 years of democratic rule. The 2012 ANC conference identified the provision of ECD as a national priority in the government's 2030 Vision and National Development Plan (NDP) published in 2011. ECD is now receiving high-level government support through the ANC's renewed commitment to redress poverty and inequity and creating 'a better life for all'[1] as promised before the 1994 election. As part of the development of Vision 2030, a separate diagnostic review was commissioned to assess the state of South African ECD policy and implementation (Richter et al., 2012). This report informed the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (RSA, 2015) and the South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four (NCF) (Department of Basic Education, 2015a) which I refer to as the NCF.

In this article, I explore the power relations, knowledge hierarchies and discourses of childhood, family and society in the NCF and how those relate to children's everyday contexts. I throw light on how the curriculum's discourses relate to the diverse South African settings, child rearing practices and world-views, and how they interact with normative discourses of South African policy and global early childhood frameworks. The NCF acknowledges indigenous and local knowledges and suggests that its content should be adapted to local contexts. I argue that the good intentions of these documents to address inequities are undermined by the uncritical acceptance of global taken-for-granted discourses, such as narrow notions of evidence, western child development, understanding of the child as a return of investment and referencing urban middle class community contexts and values. These global discourses make the poorest children and their families invisible, and silence other visions of childhood and good society, including the notion of 'convivial society' set out in the 1955 Freedom Charter.

To describe the contexts of children's lives, I use an autoethnographic method. I outline different visions of childhood and society that are present in these different contexts I have encountered through living and working in remote rural villages and informal settlements. I briefly introduce my theoretical and methodological framework before analysing the NCF.

---

[1] 'A better life' is understood in terms of rights, protection against discrimination, and extended access to basic services

Policy-as-discourse and Autoethnography

In order to highlight the ways in which power operates through policy, I use, what Carol Bacchi (2000, 2009, 1999) and others refer to as 'policy-as-discourse' analysis. I pay attention to the relationship between 'knowledge' (such as human science and indigenous knowledges or ways of being) referred to or referenced in policy and the meaning of 'subjugated' knowledge (Bacchi, 2009). Subjugated knowledge, according to Foucault (1980), is has been disqualified as inadequate or insufficiently elaborated, or a body of knowledge that is considered as missing scientificity. 'Evidence-based' policy making in South Africa prioritises scientific knowledge over other knowledges and thus influences "who can speak, when, where and with what authority" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 237) and whose ideas are heard and considered important, relevant or useful. I pay close attention to the discursive power of policy texts and the way they construct actors (experts, children, families and communities) and the kind of knowledges they draw upon and subjugate to establish 'truths' about the care, education and development of children.

Carol Bacchi (2000, 2009, 1999) challenges the traditional view of policy as solving identified problems and suggests that 'problems' are generated in the kind of change implied in particular policy proposals. From this perspective policy can be viewed as a strategic and political process in which concepts and categories are used to influence ongoing practices. As Bacchi explains, "what someone proposes to do about something reveals what they think needs to change" (Bacchi, 2009, p. 263). That is, they assess, even if in unexpressed ways the problem that the policy aims to solve. I therefore understand policy as discourse that constructs a picture about the problem and how we need to understand it. Bacchi identifies the special role "of the intellectually and professionally trained, whether in state employment or in civil society" in policy making and the consequent power relations, especially in terms of possibilities for action (Bacchi, 2000, p. 52). It is important to note that in South Africa, intellectually and professionally trained people have all succeeded in a system of education strongly influenced by colonial apartheid schooling. Those who produce policy texts do not only "assign positions and value to groups within policy discourses" but also prioritise certain knowledges and experiences that are being used to provide context, evidence or legitimation to the proposed changes or applications (Bacchi, 2000 p. 54).

Having been a participant over three decades in various processes concerned with the wellbeing of young children, their families and communities,

I use an autoethnographic approach to complement this policy-as-discourse analysis. I do so to cast light on various discourses that are in operation in current South African ECD policy in relation to particular communities' experiences and knowledges they draw upon. Heewon Chang explains that, "autoethnography utilizes the ethnographic research methods and is concerned about the cultural connection between self and others representing the society" (Chang, 2008, p. 2). Chang's explanation refers to current literature, including authors, such as Ellis, Bochner and Reed-Danahay, who all emphasize that ethnographic inquiry utilizes the autobiographic materials of the researcher as the primary data (Chang, 2008; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Reed-Danahay, 1997). Unlike most autoethnographic studies, this desk review draws on my memories, field notes and an archive of historical documents, rather than collecting fresh field data specifically for the study through participant observation or interviews. My roles during this period, included three major contexts: first, establishing an NGO called Woz'obona with its own unique approach developed through dialogue in participating communities; second, conceptualising and guiding the provincial Gauteng Department of Education's Impilo Project; and third, leading the Children's Institute Caring Schools action research project.

While my employment shifted from non-government organisation to government employee, then to university staff member, the participatory action research approaches I used across all three periods and in many different contexts linked theory (knowledge) and practice (experience) through dialogue (Biersteker & Rudolph, 2005; Rudolph, 1996, 2003; Rudolph & James, 2015). These methods that evolved through practice have been particularly helpful in recognising in communities what Boaventura de Sousa Santos refers to as 'abyssal thinking' (Santos, 2007), the devaluation and subjugation of non-western knowledges. Santos argues that the model of radical exclusion dividing the human from the sub-human provided by the colonial period "prevails in modern western thinking and practice today as it did during the colonial cycle" (Santos, 2007, p. 10). According to Santos, modern western thinking is a system of visible and invisible distinctions that divide social reality into two realms that make what is in the other realm (or on the other side of the line) invisible or non-existent. As a result, "popular, lay, plebeian, peasant, or indigenous knowledges … vanish as commensurable or relevant knowledges" (Santos, 2007, p. 4). In bringing forth subjugated knowledges based on my experiences with these communities, I am constantly prompted to question many of my own western assumptions that have been normalized as truth.

Michael Cross (2015) addresses the relations of power and knowledges in recent curriculum policy in South Africa. He examines the way that knowledges are "combined or rank-ordered", not only in relation to "prevailing epistemological assumptions, but also with reference to issues of power and interests in the communities involved' (Cross, 2015, p. 38). He explains how, what he refers to as 'hierarchies of knowledge' generates bias in relation to policy ideas, with a strong tendency to unproblematically follow precedent and in particular seek to replicate 'best practice'. The assumptions underlying each form of knowledge produces different criteria for judging policy and experience, thus dominating analysis and debate in the policy process to address certain problems deemed to be present in society. In Crosss's words (2015, p. 38), "[l]esser knowledges become marginalised in the light of the dominance of others". This is particularly pertinent in taking account of diverse African complexities (Cross, 2015). However, Cross stresses that these hierarchies are not fixed and are locally constituted and reconstituted in the policy arena through "dynamic compromises between competing forms of knowledge and knowledge producers" in the changing political context (Cross, 2015, p. 53). He explains that

> local and global knowledges are intrinsically mingled together; indigenous forms of knowledge are contested, reinterpreted and integrated into global knowledge. The dynamics of appropriation have changed the boundaries and the knowledge interface in the hierarchies. Similarly, the localisation of global knowledge has become an important feature of globalisation with intensification of policy borrowings and the integration of research knowledge with other competing forms of knowledge: 'embodied knowledge' in project and programme experiences, participatory knowledge (specific communities of practice), or knowledge in different combinations. (Cross, 2015, pp. 53-54)

In this policy analysis, I respond to Cross's call for 'epistemic reflexivity' and 'relational thinking' to point to taken-for-granted assumptions and unhelpful dichotomies. I look specifically at how 'family' and 'indigenous and local knowledge' are talked about in the NCF to throw light on power relations, silences and possible implications in the context of extreme diversity in South Africa. I draw on my experience in a variety of different local contexts and my understanding of the interplay of policy, action, experiences and the different forms of knowledge.

What is the Intended Direction of Change in ECD Policy in South Africa?

After the 1994 election, the term Early Childhood Development (ECD) was introduced and defined as "an umbrella term, which applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least 9 years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially" (Department of Education, 1996, p. 3). Despite this broad definition of ECD, only a single-year pre-school programme for children in the year before entering the first grade of primary school, referred to as Grade R, has been "systematically introduced and expanded" as the primary focus of ANC government ECD policy "with the intention of preparing children from low socio-economic status communities for primary schooling" (Samuels et al., 2015, p. 1).

In 2010, President Zuma established the National Planning Commission (NPC) to undertake an independent critical review of South Africa and produce a vision and plan for the country given the poor progress during ANC rule in addressing poverty and inequality. The NPC initiated a diagnostic analysis to identify and examine key challenges and obstacles that impact on social and economic development. Subsequently, the NPC Diagnostic Report outlined nine challenges affecting the development of South Africa, including 'poor education outcomes' (RSA, 2011). The NPC review process included a separate diagnostic review of ECD published in 2012 that emphasised the importance of the early years and especially the first 1000 days from conception. The new focus of ECD including services from conception to four years was included as a priority in the NDP (2011) as part of the strategy for improving education outcomes in order to reduce poverty and inequality.

The 2015 National Integrated ECD Policy (NIECDP) aims to address critical gaps and "ensure the provision of comprehensive, universally available and equitable ECD services" (RSA, 2015, p. 8). It proposes a package of services: "Health care and nutrition programmes; Social protection programme; Parent support programmes; Opportunities for learning; National public early childhood development communications; Water, sanitation, refuse removal and energy sources; Food security; and Play facilities, sport and culture" (RSA, 2015, pp. 8-9). My focus in this article is the NCF that supplements the NIECDP by providing the curriculum framework for parents, caregivers and service providers in different programmes, targeting children under 4 years of age, including family and community support services (Department of Basic Education, 2015a). I quote from both of the two separate versions

of the NCF, the 'abridged version' (Department of Basic Education, 2015b) and the 'aomprehensive version' (Department of Basic Education, 2015a). The abridged version has been condensed into fewer pages and has been 'simplified' to make it easier to understand[2].

In the words of the Minister, "[t]he NCF comes at a time when we are celebrating 20 years of democracy in our country and it is one of the activities aimed at improving the quality of basic education by laying a solid foundation in the early years" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. iii). In her foreword to the South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four (NCF) (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. iii), the Minister of Basic Education, quotes from National Development Plan titled *Vision for 2030* (2011):

> Delays in cognitive and overall development before schooling can often have long lasting and costly consequences for children, families and society. The most effective and cost-efficient time to intervene is before birth and the early years of life. Investment in Early Childhood Development should be a key priority. (National Development Plan: Vision for 2030, 2011)

This statement identifies the 'problem' as 'cognitive and overall developmental delays' in children. Defining the problem in individualistic, development and economic terms reflects international child development discourses in recent global policy (Ebrahim, 2014; Lightfoot-Rueda & Peach, 2015; Millei & Joronen, 2016). The economic focus of the policy also constructs 'childhood' and 'ECD' in terms of the human capital rationale, that is 'return on investment' measured in educational achievement. By describing the purpose of the NCF as "improving children's learning experiences" and preparing young children for schooling, the Minister in her foreword (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. iii) focuses narrowly on the child's developmental potential to succeed at school and links this directly to the economy. Thus, she minimises other responsibilities of the government, such as to provide better living conditions in order to ensure better achievement and general wellbeing. This discourse cuts off socio-economic and cultural contexts in which growing children are embedded and narrows development to

---

[2] Both versions of the NCF are aimed at adults working with children from birth to four and include an overlapping list of user groups, such as 'Parents and caregivers', 'ECD practitioners' and 'monitoring personnel'. However, the category of/educator and is only listed in the comprehensive version. The category, 'Training providers', is only mentioned in the user list of the abridged version.

the cognitive domain. It also links the development of children to the development of the nation, its economic prosperity (Burman, 2008; Millei & Imre, 2016). Anchoring the problem of childhood in the NCF in these economic and psychological frames narrows notions of 'what good childhood' is and silences other possible knowledges and perspectives (Moss, 2015).

Concepts of childhood are social constructions (James & James, 2004) that change across time and place, and as such must be considered in relation to gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and other categories and as shaped by cultural, social and political contexts. These shifting and contextually dependent constructions of childhood, and the bodies of knowledge they draw from, stand in contestation with each other and have often unexpected effects. Changes in constructions of childhood are a product of adult-child relations located within the broader social, political and economic frameworks that structure societies and which give shape to the institutional arrangements – work, schools, families, churches – through which children's daily lives unfold (James & James, 2004). For example, the influence of international organisations, such as UNICEF in advocating for a unified voice to mobilise resources with the intention to improve children's living conditions, undermines debates and acknowledgments of the multiple constructions prevalent in local communities' knowledge that exceed the policies' understanding of childhood (Morabito, Vandenbroek, & Roose, 2013). In another example, Nieuwenhuys (2010), contrasts the perspectives of the 'international community' "armed with international conventions, a body of knowledge and specialists, media spectacles and an array of symbolic goods" with the "fragmentary, fleeting and contradictory ideas and practices that are part and parcel of the business of real-life people crafting a future for the next generation" (Nieuwenhuys 2010, p. 292).

Following Bacchi's approach to policy analysis, I trace how this representation of the 'problem' further unfolds in the curriculum, and with the help of the autoethnographic stories I disrupt them (Bacchi, 2009, p. 2) to create spaces for alternative understandings.

How do the NCF constructions of 'family' accommodate South African Complexity and Diversity?

In the terminology section of the NCF "parents refers to the main caregiver of the child" and "families refers to people with whom the child lives" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a). Both 'parents' and 'families' are

referred to differently in different parts of both the abridged and comprehensive versions of the NCF. According to the first key idea in the abridged version:

> Families are made up of people who choose to live together and care for each other. Families are the first teachers of their children. It is from the family that children learn about beliefs, values, customs and manners and what it means to be loved and cared for. Families that support, guide and encourage children help them to value themselves. (Department of Basic Education, 2015b, p. 2)

This ideal image of the family is promising in terms of ECD aims, however this construction of 'family' does not accommodate the extreme diversity of childhoods in South Africa. For example, my experience of 'family' in Msinga, where most families are polygamous with many men and a smaller number of women working as migrants on the mines or in domestic employment in the cities, rubs against the notion of family portrayed in the policy.

The Children's Institute (CI) website uses the most recent statistics to describe the circumstances of children and offers yet another view on family. A long-established feature of childhoods in South Africa relates to factors, such as historic population control, labour migration, poverty, housing and educational opportunities, low marriage rates and cultural practice that leaves many children not living consistently in the same dwelling as their biological parents. Relatives often take over child-rearing roles as circumstances change so that many children experience a sequence of different caregivers and do not necessarily live in the same household as their biological parents or siblings (Children's Institute, 2016). The construction of 'family' for most children is neither a matter of choice nor defined by a common 'dwelling' or 'household'.

The NCF does not explicitly acknowledge the role of siblings in the socialization and learning of young children, except for reference to 'buddies[3]'. In many villages in South Africa, children spend time together in fairly stable mixed age groups called 'ubungani', meaning 'friendship', 'comradeship' or 'playing together' in isiZulu and isiNdebele. Swart and colleagues (1996) provide a description of these friendship groups, and

---

[3] 'Buddies' refers to older children who offer child-to-child ECD interventions usually through ECD NGOs

Marfo and Biersteker (2010) refer to Swart et al (1996) explaining that similar constructions are used in other South African languages, such as Sotho (Marfo & Biersteker, 2010). These groups are recognized by adults and foster a sense of security, spirit of communalism and mutual respect (Swart et al., 1996). Together with others in their neighbourhood, children collectively take care of their siblings and learn through collaboration. Somè (1995) explains that these friendship groups continue through adulthood and play the role of the family in children's lives performing important pedagogical roles.

Living in Msinga in about 1980, as an apprentice in the culture (with extremely limited isiZulu language skills) I most enjoyed learning with the youngest ubungani (between about two and 8 years old) in activities, such as harvesting edible green leaves called 'imifino' in isiZulu. This is a regular activity for women and girls when there has been rain. One of the older children would identify one variety and direct us all to collect the same variety on that day. As I learned to recognize more and more edible varieties, I was perplexed about the requirement to only pick one variety as we could have picked much more if we picked all the edible varieties. After all, food was scarce! In my yearning for efficiency, I pondered on this question for some time, until I understood that picking only one variety at a time helped the cook check for inedible varieties when she prepared them for the pot. It would have been much more difficult to identify the errors in a mixture of different varieties. In the ubungani, the experts are older children who have mastered an understanding of edible varieties. There is no competition. All contribute according to capacity and the harvest is pooled and allocated according to need. I continue to be enthralled by this example of collaborative learning and interdependence.

The construction and pedagogical role of 'parents' and 'families' in the NCF require further problematisation. The comprehensive version of the NCF notes that "Families[4] in their many forms are the primary educators of their children and must be included in ECD programmes" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 5). This reference to different forms of families is absent in the abridged version and neither version discusses the variety of forms that families might take. There is no discussion of the diversity of care-giving arrangements in relation to this construction of 'parent'. Each

[4] 'Family' is defined as "Individuals, who either by contract or agreement, choose to live together and provide care, nurturing and socialisation for one another" see glossary comprehensive version p.78

activity in the NCF (comprehensive version) has a column with the heading, "Broad Assessment guidelines for watching, listening, noting, reporting, discussing with parents and referring for specialist attention where necessary"(Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 19). The NCF is intended for use in a variety of programmes and settings including, ECD centres, homes, neighbourhoods and institutions where children in the early years are cared for (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 1). However, the emphasis throughout the document is on a 'practitioner' reporting to a 'parent', which prioritises ECD settings, such as centres rather than the homes and neighbourhoods in which most young children are cared for. For most people in South Africa, the term 'ECD' refers to 'ECD centres' or 'institutions' although for most marginalised and remote communities, it is neither affordable nor feasible for many children under-four years to be in that kind of setting.

