Transnationalising (Child) Care Policy: the OECD and the World Bank

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Much of the work on the transnationalisation of care has focused on the forging of global care chains, discussed in previous chapters, or, more recently, the growth of transnational corporations operating in the care sector, such as ABC Learning (Brennan, 2007). Yet the transnationalisation of care also involves the elaboration and global transmission of social policy discourses. International organisations (IOs) like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank have played an important part in this, along with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) like the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the Aga Khan Foundation, the Christian Children's Fund and, in Eastern Europe, the Soros Foundation. The work of the major international organisations is also supported by transnational knowledge networks, such as the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development. This chapter focuses on the role played by the OECD and the World Bank in working to put early child education and care (ECEC)[1] on national policy agendas around the world.

Although the OECD and the World Bank are often (rightly) associated with the diffusion of ideas and practices underpinning neoliberal globalisation, a closer examination of their policy discourses over the last decade suggests that they have clearly gone beyond counselling the brute neoliberal prescription of welfare cuts and structural adjustment. As part of their broader push for a focus on "social investment" (Jenson, 2008), they have become advocates for, and supporters of, public investment in child care/child development programs. This does not mean that they have abandoned the broader globalisation project. Rather, for the most part "investing in children" has come to be seen as a critical component thereof.

Somewhat ironically, given the way globalisation has meant the intensified export of carers from South to North, investment in child care is advocated not only for OECD countries but also for the Global South. Both northern and southern versions of the child care policy discourse aim at the modification of postwar welfare/development regimes, away from the goal of greater equality in the here-and-now to equality of opportunity over the life course. Both also reflect the impact of global political developments in the name of gender equality and the rights of the child. At the same time, they differ in important respects. The dominant discourse directed at the South, by international financial organisations like the World Bank, draws especially on the American social policy model, which emphasises provision through the market. In this sense it might be considered "neoliberalism plus", in that it integrates elements of social liberalism, such as Sen's emphasis on the opportunity to develop one's capabilities, into a residual social policy discourse refashioned to meet the demands of economic globalisation. In contrast, the discourse directed at OECD countries by that organisation, especially through its thematic study, Starting Strong, exhibits the stronger influence of Western European, especially Scandinavian, experience.

This chapter examines how the main international organisations dealing with social policy have framed their arguments for child care, including the scientific and normative knowledge bases they draw on in making their truth claims. The first section reflects briefly on the role of international organisations and then locates the 1990s discovery of the importance of investing in children in its broader political and intellectual context. The next section analyses two key reports – *Babies and Bosses* and *Starting Strong* - produced through the OECD, which call for increased investment in early child education and care in the North. The discussion then turns to discourses directed to the South, focusing on the early childhood care and development discourses articulated by the World Bank, in collaboration with INGOs and networks of experts such as the Consultative Group.

International Organisations: Key Nodes in Transnational Discourse Communities

[1] There are different names for child care. Child care usually refers to care provided for working parents. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) refers to the integration of care and early child education. Early child development (ECD) has a broader scope, including things like prenatal care and parental education as well as ECEC. For convenience, I will use ECEC to refer to the transnational discourse in general, using ECD only when I turn to the Bank's version.

The globalisation debate has helped to draw attention to the transnational flow of policy discourses, which has long existed but has intensified in recent decades. In the field of social policy in particular, scholars like Bob Deacon and Nicola Yeates have signalled the emergence of "global social policy" - modes of transnational governance and contestation around issues of redistribution, social provision and regulation (Deacon et al, 1997; Yeates, 2008). In the process, they have highlighted the formation of increasingly dense social policy networks operating at different scales. While Yeates is rightly critical of those who focus exclusively on elite international organisations like the World Bank and the OECD, the latter do occupy a privileged position within these networks and thus are well-placed to promote their policy agendas. Some, like the World Bank, are able to use their financial resources to aggressively promote their notion of "best practice." For the most part, however, IOs rely on softer forms of governance that draw especially on the resources they deploy as knowledge banks – sites for the assembly and dissemination of various kinds of expertise.

Reliance on soft instruments of governance does not mean the absence of power and contestation. The production of ideas and evidence-based arguments involves the power to classify, fix meanings and diffuse norms (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999:711). As Bislev et al note, the policy discourses IOs fashion and disseminate "map out what can be said, thought and done about different aspects of life – discourses generate 'effects of truth.' And by normalising and naturalising specific ways of thinking and acting, often with a claim of scientific or other expertise, discourses produce 'effects of power'…" (2002:209). Such ideas gain added force when backed by an 'inquisitive' or surveillance function. For Jacobsson, this occurs when "member states are not obligated to follow up specific policies, but they are required to 'open up' for others to examine and critically judge what they are doing' (2006: 207). Thus for instance, the United Nation Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was mandated to monitor progress toward agreed goals such as those established via the Education for All (EFA) World Summits in 1990 and 2000, while Article 3 of the OECD's founding convention committed member states "to furnish the Organisation with the information necessary for the accomplishment of its tasks" (Wolfe, 2008). In turn, their surveillance capacities establish the basis for the deployment of peer review (name and shame). Inquisition, in other words, makes possible the exertion of pressure on states to conform to new standards and appropriate practices.

