

CRITICAL CULTURAL STUDIES OF CHILDHOOD

Series Editors:

Marianne N. Bloch and Beth Blue Swadener

This series focuses on reframings of theory, research, policy, and pedagogies in childhood. A critical cultural study of childhood is one that offers a “prism” of possibilities for writing about power and its relationship to the cultural constructions of childhood, family, and education in broad societal, local, and global contexts. Books in the series open up new spaces for dialogue and reconceptualization based on critical theoretical and methodological framings, including critical pedagogy; advocacy and social justice perspectives; cultural, historical, and comparative studies of childhood; and post-structural, postcolonial, and/or feminist studies of childhood, family, and education. The intent of the series is to examine the relations between power, language, and what is taken as normal/abnormal, good, and natural, to understand the construction of the “other,” difference and inclusions/exclusions that are embedded in current notions of childhood, family, educational reforms, policies, and the practices of schooling. *Critical Cultural Studies of Childhood* will open up dialogue about new possibilities for action and research.

Single-authored as well as edited volumes focusing on critical studies of childhood from a variety of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives are included in the series. A particular focus is in a reimagining and critical reflection on policy and practice in early childhood, primary, and elementary education. The series intends to open up new spaces for reconceptualizing theories and traditions of research, policies, cultural reasonings, and practices at all of these levels, in the United States, as well as comparatively.

The Child in the World/The World in the Child: Education and the Configuration of a Universal, Modern, and Globalized Childhood

Edited by Marianne N. Bloch, Devorah Kennedy, Theodora Lightfoot, and Dar Weyenberg; Foreword by Thomas S. Popkewitz

Beyond Pedagogies of Exclusion in Diverse Childhood Contexts: Transnational Challenges

Edited by Soula Mitakidou, Evangelia Tressou, Beth Blue Swadener, and Carl A. Grant

“Race” and Early Childhood Education: An International Approach to Identity, Politics, and Pedagogy

Edited by Glenda Mac Naughton and Karina Davis

Governing Childhood into the 21st Century: Biopolitical Technologies of Childhood Management and Education

By Majia Holmer Nadesan

Developmentalism in Early Childhood and Middle Grades Education: Critical Conversations on Readiness and Responsiveness

Edited by Kyunghwa Lee and Mark D. Vagle

New Approaches to Early Child Development: Rules, Rituals, and Realities

Edited by Hillel Goelman, Jayne Pivik, and Martin Guhn

Comparative Early Childhood Education Services: International Perspectives

Edited by Judith Duncan and Sarah Te One

Early Childhood Education in Aotearoa New Zealand: History, Pedagogy, and Liberation

By Jenny Ritchie and Mere Skerrett

Early Childhood in Postcolonial Australia: Children's Contested Identities

By Prasanna Srinivasan

Rethinking Readiness in Early Childhood Education: Implications for Policy and Practice

Edited by Jeanne Marie Iorio and William A. Parnell

Global Perspectives on Human Capital in Early Childhood Education:

Reconceptualizing Theory, Policy, and Practice

Edited by Theodora Lightfoot-Rueda and Ruth Lynn Peach

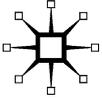
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN
CAPITAL IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION

Reconceptualizing Theory, Policy, and Practice

Edited by

Theodora Lightfoot-Rueda and Ruth Lynn Peach

palgrave
macmillan



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN CAPITAL IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
Copyright © Theodora Lightfoot-Rueda and Ruth Lynn Peach, 2015.

All rights reserved.

First published in 2015 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world,
this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited,
registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills,
Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies
and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States,
the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-56201-5 ISBN 978-1-137-49086-5 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781137490865

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available from the
Library of Congress.

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: August 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<i>Foreword</i>	ix
Marianne Bloch	

Part I Theory and History of Human Capital

1 Introduction and Historical Perspective	3
<i>Theodora Lightfoot-Rueda and Ruth Lynn Peach</i>	
2 Theorizing Dialogue among Various Voices in Critical Theory	27
<i>Joseph Zanoni</i>	

Part II Deconstruction and Critique of Human Capital and Education

3 Governing the Brain: New Narratives of Human Capital in Australasian Early Childhood Education	47
<i>Zsuzsa Millei</i>	
4 The Instrumentality of Spanish in Early Spanish Education: Unraveling the “Linguistic Masquerade” via Storytelling	71
<i>Alejandro Azocar</i>	
5 Human Capital Theory and the Promotion of the Entrepreneurial Attitude toward Early Education in Turkey	87
<i>Sabiha Bilgi</i>	
6 Human Capital Theory and Shifting Perceptions of Teachers in the United States	105
<i>Theodora Lightfoot-Rueda</i>	