The NCF lists "parents and family of the child" as one of three sets of people "who need to be kept informed of each child's needs and interests" "informally when parents bring and collect the child each day" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, pp. 24-25). There is an acknowledgement that, "[i]f another adult or older sibling is in charge of delivering and fetching the child, the parents will have to give permission for more in-depth discussions to take place, and they need to be informed in writing of any incidents" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 25). The assumption that there is always someone who brings and fetches the child does not fit with my vivid memory of young children walking long distances alone to the nearest ECD service. These children appear invisible in the NCF, which also suggests that other forms of discussion happen "informally through phone calls and notes to parents in the child's home-programme notebook" or "formally through individual parent-practitioner meetings which are arranged in advance (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 25). This image of a literate parent who delivers and collects his/her child and with whom the practitioner or teacher discusses observations and progress of individual children on a regular basis probably comes from practices in ECD centres in urban contexts. It does not take account of distances between homes and services, the absence of private or public transport, low literacy rates and whether either the parent or practitioner can afford telephone airtime in the poorest communities.

According to the CI Statistics on children in South Africa, only 77% of children in South Africa live in housing that would qualify as 'habitable' according to United Nations' standards (Children's Institute, 2016). The rest

live in informal or traditional housing[5]. 'Informal housing' could be: informal dwellings, shacks or rooms in backyards or informal settlements, caravans or tents. Disaggregating the data by age, 41% of children living in informal housing are 0-5 years of age. The CI statistics also show that the homes of 31% of children do not have access to adequate clean drinking water drinking water and 26% do not have access to adequate sanitation and 10% live in households without an electricity connection. This of course does not mean that all of the other 90% can afford the cost of electricity supply and appliances. Goldberg (2009) explains that privatized home ownership while making electricity available to more people also reduced utility subsidies increasing the cost to consumers, "making them increasingly unaffordable to larger and larger groups of almost exclusively black residents" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 258). What is more significant is the disaggregated data that shows that 27% of children in informal dwellings and 30% of children in traditional dwellings do not have any electric connection in their homes. The lives of young children reflected in these statistics are clearly not foregrounded in the construction of 'families' in the NCF. This is just one example of the neoliberal influences in post-apartheid education reform and the knowledge it draws on in relation to rearing young children and the pedagogical work that is undertaken to learn to live within these circumstances. These influences are well documented in an extensive literature drawing attention to the absence of complex understandings "of the interplay of race, class, and space in educational contexts" (Goldberg, 2009; Postma, Spreen, & Vally, 2015; Soudien, 2010; Subreenduth, 2013).

The youngest children living in informal dwellings, and the child raising practices and knowledge accommodated to those difficult circumstances are disproportionately represented in the NCF. Pedagogical considerations concerning the construction of 'family' in the NCF do not reflect the lives of these children and they do not respect and build on the pedagogical work that takes place in 'extended' and 'disadvantaged' families. There are no spaces in the curriculum for making the necessary adaptations to these 'local' circumstances. In addition, the high mobility of young children between rural and urban informal settlements raises the question of what 'local' would mean for poor highly mobile children living in 'informal' dwellings and what 'knowledge' would shape their identities and belonging as discussed in the next section.

---

[5] These dwelling types used by CI as data source are listed in the General Household Survey

How is 'Indigenous and Local Knowledge' constructed in the NCF?

> *Despite differences in urbanization, class, tribal affiliation, religion and geographical location across the African continent, many authors have nevertheless written of an African cosmology or worldview that reflects basic universal themes.* (Eagle, 2005, p. 201 referring to Airhihenbuwa, 1995; Buhrmann, 1984; Shutte, 1994)

Indigenous knowledge is defined in the NCF glossary as "knowledge which is held by families, and groups" and is

> passed down from generation to generation. Local knowledge and practice is that which is used in geographical regions. This curriculum framework promotes the use of that indigenous and local knowledge and practices about babies, toddlers and young children, which enhances their development and learning. (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 79)

While the NCF acknowledges 'indigenous knowledge', there is no discussion of how this knowledge relates to 'scientific' knowledge. The NCF is also silent on the spiritual dimension of indigenous African knowledge and there is no mention of ancestors, despite using the 1996 definition of ECD that includes 'spiritual development'[6].

Western and African view of knowledge

Let me discuss here briefly what the curriculum framework might reference as indigenous and local knowledges to show the ways the document actually is not grounded in this view. Rather, this worldview appears as an add-on to dominant western views of the child and his or her culture. The quotation below the section heading highlights the universal themes of African cosmology, which I foreground in my analysis. I include the often forgotten Southern African first peoples, particularly the nomadic San hunter-gatherers and the Khoi pastoralists and herders. While constructions of 'indigenous and local knowledges' feature in recent South African ECD policy, I do not think that sufficient attention is given to what Gillian

---

[6] The glossary on page 78 of the comprehensive version of the NCF explains "Early childhood development is an umbrella term that applies to the processes by which children from birth to at least nine years grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, morally and socially".

Eagle (2005) identifies as some of the "key premises" that "underpin the differences in 'western' and 'African' world-views" (Eagle, 2005, p. 201). In particular, colonial discourses have subjugated "many pre-modern characteristics, such as the entertainment of animistic and magical thinking and belief in the power of natural and supernatural forces" (Eagle, 2005). Keane and others (2016) drawing on Aikenhead (2002) and Khupe (2014) explain that in many indigenous cultures there is no emphasis on 'knowledge' as a noun, an object or abstracted product, but knowledge is "rather expressed as a 'way of being', 'a way of knowing', 'a way of living in nature' and 'a way of belonging'" (Keane, Khupe, & Muza, 2016, p. 4). This contrasts strongly with the western notion of knowledge as a commodity separate from ourselves (Keane et al., 2016).

Ubuntu, ancestors and relatedness

African philosophy and thinking is rooted in two fundamental concepts: ubuntu[7] (connection and belonging) and the significant role that ancestors play in maintaining social harmony (Eagle, 2005; Mji, 2012 referring to Berg 2003). From this perspective, there is not a clear binary relationship between mind and body or the 'dead' and the 'living'. The dead continue to live on as 'shades' and play a very important part as guides and mentors in the family with elders as future ancestors acting as mediators between the living and the dead (Rico, 2016). The benign symbiotic influence of omnipresent ancestors is all embracing "with the living keeping the deceased in mind and honouring them through ceremonies, and in return receiving their protection" (Mji, 2012, p. 49). This construction of 'ubuntu' resonates with Howells' (2014) construction of 'gratitude' in the statement of an Australian Aboriginal woman she quotes: "we do not feel gratitude for ourselves, we feel it for our whole people, and it also connects us to our ancestors" (Howells, 2014, p. 42). Howell distinguishes between the western construction of 'gratitude for' understood as an emotion, and the indigenous construction of 'gratitude to' understood as an action (Howells, 2014, p. 43). Howell acknowledges that while 'gratitude for' might be a starting point, it cannot be complete 'gratitude', which is always embedded in the context of relatedness (Howells, 2014). In Howells' words, "… it is our recognition of our connectedness, which many writers, such as Martin Buber, Carl Jung, Charles Taylor, Margaret Sommerville, and Sooren Kierkergaard, have argued is at the heart of our relatedness …. that is also crucial to many indigenous notions of gratitude" (Howells, 2014, p. 47).

---

[7] 'Ubuntu' is an African word depicting humanity and compassion.

Constructions of 'identity' from this perspective of relatedness are collective rather than individualistic (Keane et al., 2016). Maintaining 'harmonious relations' is critical for good health (Mji, 2012). 'Harmonious relations' refers not only to relations among humans (living and dead) but all dimensions of material and spirit worlds. My understanding of this construction acknowledges that conflict of different kinds is inevitable in all contexts. Consequently, 'harmonious relations' does not assume an absence of conflict, but a world-view based on interdependence. Harmony is sought through paying attention to dreams and messages from the spiritual world as well as conversation, guidance from elders and negotiation. It is about listening to the 'outside' and the 'inside' and accommodating multiple perspectives that can co-exist as equal.

Margaret Somerville presents a similar Australian indigenous multidimensional notion of 'Country', that is "sentient" and "consists of people, animals, plants, Dreamings; underground, earth, soils, minerals and waters, surface water, and air" (Somerville, 2014, p. 184). Somé, Rico, Somerville, Santos and others all promote similar frameworks for distinguishing between indigenous and western ways of thinking and negotiating our participation as the human species in complex ecological systems. Somé (1995) describes western knowledge as "stiff and inflexible" on account of being "wrapped in logical rhetoric" (Somé, 1995, p. 204) and vividly portrays the institutional racism and exploitative economies of colonialism.

Somé positions himself as highlighting the differences in constructions of knowledge and making African cosmology more accessible to the West as opposed to judging one worldview as better than the other. Similarly, Santos, calls for a different kind of thinking referred to as "post-abyssal thinking" and argues that the "struggle for global social justice must be a struggle for global cognitive justice as well" (Santos, 2007, p. 1). In agreement with these thinkers, Raymond Suttner argues, drawing on the history and heritage of the Freedom Charter, for "bringing into focus unacknowledged knowledge, especially the questions of orality and communication with the ancestors"(Suttner, 2006, p. 3). The NCF fails to do this work. Rather, it creates a hierarchy of knowledge privileging the powerful western worldview and scientific bodies of knowledge over indigenous ones. In this hierarchy, it becomes easy to erase indigenous knowledges as less relevant or evaluate them as providing less legitimation and 'best practice' for ECD in the current international context.

Identity and belonging in a 'material' world

The NCF constructs the 'world of the child' in material terms in the section on 'Knowledge and understanding the world':

> Children's worlds include their immediate surroundings (people, animals, vegetables and minerals of all kinds); the history of their own families and later on their neighbourhoods; the geography of their surroundings (for example, hills, rivers, flat spaces, rocks, weather and climate) and the tools that they use such as pencils, scissors, cutlery, household equipment on to cameras, mobile phones, computers (technology). (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 65)

This description is borrowed from a United Kingdom publication[8] and it is this construction of the world used in the entire section. In this construction, the spiritual world is absent. I remember an occasion when one young child reported that she had seen her mother the previous night. A well-intentioned ECD practitioner who knew that the child's mother had recently died gently explained to the child that that was impossible. The indigenous knowledge of ancestors is particularly pertinent in helping young children deal with death in communities in the context of the AIDS pandemic. The teacher however remained insensitive or ignorant of this worldview that could have eased the child's feeling of loss.

Similarly, the notion of 'relatedness' as it links to belonging and identity discussed below is overridden by the values of modernity and the drive to "shape subjects" fit for the competitive global market (Moss, 2015, p. 231). The focus on the 'development' of the individual child that must be observed and recorded eclipses the image of collective friendship, for example, in the ubungani groups, where 'knowledge' is a way of being, rather than a 'thing' to be acquired. In addition, the material world represented in the NCF would be out of reach for the 41% of children living in traditional or informal housing without electricity. I would imagine it would be challenging for anyone outside of the middle-class to adapt examples of technology, such as 'electronic toys and computers' to local contexts.

---

[8] Department for Education and Skills, 2007. Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Setting standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. DfES publications.

The NCF promotes helping children know "where and with whom they belong" through a "sense of group identity and sense of celebrating difference" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 33). 'Belonging' and 'identity' are "about personal development, social development, secure relationships and celebrating difference" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 32).

> Belonging is related to children's identity: When children have a strong sense of belonging then they have secure relationships with adults and/or communities that have certain values, traditions and beliefs. This gives them messages of how they depend on other people to make sense of themselves. A sense of belonging helps them to know where and with whom they belong. (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 32)

These constructions are based on ideal notions of 'family' and 'community' that do not accommodate the hardships of poverty and the AIDS pandemic that break down family and community ties as illustrated by this story told by research participant from a non-government service organisation:

> A young child lived in the plots with both parents, not having any other families or relatives except his mom or dad. The parents decided to move from the plots to stay in the location (be)cause they are unable to work due to some circumstances. It might be age or illnesses. After a while his dad died. Mom starts to panic and tries to find a job. No luck. Starts picking food (unwanted) from green market to feed the kids. Because of hunger she finds herself a man to stay with in her shack in order to help with food and clothing for the kids. The mother dies after some few months and the child is left with the mother's boyfriend. He starts treating the boy badly, calling him names until everyone finds out and reports the problem to us. The child needs loving care and a warm family who can look after him and give him shelter to stay. (Rudolph, 2005, p. 29)

This is not an uncommon story uncommon story of a young child without secure family or community relationships. To help him know where and with whom he belongs, raises some questions in relation to the framing of belonging connected to family and community that is present in the NCF document, such as: What values, traditions and beliefs have been handed down to this child? Where and with whom does he belong? How can he make sense of himself and how can his belonging be supported in an ECD settings? Unfortunately, the NCF is silent on this matter.

Constance, a research participant from a remote rural community in South Africa, offers a different perspective:

> I was never viewed as an outsider in my relatives' homes. My culture has no cousins, aunts and uncles. We have brothers, sisters, older and younger mothers and fathers. The 'extended' family, in its modern western sense, did not exist. Everyone was part of our large family. Neighbours who were not direct relatives always had their families traced through totems and marriages until they became related to everyone else. So all villagers were one large family where individuals were expected to work for the common good. (Keane et al., 2016, p. 6)

This view of identity that emerges from ubuntu and relatedness can be extended also beyond the village, beyond only humans, to include the natural and spirit world. Relatedness offers an inclusive way of knowing, being and belonging that does not constrain identity in terms of any particular group that automatically makes those not in 'my' group 'different' and 'other', a view that dominates the NCF at present.

Intersectionality: Class in the 'rainbow nation'

I also wish to signal the importance of the intersections of race, class and culture in understanding how children belong in diverse South African contexts. The NCF does not take account of class and its complex relations with race, religion and spirit in the South African context. While I have to leave this important discussion for others, because of the limited space in this article, let me discuss one example. The 'rainbow nation', a particularly important construction was drawn by its proponents from the traditional notion of 'ubuntu' and came to represent the ideal non-racial identity after 1994 (Goldberg, 2009). This notion, however, has subsequently been undermined by post-apartheid neo-liberal influences.

As children prepare for Grade R, the NCF suggests activities that help children "experience their cultural beliefs and religion in a positive way"… "talk about who is like them and who is different" … and "learn about race, gender, abilities" through an anti-bias approach (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 40). The example of an activity provided in the NCF for children 'to learn about difference' suggests acknowledging and celebrating events, such as "birthdays, Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Ramadan, Rosh Hashanah, Easter" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 40). The selection of these events reflects Wole Soyinka's position that African peoples and

their indigenous religious experiences have been rendered invisible by imperial religions (Soyinka, 2012). There is no mention in the NCF of ancestor rituals, funerals (in which young children participate), initiation or rain ceremonies, nor to collaborative work parties, known as 'Letsema' (Sotho) or 'iLima' (isiZulu) to get big communal jobs done through volunteering labour, usually accompanied by a celebration.

The NCF is less mindful if at all to include children in 'informal' and 'traditional' dwellings. Instead, the knowledge base it references, the pedagogies it suggests and the examples it offers are biased towards urban contexts, middle-class neighbourhoods, and the western myth of nuclear family. It would seem that in the interest of equity, the bias should be in the other direction. The NCF abridged version states that, "it is important to build a society that pays attention to equity and diversity and respects indigenous African experiences"(Department of Basic Education, 2015b, p. 2). The NCF prescribes 'respecting' the existence of other forms of belonging and experiences and using those "to promote socially, culturally and linguistically sensitive learning environments" (Department of Basic Education, 2015a, p. 66). Respecting and being sensitive to these knowledges and forms of belonging, however, fall far short of considering what those mean for diverse identities and forms of belonging for young children, and the inclusion of place and spiritually based pedagogies in South African ECD. This suggests that the mobilization of the notions of local and indigenous knowledges are utilised to 'add-on' to the dominant western view of knowledge and learning without the need to address the fundamental issues of commensurability and hierarchies of knowledge that silence indigenous perspectives and ways of being prevalent in different communities.

Conclusion

With my analysis of the NCF, I argue that the way the 'problem' is identified in the national policy support for ECD in South Africa ironically undermines its intention to reduce poverty and promote equity. In the absence of debate about the purpose of education and the kind of society we want, positioning ECD as a strategy for improving taken-for-granted 'evidence based' education outcomes subscribes to a western and middle-class view of childhood and society. Drawing on autobiographic stories, I have pointed to the wide diversity in the experiences of children in South Africa in terms of the complex relations of space, race, class and culture, and flagged the urban middle-class bias of the NCF. I have contrasted the NCF construction of 'identity' and 'belonging' with another view based on an African holistic and

inclusive notion of 'relatedness' that extends beyond the material world into the spirit world. I have flagged some of the taken-for-granted 'truths' that normalise one image of childhood and society leaving many children and their families invisible, unacknowledged and unappreciated, thus marginalising them further. My argument does not seek to judge or privilege one knowledge or world-view, but rather aims to create spaces for alternative world-views by uncovering silences and highlighting the implicit hierarchy of knowledge in the NCF that claims to create an equal, just and 'convivial society' set out in the 1955 Freedom Charter.

References

Bacchi, C. (2000). Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 21* (1), 45-57.

Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing policy: What's the problem represented to be?* Frenchs Forest, N.S.W. : Pearson Education.

Biersteker, L., & Rudolph, N. (2005). *Protecting the rights of orphans and vulnerable children aged 0-8: South African case study*. Unpublished report for ECD Network Africa (ECDNA).

Burman, E. (2008). *Developments: Child, image, nation*. London Routledge.

Children's Institute. (2016). *Statistics on children in South Africa*. Retrieved 7 March 2017, from Children's Institute http://www.childrencount.org.za

Cross, M. (2015). Knowledge hierarchies and the politics of educational policy in South Africa. *Education as Change, 19* (2), 37-57.

Department of Basic Education. (2015a). *The South African national curriculum framework for children from birth to four: Comprehensive version*. Pretoria: Department of Basic Education. Retrieved February 16, 2017 from Department of Basic Education website http://www.education.gpg.gov.za/Documents/SAF_resources_ncfcomprehensive.pdf.

Department of Basic Education. (2015b). *The South African national curriculum framework for children from birth to four: abridged version*. Retrieved on February 16, 2017 from Department of Basic Education website http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/SAF_resources_ncfabridged.pdf.