International organisations are able to exercise these soft powers more effectively if they possess a relative autonomy from national states. For organisations like the World Bank and the OECD, that autonomy is substantially located in, and based upon, their professional expertise. This does not mean that the production of ideas takes place in isolation. Rather, "ethnographic studies of IOs describe a world in which organisational goals are strongly shaped by norms of the professions that dominate the bureaucracy and in which interests themselves are varied, often in flux, debated and worked out through interactions between the staff of the bureaucracy and the world in which they are embedded" (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999:706). Thus international organisations can be understood, in part, as critical nodes in transnational discourse communities "that share a common language and discursive frame, consolidated through face to face communication at conferences and sustained by written and electronic forms of communication – papers, documents, websites, emails etc" (Bislev et al, 2002: 208). In examining the role of IOs therefore, it is important to look at the ideas debated and conveyed through such fora, as well as to identify the knowledge networks on which they draw as international organisations, or divisions thereof, engage in policy learning.

At the same time, within each organisation, such expert knowledge is normally tempered by what Dostal has called 'organisational discourse' – "claims encapsulating long term political projects as defined by the organisation in question" (2004: 445). These organisational discourses inform the ideational grid through which the organisation - or the relevant branch thereof - interprets the world. While as "learning organisations", IOs are to varying degrees open to new ideas. Nevertheless organisational discourses and internal practices designed to reinforce these often place limits on innovation. For example Bedford's (2007) analysis of the reception of the new "gender and development" discourse in the World Bank during Wolfensohn's presidency shows how the feminists had to learn to make their arguments in "efficiency" terms consistent with the Bank's core mandate. Broad (2006) and Hall (2007) illustrate how conformity to the dominant economic discourse is reinforced through a range of internal Bank procedures.

Learning can and does occur, but just as national states translate the policy ideas purveyed by IOs, so too do IOs filter ideas travelling through transnational discourse communities through their organisational discourses.

In studying international organisations, then, it is also important to identify themes and concepts running through key studies and policy documents they produce, which infiltrate and modify generic expert discourses, as well as tracing the wider networks they help to establish and the broader environments in which they work. Here it is important to underline that international organisations are themselves involved in policy learning in response to ideas transmitted through the transnational discourse communities of which they form a part, as well as from environmental challenges. The next sections look at the political and ideational contexts in which ECEC was discovered as an important policy solution by key IOs and then examine the ways they translated new ideas into policy advice.

Political Context(s) of Discovery

The promotion of ECEC at international scales is not entirely new. There is some evidence of efforts to promote preschool education in the early postwar years (Kamerman, 2006). In the 1960s, UNESCO began to collect data on preschools and in 1965 UNICEF's executive board recognised the period of 1-6 years as a "crucial missing link" in human growth and development (Myers, 1991). Preschool was still, however, considered a luxury, to be considered only after states had made primary and secondary education available for all. For the World Bank, preschool was not even on the horizon: its embrace of investment in human capital was confined to secondary and vocational education (Jones et al, 2005: 106). It was only in 1972 that UNESCO allocated funds to organise expert seminars on ECEC and its 1974 conference on education for children from 0 to 6 took a defensive tone, at pains to stress that preschool would not harm the child's creativity (Kamerman, 2006). In the same year, UNICEF's *Report on the Young Child* rejected preschool education in favour of improved maternal care (Myers, 1991:8-9). The World Bank also concluded that investment in preschool "could not be justified" (Kamerman, 2006: 8).

The OECD began to reflect on ECEC in the 1970s, and its perspective was clearly marked by the push for gender equality - and the concomitant need to deal with the care needs associated with women's rising labour force participation. The first report of the newly formed working party on the role of women in the economy (ROWITE) focused on *The Care of Children of Working Parents* (OECD, 1974). Gender equality was clearly the primary normative lens through which it viewed ECEC. Yet the interests of children also figured in the calculus, perhaps because, at the same time that ROWITE was conducting its study, the OECD's Centre for Research and Education (CERI) was engaged in identifying common problems in early childhood education. Exchange between these two units helps to account for an important conceptual innovation – the concept of ECEC, i.e. the linking of spheres (preschool education and day care) that remained divided in most countries at that time. In contrast to some of the later studies, these OECD studies also recognised that ECEC only formed part of the equality puzzle. For instance, the ROWITE study noted that ECEC was not only critical to the achievement of gender equality but that ECEC policies "should be conceptually linked and coordinated with a spectrum of broader social, housing and health policies which treat the child and family as a unit" (OECD, 1974:12).

Many of the points made in the OECD studies would reappear in the policy discourses of various international organisations twenty five years later. In the 1980s, however, ECEC largely disappeared from the international organisations' agendas: the ascendancy of neo-liberalism meant a push to cut, not expand, social expenditure in the North. At the same time in the South – and, later, the countries of the former Soviet Bloc, many of which had had extensive publicly financed child care – the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund made access to financial assistance conditional upon the adoption of austere structural adjustment packages.

There was, of course, resistance to "roll-back" neo-liberalism, and not only at the grassroots level. Some international organisations entered the fray, led by UNICEF under the banner of "adjustment with a human face." Consistent with its mandate, UNICEF emphasised the cost of adjustment for young children "the most vulnerable section of the population, yet also the one more important for the future of the country" (Jolly, 1991:1810). As Jenson (2008) argues, UNICEF helped to open a space for what she calls the "social investment paradigm," one focused especially on children. Yet it is important to note that UNICEF did not challenge the need for "adjustment." While adjustment with a human face included a call for the preservation of minimum level of nutrition, income and services, it also sanctioned "serious restructuring" of social services to achieve the maximum cost effectiveness and internal efficiency," and pointed to the possibility of "more creative reliance on community action and the informal sector" (Jolly, 1991, 1810). It also conceded the need to scale back existing welfare regimes, while arguing for programs targeting the poorest, especially children.