7	Reforming Early Childhood Education as a Smart Investment for the Future: Stories from East Asia <i>I-Fang Lee, Chao-Ling Tseng, and Hong-Ju Jun</i>	119
8	England's Foundation Stage Child in a Shifting World: Troubling Grids of Reasoning of "Children with Potential," "Normalization," and "Value-Added" Curriculum <i>Ruth Lynn Peach</i>	143
9	Deconstructing Human Capital Discourse in Early Childhood Education in Indonesia <i>Vina Adriany and Kurniawan Saefullah</i>	159
Part III Reconceptualizing Education outside of Human Capital Language		
10	And You Gotta Believe Me: When Social and Human Capital Collide <i>Janice Kroeger</i>	183
11	Economistic Subjects: Questioning Early Childhood Pedagogies of Learning, Participation, and Voice <i>Emma Buchanan</i>	199
12	How Human Capital Theory Sells Early Education Short: Revaluing Early Education through the Capabilities Approach <i>Cary A. Buzzelli</i>	215
13	Concluding and Moving Forward <i>Theodora Lightfoot-Rueda and Ruth Lynn Peach</i>	231
	<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	233
	<i>Index</i>	235

TABLES

9.1	Different types of ECE institutions by different ministries in Indonesia	167
9.2	Milestones for ECED project in Indonesia	169
10.1	Unique characteristics making parent engagement difficult	187
10.2	University students and their mentor teachers	188

FOREWORD

Marianne Bloch

As a series coeditor and as a person who continues to worry about contexts and discourses that frame and construct early education and child care policy, pedagogy, and practices, I am delighted to have been asked to write the foreword for this important new edited volume by Dory Lightfoot-Rueda and Ruth Peach. Here and in the volume, the contributors focus on the overreliance on language/discourse and implied “truths” that argue for early childhood education based on:

- the evidence of scientific *and* quantitative analyses that is taken to show what is best practice for young children, as well as what is considered or constructed as *high quality* programs;
- a focus on probability, statistics, and statistical reasoning about risks and the “benefit to cost ratio” (or cost/benefit analysis) of good or poor early education for children, as well as societies;
- the “market” value of early education to families, cities, states, and nations; a narrow focus on skills, concepts, and education for jobs/careers that are thought to be measurable and important for national/international competition and development (e.g., a *literate nation*; a *mathematically competitive nation*);
- the importance of putting money into early education rather than prisons (what is often called the “preschool or school to prison pipeline”);
- the crucial and long-term need to question discourses and the knowledge/power relations that continue to reinforce assimilationist and colonialist policies; for example, “Catching children early to get them ready for school” or to be good national citizens (e.g., good Americans, as I suggested in earlier writing, Bloch, 1987, 2006) ignores preschool/school and societal needs to recognize the child and family as rich with knowledge, not

- “lacking,” “deficient,” or “at risk for failure by age 3 or 4 without a certain type of “quality” and homogenized or standardized preschooling (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Fuller, 2007);
- the need to recognize that diverse values for learning exist and there are a multiplicity of ways to demonstrate knowledge, behavior, and learning; and
 - last but not least, the discourses of inclusion, exclusion, and normality/abnormality or at risk (e.g., the *nation at risk*); in this set of discourses, we see the construction of a normal childhood, the normally developing child, a normal family, as well as the normally developing nation (read this as a contrast to the construction of abnormal childhood, abnormally developing children, abnormal or bad families (or communities), and less (normally) developed nations (or more primitive nations and people).

In previous work in which both the editors and some of the book’s contributors have written (e.g., Bloch, Kennedy, Lightfoot, & Weyenberg, 2006), we drew on post-structural theories of Foucault and Deleuze and Guattari (e.g., Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Foucault, 1980, 1991) to discuss the concepts of knowledge/power relations, governmentality, populational statistics, and statistical reasoning that are highlighted in the excellent introductory chapter by Lightfoot-Rueda and Peach in this volume. We also focused on Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of the rhizome and Deleuze’s notion of societies of control (Deleuze, 1992) as a way to acknowledge the complexity, uncertainty, and unpredictability of forms of control, and the possibilities for flight, escape, and new ways to open spaces for both action and (critical) thinking. This volume provides both intellectual critique of what we have come to take as natural and good, and provides some avenues for opening spaces for alternative reasoning and different policies/policing and actions.

The focus of this book is on one discourse—human capital—which is nested in a grid of discourses that have developed over centuries but have emerged in very limiting and narrow ways in the twentieth and twenty-first century. During this period the combined construction of young children and normal/abnormal childhoods and families were constructed in new ways (see Danziger, 1990; Foucault, 1977; Rose, 1989) and governed through new disciplinary technologies. In Donzelot’s (1979) volume *Policing the Family*, he suggests that policing was equivalent in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries to policies by the government that drew on new concepts or governing

technologies to group and divide children and families as well as to try new strategies to encapsulate them and intervene in their bodies and life through social policing/policy. In this sense, policing and policy are both seen as potentially positive, another unexamined truth, as they are justified as necessary for the well-being of the entire population (Foucault, 1991). Drawing on Foucault's notion of *disciplinary societies* and Deleuze's notion of *societies of control*, I can then draw in the development of prisons and schools as disciplinary devices, and the *assemblage* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of myriad events (economic, political, philosophical, cultural, social, mathematical, global, and local) that hold our reasoning and action in place (e.g., the normal young child and his/her family, early childhood, and the economic values of high quality preschools to human capital formation at national and global levels) while also allowing for movement, new ways to think and act.