Department of Education. (1996). *Interim policy for early childhood development*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Eagle, G. T. (2005). Therapy at the cultural interface: Implications of African cosmology for traumatic stress intervention. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy, 35* (2), 199-209.

Ebrahim, H. B. (2014). Foregrounding silences in the South African national early learning standards for birth to four years. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 22* (1), 67-76.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge : Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press.

Goldberg, D. T. (2009). A political theology of race: Articulating racial southafricanization. *Cultural Studies, 23* (4), 513-537.

Howells, K. (2014). Exploring Cultural Diversity through the Lens of the Practice of Gratitude in Education. *The International Journal of Diversity in Education, 13* (2), 41-52.

James, A., & James, A. L. (2004). *Constructing childhood: Theory, policy and social practice.* China: Palgrave MacMillan.

Keane, M., Khupe, C., & Muza, B. (2016). It matters who you are: Indigenous knowledge research and researchers. *Education as Change, 20 (2)*, 163-183.

Lightfoot-Rueda, T., & Peach, R. L. (2015). *Global perspectives on human capital in early childhood education: Reconceptualizing theory, policy, and practice.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Marfo, K., & Biersteker, L. (2010). Exploring culture, play, and early childhood education practice in African contexts. In S. Rogers (Ed.), *Rethinking play and pedagogy in early childhood education: Concepts, contexts and culture* (pp. 161-187). Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

Millei, Z., & Imre, R. (2016). *Childhood and nation: Interdisciplinary engagements.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Millei, Z., & Joronen, M. (2016). The (bio)politicization of neuroscience in Australian early years policies: Fostering brain-resources as human capital. *Journal of Education Policy, 31* (4), 389-404.

Mji, G. (2012). *The health knowledge utilised by rural older Xhosa women in the management of health problems in their home situation, with special focus on indigenous knowledge.* Unpublished Dissertation presented for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy in Family Medicine, Stellenbosch University. Provided by author.

Morabito, C., Vandenbroek, M., & Roose, R. (2013). 'The Greatest of equalisers': A Critical review of international organisations' Views on early childhood care and education. *Journal of Social Policy, 42* (03), 451-467.

Moss, P. (2015). There are alternatives! Contestation and hope in early childhood education. *Global Studies of Childhood, 5* (6), 226-238.

Nieuwenhuys, O. (2010). Keep asking: Why childhood? Why children? Why global? *Childhood, 17* (3), 191-196.

Postma, D., Spreen, C. A., & Vally, S. (2015). Education for social change and critical praxis in South Africa, education as change. *Education as Change, 19* (2), 1-8.

Richter, L., Biersteker, L., Burns, J., Desmond, C., Feza, N., Harrison, D., & Slemming, W. (2012). *Diagnostic review of early childhood development.* Retrieved on March 6, 2016 from http://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Evaluations/Diagnostic Review of Early Childhood Development.pdf.

Rico, A. R. (2016). Seeking balance: African autobiography as philosophy in Malidoma Patrice Somé's of water and the spirit: Ritual, magic and initiation in the life of an African shaman. *Research in African Literatures, 47* (1), 76-94.

RSA. (2010). *Guide to the outcomes approach, Version 27.* Retrieved on Jan 15, 2015 from website of the South African Government http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/guide_outcomes_approach.pdf

RSA. (2011). *National Development Plan: Vision for 2030.* Retrieved on July 16, 2014 from South African Government website http://www.gov.za/issues/national-development-plan-2030).

RSA. (2015). *National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy.* Pretoria: Government Printers.

Rudolph, N. (1996). Building an educative community for early childhood development. *International Journal of Early Education, 4* (3), 61-71.

Rudolph, N. (2003). *Building a child rights advocacy strategy using an appreciative inquiry approach.* Unpublished report on workshop facilitated for Early Learning Resources Unit (ELRU) in Cape Town March 2003.

Rudolph, N. (2005). Building a safety net to support child well-being in Hammanskraal and Temba. Unpublished background report to the South African Case Study for Early Childhood Development Network Africa (ECDNA), *Protecting the rights of orphans and vulnerable children aged 0-8.* Available at https://www.academia.edu/22795468/Protecting_the_Rights_of_Orphans_and_Vulnerable_Children_Aged_0_-_6_Years

Rudolph, N., & James, M. (2015). Reconceptualising services for young children through dialogue in a South African village. In L. Newman, & C. Woodrow (Eds.), *Practitioner research in early childhood : International issues and perspectives.* London Sage Publications Ltd.

Samuels, M., Taylor, S., Shepherd, D., van der Berg, S., Jacob, C., Deliwe, C., & Mabogoane, T. (2015). Reflecting on an impact evaluation of the Grade R programme: Method, results and policy responses. *African Evaluation Journal, 3* (1), 10.

Santos, B. de Sousa (2007). Beyond abyssal thinking: from global lines to ecologies of knowledges*. *Review of African Political Economy, 30 (1).*

Somé, M. P. (1995). *Of water and the spirit: Ritual, magic and initiation in the life of an African shaman.* New York: London Penguin.

Somerville, M. (2014). Entangled objects in the cultural politics of childhood and nation. *Global Studies of Childhood, 4* (3), 183-194.

Soudien, C. A. (2010). 'What to teach the natives': A historiography of the curriculum dilemma in South Africa. In W. F. Pinar (Ed.), *Curriculum studies in South Africa: Intellectual histories and present circumstances* (pp. 19–51). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Soyinka, W. (2012). *Of Africa.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Subreenduth, S. (2013). Theorizing social justice ambiguities in an era of neoliberalism: The case of postapartheid South Africa. *Educational Theory, 63* (6), 581-599.

Suttner, R. (2006). Talking to the ancestors: National heritage, the freedom charter and nation-building in South Africa in 2005. *Development Southern Africa, 2* (1), 3-27.

Swart, T., Berman, L., Mahahlela, M., Mlonzi, L., Phakhati, L., & Sixako, L. (1996). Mothers' ideas of model offspring inform training. *Recovery,* 22-26.

Author:

Norma Rudolph
Faculty of Education and Psychology
University of Jyväskylä
Finland
The University of Newcastle
Australia
Email: normarudolph610@gmail.com

II

DATA PRACTICES AND INEQUALITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICY: TECHNOCRATIC MANAGEMENT VERSUS SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.

by

Rudolph, N., Millei, Z., & Alasuutari, M., October 2019

South African Journal of Childhood Education vol 9(1), 11–11

https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.756

AOSIS

Data practices and inequality in South African early childhood development policy: Technocratic management versus social transformation

CrossMark
click for updates

Authors:
Norma Rudolph[1]
Zsuzsanna Millei[2]
Maarit Alasuutari[1]

Affiliations:
[1]Department of Education, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

[2]Faculty of Education, University of Tampere, Tampere, Finland

Corresponding author:
Norma Rudolph, normarudolph610@gmail.com

Background: In 1994, the African National Congress identified early childhood development as a potential strategy to redress the inequalities of apartheid, however, two and a half decades later, poverty still persists, and South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world.

Aim: This article explores how policy texts based on and with the use of certain data practices establish 'truths' about childhoods and society, construct families and communities, and determine forms of provision to address inequality.

Setting: In 2015, the South African government published the National Integrated Early Childhood Policy (NIECDP) to continue to address poverty and inequality. Its implementation increasingly draws on data practices that measure and inform solutions. The use of data practices, while also providing needed information, prioritises solutions that proceed in technocratic ways instead of facilitating social change.

Methods: With a critical discourse analysis of policy texts and the introduction of alternatives, the analysis seeks to highlight the power and knowledge hierarchies that construct the policies of NIECDP.

Results: This article demonstrates how discourses and data practices prioritise 'the government of poverty' instead of helping to eliminate it and silence the voices of those living with poverty. This form of government through data also undermines the policy's potential to respond to the different life chances resulting from the diverse conditions in which young children live in South Africa.

Conclusion: This article seeks to re-open a debate that the NIECDP successfully silenced, specifically who benefits, who speaks and who is silenced.

Keywords: data practices; policy analysis; South Africa; early childhood; social justice.

Global discourses with a propensity for measurement

There is a global agreement on the benefits of early childhood education, including poverty alleviation, and a growing consensus around mobilising resources for early childhood services based on needs established on data (Britto et al. 2018). However, the way 'data' and 'evidence' are constructed and the kind of data practices that are used warrants closer attention. While centralised population-based data are necessary for general planning, allocation of resources and identifying areas needing policy input, exclusive reliance on this kind of data-driven policy and decision-making can risk depoliticising early childhood policy (Dahlberg & Moss 2005; Morabito, Vandenbroeck & Roose 2013) and silencing broad, continuous and necessary debates about early childhood services. More specifically, it leaves little space for discussions regarding notions and values underpinning early childhood provision, such as the competing understandings of childhood and society promoted by diverse communities, and the values, which inform funding strategies. While challenges to the global consensus and policy decisions involving data use can be found in the literature (Campbell-Barr, Lavelle & Wickett 2012; Cannella, Pèrez & Lee 2016; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence 1999; Millei & Gallagher 2017; Penn 2010; Roberts-Holmes 2015), there is little critical attention being given to this issue in South Africa. The acclaim for the long-awaited integrated early childhood services and increased government funding promised in the South African 2015 National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECDP) (RSA 2015) has overshadowed critical response to the specific policy choices and programme options that are defined and delivered on particular presentations of data. By relying solely on centralised planning, the NIECDP constrains space for beneficiaries to contribute more refined data generated

through decentralised participatory processes at the local level to guide a responsive integrated approach.

In this article, we analyse the kinds of data practices promoted in the 2015 South African NIECDP and argue that the current dominant global discourses, with a propensity for measurement and a particular kind of data use, undermine the stated policy intention to address poverty and inequality. By revealing the underlying policy discourses and power relations that shape the collection, administration and use of data, we aim to stimulate debate about different data practices and constructions of evidence in current early childhood policy in South Africa.

Systematic data practices and the analysis of policies

The stated intention of the 2015 NIECPD is to address inequality, claiming that 'inequality within and between populations has its origins in poor early childhood experiences' (RSA 2015). Consequently, it argues that investment in early childhood development (ECD) that targets the underlying social and economic causes and consequences of risk factors can 'limit inequality at its source' (RSA 2015). To create information on how and what kind of investments are to be taken, an evidence-based policymaking discourse is mobilised. This calls for the collection of data based on an autocratic and bureaucratic point of view. The problem is, however, that instead of gathering local data in discussions with community stakeholders, policymakers exclusively use large population data sets and centrally devised measures in determining the set of early childhood services to be funded and scaled up. As a result, there is insufficient detail about local conditions. This kind of standard data practice is explored in the literature as datafication, data-driven and evidence-based decision-making. We follow Kelly and Noonan's (2017) distinction between 'systematic practices' and 'edifying practices' of datafication in their research on the Indian public health sector. Bringing Rorty's (1979) notion of 'edifying practices' to their conceptualisation, they emphasise the 'shifts from representing the world (with a view to domesticating it) to cultivating the skills to experience it more fully' (Kelly & Noonan 2017:878). They oppose standard systematic data practices that represent the world with a view of objectifying and simplifying it to fit normalised understandings. For example, in relation to the measurement of poverty with some numerical indicators, data enact relational object positions, such as positioning some people 'below the poverty line', or in groups that are at 'risk of poverty', thus creating distinctive forms of sociality that are understood in well-rehearsed or normative ways. Kelly and Noonan (2017) remind us that practices are performative and they therefore conceive of data not as a noun or a thing but as a kind of 'doing' that can produce worlds and also reveal new worlds and possibilities through conversation with various stakeholders. Using a practice theoretical approach, they suggest understanding data as being performed within social practices. They promote what they term as 'edifying

data practices' that generate mutual exploration and learning of complex conditions through conversation (Kelly & Noonan 2017).

The standard systematic data practices in the South African early childhood policy scene are used to measure the success of implementation. The South African Early Learning Outcomes Measure (ELOM) seeks to determine the level of success of services, based on the measurement of children's performance improvement (Dawes et al. 2016; DGM Moderator 2016; Snelling et al. 2019). This is in line with the recently launched global campaign by the Early Childhood Action Network (ECDAN[1]) that proposes standardising global reporting of implementation based on predetermined 'evidence to inform effectiveness, quality, and scale' (Britto et al. 2018). In addition to its compliance with the global expectation of comparable measurement tools, South African early childhood policy and practice is strongly informed by the dominant position that there is sufficient evidence of effective programmes that should merely be taken to scale (Britto et al. 2018). Thus, it seems that the South African government strategy to reduce inequality is primarily based on needing effective large-scale data sets to determine needs, administer the correct measures of funding and upscaling, and prove success with the measurement of learning outcomes through predefined measurement procedures.

Policymaking, informed and evaluated primarily by quantified measurements, contributes to the process of what Grek and Ozga (2010) term the 'scientisation' of education governance, where it is 'increasingly assumed that it is only knowledge based on data (and in particular statistical knowledge) that can reveal problems and shape solutions' (Grek & Ozga 2010). Adding to this observation, Dahlberg (2016) notes, in relation to the context of the Global North, that data use follows dominant economic rationalities and neoliberal ideologies. For example, systematic quality assurance and quality control practices use predefined measurement procedures to assess children in terms of predetermined outcomes and, in so doing, govern and normalise young children and their families. In contrast to this approach, she presents an 'ethico-aesthetic paradigm' that accommodates the possibility of imagining and enacting alternatives and thus allowing for change, creativity and hope (Dahlberg 2016).

Dahlberg's (2016) argument is further complicated in South Africa by the colonial history that vests colonial power relations in policy for young children (Porteus 2004). To consider this complex historical and policy terrain, we chose the policy-as-discourse analysis method (Bacchi 2000; Shore & Wright 2011) to reveal colonial power relations and political agendas inherent in policy texts and processes. This approach highlights the ways in which a 'problem' is represented in policy and how that can frequently generate rather than solve problems. From decolonial perspectives (Mignolo 2007; Santos 2007), policy-as-discourse works towards identifying

1.UNICEF and the World Bank Group launched the Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) in 2016 see https://www.ecdan.org/.

hierarchies of knowledge and the ways global colonial and the so-called 'western' perspectives can subjugate or silence other knowledges.

In our analysis, we focus on how policies construct the problem by, firstly, identifying particular policy statements that allude to a problem by using Kendall and Wickham's (1999) method of discourse analysis. We explore the possible meanings implied in a given statement, including the categorisations and binaries it constructs, the way it positions certain people, how it creates and shapes personal and institutional relationships, and draws on stereotypes, notions of equality, justice and injustice, and politics. We scrutinise how different actors, such as children, communities and experts, are constructed and how power relations and hierarchies are produced through these statements. We explore how discourses and described practices align with or subjugate particular understandings of childhood and early childhood education. We relate this to other discourses, concepts and frames mobilising available and dominant discourses, such as global consensus on the benefits of early childhood education and care and systematic data practices.

The policy-as-discourse approach takes the position that policy is a complex, interactive, multi-layered and value-laden process (Shore & Wright 2011). Therefore, relevant policy documents in their context, as well as those that informed the policy and those that have emerged from it, are analysed in order to create a complex account. We pay particular attention to the 12 background papers produced as part of the diagnostic ECD review that informed the policy (Richter et al. 2012) and the overarching national guiding framework (National Planning Commission 2012; RSA 2011). The reports and literature that have been brought together by the ECDAN to support its recently launched global campaign give us some indication about the kind of dominant early childhood discourses used in South African early childhood policymaking (Britto et al. 2017, 2018). In order to retrace historical contextual information, the analysis is also informed, in addition to the published literature, by the personal archives of one of the authors, including personally stored government reports and personal communications dating back to the 1980s.

In this study, all of the recent data and most of the historical data are in the public domain and consist of documents that are either already available or in the process of being made available in digital form. Therefore, there are no ethical considerations relating to the source or accessing of data, other than possibly personal communications, which are only used to inform the policy analysis and thus identities are not revealed. In writing up this analysis, we kept asking the questions: what can we say, with what authority and with what consequences? While policy critique focuses on documents, it is still about the people who stood behind those policies. Therefore, analysis and critique must be levelled with knowledge and consideration of the consequences for not only those who were behind these policies but also for those who are reading our analysis.

These ethical considerations guided our decisions, including where to publish this article.

Context for a more 'edifying' policy

In 1994, when the African National Congress (ANC) came to power in South Africa, it promised to redress the inequalities inherited from the apartheid regime by attacking poverty and deprivation as its first priority. The ANC identified ECD as one strategy for achieving the kind of convivial society envisaged by the 1955 Freedom Charter that had inspired and directed the political and armed struggle that ended apartheid and led to the first democratic election. While there is no longer legal racial discrimination, the spatial inequalities, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) pandemic, the poor state of the economy and high unemployment rates have exacerbated poverty and inequality. The most serious consequence of poverty is child hunger, stunting, undernutrition and low birth weight. According to the South African Early Childhood Review 2017, '30% of young children fall below the food poverty line (FPL)' (Hall et al. 2017:8). Nearly one-third of South Africa's children do not have sufficient nutritious food.

The *Population Registration Act* of 1950 classified people according to their racial characteristics and each group lived in a different area as part of the system of apartheid. Segregation, land dispossession, the system of migrant labour and forced removals dislocated families and communities. The vast majority of indigenous peoples were dispossessed of their ancestral and agricultural lands onto the 'Bantustans' where they eked out a living supported by remittances from family members who worked in cities or on the mines. The political struggle for democracy itself left an indelible mark. Economic policies post-1994 have also deepened inequality (Du Toit 2012).

In the case of schooling, the legacy of apartheid has been exacerbated by the school fee policy. The ANC legislated for free basic public schooling and committed to paying for a standard number of teachers for all schools. However, by allowing school governing bodies to determine fees for additional costs, the schools in previously advantaged areas were able to offer much better schooling at a higher cost to those who could afford to pay. Only a small minority of the previously disenfranchised population had the financial means to relocate to the previously advantaged racially segregated areas, and consequently today enjoy better services. In addition, there are families who have the resources to transport their children to schools in wealthier neighbourhoods. However, the vast majority remain in rural areas or have moved to informal urban areas, which lack services and adequate schooling (Goldberg 2009).