As Jolly has recorded, UNICEF's African and Latin American field offices were quick to file reports of the negative impacts of adjustment, especially on children, prompting UNICEF to launch its own effort to document the scale of the problems. By 1984 it was ready to persuade the IMF to take the special needs of children into account. At the 18th World Conference of the Society for International Development in 1985, Jolly presented "Adjustment with a Human Face" to an audience that included representatives from the World Bank. In light of the debates which ensued, "some in the World Bank, such as Alan Berg and Paul Isenman, subsequently used the occasion to encourage broader thinking, circulating copies of *Adjustment with a Human Face* to colleagues within the World Bank and to others outside" (Jolly 1991:1814). As we shall see, Berg was one of the Bank officials who would go on to support the Bank's embrace of "investment in children" in the 1990s.

The focus on young children was given added impetus by the widespread ratification of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.[2] All states which ratified the Convention committed to report to, and appear before, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on steps taken to implement the Convention.[3] Although the Committee did not take up the issue of ECEC until 2005, the widespread ratification of the Convention added a potentially important rights basis to UNICEF's case for investment in children. The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) recognised that "learning begins at birth while the subsequent (2000) EFA Framework of Action included "expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children" as its first goal. The 1990 World Summit for Children similarly focused a spotlight on children's right to survival, protection and development.

As Myers notes, for some, the Convention introduced the concept of rights to the discourse on ECEC, helping to bring about a shift from the 1980s focus needs (2000:25). Such a rights orientation fit well with UNESCO's discourse, especially during the 1980s (Jones et al, 2005:77). Under the Presidency of Amadou –Mahtar M'Bow from Senegal, the organisation had sharpened its rights profile, helping to disseminate Southern demands for a new international division of labour.[4] The dominant discourse, however, continued to emphasise needs, although the concept was broadened to include child development, in part as a result of the work of expert groups such as the then-newly formed Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, an important actor in the constitution of "knowledge-networking" around early child care and development. The Consultative Group brings IOs like UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank together with major donor agencies and key INGOs in this transnational discourse community, such as the Bernard van Leer Foundation, Aga Khan, Save the Children (US and UK) and the Christina Children's fund. It has been particularly close to UNICEF. In fact, during its first decade, it was housed in UNICEF's New York headquarters.

One of the key figures employed by the Group was Robert G. Myers, author of an important report on early child development for the World Bank (1987) and later for UNESCO

[2] The US, along with Somalia, has not signed the Convention.

[3] Ratifying countries must submit a report on measures taken to realize the Convention to the Committee within two years of entry into force of the Convention and then every five years thereafter (UN, 2006:1). The Committee, which normally holds three sessions a year, is composed of human rights, international law, juvenile justice, social work and health care experts, elected by the ratifying countries while secretariat support is provided by the Treaties and Commission Branch of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN, 2006:1).

[4] As Jones et al note, this prompted the Reagan and Thatcher governments, as well as Singapore, to withdraw from the organization, taking with them about one third of its budget (2005:67). The UK returned under the Blair government and the US in 2002.

(1990). Arguably experts like Myers played an important role in broadening the IOs early child discourse. As Myers notes,

> During the 1980s…, financing within the international community for projects related to young children was focussed on survival, and, more specifically on health and nutrition. Guided by a consortium of donors…and by the energetic promotion efforts of a Child Survival Revolution by UNICEF and the World Health Organization, major lending agencies, bi-lateral organizations, major Foundations and the larger international NGOs emphasized immunization, oral rehydration, feeding, and other actions that were directed primarily at reducing infant and child mortality rates. Very little attention was given to child development (2000:28).

As a result, the IOs agenda was reframed from child survival = reduction in child mortality, to survival= a process "of change in which the child learns to handle ever more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling and relating to others" (Myers, 1990: 19). In the 1990 Jomtien EFA declaration, however, the call for investing in child development was framed in a manner consistent with UNICEF's adjustment with a human face discourse. The EC goal was thus defined as "expansion of early childhood care and development activities, *including family and community interventions, especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children*." (Myers, 2000:4 Emphasis added). Thus, like "adjustment with a human face", the emergent discourse favoured programs targeting "poor, disadvantaged and disabled children" and envisaged an important role for (cheaper) "family and community interventions." As we shall see, this is the interpretation which the Bank would later adopt.

While the leading role played by IOs and certain INGOs in forging an ECEC transnational discourse community helped to focus attention on the development of young children, the emergence of a transnational women's movement, aided by opportunities afforded by the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985) served to inject a gender dimension into the social investment discourse (Friedman, 2003; Kardam, 2004). Here again UNICEF – or, more specifically, UNICEF's Latin American region – contributed, by demonstrating that "the adjustment process typically added burdens to women in their roles as household managers and parents while often reducing the time and finance available to support them in these roles" (Jolly, 1991: 1817). As we shall see, gender equity would also figure in the ECEC discourse of the World Bank, but less a matter of equality between men and women in the here and now than levelling the playing field between boys and girls in access to education.

Truth Claims

In *Toward a Fair Start for Children*, Myers asked "why do governments and other organizations not respond more generously in their budgets to the obvious developmental needs of those twelve of every thirteen children…who manage to survive to age one?" (1990:3). In the decades since he posed the question, neuroscientific and social science research have helped to alter the calculus. These diverse epistemic communities have helped to establish new truth claims on which IOs have been able to draw in mounting the case for investment in early child development.

One strand of research that has proved particularly influential for the World Bank came from the field of neuroscience. This research helped to identify the very early years – especially children from 0 to 3, an age group often ignored in favour of preschool children – as the critical period shaping the child's subsequent development. Major American foundations began to distil the policy implications and disseminate the results of this research in the 1990s. Thus the Carnegie-sponsored study, *Starting Points* (1994), drew on this research to focus attention on "the quiet crisis" affecting American children under three due to inadequate prenatal care, the rising number of lone parents, substandard day care available to the now dominant adult worker family, and poverty. The study highlighted the critical development undergone by the prenatal human brain, which continues to develop rapidly in the first year, and pointed to the importance of environmental impact on the way the brain is wired.