I applaud the editors and contributors for tackling one of the most prevalent discourses that is used to argue for “high-quality preschool” especially for low-income children, or “other children.” It has a stranglehold on arguments and policy directions in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Nonetheless, as contributors argue, human capital theory is part of a larger complex network of discourses that come together to form our everyday reason and conduct (including policy) about early childhood, normal families, good teachers, and high-quality programs for young children.

As one example, we could take the concept of the good, young child who develops into a “good citizen” for the nation or globe (Bloch, 2006). We know that while this way of reasoning is currently important, it was also important in many philosophers' and pedagogical experts' ideas on education for young children (e.g., Plato, Rousseau, Froebel, McMillan, Hill, Dewey, Piaget, and Vygotsky). However, here we see *imaginaries* of the “problem-solving child as future good citizen” and the child who should only learn basic skills. By looking at others' visions of a good citizen, we can detect gendered discourses of wealthier males as autonomous and self-reliant (creative play is good) while females and other males might be seen as needing to learn obedience, dependence, conforming, or how to be a quiet, young child. Our early education visions and values embed classed, gendered, colonial, ageist, and inability discourses that fabricate a truth about normal or abnormal young childhood within and across nations. The chapters in this book, written by authors from a variety of perspectives and nations, help us to see the texts, truths,

and power/knowledge relations. These hold in place present-day reasoning and hold back needed resistance, interrogation, or different ways of thinking and acting.

This book is the first to my knowledge to focus on the prevalence of human capital theory and early childhood education, across and within nations. While it is not a new thing to argue about the economic value of children, their education, and child rearing for the growth of a society, it is so pervasive today that other ways to value diverse children's experiences, knowledge, and ideas as well as family/community needs in the face of growing national and international inequalities have largely been submerged. Teachers' and families' questioning of the value of standardized, skills-based curriculum filled with testing is startling and crucial. As one very recent example, President Obama convoked White House Conference on Early Childhood very recently (White House Conference on Early Childhood, December 10, 2014) in which the majority of arguments centered on economic competitiveness as the primary rationale for funding more high-quality early childhood programs. While I listened to a webinar (*ibid.*), one person talked about other ways to value children. This participant questioned early education and child care as a business model—aimed at economic competitiveness—and wondered why the largely female working force was so underpaid or why parents could not afford to send their children to preschool or full-day child care. What or whose business model are these material realities serving?

What type of experiences should we value in a program for young children (aside from skills and drills)? What characteristics, cognitive, social, physical, and ethical (fairness, justice, care for the “other”) should be included in a curriculum for younger and older children? Are our dreams and visions for some children, parents (mothers/fathers), families, and communities different from those for Other families, Other communities, Other nations or regions? Should a half- (or full-)day program be subsidized as a right for all families as part of democratic and equitable education or should early education be focused on assimilation to a “standard” and getting rid of the risk in imagining a “preschool to prison” pipeline? A more serious study of these questions and of our reliance at this time on human capital theory and the discourses of the market is so very important.

I am so pleased that these editors and contributors have started this long-overdue critique and conversation. I am hopeful that many people will remember this book as a powerful critique and questioning

of current practices and as an enormously powerful intellectual contribution to discussions.

REFERENCES

- Bloch, M. N. (1987). Critical perspectives on the aims and effects of early education: Becoming scientific and professional. In T. S. Popkewitz (Ed.), *The Formation of School Subjects*. (pp. 25–62). London: Falmer Press.
- Bloch, M. N. (2006). Educational theories and pedagogies as technologies of power/knowledge: Educating the young child as a citizen of an imagined nation and world. In M. N. Bloch, D. Kennedy, D. Lightfoot, & D. Weyenberg (Eds.), *The child in the world/the world in the child: Education and the configuration of a universal, modern, and globalized childhood* (pp. 21–42). New York: Palgrave Press.
- Bloch, M. N., Kennedy, D., Lightfoot, D., & Weyenberg, D. (Eds.). (2006). *The child in the world/the world in the child: Education and the configuration of a universal, modern, and globalized childhood*. New York: Palgrave Press.
- Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (1999, 2007 2nd ed.). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Postmodern perspectives*. Abington, UK: Routledge Press.
- Danziger, K. (1990). *Constructing the subject: Historical origins of psychological research*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1992, October). Postscript on the Societies of Control, 59, 3–7.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Donzelot, J. (1979). *The policing of families*. New York: Pantheon Press.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977*. C. Gordon (Ed.). New York: Pantheon Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality* (pp. 87–104). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Fuller, B. (2007). *Standardized childhood: The political and cultural struggle over early childhood*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Rose, N. (1989). *Governing the soul*. London: Free Association Books.
- White House Conference on Early Education, December 10, 2014. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/12/10/invest-us-president-obama-convenes-white-house-summit-early-education>