Extensive literature (Christie 2010; Soudien 2004; Unterhalter 2009) portrays the inequitable education provision and curriculum that undermine the intended values of a convivial society post-apartheid. Spreen, Vally and Thapilyal (2012) describe social injustice in education policy in terms of power

relations in decision-making, pointing to the kind of knowledge that is valued, the legitimacy of actors and the 'ideological acceptance of the broad framework of the globally dominant, neoliberal, political and economic orthodoxy' that undermined equality and equity (Spreen et al. 2012:53). The displacement of the voice and power of beneficiaries by technical experts (Du Toit 2012; Vandenbroeck, Coussée & Bradt 2010) is evident across the South African education system from the early childhood sector to higher education.

The South African early childhood landscape

Before the first democratic election in 1994, the system of provision for young children was extremely unequal, with well-funded government preschools in the 'white' education system and reliance by the majority of 'black' children on limited community-based and fee-paying educare centres for children from three to six years. Teachers in preschools were university trained and a relatively small group of non-government training organisations offered non-formal training in the 'educare' sector, which fell outside of government influence and dominant apartheid Christian National Education with its fundamental pedagogic approach. This allowed a few non-government organisations to develop innovative and progressive approaches, such as using a Freirian conscientisation approach and drawing on indigenous childcare practices (Biersteker 2018; Swart 1996). Community-based centres with children from three to six years and home visiting programmes located services close to where children lived, encouraging family and community participation (Rudolph 2017). In 1980, the apartheid government introduced a 'school readiness' bridging period to address the high failure and drop-out rate among children classified as 'black'. The non-government 'educare' sector argued instead that schools should be 'ready' to 'receive' and support children and accommodate diversity (ELRU 1994).

For nearly 20 years the primary focus of government services for young children has remained on the introduction and expanding of a single year of provision for children before they enter primary school, referred to as Grade R. This is despite the intended broad integrated approaches set out in the Interim Policy for ECD (DoE 1996) and later in the National Integrated Plan (NIP) (DoE, DOH & DSD 2005) and the *Children's Act* (DSD 2005). Grade R is not yet available to all children and those living in urban areas and those with greater financial resources are more likely to be in a Grade R class (Biersteker 2018). Since those classes attached to schools are better funded, educated practitioners prefer to be employed in schools. Drawing on recent research, Biersteker (2018) concludes that 'while Grade R was established as a means of reducing inequalities, it simply extended the advantage to children in more affluent schools' (Biersteker 2018:305).

Before the introduction of and dominant focus on Grade R, the standard model of early childhood provision was in community-based centres with children from three to six years. This format encouraged family and community participation and nurtured peer teaching and learning more closely aligned to traditional childcare arrangements (Rudolph 2017). The community-based system of provision has been eroded by age segregation and the flight of practitioners to better paying jobs in schools (Biersteker 2018), thus undermining the pre-1994 progressive work of non-governmental organisations and reproducing inequality on economic lines.

Constructing 'vulnerable' children and families as the problem

The NIECDP draws extensively on dominant early childhood discourses that promote ECD as a panacea for all social problems, especially poverty and inequality. This is evident in the exclusive reference in the policy to the 'neuroscience' perspective and human capital. The NIECDP claims that 'inequality between and within populations has its origins in poor early childhood development experiences' (RSA 2015:21). It states that:

> The science is conclusive: investments in early childhood development yield lifetime development returns for the child, his or her family and society. Notably, early childhood development has the potential to contribute significantly to the reduction of key development challenges facing South Africa in 2015, particularly poverty and inequality. (p. 21)

The policy states that it has taken into account 'recent scientific evidence', including the evidence of the 'challenges that young children and families experience, especially those most vulnerable' (RSA 2015:120). 'Vulnerable children' are constituted as:

> Those who experience compromised caregiving and/or compromised access to quality early childhood development services because of one or more structural, social, economic, geographic, physical, mental, psychosocial, racial, familial or any other risk factors associated with poor access to services, and/or poor early childhood outcomes. (p. 14)

The primary focus, in the discourse, on 'compromised' caregiving and lack of access to ECD subjugates real conditions of families. By making this discursive move, it is possible to narrow the focus, in line with human capital discourses, to only focus on education. The policy lists 12 of these risk factors, starting with 'Children living in poverty'; and including (RSA 2015):

> Orphaned children and other children living without their biological parents; Children living in child-headed households; Children whose caregivers abuse substances such as alcohol and drugs; Children who are exposed to violence; Children living in under-serviced rural areas or urban informal settlements. (p. 14)

Referring again to the Centre on the Developing Child (2007), the policy states that 'Poverty is widely recognised as a root cause of poor child development' and that 'low socioeconomic status is a key predictor of poor early childhood development' (RSA 2015:19). Demarcating, identifying and characterising large groups of children this way makes it possible to amass

them, collate data about them through systematic data production and make them the specific targets of these policies. Amassing unifies specific conditions, subjugating their real-life conditions to the overarching discourse of needing education. Having shaped the problem in a specific way determines the solution. Consequently, in this case, the solution to the absence of learning is addressed through improving learning outcomes. This kind of construction of the problem denies the many interlinked conditions children experience as discussed above.

A discourse in the UNICEF 2012 report resonates with the NIECDP's construction of poverty:

> Leaving a young child alone or in the care of another child is a dereliction of caregiving responsibilities and can have harmful consequences. It exposes the child to increased risk of not only injury, but also abuse and neglect. (pp. 9–10)

Children living without biological parents are described in the NIECDP as being 'especially at risk of being denied the care necessary for their physical and psychosocial well-being' (RSA 2015:14 referring to UNICEF 2012). This perspective disregards the strong argument made in the wake of the AIDS pandemic, that there is a mismatch between international policy definitions and local or community constructions of 'childhood', 'vulnerability' and 'orphanhood'. For example, Meintjes and Giese (2006:407) argued that these global perspectives were 'shifting the terrain of orphanhood at a local level in South Africa and producing new struggles on the ground'. They argued that the construction of 'orphans' in the AIDS pandemic discourses obscures the range of childhood vulnerabilities, especially children living in poverty. Emerging from this literature, a research project facilitating community-based dialogue revealed that the status of children is not static and that children continually move in both directions on a continuum between well-being and vulnerability depending on their changing family circumstances (Rudolph et al. 2008). This research offers a more complex and relational view of poverty, which highlights its temporality. Dialogue in communities, as the above research powerfully shows, can help in revealing the unproductive policy frames that place certain people in static economic categories, as does the NIECDP, rather than relating it to changing socio-political, health, economic conditions and personal circumstances.

The poor are constructed as deficient and in need of services that counteract the 'biological and psychosocial risk factors that limit [them from providing] care, stimulation and learning opportunities' that are understood to result in unequal development (RSA 2015:21). In this way, the policy locates social problems in the biological and psychosocial composition of the population affected by poverty. It emphasises solutions, such as passing on general information about parenting, rather than focusing on targeting the systemic drivers of basic and long-standing economic inequalities and discrimination that led to the impoverished circumstances that large sections of the population experience.

The policy is permeated by examples of responsibility for children's health and well-being being passed on to parents. This reflects the dominant practice described in other contexts (Vandenbroeck et al. 2010) and is visible in the major focus in the NIECDP on providing skills and information (especially for parents and through media campaigns) rather than the much needed material support. We will return to this topic later.

By drawing on a Western individualistic construction of risk and vulnerability, the policy also subjugates the indigenous African perspective that views 'being needed' and 'being in need' as inevitable and valuable features of life (Ebersöhn et al. 2014). Through the natural periods of vulnerability in one's personal life-cycle, or the shocks and stresses that impact families and communities, connectedness and reciprocity are key features of nurturing and caring responses. In contrast, the NIECDP does not refer explicitly to the strengths and resources of young children and their families or the role of social solidarity. Therefore, this kind of construction helps erase not only the complexity of worldviews but also the diversity of life experiences across each lifespan.

Constructing the 'parent' and 'expert' binary

The diagnostic report undertaken by the National Planning Commission that informed the vision of the National Development Plan (NDP) identified one of South Africa's nine key challenges as 'the standard of education for most black learners is of poor quality' (RSA 2011:3). The two proposals most closely linked to early childhood are a nutrition intervention for pregnant women and young children, and universal access to two years of ECD (RSA 2012). The plan constructs early childhood as an enabling milestone and links to it the need to 'increase the quality of education so that all children have at least two years of preschool education and all children in Grade 3 can read and write' (RSA 2012:3).

To achieve its goal, the NIECDP proposes a 'comprehensive package' of services (RSA 2015). Given that young children cannot wait for their rights to be progressively realised, especially in the critical period from conception to two years, the policy proposes an 'essential' package of services to promote their survival and development with immediate effect (Hall et al. 2017; RSA 2015). The 'essential package' will be implemented by 2024 as a stepping stone to the delivery of the 'comprehensive' package by 2030 (DBE, DSD & DOH 2017). The essential package consists of maternal and child health services; nutrition support for pregnant women, mothers and children; support for primary caregivers, including parenting skills and psychosocial support; social services; and stimulation for early learning (Hall et al. 2017). The intention is to eventually make these programmes universally available through 'equitable access' (RSA 2015:48). While the intentions of the programme are commendable, the immediate effect is postponed to 2024 and the meaning of what will constitute 'equitable' remains undefined.

The NIECDP also makes a clear distinction between the role of parents and technical expertise, as is evident in the quotation below (RSA 2015):

> The inputs required for early childhood development include parental love, food, safety and stimulation. At the same time, there is a need for sufficient technical expertise to design and develop quality content for early learning, and to plan and manage large-scale services. Sufficient technical expertise is required to ensure that early childhood development in South Africa achieves the significant returns on investment achieved by a number of other countries. (p. 21)

What is provided by parents is defined here as love, food, safety and stimulation, all basic needs linked to healthy physical development, and includes stimulation for brain growth. So, the role of parents is limited to meeting the basic needs of children, while experts are constructed as those who are capable of providing learning experiences and services that ensure early childhood development. Parents and experts thus are constructed on a binary. The National Integrated ECD Policy defines a 'parent' as a (RSA 2015):

> [B]iological, foster or adoptive mother and/or father responsible for the care and protection of a young child, who is stable in the child's life and who loves the child and wants to protect the child. (p. 13)

This construction again circumscribes the capacity of the parent to ensure the child's basic needs. Moreover, as exemplified in the next quote from the essential package, the policy assumes little knowledge on behalf of parents to raise healthy and useful members of society, and they are therefore in need of 'factual information as well as the social support' … 'to ensure the survival and development of their children to their full potential' (RSA 2015:58).

Parents and other caregivers are constructed as needing information and support to be able to 'understand and fulfil their role in children's early learning' (RSA 2015:27). Besides constructing parents as lacking competency, this perspective sidelines the possibility of citizens with an already rich understanding of their parental roles needing material resources rather than information. The policy proposes the development and implementation of systematised national communication campaigns that relay 'pertinent early childhood development messages' on topics such as nutrition and protection (RSA 2015). This top-down approach negates the complexity and material challenges many parents face in terms of feeding and protecting their children and distracts attention from the underlying causes of food insecurity and social conflict.

In summary, we can argue that despite its social transformation intentions, the 2015 ECD policy constitutes the primary problem as the need to prepare young children for schooling and prioritises the voices of early childhood 'experts' over beneficiaries, children and their families. By drawing uncritically on global discourses and normative notions of 'risk' and 'vulnerability', it constructs families living with poverty as deficient and in need of information campaigns

and messages. The policy also suggests that 'communication aimed at parents should enable them to … understand and demand quality early learning and development' (RSA 2015:45). This suggests that the authors of the information campaign must transfer their understanding of 'quality' and 'development' to beneficiaries who do not have their own constructions of childhood, well-being or the kind of society they want for themselves and their children. Parents must be told to 'demand' the prescribed services on offer without any opportunity to participate in designing the kind of services they want or explaining why they are not utilising available services.

Data practice as population-based planning to solve the problem of poverty

The current South African guiding framework for development, set out in the 2011 NDP and Vision 2030, ties in well with global discourses on the assumption that (RSA 2015):

> [T]he loss of human capital is avoidable through the provision of timely and appropriate quality early childhood development services targeting the causes and consequences of the known risk factors. (p. 20, see note s36)

Laying down two fundamental objectives attached to measurable risk factors – to eliminate poverty and to reduce inequality (RSA 2011) – it addresses critical gaps 'to ensure the provision of a comprehensive, universally available and equitable early childhood development services' (RSA 2015:8). The notions of 'targeting', 'risk factors', 'critical gap', 'comprehensive' and 'universally available' together construct a policy field where data practices are needed and are the best tools to prepare decision-making about provision. Moreover, the plan is driven by an 'evidence-based' approach that seeks to measure success 'by the degree to which the lives and opportunities of the poorest South Africans are transformed in a sustainable manner' (Statistics South Africa 2017:6). This statement further contributes to constructing the need for measures, in this case, to assess delivery, and against which progress can be calculated. These notions and discourses create the need for and justify the top-down use of expert-driven data practices.

Based on available population-based data, the NIECDP identifies and prioritises 'the poorest 63.9 percent of children, since these comprise the most vulnerable children as well as the group that will benefit most from early childhood development services' (RSA 2015:68). The practice of targeting these children based on systematic data produces an affective structuration of society, locating vulnerability and hope in this objectified and uniform body of children. A different affect, that is, loss and despair, is also associated with this group of children: 'in the absence of appropriate and high quality early learning opportunities, earlier disparities in language and socio-emotional development determined by socio-economic status can become increasingly

apparent' (RSA 2015:68). Constructing an affective structuration in society and mapping vulnerability against poverty, population-based planning is positioned as the most effective and equitable strategy for this assumed dire need (RSA 2015):

> [*T*]o assess [the] scale and nature of the need for early childhood development services, and to plan for universal availability at a local level of sufficient early childhood development programmes in sufficiently close proximity to young children and their families, especially in under-serviced areas, to meet such demand. (p. 69)

Dahlberg (2016) warns that 'implementing standardised tools, which culminate in classifying children as "at risk" and/or "in need," may, if not scrutinised and contested, be counterproductive' by exacerbating marginalisation and limiting participation (Dahlberg 2016:128). On the one hand, dominant risk and vulnerability discourses in the NIECDP, and on the other hand objectification and uniformisation of a large section of the population through systematic data practice, produce knowledge from a hierarchical position. This knowledge marginalises the voices of beneficiaries, who are 'reduced to spectators' in this construction of the problem (Vandenbroeck et al. 2010). Moreover, by making poverty the primary indicator for vulnerability and linking vulnerability to the need for early childhood education, regulating the private life (such as their parenting practices within their homes) of those people, who are reckoned as poor according to data, becomes possible.

Expanding regulative roles to technical experts

The NIECDP refers to the 2001 Education White Paper 5 (2001) in acknowledging that an integrated approach requires the involvement of 'civil society organisations, the corporate sector, religious organisations, non-government organisations, parents and children' (RSA 2015:90). However, to enable targeting the NIECDP locates data practices within a centralised system where expertise is supposedly more available. The required data practices to do this work are described as follows (RSA 2015):

- Assess population-level needs for early childhood development services.
- Plan the provisioning of suitable early childhood development programmes and services to meet the identified needs (population-based planning).
- Develop and implement appropriate coverage targets and quality service standards and systems.
- Monitor compliance and provide support for ongoing quality improvement.
- Evaluate and report on progress. (p. 84)

To enable these processes, the government's first priority was to put in place the 'management structures and systems for population-based assessments' (RSA 2015:24). This is intended to aid in working out the number of services needed for different ages, places and 'developmental needs for the full range of early childhood development services at a national, provincial and municipal level' (RSA 2015:24).

This kind of data generation is what Kelly and Noonan (2017) term 'systematic' data practices. Data are collected based on large-scale population measures and trust is placed in these tools to show complex and extremely diverse economic, social and health conditions and needs. However, the data sets being used to determine the need and location of services cannot take account of complexity as they rely primarily on the macro aggregated socio-economic status of the community in which the service is situated. Besides, producing this type of data will require a gigantic machine of bureaucrats, professionals and 'measurement' experts to facilitate the envisioned systematic data practices and centralised planning, monitoring and reporting needed 'to strengthen, integrate and improve availability of and access' to these proposed ECD services (RSA 2015:48).

'Measurement experts' are given three major roles by the NIECDP: firstly, through using population data sets they determine the need for services; secondly, they assess the 'quality' of services by measuring learning outcomes; and thirdly, they monitor the impact of the system by using centrally predetermined indicators. All these roles rely on indicators established by early childhood 'experts' drawing on international discourses on quality, with no systematic participatory opportunities for beneficiaries to add to criteria. In summary, the NIECDP relies solely on centralised data based planning, implementation and monitoring and suggests that high-level collection and analysis of data is regarded as the most important planning tool. The focus of the initial implementation process is to build integrated national and provincial structures using systematic data practices for planning and monitoring. The NIECDP overlooks the responsibility of municipalities to implement early childhood services and the potential of the Integrated Development Plans for the participation of beneficiaries in local planning. The Toolkit of the Education and Training Unit (ETU) for Democracy and Development explains that 'Integrated Development Planning is an approach to planning that involves the entire municipality and its citizens in finding the best solutions to achieve good long-term development' (ETU 2018). While local government has failed to live up to the aims of decentralisation and participation set out in the 1997 Constitution of South Africa, there is growing renewed interest in it (Tshoose 2015). Past civil society experience and existing local government policy generate space for ongoing local dialogue that includes beneficiaries in planning early learning services.