The original research served to add the early years to a "lifelong learning" agenda[5] and some find in this research a basis for justifying public support for ECEC for all.[6] Yet these findings

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[5] See for example, Shonkoff and Phillips (2000)

have been primarily interpreted as justification for: 1) a turn from programs for older workers – or even tertiary education – to children and youth; and 2) ECEC programs targeting the disadvantaged. This approach is reflected in the contributions of influential economists, such as J. J. Heckman of the University of Chicago, who have calculated cost-benefit analyses of public efforts to promote human capital formation at different stages of the life cycle. In an influential paper drawing on longitudinal studies of "disadvantaged" children exposed to programs like the Perry Preschool or Abecedarian in the United States, Heckman concluded that no significant improvement in American skill was likely without a substantial investment at an early age "to mend the harm done by dysfunctional families" (1999:39).

While Heckman's research made the utilitarian case for investment in early child development, the work of economic philosopher Amartya Sen's on "human capabilities" has helped to marshal ethical claims in support of similar programs. Drawing out the implications of his work for ECEC, Sen argued that "the capabilities that adults enjoy are deeply conditional on their experiences as children" and that "a securely preparatory childhood can augment our skill in living a good life" (2003: 78). Sen's capabilities approach draws on an important strand of social liberalism, one that harks back to the social liberalism of John Stuart Mill, who envisaged a positive role for governments in enabling individuals to develop to their full potential. While the previous era drew on social liberalism in mounting an argument for the Keynesian-welfare state, in the discourses of international financial organisations like the Inter American Development Bank, the capabilities approach becomes part of "adjustment with a human face", as the following quotation from Nancy Birdsall suggests:

> …the market reforms that are spurred by and reinforce the global integration of markets – ultimately a key to rapid growth in the region – can in the short run make the game even more unfair. This is especially the case…where the poor are especially poor and where the distribution of land…and of education is so unequal. Because the poor lack those productive assets, market reforms will not necessarily help them. Conventional reforms need to be supplemented with aggressive policies and programs to increase the assets of the poor, to ensure the poor can exploit new market opportunities. That means among other things putting a premium on programs of early child intervention. Birdsall, 1999

In other words, structural adjustment measures need to be supplemented with investment in early child development to break the "inter-generational poverty cycle."

Other social scientists have contributed to the ECEC argument. Of particular note is the work of European sociologist, Gosta Esping-Andersen. In *The Social Foundation of Post-Industrial Economies* (1999) Esping-Andersen cast his argument for ECEC as part of a broader project of welfare redesign. Echoing other critiques of Western European social insurance-based systems, Esping-Andersen was especially critical of the "conservative-corporatist" regimes of Western Europe, for clinging to social programs targeted at the male breadwinner family instead of engaging in welfare redesign focused on the needs of the time-pressed post-industrial dual earner family with young children. Although Esping-Andersen drew his inspiration from the Nordic social policy model, which is characterised by substantial public investment in universally available child care and programs to induce men to share 'parental' leave, he drew back from recommending its extension to other advanced countries, content to make a pitch for some form of investment in ECEC. His work influenced the social policy paradigm that began to take shape in the OECD's Directorate on Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (DELSA) as well as the European Union. This in turn helped to pave the way for the *Babies and Bosses* study to be discussed in the next section.

His critique of continental European social insurance based systems has also been transposed onto the social security regimes of certain Latin American and Asian countries among others by the World Bank, which sees them as favouring "insiders" at the expense of the real poor.[7] The Bank extends the critique to universal programs in the South like education. Thus, as Jones et al note, in *Financing Education in Developing* Countries, the World Bank argued: "1)

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[6] See for example Mustard (2000)

[7] See Haggard and Kaufman (2008, chapter 7) for a discussion of the critique and attempts to restructure the postwar welfare regimes in Latin America.

governments do not tap the willingness of households to contribute resources directly to education; 2) current financial arrangement result in a misallocation with heavy subsidisation of higher education at the expense of primary; 3) in schools, resources are not used as efficiently as they might be…reinforced by lack of competition among schools" (2005:119). As we shall see, similar arguments appear in the World Bank's counsel on investment in ECEC.

The policy discourses emanating from these sources have not gone unchallenged. In the decade prior to Esping-Anderson's 2002 report the President of the European Union, which made a strong (gendered) pitch for investing in children, the European Commission had established a Childcare Network under the direction of Peter Moss, who was committed to an egalitarian vision of care. The Network began to develop a blueprint for a European ECEC strategy and, more importantly for the longer run, to forge an alternative ECEC discourse community with strong European roots. It found inspiration especially in the Nordic and Reggio-Emilia models of care. Both emphasized the importance of child development, while the Nordic model added strong public support and a concern to promote gender equality. Looking to these sources of inspiration, the Network developed a conception of quality quite different from the dominant "Developmentally Appropriate Practice" (DAP) that dominates the US discourse. For the Network, "quality is a *relative concept* based on values and beliefs, and defining quality should be a *dynamic, continuous and democratic process*" (European Commission Childcare Network, 2004:11).