Reproducing coloniality through systematic data practices to measure learning outcomes

The glossary of the NIECDP links quality to the measurement of the efficiency of interventions in the provision of ECEC: '(t)he quantity of interventions, services, programmes, training and systems linked with and achieving child outcomes' (RSA 2015:14). To explore this link further, it is important to reveal the colonial power hierarchies this document reproduces. Some observers hail the possibility that systematic data practices create for the comparison of

service types and for the improvement of performance (Dawes et al. 2016). However, comparability is built on the selection of existing programmes deemed good quality and worthy of replicating. Thus, 'five well-capacitated non-profit organizations were invited to submit proposals for ECD interventions that responded to key identified issues' (Biersteker & Dawes 2019:94). Consequently, the quality of services in the future will not only be compared to interventions selected and supported by well-resourced training organisations, but also on a historical measure of quality, and thus side-lining the knowledge and changing experiences of communities. This accommodates scaling up existing kinds of services, leaving little opportunity to generate innovation.

To understand the effect of this systematic data practice requires attention to historical legacies. Apartheid has generated the intractable problem of spatial inequality that has resulted in continued unequal access to services, including schooling (Vally, Motala & Ramadiro 2010). Goldberg (2009) argues that post 1994, racial apartheid has transformed into a more generic and so supposedly less pernicious class apartheid. He identifies neoliberalisation as a contributing factor, since segregation based on racial classification has been displaced by separation based on access to material resources as we have described earlier. South African citizens now have the opportunity to make choices that can only be made (Goldberg 2009):

> [W]ithin the limits of one's means and networks, one's inheritance and education, one's class and gender, all of which are racially marked if much less deeply and directly determined than under apartheid. (p. 528)

The way government constitutes the problem, constrains Biersteker and Dawes in the development of measurement tools and the selection of data practices. This produces unintended consequences. Biersteker and Dawes (2019:93) acknowledge that despite the intention to design programmes using local knowledges, 'very little space is afforded to these when it comes to measurement and evaluation'. In developing the learning outcomes and their measurement, they sought to determine the extent to which indigenous rather than globalised modern practices might influence the skills commonly assessed in development tests. In their argument for using globalised modern practices, they claim that rural children today in traditional settings are neither as exposed to indigenous practices nor as insulated from modern practices as they were 20 years ago. They base this claim on data about increased urbanisation, access to television, mobile telephones and electricity. Consequently, they calculate that those young children who are primarily exposed to indigenous early childhood practices are 'probably restricted to more remote rural areas' (Biersteker & Dawes 2019:93). With their specific data use, they circumscribe and erase from consideration an assumedly small community not really worthy of consideration in a national policy.

We read this tactic as the presence of coloniality that subjugates valuable perspectives, such as 'connection and

relatedness' in the African tradition of 'ubuntu' (Green 2013; Mji 2012). Their conclusion disregards the need to preserve indigenous understandings that continue even in urban contexts. In adapting the globally designed test items to the local context, they focus on differences in language use and the difference in the nature and prevalence of objects in varying areas. For example, they replace the word 'squirrel' in test items with 'mouse', which is more universally present in South Africa. This kind of adaptation of test items borrowed from developmental psychology consequently reinforces the dominant and normalised constructions of childhood that further favours 'white', male, middle class norms and values (Burman 2007). Burman (2007) reminds us that we need to consider the emergence of this kind of 'mental measurement, classification of abilities and establishment of norms' as historically located during the industrial revolution with the purpose of regulating 'those populations deemed a social threat to the prevailing order' (2007:13–14).

A genuinely integrated approach that accommodates multiple visions of childhood and society would generate complexity that is perhaps more difficult to manage with systematic data practices. In the face of this complexity, Biersteker and Dawes (2019) do not take into consideration community-based ECD services. This type of service does 'not readily lend itself to requirements of formal evaluation' as these services frequently respond to community priorities and a complex range of interacting factors (Biersteker & Dawes 2019:94). They also acknowledge that 'randomization is extremely tricky in many situations' in the context of diversity (Biersteker & Dawes 2019). By including the early childhood practitioners that they have trained as assessors in the piloting of standardised tests, they assume that they can account for the multiplicity of viewpoints. However, they do not consider that although assessors might live in marginalised communities, they might not represent the full range of local perspectives. Unlike the majority of the targeted population of ECD services, trained practitioners will inevitably already have achieved some success within the education system in which Western knowledge dominates, subjugating indigenous knowledges.

Systematic data practices do not easily accommodate the complexity of integrated approaches that respond to local contexts and constantly changing priorities. Kelly and Noonan (2017) suggest 'edifying practices' to grapple with complex conditions. In 'edifying data practices', data are revealed through 'patient engagement with' local conditions in non-judgmental and attentive dialogue with local stakeholders, as opposed to standard systematic data practices that erase local differences and act as an arbiter between competing claims to truth (Kelly & Noonan 2017:885). 'Edifying practices' assume a dialogical approach generating mutual exploration and learning through conversation, while in standard evaluation approaches, authority is produced through a hierarchical position with a tendency towards reprimand and risk aversion. In 'edifying data practices', 'authority is produced through demonstrated situated expertise' with 'tendencies towards openness and

experimentation' (Kelly & Noonan 2017:885). Conversation generates receptiveness through curious and sympathetic dispositions to compel the search for other perspectives. The currently adapted learning outcomes in South Africa unfortunately allow little scope for innovation to emerge outside of the predetermined indicators.

Despite the acclaim for the learning outcomes in South Africa, recent global literature, on this kind of data practice, raises several red flags. The learning outcomes are designed for comparison so that 'data can flow and travel well', creating spaces for international comparison instead of a detailed portrayal of local conditions and achievements (Piattoeva 2015:14). By tracking the power of numbers in the data generated in national examinations, Piattoeva raises important considerations. She illustrates how these kinds of numbers can be used for different government purposes and at the same time 'preclude criticism of their political effects' (Piattoeva 2015:14). These political effects are varied; for example, Bradbury draws on the experience of testing five-year-old children since 2003 in England to warn that the production of numerical data in early childhood education creates a 'high stakes situation' that can lead to more time 'teaching the test' than supporting the learning and well-being of young children (Bradbury 2014:336). Roberts-Holmes and Bradbury (2016:600) draw on the testing of children aged five years old in England to show how the 'surveillance and performative culture of accountability both affirms, legitimates and seduces through discourses of quality while increasingly regulating and governing the early years'. Millei and Gallagher (2017) show the complex entanglements that data practices produce and the resulting ambivalent positions in which professionals find themselves. They reveal the ethical dilemmas, practical and material consequences, as well as the political possibilities for resistance and advocacy that data practices bring forward. Millei and Gallagher (forthcoming) also illustrate how data practices actually can work against the stated initiative of universal access and create new forms of inequalities instead of overcoming those.

The 'government of poverty'

The withering away of ANC policy commitments and principles is evident across many policy sectors. It is also visible in the dominant government strategies for addressing poverty that some argue is a strategy to merely manage the consequences of rising unemployment and inequality (Du Toit 2017; Hickey 2014; Seekings 2014), rather than as a strategy for meaningful social change intended in the Freedom Charter (ANC 1955). Du Toit (2017) calls this policy strategy the 'government of poverty'. In this article, we have demonstrated how through systematic data practices the NIECDP 'governs poverty' by objectifying and constituting a large section of the population as vulnerable, thus needing intervention into their lives. Part of this form of governance is to place the power to make decisions about resources in the hands of measurement experts rather than engaging the service providers and beneficiaries in ongoing reflection and action. While acknowledging that social grants and other

pro-poor government policies have alleviated some suffering for many families in South Africa, Du Toit (2017) points to:

[D]isplacement of a political practice of popular mobilization and social transformation by a new technocratic rationality of government that seeks to construct poor populations (and poverty as such) as objects of scientific knowledge, understanding and technical intervention. (p. 2)

Du Toit explains that the use of mostly quantitative and usually fairly positivistic discourses promoting 'evidence-based policymaking' has institutionalised the 'power and voice of a distinct cadre of technical experts and professional bureaucrats', who generate the 'knowledge' used to make decisions about resource allocations to vulnerable and marginalised communities (Du Toit 2017:2).

This notion of 'government of poverty' used by Du Toit to argue that evidence-based policymaking discourses undermine local decision-making in marginalised communities also holds true for the NIECDP, which in a similar manner prioritises and adapts the globalised neoliberal discourses and practices of measurement experts to the constructed problems of the government. However, in Foucault's (1991) terms, discursive practice is always in flux and power is not fixed; moreover, where there is power there is resistance. Consequently, change is possible with the capacity to recognise and question norms and constraints. Kelly and Noonan suggest reconsidering 'conceptions of data as a given "thing" that unproblematically reflects an underlying reality and to focus instead on how data are made and what this making does' (Kelly & Noonan 2017:879). For example, this kind of thinking raises the possibility of re-examining the kind of individuals, groups and needs that are identified and constituted through different kinds of data practices. They also highlight the importance of studying the relations between data, knowing and managing. They encourage unpacking 'practices of datafication' and relating them to the 'broader practices of organizational knowing in which they are typically embedded' (Kelly & Noonan 2017:876). In particular, they call attention to finding or creating data practices that can accommodate uncertainty and contingency and keep the conversation open through dialogue that attends to power relations and diversity.

In this article, we show the ways in which systematic data practices in South African early childhood policy brush over complex conditions, legitimate their own use and silence less-dominant knowledges of local communities. If governments are truly concerned about inequality and the future of their countries, instead of governing poverty, they could engage in dialogue with families and communities about the kind of society they want for themselves and their children and find out what help they need to build that kind of society. This article takes a first step to open spaces for this type of engagement by inviting the readers to think about power relations and data practices prevalent in and proposed by the NIECDP to better understand: who benefits, who speaks and who is silenced.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

The first author (N.R.) conceptualised the article, undertook all the analysis, reviewed the literature, wrote the article and integrated comments as part of an article-based doctoral study. The second (Z.M.) and third (M.A.) authors are both supervisors of the first author. The second author gave detailed written comments on the content and structure. The third author gave general oral feedback and support.

Ethical considerations

This study did not require ethical clearance.

Funding information

Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this article are the authors' own and not the official position of their institutions or funders.

References

ANC, 1955, The Freedom Charter, viewed 10 March 2019, from African National Congress website: https://www.anc1912.org.za/freedom-charter.

Bacchi, C., 2000, 'Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us?', Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education 21, 45–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300050005493

Biersteker, L., 2018, 'Early childhood education and social transformation in South Africa: The emergence of early childhood education as a priority in South Africa', in J.L. Roopnarine, J.E. Johnson, S.F. Quinn & M.M. Patte (eds.), Handbook of international perspectives on early childhood education, pp. 296–310, Routledge, New York and Abingdon.

Biersteker, L. & Dawes, A., 2019, 'South Africa: Measuring up – The Sobambisana evaluation', in P.H.E. Kjørholt At (ed.), Early childhood and development work, pp. 91–112, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Bradbury, A., 2014, 'Early childhood assessment: Observation, teacher "knowledge" and the production of attainment data in early years settings AU – Bradbury, Alice', Comparative Education 50, 322–339. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2014.921371

Britto, P.R., Lye, S.J., Proulx, K., Yousafzai, A.K., Matthews, S.G., Vaivada, T. et al., 2017, 'Nurturing care: Promoting early childhood development', The Lancet 389, 91–102. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(16)31390-3

Britto, P.R., Singh, M., Dua, T., Kaur, R. & Yousafzai, A.K., 2018, 'What implementation evidence matters: Scaling-up nurturing interventions that promote early childhood development', Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences 1419, 5–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.13720

Burman, E., 2007, Deconstructing developmental psychology, 2nd edn., Taylor and Francis, Hoboken, NJ.

Campbell-Barr, V., Lavelle, M. & Wickett, K., 2012, 'Exploring alternative approaches to child outcome assessments in children's centres', Early Child Development and Care 182, 859–874. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2011.590937

Cannella, G.S., Pèrez, M.S. & Lee, I.F., 2016, Critical examinations of quality in early education and care: Regulation, disqualification, and erasure, Peter Lang, New York.

Centre on the Developing Child, 2007, A science-based framework for early childhood Policy, Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University, Cambridge.

Christie, P., 2010, 'The complexity of human rights in global times: The case of the right to education in South Africa', International Journal of Educational Development 30, 3–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2009.06.006

Dahlberg, G., 2016, 'An ethico-aesthetic paradigm as an alternative discourse to the quality assurance discourse', Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood 17, 124–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949115627910

Dahlberg, G. & Moss, P., 2005, Ethics and politics in early childhood education, Routledge Falmer, Abington.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P. & Pence, A., 1999, Beyond quality in early childhood education and care, Falmer Press, London.

Dawes, A., Biersteker, L., Girdwood, E., Snelling, M. & Tredoux, C., 2016, The development and age validation of the early learning outcome measure (ELOM), Innovation Edge briefing document, viewed 10 December 2016, from http://elom.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/ELOM-Briefing-Document.pdf.

DBE, DSD & DOH, 2017, Briefing on early childhood development – Joint Portfolio Committee, viewed 31 October 2017, from https://slideplayer.com/slide/13452347/.

DGM Moderator, 2016, Early learning gets a boost – ELOM and SmartStart, viewed 19 September 2016, from http://dgmt.co.za/?p=7929.

DoE, 1996, Interim policy for early childhood development. Department of Education, South African Government Printers, Pretoria.

DoE, DOH & DSD, 2005, National integrated plan (NIP) 2005–2010, viewed 11 August 2007, from http://www.unicef.org/southafrica/SAF_resources_nip.pdf.

DSD, 2005, Children's act 38, Government Printers, Pretoria, viewed 10 August 2008, from http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2005-038%20childrensact.pdf.

Du Toit, A., 2012, Making sense of 'evidence': Notes on the discursive politics of research and pro-poor policy making, UWC, PLAAS, Bellville.

Du Toit, A., 2017, Hyper-political anti-politics. Open democracy: Free thinking for the world, viewed 04 November 2017, from https://www.opendemocracy.net/andries-du-toit/hyper-political-anti-politics.

Ebersöhn, L., Sefotho, M., Mampane, R., Loots, T., Omidire, F., Sherman, V. et al., 2014, Imbeleko Report: Cultivating resourcefulness, not dependency, viewed 30 January 2019, from https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/Imbeleko%20Report%20-%20Cultivating%20Resourcefulness,%20Not%20Dependency.pdf.

ELRU, 1994, A proposed model of ECD service provision, with the emphasis on the reception year (called the 'alternative approach'), Early Learning Resources Unit (ELRU), Cape Town.

ETU, 2018, Integrated development planning for local government, viewed 06 February 2018, from http://www.etu.org.za/toolbox/docs/localgov/webidp.html.

Foucault, M., 1991, 'Politics and the study of discourse', in G. Burchell & D.M. Miller (eds.), The Foucault effect: Studies in governability, pp. 53–72, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Goldberg, D.T., 2009, 'A political theology of race: Articulating racial Southafricanization', Cultural Studies 23, 513–537. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380902950955

Green, L., 2013, Contested ecologies: Dialogues in the south on nature and knowledge, L. Green (ed.), HSRC Press, Pretoria, viewed 20 March 2017, from www.hsrcpress.ac.za.

Grek, S. & Ozga, J., 2010, 'Re-inventing public education: The new role of knowledge in education policy making', Public Policy and Administration 25, 271–288. https://doi.org/10.1177/0952076709356870

Hall, K., Sambu, W.L.B., Giese, S. & Almeleh, C., 2017, South African early childhood review 2017, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town and Ilifa Labantwana, Cape Town.

Hickey, S., 2014, 'Relocating social protection within a radical project of social justice', The European Journal of Development Research 26, 322–337. https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2014.9

Kelly, S. & Noonan, C., 2017, 'The doing of datafication (and what this doing does): Practices of edification and the enactment of new forms of sociality in the Indian public health service', Journal of the Association for Information Systems 18, 872–899. https://doi.org/10.17705/1jais.00477

Kendall, G. & Wickham, G., 1999, Using Foucault's methods, Sage, London, viewed 16 February 2019, from http://methods.sagepub.com/book/using-foucaults-methods.

Meintjes, H. & Giese, S., 2006, 'Spinning the epidemic the making of mythologies of orphanhood in the context of AIDS', Childhood 13, 407–430. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568206066359

Mignolo, W.D., 2007, 'Delinking: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality', Cultural Studies 21, 449–514. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162647

Millei, Z. & Gallagher, J., 2017, 'Ad-hoc numbers forming provision and policy: Round and round of universal access in an Australian preschool', *Early Child Development and Care* 187, 1528–1542. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1289926

Millei, Z. & Gallagher, J., (in-press), 'The paradox of universal access: Alleviating or perpetuating inequity for children in NSW Australia', in M. Alasuutari, K. Karila, J. Lammi-Taskula & K. Repo (eds.), *The policies of childcare and early childhood education: Does equal access matter?*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, United Kingdom.

Mji, G., 2012, 'The health knowledge utilised by rural older Xhosa women in the management of health problems in their home situation, with special focus on indigenous knowledge', PhD unpublished dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy in Family Medicine, Stellenbosch University.

Morabito, C., Vandenbroeck, M. & Roose, R., 2013, 'The greatest of equalisers': A critical review of international organisations' views on early childhood care and education', *Journal of Social Policy* 42, 451–467. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279413000214

National Planning Commission, 2012, *National development plan 2030: Our future–make it work*, Presidency of South Africa, Pretoria.

Penn, H., 2010, 'Shaping the future: How human capital arguments about investment in early childhood are being (mis)used in poor countries', in N. Yelland (ed.), *Contemporary perspectives on early childhood education*, pp. 49–65, Open University Press, Maidenhead.

Piattoeva, N., 2015, 'Elastic numbers: National examinations data as a technology of government AU – Piattoeva, Nelli', *Journal of Education Policy* 30, 316–334. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2014.937830

Porteus, K., 2004, 'The state of play in early childhood development', in L. Chisholm (ed.), *Changing class: Education and social change in post apartheid South Africa*, pp. 339–365, Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town.

Richter, L., Biersteker, L., Burns, J., Desmond, C., Feza, N., Harrison, D. et al., 2012, *Diagnostic review of early childhood development*, viewed 11 January 2014, from https://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Evaluations/Diagnostic%20Review%20of%20Early%20Childhood%20Development.pdf.

Roberts-Holmes, G., 2015, 'The "datafication" of early years pedagogy: "If the teaching is good, the data should be good and if there's bad teaching, there is bad data"', *Journal of Education Policy* 30, 302–315. https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2014.924561

Roberts-Holmes, G. & Bradbury, A., 2016, 'Governance, accountability and the datafication of early years education in England', *British Educational Research Journal* 42(4), 600–613. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3221

Rorty, R., 1979, *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

RSA, 2011, *National development plan: Vision for 2030*, National Planning Commission (ed.), South African Government, Republic of South Africa, viewed 16 July 2014, from http://www.gov.za/issues/national-development-plan-2030.

RSA, 2012, *National development plan 2030: Our future – Make it work*, South African Government, viewed 16 July 2014, from http://www.gov.za/issues/national-development-plan/.

RSA, 2015, *National integrated early childhood development policy*, Government Printers, Pretoria.

Rudolph, N., 2017, 'Hierarchies of knowledge, incommensurabilities and silences in South African ECD policy: Whose knowledge counts?', *Journal of Pedagogy/Pedagogický Casopis* 8, 77–98. https://doi.org/10.1515/jped-2017-0004

Rudolph, N., Monson, J., Collett, K. & Sonn, B., 2008, *Champions for children handbook: How to build a caring school community (pilot version)*, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Santos, B.D.S., 2007, 'Beyond abyssal thinking: From global lines to ecologies of knowledges*', *Review of African Political Economy* 30, 1–33, viewed 22 June 2016, from www.eurozine.com.

Seekings, J., 2014, 'The social and political implications of demographic change in post-apartheid South Africa', *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 652, 70–86. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716213508265

Shore, C. & Wright, S., 2011, 'Introduction. Conceptualising policy: Technologies of governance and the politics of visibility', in C. Shore, S. Wright & D. Pero (eds.), *Policy worlds: Anthropology and the analysis of contemporary power*, pp. 1–25, Berghahn Books. New York.

Snelling, M., Dawes, A., Biersteker, L., Girdwood, E. & Tredoux, C., 2019, 'The development of a South African early learning outcomes measure (ELOM): A South African instrument for measuring early learning program outcomes', *Child: Care, Health and Development* 45(2), 257–270. https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12641

Soudien, C., 2004, 'Constituting the class': An analysis of the process of "integration" in South African schools', in L. Chisholm (ed.), *Changing class: Education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa*, pp. 89–114, HSRC Press, Pretoria.

Spreen, C.A., Vally, S. & Thapilyal, N., 2012, 'The limits of post-apartheid education policy: Knowledge, power and community mobilization for education rights in South Africa', *World Studies in Education* 13, 51–65. https://doi.org/10.7459/wse/13.2.05

Statistics South Africa, 2017, *Poverty trends in South Africa: An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2015*, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria.

Swart, T., 1996, 'Helping parents build on natural learning', in *Recovery: Research and cooperation on violence education and rehabilitation of young people*, vol. 1, pp. 10–26, Recovery, Durban.

Tshoose, C.I., 2015, 'Dynamics of public participation in local government: A South African perspective', *African Journal of Public Affairs* 8, 13–29.

UNICEF, 2012, *Inequities in early childhood development: What the data say evidence from the multiple indicator Cluster surveys*, United Nations Children's Fund, New York.

Unterhalter, E., 2009, 'Social justice, development theory and the question of education', in R. Cowen & A.M. Kazamias (eds.), *International handbook of comparative education*, pp. 781–799, Springer and Science + Business Media B.V., London.

Vally, S., Motala, E. & Ramadiro, B., 2010, 'Education rights, education policies, and inequality in South Africa', in S. Macrine, P. Mclaren & D. Hill (eds.), *Revolutionizing pedagogy: Education for social justice within and beyond global neo-liberalism*, pp. 41–63, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Vandenbroeck, M., Coussée, F. & Bradt, L., 2010, 'The social and political construction of early childhood education', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 58, 139–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071001003752237

III

REVEALING COLONIAL POWER RELATIONS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY MAKING: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC STORY ON SELECTIVE EVIDENCE.

by

Rudolph, N., February 2021

Revealing colonial power relations in early childhood policy making: An autoethnographic story on selective evidence

Norma Rudolph[1]

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic exposes uncertainty, instability and glaring inequality that requires urgent global policy decisions. Historically, bureaucrats regard uncertainty as the enemy and look for tested solutions (Stevens, 2011). In contrast, Fielding & Moss (2010) acknowledge an uncertain future and encourage shifting policy making towards the search for possibilities instead of replicating singular solutions. Escobar (2020) advocates for pluriversal politics, with many possibilities created through collective decision-making by autonomous interlinked networks. In this paper, I combine autoethnography with policy analysis drawing on my own experience in South African early childhood policy making. I argue for a fresh decolonial debate about early childhood policy to replace dominant imported evidence-based narratives. I pay attention to power relations and examine, not only the content of evidence, but who has authority to speak (Mignolo, 2007). I introduce the bottom-up appreciative participatory dialogical policy making in the Gauteng Impilo project (1996 - 2000), as one attempt to resist the dominant policy trajectory. Local networks, that can inform policy making and resource allocation though conversation and action, emerged from this experience. This article invites urgent inclusive policy debate that expands choices and can produce cumulative worthwhile change and new learnings to birth a better society.

Introduction

Global instability and uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic brightly illuminate inequality and ecological precarity, calling for new ways of being and action for energy, food and education sovereignty[2]. Inequality has persisted in South Africa long after the end of Apartheid. Before coming to power in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) promised to redress the legacy of Apartheid. While much has been achieved, there have been major failures and South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. Before the pandemic, nearly one-third of South Africa's children did not eat sufficient nutritious food and twenty percent of the population was food insecure[3]. The combination of poor water policy, degradation of infrastructure, and insufficient action to address climate change, has left a large portion of the population having to walk long distances and queue for limited access to water. The majority of South Africans do not have access to good quality health, education and other essential social services.

On 15 March 2020, a national state of disaster was declared in South Africa (Gazette No 43096) and from 26 March everyone was confined to their homes. The first five weeks of the South African lockdown went further than most countries, as adults and children were not permitted to leave their homes for exercise or sunlight, or even to take their dogs for a walk. However, government did not plan to simultaneously implement complementary testing, tracing and measures to mitigate the effects of the

---

[1] University of Jyväskylä, Faculty of Education and Psychology, Education, Jyväskylä, Finland, normarudolph610@gmail.com; norma.1.rudolph@student.jyu.fi, ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2431-0236

[2] While, I argue that COVID-19 highlights the need for dialogue, my policy analysis does not relate directly to COVID-19.

[3] More than half a million households with children aged five years or younger experienced hunger in 2017. http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=12135

lockdown on the poor[4]. A small percentage of the population live in homes with gardens, but most live in densely populated informal settlements or inner-city high-rise buildings. Physical distancing is impossible for the majority. In some 'homes', ten or more adults and children (who might not all be blood relatives) could be living together in a single small room. While a few children travel to school in private cars, the majority walk long distances or use public transport. The most accessible form of public transport is minibus taxis. The protest by taxi owners against the government policy that taxis must reduce the number of passengers on each trip during the pandemic, led to the revised decision that they merely needed to keep one window open. Children in a few homes have devices and internet access and have been able to continue schooling and interact with friends on-line. Most children experienced precarity and uncertainty and the majority of school children were not receiving the one free meal at school per day that they rely on. The National Income Dynamic Study - Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM)[5] survey in the second month of the lockdown found that 7% of adults and 4% of children were perpetually hungry (hunger "every day" or almost every day) and half of the respondents had run out of money to buy food that month.

Soon after the start of the lockdown President Ramaphosa confirmed that the pandemic had exacerbated inequality, that government food distribution had been unable to meet the "huge need" and he promised to "forge a new economy"…. " founded on fairness, empowerment, justice and equality"[6]. Eighteen weeks after the disaster had been declared and the level of lockdown had been lowered from level 5 to 3, the rate of infection and death had started to increase rapidly, and more than 5000 people had died. The focus on COVID-19 had compromised human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and tuberculosis (TB) testing and treatment as well as infant immunization and ante-natal services. Debate raged about opening schools and early childhood services and several court cases were won against government, including a court order that Grade R[7] and preschool children who attend non-government institutions can return to their centres and that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) provide one nutritious meal a day to all qualifying school children whether they had returned to class or not. While insufficient, unfunded and underfunded early childhood services collapsed, the Minister of Social Development announced the planned employment of thirty-six thousand (36 000) youth as compliance monitors in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres and partial care facilities at a cost of 1.3 billion Rands[8].

In this article, I examine ANC policy-making for young children since the first democratic election in 1994 and invite debate about how policy-making might need to change to achieve Ramaphosa's recommitment to the pre 1994 ANC goals of building a convivial society. I analyse power relations, dominant discourses and subjugated attempts to tell a different story. As COVID-19 spotlights uncertainty and glaring inequality, this autoethnographic story invites conversation about early childhood policy-making in South Africa. As an example of the primary focus of ANC early childhood policy and financing, I trace the introduction and expansion of the extension of primary school downward, through what is referred to in South Africa as Grade R. South Africa is poised to introduce Grade RR, thus adding an additional compulsory year before Grade R and entry into the formal primary school system, despite acknowledging that in the past 20 years Grade R has increased inequality rather than decreased it. I argue for urgent inclusive debate about early childhood policy.

Walking and Talking the World into Being for a Decolonial Methodology

This is not an easy story to tell. I aim firstly to deploy an approach, 'reflexivity of discomfort' (Pillow, 2003), to reveal post-Apartheid discourses and power relations that informed the initial decisions to pilot

––––––––––––

[4] 2020 Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey compiled by 30 social scientists from five different universities across the country https://cramsurvey.org/reports/.

[5] 2020 Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey compiled by 30 social scientists from five different universities across the country https://cramsurvey.org/reports/.

[6] https://apnews.com/3982bc2db40764467e8164f03c362aa9

[7] Initially referred to as the "Reception Year', Grade R is a year-long programme for children in the year they turn 5 and just before they enter the first year of primary schooling. These Grade R classes can be in schools or in the community

[8] https://www.gov.za/speeches/minister-lindiwe-zulu-socioeconomic-interventions-mitigate-impact-coronavirus-covid-19

and then formally introduce Grade R in 2001. Secondly, I wish to stimulate debate about current early childhood policy in South Africa by "pushing the reader to analyse, question, and re-question her/his own knowledge and assumptions brought to the reading" the same way I approach writing in this article (Pillow, 2003, p. 188). In order to stimulate the debate about policy-making for young children in South Africa, I use an autoethnographic method drawing on my own experiences in policy-making in the same geography and period of the policy-making discussed in this article. I draw on my memories as data to guide my story about juggling complex relationships with a variety of different institutions and individuals with different beliefs, paradigms and priorities. I contextualize this analysis within the framework of relevant theorists, and with reference to my archive which, in addition to published literature includes a variety of original documents, such as original reports and memoranda, personal communications and journal entries. I chose autoethnography for the possibility of disrupting colonial research methods, by reclaiming the subjective voice of those in marginalised communities, with whom I engaged in participatory action research over three decades in different geographic contexts. Autoethnography has been positioned historically as disrupting Eurocentric norms of research practice and representation (Chawla & Atay, 2018). I combine autoethnography and analysis of policy and policy-making processes. Through focusing on questions about included and excluded actors, selected stories and the ends that are served by such choices (Chawla & Atay, 2018), I challenge myself, as the researcher, to pay attention to emotions and affect in all aspects of policy-making and research.

I draw on Pillow's (2003) construction of 'reflexivity of discomfort' to help me think differently and try to avoid falling into my own trap of using the same language or categories that I reject. I try to be accountable to the "struggles for self-representation and self-determinism" of the characters in my story, including myself (Pillow, 2003, p. 193). I continuously interrogate my shifting power relations and try to write the account in a way that could provide multiple possibilities. I avoid confessing personal historical failures or applauding my successes. Whether or not the reader challenges the 'truthfulness' of my (re)telling, my aim remains constant: to stimulate discussion about future policy decisions. In this methodology, ethics is not derived from official 'ethical clearance' of the research design or informed consent of participants. The methodology "resituates ethics as the responsibility of researchers and readers" (Pillow, 2003, p. 191 referring to St. Pierre). As author, I pay attention to the ethical implications of all my research decisions and invite all to theorize our own lives and examine different frames.

I construct a theoretical framework that combines Stevens' (2011) analysis of the social world of policy-making with the literature reconceptualizing early childhood education as well as decoloniality. Moss and others discuss the transformation in early childhood policy-making (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008; Fielding & Moss, 2010; Moss, 2007, 2014, 2019). They suggest that by being open to possibilities and nurturing a willingness for transformation, it is possible to move towards one of many versions that can produce cumulative worthwhile change and new learning (Fielding & Moss, 2010, p. 135). Escobar (2020) advocates for pluriversal politics, with many possibilities created through collective decision-making by autonomous interlinked networks. Stevens explains that there is very little examination of policy-making process and draws on his own observation and participation in the United Kingdom to argue that 'evidence' is used as a tool of persuasion to sell certain policy proposals that have the greatest chance of being accepted within the particular context in which they are being presented (Stevens, 2011). He argues that support for policy proposals relies on strategies such as avoiding complexity and uncertainty, as well as the 'trustworthiness' of the proponents. He describes how 'evidence' can be used to shift attention away from inequality and the challenging of "contemporary distribution of power" (Stevens, 2011, p. 18).

I acknowledge Pam Christie's argument that "the nature of government in a modern state entails engaging with particular practices and ways of thinking which themselves set limits to the changes that are conceivable and credible" (Christie, 2006, p. 374). I analyse these practices and ways of thinking in order to expose the danger of dominant policy-making practices and uncover the "disorder, confusion and chance happenings" that might have contributed to decisions that appear, in retrospect, to have been made with careful consideration in the best interests of all children (Christie, 2006, p. 375 referring to Foucault (1997)). I wish to explore the 'rationalities that normalize acts of power' (Christie, 2006; Foucault, 2000;

Green, 2012), and invite debate and discussion about other possibilities and opportunities for resistance. I hope to stimulate conversation across the country, in government, civil society, homes and other gathering places, about well-being and food, land, energy and education sovereignty.

Fragmented and Inequitable Services for Young Children in South Africa

When I entered the early childhood field during the last decade of Apartheid, the available government funded services were unevenly distributed in terms of race and place, with urban children classified as 'white' receiving most resources, and rural children classified as 'black' receiving little if anything. Responsibilities were fragmented across different government departments, including education and welfare. The segregated education system provided well-resourced pre-primary schools for children from 3 to 6 years old, mainly in urban garden suburbs, where only families classified as 'white' were permitted to live. Before 1994, the most common form of provision was community-based 'educare centres' for children between the ages of 3 to 6 years. These 'informal' services were the responsibility of the Department of Welfare, which provided a small subsidy for a small number of educare services in mostly black urban areas; the rest were privately funded. Staff had little or no training and relied on whatever minimal fees that very poor families could afford. In the 1994 Situation Analysis, Mary Newman described educare services, explaining that, "There are many places where children are crowded together, often with little or no food supplies, little adult attention and certainly no educational stimulation" (September & Mokgoro, 1993, p. 19).

Different kinds of organisations offered adult early childhood training courses. Formal institutions, such as teacher training colleges, prepared preschool teachers in the education system and a few urban-based non-governmental organisations offered short courses for 'practitioners' in 'informal' services. Between the mid-1980s and 1990s, the South African non-government ECD sector thrived and grew to about 100 training organisations (Van den Berg & Vergnani, 1986). A number of foreign donors, including foreign government agencies that refused to cooperate with South Africa's apartheid government, redirected funding to non-government early childhood initiatives. Van den Berg and Vergnani offer a comprehensive account of the early childhood sector in South Africa in the mid-80s, identifying "an endemic and chronic disease of competition and suspicion" within the field and a volatile political climate with a "tumultuous level of conflict in many parts of the country" (Van den Berg & Vergnani, 1986, p. 8-9). This continued into the mid-90s. At the same time the absence of government attention or regulation offered fertile ground for experimentation in the non-formal early childhood field. Some training organizations, that I will refer to as Resource and Training Organizations (RTOs), had started to introduce innovative family-based programs, such as home-visitors and Community-based Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (cIMCI). In particular, there were a small group of RTOs who were drawing on the work of Paulo Freire and the training of Anne Hope and Sally Timmel (Hope & Timmel 1984), to use a conscientizing approach to empower marginalised communities. I started a small RTO called Woz'obona in the mid-80s, acknowledging that this was political work as we were essentially organising communities around the needs of young children (Rudolph, 1993). The Woz'obona curriculum was developed with marginalised partner communities from different parts of South Africa and drew on beneficiary visions of childhood and society (Rudolph, 1993).

Getting Ready to Govern

After the ANC and other organisations were unbanned on 2 February 1990, preparing for democracy was no longer clandestine. In October 1991, the Process of Multi-Party Negotiations for the transfer of power was initiated with preparation for the All-Party Congress. From 1991, while the multi-party negotiations determined the big issues for a democratic South Africa, such as control of the security forces, the electoral process, state media and finances, the early childhood sector was also busy with its own negotiations on a much smaller scale. While the alliance represented by the ANC in the national negotiations had been galvanised through the United Democratic Movement (UDM), in the 1980s there was still fragmentation in the early childhood sector. There were several interlinked processes that

contributed to formulating the proposed policies that the ANC would take to the electorate. In terms of my story in this article, I introduce the 1992 National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) and the ANC consultative process, including the 1992 Ready to Govern Conference.