Dahlberg and Moss highlight important differences between the discourse emanating from this network and the dominant Anglo-American one:

1. Whereas the dominant Anglo-American discourse stresses a future oriented instrumental rationality (child as human capital in the making), the alternative stresses ethico-political rationality or an "ethics of encounter" (child in the here and now);
2. Whereas the first sees ECEC as an enclosure for application of techniques to achieve predetermined outcomes, the second stresses a plurality of possibilities. In the latter the child is not seen as an object of such techniques but as a co-constructor of knowledge and an active citizen;
3. Whereas quality for the first is a measurement of the extent to which services conform to externally prescribed norms, a technology of normalisation, for the latter, as for the original European Network, quality develops in an open-ended, dialogical way. The latter takes as its exemplars the maternal schools in Reggio and the Swedish ECEC systerm (Dahlberg and Moss, 2007).

While the Commission officially disbanded the Network in the mid-1990s, it has remained alive as a dissident segment in the ECEC transnational discourse community, and has grown in scale, helped in part by another OECD thematic study we shall discuss, *Starting Strong*. The OECD's *Starting Strong* review would draw its inspiration from this alternative discourse.

ECEC for OECD Countries: Gender Equality…And Children's Rights

The messages to OECD member states brought out the importance of ECEC for gender equality as well as a service to the "time-pressed" adult earner family. There were, however, important differences as between the two versions, *Babies and Bosses* and *Starting Strong* in how the argument was cast, the transnational discourse communities involved and ultimately their capacity to alter the organisational discourses of the two OECD Directorates involved. *Babies* cast its argument in a way that "fit" with DELSA's organisational discourse and it drew primarily on existing discourse communities constituted through the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee and the Working Party on Social Policy. This is not to suggest that learning did not occur. In some respects, the *Babies* team went beyond the instrumentalist view with which it began, developing a greater appreciation of the gender equality dimension. It brought this back to DELSA, managing to institutionalise the lessons learned in the OECD's new family data base.

To head its *Starting Strong* project, the Education Directorate engaged an outside expert with stronger links to the alternative discourse community, John Bennett, who had been deeply involved in the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child while in charge of UNESCO's Child and Youth program. While the *Starting Strong* team clearly drew on the OECD's official education network of experts, it also worked in such a way as to strengthen the alternative discourse community. The intention was to sustain this network following the study's conclusion to enable it to transform the Education Directorate's and Education Committee's ECEC discourse.

Babies, launched in 2001 and concluded in 2005, followed the standard procedure for OECD cross-national research, although it did reject as premature a large sample, quantitative approach in favour of a more in-depth study of 13 countries. The team operated through the channels provided by the Working Party on Social Policy of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs committee, which brings together leading social policy officials from the member countries. While it produced a number of background papers, exploring various issues and collected data on the countries, visits to the participating countries, organised by the host department, played a key part in the research. The country visits involved meetings with appropriate government units, business and labour representatives and other experts. This allowed for interaction with a range of actors, but did not involve the constitution of a transnational discourse community that went beyond the official network constituted by the membership of the Working Party nor did it hook into the ECEC transnational discourse community.

Central to how *Babies* saw its task is DELSA's organisational discourse, which had incorporated a new conception of social policy in the 1990s. In fact, Jenson (2008) has argued that the OECD (or more specifically, DELSA) played a critical role in developing and disseminating the "social investment" social policy paradigm. The new discourse does indeed have much in common with the "adjustment with a human face" discourse of the World Bank but DELSA's version focuses on ECEC less as a solution to the intergenerational transmission of poverty than as part of a policy package aimed at the time-pressed adult earner family, which has become the norm in most, if not all, OECD countries. I have elsewhere labelled its approach "inclusive liberalism" (Mahon, 2006).

This is not to say that DELSA's new discourse rejected core OECD goals of economic globalisation and the concomitant need for policy redesign. Thus the *New Orientation for Social Policy* (1994) accepted non-inflationary growth and the need to reconcile social program costs with overall limits on public budgets, while conceding that these objectives could be "enhanced by the role of social expenditures as investments in society" (1994: 12-14). In this respect, its analysis differed little from that of "adjustment with a human face." Where it differed was in its main object – the adult earner family. In other words, the main problem was not inequality, though that was clearly on the rise as a recent (2008) OECD study documented, nor even on lone parent families, and the poverty to which their children were exposed. Rejecting a narrow "workfare" approach, DELSA focused on all adult earner families and the resulting social policy challenges posed by the "new demands for services traditionally produced within the home, particularly those relating to the care of children and other dependent relatives, and an increasing need for policy directions that will facilitate a balance between work and family responsibilities" (OECD, 1994: 10).

The ideas originally laid out in *New Orientation for Social Policy*, and developed through in-house research and conferences, were sanctioned by the ELSA Committee and became part of DELAS's organisational discourse. It is this discourse that provided the ideational framework for *Babies.* Consistent with DELSA's embrace of a social investment discourse, *Babies* carefully scrutinised tax and benefit policies to identify disincentives to women's labour market participation. It accepted that this would result in the need for public support for non-parental child care as, on their own, markets may not be capable of delivering the number of spaces needed at a price many parents could afford. Nevertheless, public sector monopolies were to be avoided, even though it recognised that wage rates and employment conditions in the Nordic countries were better than in countries relying on private provision. Demand subsidies were also to be preferred to investment on the supply side as the latter were seen only to benefit those able to obtain a place and do little for parents unable to find one. More importantly for DELAS, demand-side subsidies supported a market for care, thus putting pressure on providers to keep costs down while meeting parental demand for things like more flexible opening hours. *Babies* did not ignore issues of quality, but in contrast to the dialogical conception of quality offered by the European Commission Childcare Network, it adopted a new public management perspective in which child care providers are seen as agents pursuing their own self interest at the expense of children and parents, unless checked by market like mechanisms. The best method therefore is "quality assurance" programs, backed by the discipline of market forces.