ANC policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa were adopted at the National Ready to Govern Conference held on 31 May 1992. The ANC stressed its commitment to broad discussion and consultation, pointing out that the guideline would need to be adapted through consultation with the "broadest spectrum of South African public opinion", in order to draw on the depth and breadth of experiences (ANC, 1992a). The 1992 ANC policy aimed to reflect the values and ideals of equality, sustainability and self-determination set out in the Freedom Charter (1955) (ANC, 1992a). It also acknowledged the magnitude of problems generated by Apartheid and the transformational challenges that would require difficult choices, given the diversity of citizens and the legacy of physical separation, spiritual alienation and inequality (ANC, 1992a). The document emphasized the commitment to "equal rights, non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy and mutual respect" and "a broad, inclusive approach, free of arrogance or complexes of superiority or inferiority" (ANC, 1992a, A.1). The intention was to develop a vision of our country "not distorted by the prejudices and sectarianism that has guided viewpoints on race and gender, in the past". I was particularly encouraged by the expressed intention to "rely on the wisdom, life experiences, talents and know-how of all South Africans, women and men" in "finding solutions to the problems created by Apartheid" (ANC, 1992a, A.1). The introduction to this important initial ANC policy discussion document, as I read it, promised the beneficiaries of services (especially those most marginalized by Apartheid) the authority to speak and design the kind of policies that would best suit their diverse circumstances. I looked forward to contributing from my experience in this kind of 'bottom-up' consultative process.

Side-lining Bottom up Consultative Processes

The 1992 National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI), which analysed different policy options for an equitable education system in a democratic South Africa, constituted one important ANC-initiated policy investigation towards preparing to govern. The results of this collective work was published in a series of 12 reports, including 'Early Childhood Educare' (Taylor, 1992). As part of the NEPI investigation, Linda Biersteker brought together policy suggestions from different research initiatives and examined them in the light of the NEPI and Early Childhood Educare (ECE) Commission criteria (Biersteker, 1992). This document served as a summary of the NEPI ECE Research Group. I was a member of that group.

Biersteker isolated three main trends in terms of ECE services, taking into account the traditionally separate education and welfare policies at that time. These were "education policy re pre-primary education", "welfare policy re day care provision" and she then synthesized these two into a third position, which she referred to as "development policy re early childhood educare provision" (Biersteker, 1992, p. 2). Biersteker explains that the education sector responded to high drop-out and failure rates in the schooling system from a 'deficit' construction, proposing an additional year of provisioning within the primary school and emphasising 'school readiness' (Biersteker, 1992). Their proposal 'undervalued' the pre-primary programme for children aged three to six years, provided in the privileged education system. This position was also influenced by the one-year Bridging Period Programme that had been introduced by the Apartheid government. The welfare policy suggestions were based on full day care for children of mothers working outside the home, to be subsidized by government only for the very poor. This perspective prioritized children's care rather than educational needs.

The third 'development' position integrated education and care, within a broad context of health, education, community development and housing. It viewed the role of government policy as enabling and empowering communities to develop adequate services for their needs, in particular the holistic development of young children. This position generated more space for beneficiary agency and a wider range of possible programmes. At that time, many civic, early childhood and literacy programmes used an approach promoted in 'Training for Transformation' (Hope & Timmel, 1984). This approach, influenced

by the work of Illich (1973) and Freire (1970) acknowledged the power of dialogue to transform relationships, build community and drive social change. While Biersteker's report offered an important first step in setting out the different positions and narratives, it failed to sufficiently acknowledge and describe the innovative conscientizing programmes that were not represented in the suggestions of the more established education research institutions.

As I review Biersteker's document, what jumps out is the number of powerful education players who suggested "the downward extension of the primary school by adding a preschool year for five-year olds, either at existing primary schools or in community schools" (Donaldson, 1992; Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC], 1981; Mehl, 1991; Reilly and Hofmeyr, 1983) (referred to in Biersteker, 1992, p. 2). This proposal was based on reports written by researchers published during apartheid and who worked in institutions such as the HSRC that was established and thrived during Apartheid.

Next in my story, I point to the way that a few influential individuals were able to subjugate other proposals and elevate the proposal to extend primary school downward.

Reorganising Power Lines

In the period leading up to the 1994 first democratic election, several different associations and umbrella organisations represented different groupings of early childhood training providers and practitioners. The history of separate services for different racial groups during Apartheid was reflected in national organisations. Among these, the South African Association for Early Childhood Educare (SAAECE) was the oldest and had been established by white nursery-school teachers in 1939. In the early 1980s, SAAECE began to open its membership to other population groups, but "continued to organise primarily in the urban areas and in relatively advantaged communities" (Williams & Samuels, 2001, p. 14). In 1990, the National Interim Working Committee on Educare (NIWC) emerged from a consultative conference, hosted by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) which was operating as the ANC Education Desk, to consider a proposed University programme. The conference rejected the proposal as it did not take sufficient account of the context. At the end of the meeting, several people were nominated to take forward the process of building unity in the sector.

I was one of about ten people nominated to this national committee that decided to call itself the National Interim Working Committee on Educare (NIWC), and we started to hold regular meetings in five-star hotels, which were the only available racially integrated accommodation at the time. Despite the sector being predominantly female, all three NIWC office bearers, the National Chairperson, Organiser and Treasurer, were all men. After several meetings, a decision was made to approach the previously 'white' SAAECE to negotiate a 'settlement'. So, while the political parties negotiated the future of the country, the Educare sector held our own 'negotiations'. Williams and Samuels (2001) report that "After a gruelling process of negotiation, SAAECE and NIWC finally amalgamated in 1994 to form the Congress of Early Childhood Development (SACECD)" (Williams & Samuels, 2001, p. 10). While this might have appeared to be a democratic process, unequal power relations in the sector, including patriarchy, meant that some individuals were able to dominate. The majority of early childhood practitioners and all beneficiaries were excluded from any debate. The late Roy Padayachie[9], who also led the World Bank Research Group (Padayachie et al., 1994), had been consolidating his influence in the ANC and the early childhood sector. He had played an influential role in the early childhood policy-making processes leading up to the first democratic election and was elected as the first National Chairperson of the South African Congress of Early Childhood Development (SACECD) in 1994.

Padayachie explained, in a presentation to a 1993 ANC consultative meeting, that he saw his role as preparing the "educare constituency so that it is ready for the present challenge of building the new democratic order" (Padayachie, 1993c). However, it is evident from a range of documents in my archive that Padayachie was presenting a set of ideas to be accepted without discussion or debate (Padayachie,

_____

[9] Roy Padayachie died of a heart attack on May 4, 2012, in Ethiopia while serving as South Africa's Minister of Public Service and Administration.

1993a, 1993b, 1993c)[10]. These ideas included a vision for policy, resource mobilization and an appropriate national organisation that "speaks with a united and powerful voice" (Padayachie, 1993c, p. 1). Only a small group of people regarded as 'experts' were involved in the consultative process. My persistent inquiries, as a member of a local ANC branch, suggest that no discussion about early childhood policy was taking place in local ANC branches. Even the records of the ANC consultation at provincial and national level show that there was no open-ended discussion of possibilities for early childhood policy (ANC, 1992a, 1992b, 1994).

A Charismatic Storyteller and an Accident: The Birth of Grade R

At the time while I was participating in those early consultations, I did not recognize Padayachie's strategy of building a single narrative as clearly as I do in retrospect. Padayachie's narrative echoed the 'education' perspective of the 1992 NEPI educare research proposals. This was also the perspective being promoted by the World Bank which commissioned a study led by Padayachie to investigate the downward extension of primary school (Padayachie et al., 1994). The power of this single story supported by the familiar Apartheid era discursive tropes, and education experts from the same era, and told by a politically savvy and influential storyteller displaced discussion about the other NEPI proposals. In particular, the proposal that emerged from the non-formal educare sector that had quietly been working in and with marginalized communities, could not mobilize the same authority. The more complex and innovative story that emerged from the bottom up, came with the uncertainty of empowering communities to design the kind of services that would support their visions of the childhoods and the society they hoped to achieve in a democratic South Africa.

The scope of this article does not allow for a detailed account of power relations and the 'accidents of history' during that period. However, to further illustrate the way that this single story emerged as the dominant narrative from the early ANC education consultation, I briefly trace some nodal moments in the 'ready to govern' consultative process. Despite the heartening ANC promise of consultation, I was perplexed to see how this recurrent single educare story, by an influential storyteller, emerged without any meaningful opportunities for debate and discussion. My analysis of archival documents, and enquiries of ANC leadership at the time, including Mary Metcalfe, head of the Education Desk, suggest that a critical historical accident might be found in a story that Metcalfe told me in 2015. The story is about an early ANC consultative meeting that took place before the 1992 Getting Ready to Govern Conference. The key controversial issue of the conference was the number of years of free and compulsory education that the ANC could afford. Financial modelling by the ANC leadership had determined that ten years would be the maximum. However, the student movement and the affiliates of the NECC[11] that had argued as part of the political struggles for free education up to end of Grade 12, expected more than ten years. It was critical that this issue be resolved to avoid taking contestation into the election. Metcalfe explained:

> At the end of the day when we were carefully managing the report back to the conference, the late Ivy Matsepe-Casaburri joined us as we were summarising and finalising the resolutions. She was a passionate supporter of educare (although not part of the educare sector) and asked why educare had not been included. We had been thinking specifically of schooling and had assumed that educare would be included more broadly outside of the school system. It was now too late to discuss this suggestion fully and she insisted that educare must be included. So, we included Grade R as the first year of 10 years of free and compulsory education. So, we now have Grade R with grades 1 to 9 as our 10 years of schooling but without the exit exam. Then this became some kind of rule (Mary Metcalfe, 2015)[12]

It seems that part of this accident of history was the complexity of 'educare', which straddled more than one ANC policy grouping in the consultative process. In addition, Padayachie had already started elevating the dominant coloniality story in senior ANC circles. Consequently, the Ready to Govern Conference Report says little specifically about educare, but commits to

----

[10] Retrieved from my archive.

[11] The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was launched in early 1986 with the support of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), in the context of militant anti-apartheid student action.

[12] Personal communication in my archive.

… the provision of a minimum of ten years of free and compulsory education, which shall include, where possible, one year of preschool education. This commitment is based on our belief that ten years of quality education is the minimum necessary to prepare individuals to participate in the economy and society (ANC, 1992a, Section K.Education, subsection 1. Provision).

This position based on colonial thinking that had emerged from the Apartheid education era was taken to the election as ANC policy and has persisted into the present.

Ironed power lines: ANC policy for young children

According to the three key documents produced by Padayachie between March and October 1993 (Padayachie, 1993a, 1993b, 1993c)[13], he emphasized the need for a movement that "speaks with a united and powerful voice". He promoted NIWC, which he chaired at the time, as the appropriate organisation to lead this process of preparation and articulating the selected education policy position (Padayachie, 1993a, p. 1). He prioritized consensus and referred to several 'discussion' documents and 'consultative meetings' that did not provide any meaningful opportunities for debate or engagement. For example, an invitation[14] to an ANC Early Childhood Educare Policy Workshop, held on 2 September 1993 in Cape Town, lists the aims as: "To discuss and make recommendations for ANC Early Childhood Educare Policy; and To establish criteria and nominate a representative to the Regional Education and Training Forum 11 and 12 September" (Padayachie, 1993b, p. 1 from archive of Linda Biersteker). A wide range of complex policy issues from guiding principles to budgets, governance to redistribution were all to be discussed, alongside the nomination of one representative to the ANC regional forum, in the four hours scheduled for the meeting (Padayachie, 1993b, p. 1-2). The style of the invitation and the unachievable agenda reflect the intention to inform and vote for given decisions, rather than consult.

The 'consultative' documents circulated by Padayachie present a deficit model of the users of services and assume that communication will be in one direction, from services to parents who need 'to learn about and respond to their children's developmental needs' (Padayachie, 1993a, p. 2). There is no reference to parents and communities knowing what is best for their children and society, nor how the proposed services would best serve their needs. The discourse frames parents as merely users of services in order "to take up work or further education' (Padayachie, 1993a, p. 2). The recommendations focus on the establishment of structures and limits local influence, rather than encouraging opportunities for listening, experimentation and meaningful participation. The emphasis is on generating awareness of the need for 'early childhood care and development', based on an assumption that there is consensus about what that means. The new umbrella organisation that Padayachie was leading is positioned as the primary credible influence.

It seems Padayachie was a great bureaucrat, and excelled in performing what Stevens (2011) refers to as "bureaucratic reason", by combining "effective persuasion" with "control of uncertainty" and his personal "career incentives" (Stevens, 2011, p. 12). Padayachie selected the proposal with least uncertainty to tell a story about a new policy area, and at the same time identified himself as the primary storyteller. I believe Padayachie was using discursive tropes, not to bring like-minded people into an advocacy coalition, but rather to show his worth in this "thought world" (Stevens, 2011, p. 13). Padayachie reinforced, rather than challenged, the "fundamental assumptions and tropes" of the preferred policy narratives of education experts of that time (Stevens, 2011, p. 14). The story Padayachie chose was from the Apartheid era and so, perhaps unwittingly, he carried colonial thinking into the new democratic policy terrain.

Creating Impilo as a Participatory Alternative

My position was different to that of Padayachie. I was inspired by the ingenuity and survival strategies of the marginalized communities in which I had lived and worked. I had started to read about integrated early childhood approaches and I was particularly inspired by the work of Marta Arango in

---

[13] Retrieved from my personal archive.

[14] The document does not indicate the author, but it is most likely from Roy Padayachie.

Colombia (Arango & Nimnicht, 1987, 2004). She and her husband wrote about decolonizing education and human development strategies, and introduced me to an "integrated policy" for young children as part of the "hope for creating a new society with social and economic justice" based on what citizens desire (Arango & Nimnicht, 1987, p. 37). It was with this understanding that I continued to challenge my own colonial thinking and to listen for other stories and possibilities for social justice. In particular, I took up this challenge through Impilo, which used an experimental integrated approach in a three-year appreciative participatory action research process in 1000 community-managed sites in Gauteng.

Impilo was based on the principles stated in the 1996 Interim Policy for Early Childhood (IPECD), which was the first step that the National Department of Education (DoE), as lead department, took towards realising the ANC's promise for young children, families and communities. I was one of three ECD specialists given the task of drafting the IPECD (DoE, 1996). Our draft document emphasised an integrated approach, based on the narratives of the progressive non-formal sector, with possibilities for local communities to produce a range of stories about the kinds of services that would best enable them to support the well-being of their young children. When the policy was published, the IPECD acknowledged the importance of an integrated approach to address the "basic needs of families for shelter, water and sanitation, primary health care, nutrition, employment and adult basic education", but it only committed funding for the Reception Year[15] (DoE, 1996, p. 6). The interim policy envisioned that eventually children of Reception Year age would all be included in the school system. Consequently, it emphasized the need for this one year of provisioning to be part of an integrated system of ECD programmes that could include a variety of strategies and a wide range of services, directed at helping families and communities to meet the needs of children from birth to at least nine years old. The introductory section of the IPECD set out in detail the principles of an integrated approach and identified the paramount task as building "a just and equitable system" directed at the "integrated needs of children, women, and families" (DoE,1996, p.12). The policy specifically stated that funding for the Reception Year should not weaken funding for other kinds of services.

Despite the ANC commitment to providing opportunities for wide consultation even after it was elected to power, this did not happen except in Gauteng province. In Gauteng we used action research to engage families and communities in conversation and action to support the well-being of young children, through the Impilo Project. With the support of Education MEC, Mary Metcalfe, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) attempted to resist the dominant discourse and included consultation with communities in the research design of the provincial implementation of the national ECD pilot.

The scope of this article only allows for a brief overview of the Impilo Project. I took up the position in GDE as Chief Education Specialist responsible for Primary and ECD policy during the period we were drafting the IPECD. In my new position in GDE, and with the support of Mary Metcalf, we implemented the Impilo Project. I firmly believed at that time that it would be possible through action research to actively mobilize and demonstrate that there were possibilities, other than the single narrative of extending primary school downward. We had to negotiate with the National Department of Education (NDoE) to implement the national ECD pilot flexibly, as the national research design was limited to investigating the costing of one year of provision for four-year old children.

The primary assumption of Impilo was that the well-being of young children depends on the well-being of the families and communities. Little can be achieved by taking children out of their homes for a few hours without taking steps to change their socio-economic circumstances. Impilo sought to engage civil society and service providers in conversations about well-being by trying new paradigms, such as shifting from expert solutions to local solutions, and enabling dialogue, rather than merely pouring down simplistic messages for consumption by service users viewed as deficient (Shiva, 2002). Impilo included three linked action research projects for children from birth to nine years. The two additional projects were

_____

[15] The Reception Year was later called Grade-R.

added as funds became available, but the main project was the provincial implementation of the national ECD pilot, referred to as the district pilot.

Collective Learning through Action

We contracted different consortia of RTOs, to each work in one of the new education districts in close collaboration with the newly appointed ECD district officials. The aim was to learn with community groups through supporting them to make decisions, and if necessary, we could all learn through small missteps. At the provincial level, I started to meet with my counterparts in other departments such as Health and Welfare, to understand each other's functions and find ways to collaborate. We spent a long time building a shared understanding of the definition of the new umbrella term 'ECD', as our health comrades pointed out that services and support should start from conception rather than birth. We were able to start building referral systems and help families to access available services across different departments. We also supported organizing and mobilizing to ensure everyone could access the services to which they were entitled and start advocating for additional services to fill the gaps. For example, we talked about food sovereignty and initiated community gardens, rather than merely providing information to families about how they should feed their children and offering some food to a limited number of children who could afford to attend centres. Together, we learned about the importance of building 'networks of care', known as uMusa (acts of kindness), with trusted helpers identified by the communities in which they live.

Deleting Data That Does Not Fit the Frame

The Director responsible for ECD in NDoE dismissed the idea of allowing community groups, in dialogue with training providers, to make decisions about the kinds of service they wanted and how best to spend their small stipend. She said it could not be accepted as it could lead to corruption. I find this particularly ironic in the light of the scale of corruption committed by ex-President Jacob Zuma[16]. By the time the Impilo Project featured as the lead story in the UNICEF 2000 State of the Word Report (UNICEF, 1999), it was clear that other than the experiences that participants might carry forward, our attempt to take a new narrative into early childhood policy-making had failed.