Parental leave was also an important part of the new family-friendly policy, but long leaves were rejected as destructive of a mother's human capital and thus weakening their labour force attachment. Initially, *Babies* assumed that it would be mothers who would take "parental" leave but on this issue it began to stake out a more radical, gender equality stance such that by the fourth volume, *Babies* was prepared to criticize Sweden – one of the countries that has done to most to push for shared leave in the interests of gender equality – for not going far enough (Mahon, 2008).

DELSA's recognition of the role child care arrangements, including parental leave, can play in promoting gender equality beyond an instrumentalist "reconciliation of work and family life" can be traced in part to the impact of the feminist expert – Janet Gonick – who was hired to develop a framework for the family data base. The resulting data base, in turn, lays the foundations for future governance through surveillance on these issues. Importantly, it includes many of the areas highlighted in the earlier ROWITE studies: pay gaps between full and part time workers, male and female earnings, distribution of working hours between men and women, the gender distribution of child care leave and a typology of child care benefits, including quality indicators. The head of the social policy division has also taken on the job as coordinator for the OECD's new gender site (www.oecd.org/gender) that assembles date from all the directorates.

The gender equality lessons that might have been learned from the earlier ROWITE studies thus had to be learned anew by the OECD's social policy division. Yet while ROWITE was working within an OECD still committed to the Keynesian welfare state, *Babies'* learning occurred within an organisational discourse that embraces economic globalisation and the macroeconomic "fundamentals" associated therewith. In this universe, there is a role for "good" social policies that encourage working-age women as well as men to remain active labour market participants.

Although ECEC formed only a part of the range of "family-friendly" measures considered by the *Babies* team, it was central to the work of *Starting Strong.* While the latter by no means ignored gender equality, it focused on the child, much as the World Bank has done (next section). Unlike the Bank, which favoured a targeted approach, *Starting Strong* argued for public support to make ECEC accessible for all children. As a result, *Starting Strong* recognised the importance of public investment in the supply side. It also argued strongly for an appropriate governance structure, one that struck a balance between central vision, financial commitment and regulatory framework, in order to ensure equity, and decentralisation in the interests of democracy and diversity.

Starting Strong rejected the narrow 'child as human capital in the making' perspective, stressing instead the alternative discourse in which the children are seen as active citizens in the here and now. The final volume in particular emphasised that "well-being, early development and learning [be placed] at the core of ECEC work, while respecting the child's agency and natural learning strategies" (OECD, 2006). Here the report singled out the Norwegian and Swedish systems for their systemic recognition of the agency of the child and Reggio Emilia for its outstanding work in this regard. Quality was defined in a very similar way to the European Commission Network. This meant *Starting Strong* also took a very different view of child care staff than *Babies'*. Accordingly it was critical of the "low recruitment and pay levels…the lack of certification in early childhood pedagogy…; the feminisation of the workforce and the failure of pedagogical teams to reflect the diversity of the neighbourhoods they serve" found in many countries (OECD, 2006:17). *Starting Strong* paid particular attention to early child pedagogy, contrasting 'school readiness' approaches to the social pedagogy approach that combines "care, upbringing and learning, without hierarchy" (OECD, 2006; 59). In other words, 'educating the educators' combined with democratic governance is the solution, not market discipline.

The emphasis on the child did not mean that adults were forgotten. Equality between men and women received particular emphasis in the final volume, where it recognised the need for both gender equality – women's right to equal treatment in work, equal pay for equal value and equal opportunities for advancement and 'gender equity' – "equal sharing of child rearing and domestic work" (OECD, 2006:30). Accordingly, like *Babies,* it was critical of the lack of shared parental leave as well as of long maternal child care leaves. *Starting Strong* also took up the issue of child poverty. Like *Babies* it recognised that child care helped by strengthening family income, especially for lone parents. Like the reports to be examined in the next section, it also saw a role for ECEC in preventing the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Unlike the latter, however, it recognised that ECEC could only be part of the solution to child poverty, which is rooted not in welfare dependency or poor parenting but in the underemployment of parents, income inequalities and insufficient transfer payments (OECD, 2006: 23).

While *Starting Strong* drew on the ideas generated by the critical element in the ECEC transnational discourse community, it also worked to broaden and deepen the networks sustaining the community. Thus although it followed OECD norms, working through official networks, it reached out to like-minded experts across the OECD in selecting the teams to conduct the country visits. It also organised several transnational workshops that brought them together to explore various issues of common concern, such as financing, quality and making ECEC friendly to children from diverse cultures. The release of the two summary reports (2001 and 2006) was used to organise major conferences, strategically sited in Stockholm and Reggio Emila. As the final volume noted, "this systematic exchange of ideas on policy issues and their implementation was helpful and allowed participants to establish their own 'critical friend' networks" (OECD 2006: 233). At the Reggio conference, participants agreed to establish a permanent network, which would report to the Education Committee and thus be in a position to press the Education Directorate to incorporate *Starting Strong's* lessons into its organisational discourse. Housed in Flemish-speaking Belgium (*Kind und Gezin)*, the network functioned independently for a couple of years. In April 2008, however, it was taken over by the Education and Training Policy Division, whose understanding of ECEC is more in line with the Directorate's organisational discourse.

Early Childhood Development as Poverty Reduction

The World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO are all involved in spreading the early childhood development message to the Global South, flanked by an array of INGOs and networks of experts such as the Consultative Group. This section, however, will focus on the World Bank. As Jones et al note, "the combination of its financing levels and the force with which it promotes its views help account for its emergence as the strongest player in the world of multilateral education" (2005:94). This holds true for ECEC. While in the 1960s and 1970s the Bank focused on vocational education, by the 1990s it had embraced early childhood development as part of its broader "investing in people" strategy. Now, "it regards itself as an important contributor to the debate about childhood; conversely it is lobbied by many organisations that regard it as a major player in the field" (Penn, 2002:122).

While the Bank draws on some of the same discursive elements as the OECD's DELSA, the Bank's early childhood development message is shaped by its own organisational discourse, one in which poverty plays a central role. This, plus its clear bias in favour of American research, means that it focuses more on 'early childhood development' (ECD), which draws more heavily on the scientific case for intervention in the early years, including prenatal care. ECEC is thus just one part of a broader package of measures and the primary beneficiary is the very young child. This is not to suggest that gender equality is ignored. Yet, as we shall see, here the Bank's emphasis is more on girl children as future workers and mothers. Adult women figure mainly as maternal agents to be enlisted (and trained) in ensuring the development of the next generation. Their role as workers, while not unimportant, is clearly secondary.

As noted above, the impetus for reformulating the Bank's social policy discourse is strongly linked to UNICEF's 1980s campaign for "adjustment with a human face", although mounting resistance to the Washington Consensus provided the wider context (Naim, 1999; Wade, 2002). Some within the Bank were quick to seize the opportunity thus provided. In fact, with UNICEF's support, under the Presidency of Barber Conable (1986-91), the Bank broke with the paleo-neoliberalism of the Reagan Administration as it began to fashion its new Core Poverty Program (Hall, 2007: 155). Initially focused on the need for residual "social safety nets", the Program was gradually expanded to incorporate the message that "investment in human resources through health, education and population was good for growth" (Hall, 2007:155). Like UNICEF's adjustment with a human face, the new organisational discourse in no way involved a rejection of the need for structural adjustment. This is clearly evident in two subsequent publications – *Investing in People* (1995) and *Building Human Capital for Better Lives* (1995).

Building Human Capital clearly argued the importance of working on two fronts – 'sound macroeconomic policies' to promote growth, now to be complemented by human investment "so that people have the skills to take advantage of the opportunities thus afforded." Investment in human capital was thus understood as critical to enabling the poor and disadvantaged to participate in the liberalising global economy (Psacharopoulos, 1995:2). Or, as *Investing in People* put it, “Investment in people implies striving to reach the point at which human capital investments no longer restrain growth or keep people in absolute poverty. Vital in this is equipping the poor to take advantage of the expanding opportunities that accompany growth” through “extending better health, nutrition and family planning to the poor” (World Bank, 1995:24).

The Bank did not mean public investment in *all* people. Rather, social expenditure should be restructured, eliminating “subsidies for the elite.” For example, “Bank operations have rationalized post-secondary and higher education spending [which are seen primarily to benefit the advantaged] and attempted to redirect expenditures to primary education”.[8] (World Bank, 1995:8). Public expenditures should instead focus only on the poor and disadvantaged: “to increase the human capital of the disadvantaged groups who need it most, targeted approaches are often essential. In recognition of this, Bank-financed projects are seeking innovative ways to reach girls, indigenous peoples and the very poor – to break the cycle of poverty.” (World Bank, 1995:8).

Females are thus numbered among the disadvantaged in the Bank’s new social investment strategy, but in quite different ways from the way they are represented in DELSA’s discourse. Of particular interest are females as girls (human capital in the making) or as mothers able to affect the quantity and quality of future human capital. Thus *Building* cites “the impact of women’s health and education on their childbearing decisions and the health and survival chances of their children, as well as their earning potential and employment opportunities” in making its case for “investing in women” (Psacharopoulos, 1995: 9). Similarly *Investing in People* notes “Education leads to increases in women’s income….But it also leads to important benefits for women who stay at home….Fertility rates and infant mortality rates decline with increases in the level of women’s education…and indicators of child health improve. So, investments in girls’ education have significant benefits for future generations” (World Bank, 1995: 7). Traditional maternal practices are in fact blamed for their children’s malnutrition, rather than the structural factors behind their poverty that have been exacerbated by the Bank’s adjustment policies. Thus *Building* states that “malnutrition of very young children rarely reflects a lack of food in the home. More often it is the product of feeding practices, child care practices and the health environment to which the child is exposed” (Psacharopoulos, 1995:31).

The new discourse in no way abandoned the Bank’s earlier concern to promote privatisation and “public-private partnerships.” Like *Babies and Bosses, Investing in People* encourages the expansion of private provision in the name of greater efficiency, quality and equity. Thus, “rather than supporting only government ‘monopolies’ as suppliers of education, the Bank is working with ‘vouchers,’ community-run schools, and other instruments…to give families more choice…or more voice…” (World Bank 1995:8). The growth of private schools is also seen as an advantage as it would let the “elite,” who can pay for their children’s education, to do so, thereby freeing spaces in public schools for poor children (World Bank, 1995:11).

In other words, like adjustment with a human face, the Bank’s social investment discourse holds to the original neoliberal thrust of the Washington Consensus. At the same time, it concedes a role for the “right kind” of social policy – one targeting the poor and aimed at developing their basic capabilities, especially those of the next generation. While the Bank is prepared to offer financial support for such ventures, moreover, local governments are to liberate the finances by disinvesting in social programs seen primarily to benefit the “elite.” As Deacon notes, “the Bank’s technical experts, who were very able to measure who received public services, were ill-informed about the political economy of welfare state building, which requires cross-class alliances in defence of public expenditure” (2007: 40). In other words, the Bank’s social investment strategy ignores what Korpi and Palme (1998) call the “paradox of redistribution” - that residual systems targeting the “needy” tend to be far less generous and more

[8] Interestingly, both publications link the Bank’s conversion to primary over tertiary education to the “dazzling success” of East Asian countries like Korea. While it is true that the latter did invest in basic education for all, it has also invested in higher education. Moreover, the Bank continued to ignore the larger role played by the “developmental state”, no doubt because the latter’s very active intervention in the economy flew in the face of the structural adjustment it favoured.

vulnerable to roll-backs than universal systems of sufficient quality to retain the loyalty of the middle class.