When I resigned from my position at GDE, I understood what Tsing, 2015, alludes to when she states that "a scalable research project admits only data that already fits the research frame" (Tsing, 2015, p. 38). Before the national ECD pilot started, the decision was made to scale up the one year of provision. Consequently, the national ECD pilot research was designed for scalability and could not accommodate the meaningful diversity sought through Impilo. With no open-ended research questions, the national research could not include any of the Gauteng data. The research design was too narrow to accommodate any complexity and diversity. So it counted the 1000 sites (there were less than 1000 sites in all the other 9 provinces combined), included a short description of Impilo (probably submitted by GDE), noted that Gauteng did not follow the ECD Pilot Project formula of R2 per child per day, and that was that (DoE, 2001b). I also began to realize that in the post-Apartheid national and provincial education departments, 'uncertainty' was the enemy and that power relations subjugated debate about policy options.

Despite the 1992 ANC promise of broad consultation, policy decisions for public provisioning for young children in South Africa during the first two decades of ANC rule have favoured simple solutions that prioritize discrete and fragmented interventions instead of engaging with more complex challenges. The centre-based approach, which was uncritically borrowed from affluent countries with high employment rates and strong welfare programmes, persists as the most familiar and popular kind of ECD service provision. The primary focus of government ECD provisioning since 1996 has been the introduction and gradual extension of one year of additional schooling in the year before children join the formal school system, initially referred to as the Reception Year and now as 'Grade R'. This form of provisioning that

---

[16] On 16 March 2018, it was confirmed by the director of public prosecutions that Zuma (who was President from 2009 to 2018) would face 18 charges of corruption, including more than 700 counts of fraud and money laundering.

reproduces inequality has persisted despite government commitment to consultation and recognition, in new policies, of the need for broader 'integrated' approaches. The next part of my story briefly traces this trajectory and argues that the government commitment to 'evidence-based planning and monitoring' has reinforced this inequitable form of ECD provisioning.

Grade R: Reproducing Inequality on Economic Lines

In 1996, the ANC government committed to ten years of free and compulsory education, starting with a Reception Year for 5-year-olds (DoE 1996). By the time the Education White Paper 5 on ECD was published in 2001, the national 3-year ECD (Reception Year) pilot had been completed. The ANC's ECD policy priority, as expressed in 2001, was the establishment of a national system of provision for children aged 5 years, with the majority of these classes located within the formal school system and a small number in community-based services (DoE, 2001a, p. 5).

Despite the National Integrated Plan (NIP) (RSA, 2005), the 2005 Children's Act (DSD, 2005) and the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (NIECDP) (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2015), for nearly 20 years the primary focus of government services for young children has remained the introduction and expansion of this single year of provisioning for children before they enter primary school. Despite the 2010 target for universal access, Grade R is not yet available to all children and those living in urban areas and those with greater financial resources are more likely to be in a Grade R class (Biersteker, 2018). There is a problem of under-aged children from more resourceful families entering Grade R classes in schools and spending more than one year in that class. These are families who realize they can get cheaper better-quality childcare by manipulating the system. Since those classes attached to schools are better funded, practitioners prefer to be employed in schools. Before the introduction of Grade R, the standard model of ECD provisioning was in community-based centres with children from 3 to 6 years. This set-up more closely aligned to traditional childcare arrangements, that nurtured peer teaching and learning, with children in the village forming friendship groups (Rudolph, 2017). The community-based system of provision has been eroded by age-segregation and flight of practitioners to better paying jobs in schools.

Drawing on recent research, Biersteker concludes that "while Grade R was established as a means of reducing inequalities, it simply extended the advantage to children in more affluent schools" (Biersteker, 2018, p. 305). After concluding that Grade R is not cost-effective in terms of learning outcomes, the 2014 evaluation report nevertheless recommends that "the Grade R programme be continued and that ways to improve its impact be explored" (van der Berg et al., 2013, p. 3). The National Department of Basic Education (DBE) agreed with the evaluators and rather than considering a different approach, it committed to improving training, increasing access to materials, developing high quality school readiness tests, and reverting to a higher percentage of community-based classes (DBE, DSD, & DoH, 2017; Samuels et al., 2015). The government cost-saving strategy to increase the percentage of community sites, after having decimated community-based services through neglect over 20 years, is particularly pernicious. None of these strategies addresses the uneven expenditure across different socio-economic groups, based on the socio-economic inequalities in the entire education system. Although universal provision of Grade R has not been achieved as planned, in 2019 an additional year referred to as grade RR will be introduced, in part to address the problem of under-age children in Grade R (Biersteker, 2018)[17]. Referring to Taylor (2014), Biersteker (2018) explains the expectation that this extra year, with stricter enforcement of age-of-entry, will ensure smooth progress from one grade to another with children of their own age (Biersteker, 2018). This is an example of what Stevens (2011) refers to as the silencing of inequality.

Outcomes-based Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Deepens Inequality

The Grade R policy decision, initially drawn from the Apartheid era and sold by Padayachie, has been reinforced through the decision that all South African government planning, monitoring and

---

[17] Confirmed by the President in his 2019 State of the Nation Address (SONA).

evaluation functions be centralized in a single high-level Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) (The Presidency RSA, 2015). In the context of the 2030 Vision and ANC election manifesto, the 2010 adoption of an outcomes-based approach to public management and the 2011 National Evaluation Policy Framework (NEPF) emphasizes "increasing the utilization of evaluative evidence in planning, budgeting and management decisions" (Amisi, 2015, p. 1). Despite the laudable intention of improving value from government spending, the nature and role of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and the way that 'evidence' is understood, will determine whose judgments are valued and what kind of change is possible. The dominant 'scientific evidence' discourses prioritize the perspectives of experts over beneficiaries (Rudolph, Millei, & Alasuutari, 2019). Communication, in the form of messages, is viewed as a strategy for enlisting civil society buy-in, rather than enabling meaningful conversation that includes all concerned about child and community wellbeing.

A series of articles[18] published in the African Journal of Education, disseminate monitoring and evaluation developments in South African policy and planning and promote 'evidence' as the key policy driver (Amisi, 2015; Davids et al., 2015; Samuels et al., 2015). Amisi argues for communication as a tool for evaluators to improve the "usability and utility of evaluation evidence" (Amisi, 2015, p. 6). This is what Stevens (2011) refers to as using 'evidence' to sell a chosen story. According to Amisi, the focus on communication among evaluators, practitioners and policymakers as users of evidence, encourages dialogue as adding "meaning to often complex and technical evaluation findings in a way that is understandable and enlightening to the target audience" (Amisi, 2015, p. 5). This confirms that, from the perspective of the Presidency, policy makers assume that avoiding complexity is necessary to sell their policies. There is no reference in any of the articles to dialogue generating new knowledge or the role of service users in the evaluation process. Service users are constructed as deficient, unable to understand or engage constructively with different ideas. Consequently, they need simple messages.

Amisi identifies two separate communication processes, between practitioners and evaluators in the evaluation process, and between government and civil society in different forums, in order to target messages distilled from findings. Amisi cautions that at a later stage when "evaluations become imprinted in the operating processes of government", there will be more scope for evaluation findings to be "communicated transparently and widely", but in the meantime proposes "communication that generates interest and appreciation of evaluations, and encourages the application of lessons learned in policy and management practices" (Amisi, 2015, p. 7). Concerns are raised in all three articles about publishing evaluation findings that could "provide an opportunity to sensationalise critical findings to show government in a bad light" (Davids et al., 2015, p. 7), especially if the DPME independently communicates "evaluation outcomes of another department's programme" (Amisi, 2015, p. 5). This statement highlights government concern for the way it is viewed, rather than the social justice outcomes of their policy choices. Consequently, the singular solution is reinforced by refusing to learn through experience and possible missteps.

A Story without Ending …

Early childhood policy-making and evaluation has used 'evidence' selectively in South Africa to avoid complexity, uncertainty, or challenge to the dominant narratives, and in so doing ensures that government decisions are viewed positively. In this way, despite the good intention of the ANC government, inequality has been silenced and even exacerbated through early childhood policy. This kind of mistrust of citizens has been carried into the coercive and heavy-handed government strategy during COVID-19. Government is not linking the disease response to local practical knowledges and culture[19]. Citizens have not been invited to collaborate in solving the huge problems facing the country. Dicta are handed down in the form of simplistic messaging, without any explanation of the thinking behind these

---

[18] The first two articles relate directly to ECD and the third to the overarching national monitoring and evaluation process.

[19] Important lessons learnt in the Ebola crisis in West Africa and the AIDS pandemic in South Africa. https://steps-centre.org/blog/science-uncertainty-and-the-covid-19-response/

decisions. Most school children rely on the one meal a day they receive through the School Nutrition Program. Many early childhood workers rely on the meagre fees paid to attend large ECD centres. Consequently, experts debate whether schools and early childhood services should open, rather than engaging civil society in finding creative ways to feed and take care of children in their communities.

The kind of integrated policy-making process used in Impilo, based on trusting citizens and enabling co-operation between government and civil society, could provide the kind of environment that is urgently needed, so that citizens can understand as much as possible and choose to co-operate with government. Impilo recognized the potential of a strong network of trusted helpers in every community, who know where young children are and engage with families as partners. They could surely play an important role in helping families access food and care close to their homes. As 'essential workers' with the necessary protective equipment they could link with families and find out the nature and location of urgent needs, including food, water, protection, exercise and sunlight, or anything else our government departments might not yet have identified. They could engage in dialogue to help everyone to understand the complexity of the pandemic, avoid discrimination and work together to experiment in finding the best strategies for survival and willingly implementing public health measures.

In terms of policy for young children beyond the immediate escalating crisis of the pandemic, and in light of the expressed intention of our President's messages during COVID-19 to address inequality and forge a new economy, it is time to consider other options to the single story that has dominated early childhood policy. I pose the following questions to restart conversations: Can we learn from the uncertainty of COVID-19 in ways that open up debate and encourage a more democratic deliberation? Can government acknowledge missteps and be open to proposals from service users? How can we extend the notion of evidence, and include in our conversations early childhood theorists who have long been calling for the reconceptualization of early childhood policy, such as Peter Moss who promotes hope through contestation (Moss, 2015)? Can we imagine another way of knowing, being and communicating that does not advantage the privileged few with devices, unlimited airtime and data packages? Can we rebuild livelihoods and solidarity through recognizing the agency and voice of communities? Can we all work together towards the vision of a convivial society set out in the 1955 Freedom Charter?

Declarations

References

Amisi, M. M. (2015). Development of South Africa's national evaluation policy and system 2011–2014. *African Evaluation Journal, 3*(1), 109. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.109

ANC. (1992a). *Ready to Govern: ANC policy guidelines for a democratic South Africa, adopted at the ANC National Conference*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Policy Unit of the African National Congress.

ANC. (1992b). *Regional policy consultative conference - PWV region 9 -10 May 1992*. Retrieved from archive of Mary Metcalf.

ANC. (1994). *A policy framework for education and training (draft dicussion document)*. Johannesburg: ANC Education Department.

Arango, M., & Nimnicht, G. (1987). Implementing alternative programmes for the development of young children: A challenge for social and economic development. In O. Van den Berg, & T. Vergnani (Eds.), *Door to the future: The prechool child in South Africa: A book of readings* (pp. 37 - 56). Belveille, South Africa: University of the Western Cape.

Arango, M., & Nimnicht, G. (2004). *Twenty years on: A report of the PROMESA programme in Colombia*. Colombia: The Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Biersteker, L. (1992). *Emerging early childhood educare policy in South Africa*. Retrieved from archive of Linda Biersteker.

Biersteker, L. (2018). Early childhood education and social transformation in South Africa: The emergence of early childhood education as a priority in South Africa. In J. L. Roopnarine, J. E. Johnson, S. F. Quinn, & M. M. Patte (Eds.), *Handbook of international perspectives on early childhood education* (pp. 296-310). New York: Routledge.

Chawla, D., & Atay, A. (2018). Introduction: decolonizing autoethnography. *Cultural studies ↔ Critical methodologies, 18*(1), 3-8. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708617728955

Christie, P. (2006). Changing regimes: Governmentality and education policy in post-apartheid South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development, 26*(4), 373–381. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2005.09.006

Davids, M., Samuels, M.-L., September, R., Moeng, T. L., Richter, L., Mabogoane, … Buthelezi, T. (2015). The pilot evaluation for the National Evaluation System in South Africa – A diagnostic review of early childhood development. *African Evaluation Journal, 3*(1), 1-7. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.141

DBE, DSD, & DoH. (2017). *Portfolio committee briefing on Early Childhood Development*. Retrieved from https://slideplayer.com/slide/12195554/

DoE. (1996). *Interim policy for early childhood development*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.za/documents/early-childhood-development-interim-policy-0

DoE. (2001a). *Education White Paper No 5, Early Childhood Education: Meeting the challenge of Early Childhood Development*. Pretoria Retrieved from https://sparrowportal.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/White-Paper-5.pdf

DoE. (2001b). *Report on the National ECD Pilot Project*. Pretoria: Department of Education Retrieved from http://www.westerncape.gov.za/text/2003/national_report_ecd_pilot_2001.pdf

DSD. (2005). *The Children's Act 38*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Escobar, A. (Ed.) (2020). *Pluriversal politics : The real and the possible*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781478012108

Fielding, M., & Moss, P. (2010). *Radical education and the common school : A democratic alternative*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203837405

Foucault, M. (2000). *Ethics : subjectivity and truth* (P. Rabinow, Trans.). London : Penguin.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.

Green, L. J. (2012). Beyond South Africa's' indigenous knowledge-science'wars. *South African Journal of Science, 108*(7-8), 44-54. http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/sajs.v108i7/8.631

Hope, A., & Timmel , S. (1984). *Training for transformation. A handbook for community workers*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Illich, I. D. (1973). Inverting Politics, Retooling Society: From Tools for Conviviality. *The American Poetry Review, 2*(3), 51-53. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2777463

Mignolo, W. D. (2007). Introduction: Coloniality of power and de-colonial thinking. *Cultural Studies, 21*(2-3), 155-167. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162498

Moss, P. (2007). Bringing politics into the nursery: Early childhood education as a democratic practice. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 15*(1), 5-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/13502930601046620

Moss, P., & Dahlberg, G. (2008). Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care - Languages of Evaluation. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, 5(1), 3-12. Retrieved from http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:su:diva-74820

Moss, P. (2014). *Transformative change and real utopias in early childhood education*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

Moss, P. (2015). There are alternatives! Contestation and hope in early childhood education. *Global Studies of Childhood, 5*(6), 226-238. https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610615597130

Moss, P. (2019). *Alternative Narratives in early childhood, or why contest early childhood?* London: Routledge https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315265247

Padayachie, R. (1993a). *ANC policy discussion document (draft 1): Early Childhood Educare* Retrieved from archive of Linda Biersteker.

Padayachie, R. (1993b). *Invitation African National Congress: Early Childhood Educare policy workshop*. Retrieved from archive of Linda Biersteker.

Padayachie, R. (1993c). *Presentation to the ANC Education Consultative Workshop*. Retrieved from archive of Linda Biersteker.

Padayachie, R., Atmore, E., Biersteker, L., King, R., Matube, J., Muthayan, S., & Evans, J. (1994). *Report of the South African Study on Early Childhood Development: Recommendations for Action in Support of Young Children*. Johannesburg / Washington DC: Centre for Education Policy Development / World Bank.

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 16*(2), 175-196. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000060635

RSA. (2005). *National Integrated Plan for Early Childhood Development in South Africa (NIP) 2005-2010*. Pretoria: Government printers

RSA. (2015). *National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy*. Pretoria: Government Printers

Rudolph, N. (1993). *The nurture of human nurture: Constructivist stepping stones guide the Woz' obona educare curriculum*. Special project for BED EDUC 487. Department of Education. University of Witwatersrand.

Rudolph, N. (2017). Hierarchies of knowledge, incommensurabilities and silences in South African ECD policy: Whose knowledge counts? *Journal of Pedagogy, 8*(1), 77-98. https://doi.org/10.1515/jped-2017-0004

Rudolph, N., Millei, Z., & Alasuutari, M. (2019). Data practices and inequality in South African early childhood development policy: Technocratic management versus social transformation. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 9*(1), a756. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v9i1.756

Samuels, M., Taylor, S., Shepherd, D., van der Berg, S., Jacob, C., Deliwe, C., & Mabogoane, T. (2015). Reflecting on an impact evaluation of the Grade R programme: Method, results and policy responses. *African Evaluation Journal, 3*(1), a139. https://doi.org/10.4102/aej.v3i1.139

September, R., & Mokgoro, Y. (1993). *An Agenda for Action: The Launch of the Situation Analysis Report*. National Children's Rights Committee, Johannesburg (1 : 86808: 205: 9).

Shiva, V. (2002, September/October). Paradigm shift: Rebuilding true security in an age of insecurity. *Resurgence, September/October 2002(214)*, 30-32.

Stevens, A. (2011). Telling policy stories: An ethnographic study of the use of evidence in policy-making in the UK. *Journal of Social Policy, 40*(2), 237-255. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279410000723

Taylor, N. (1992). *The National Education Policy Investigation: Early Childhood Educare*. Cape Town, Oxford University Press/NECC.

The Presidency RSA (2015). *Strategic Plan of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation 2015-2020*. Retrieved from https://www.dpme.gov.za/publications/Strategic%20Plan%20and%20Annual%20Reports/DPME%20Strategic%20Plan%202015-2020.pdf

Tsing, A. L. (2015). *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

UNICEF. (1999, 9 December). South Africa: Helping children by helping families (Impilo). *The State of the World's Children 2000*.

Van den Berg, O., & Vergnani, T. (1986). *Providing services for preschool children in South Africa.* Report of an investigation conducted on behalf of the Southern African Association for Early Childhood Education: University of the Western Cape.

van der Berg, S., Girdwood, E., Shepherd, D., Van Wyk, C., Kruger, J., Viljoen, J., ... & Ntaka, P. (2013). T*he impact of the introduction of grade R on learning outcomes.* University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch. Retrieved from http://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Grade-R-Evaluation-1-3-25-Final-Unpublished-Report-13-06-17.pdf

Williams, T., & Samuels, M. (2001). *The Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa*. Pretoria, South Africa: The Department of Education.