By the mid-1990s, early childhood development discourse had clearly become part of the Bank's strategy and its interpretation of the problem fit neatly into the Human Development Network's investing in people discourse.[9] In fact, "multisectoral approaches to early childhood development" was the first of the next steps listed in *Building*.

The push to include the "early years" actually began in the late 1980s, with the commissioning of a report by Robert Myers from the Consultative Group (Myers, 1987). According to Myers, Bank insiders like Jacques van der Gaag played a critical role in making child development, not mere survival, part of the Bank's broader social investment project. In 1989, paediatrician Mary Eming Young was hired as Child Development Specialist within the Human Development Network – the Bank Division most influenced by the social investment discourse described above.[10] By 1992 ECD components had begun to appear in Bank educational projects and a number of bank country education strategy papers provided additional support from the field (Young, 1995:9). Since then numerous studies have been commissioned, especially between 1998 and 2002, and the Bank hosted two major international ECD conferences (1996, 2000), as well as several regional conferences, on ECD. It is also involved in several projects in partnership with other IOs and INGOS.[11]

The Bank's ECD research draws heavily on mainstream American research, beefed up with examples drawn from the Bank's own projects in the field and inputs from the US "High/Scope" educational research foundation, UNICEF, the Inter American Development Bank, USAID, Save the Children US, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and the Aga Khan Foundation. Young's first public report (1995)[12] referred to the Carnegie and Rand studies mentioned earlier while later publications drew on Heckman's argument for the efficiency of investment in the early years. The Bank's first ECD conference was also held in conjunction with the Atlanta-based Task Force on Child Survival and Development (now the Center for Child Well-Being). Penn is thus largely correct in criticising Young's work for failing to "mention any developed country except the USA, even though there is considerable documentation from various European and Antipodean sources to suggest that conceptions of early childhood programmes in these countries may be very different" (2002:123).[13]

These sources, filtered through the Bank's own "investing in people" lens, clearly left their mark on how the case for ECD was made, as well as on the Bank's advice on how to promote it. Thus the case for ECD drew heavily on American neuroscience and behavioural science discoveries. It also relies on the notion of "developmentally appropriate practice" (DAP), as

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[9] Hall notes that the Network, the major Bank unit involved in formulating the investment discourse, spends the largest share of the Bank's social program budget and it "commands a strong position in the Bank" (2007:106).

[10] In her first major public report on ECD for the Bank, Young, who is currently in charge of the Bank's ECD "knowledge base" and the development of the ECD guide for its Global Development Gateway, thanked Alan Berg (one of the Bank officials who helped carry UNICEF's message to the Bank), van der Gaag and Psacharopoulos for their support within the Bank.

[11] In 2004 the Bank, in cooperation with UNICEF, UNESCO and ADEA0ECD launched a program to address the needs of the young affected by AIDs and it has also contributed to an ECD capacity building project, managed by the US-based Christian Children's Foundation, to develop capacity in various regions of the South.

[12] Psacharopoulos refers to an earlier (1994) report by Young on ECD but it is not listed among the Bank's publications in this area.

[13] In her 1996 report, Young drew on a 1995 study by the Consultative Group that discussed the destructive effects of "adjustment" on the Soviet-era childcare systems in Eastern Europe. While she recognized that "at its best the old system of state-supported child care centers provided appropriate, high-quality care – including mental stimulation activities, health care and three to five meals a day" she did not recommend its reinstatement nor that other countries might learn from the Soviet system. Rather, the advice was to "seek ways to strengthen family- and community-based child care", educate parents, and support NGOS like the Soros Foundation, which is using materials designed by US-based Children's Resources International, to promote a "pro-democracy" preschool curriculum (1996: 10-11 and 63).

reflected in the definition of ECD provided on the Bank's ECD home page: "all children progress through an identical sequence of physical, cognitive, and emotional growth and change. The ECD approach is based on the proven fact that young children respond best when caregivers use specific techniques designed to encourage and stimulate progress to the next level of development."[14] While Bennett (2008) notes that DAP was initially advanced as a counter to "schoolification" of ECEC, Penn underlines the liberal assumptions – the centrality of the individual, the need to encourage choice - that permeate the discourse (2002:125).

In line with the American social model, the Bank argues for a targeted approach to ECD in terms of a liberal definition of "equity" as well as efficiency. Here it draws on the normative claims advanced by of thinkers like Rawls and Sen. This is nicely exemplified in the Bank's paper by one of Young's mentors in the Bank, van der Gaag, who made the normative argument for ECD in terms reminiscent of Birdsall's (cited above),:

> a minimum notion of what constitutes 'social justice' would exclude any state in which some groups of children are deprived of having a reasonable chance to live a productive life just because they are born poor. Even societies that are unable, or unwilling, to provide a 'level playing field'…may want to put policies in place that allow all who have reasonable talents and are willing to use them, a chance to enjoy at least a minimum level of well-being. (van der Gaag and Tan, 1998:32)

A corollary of this approach is that middle class families should be expected "to contribute to the cost of their investment in the future of their children" (van der Gaag and Tan, 1998:33). This means countries like Brazil err in investing scarce public dollars in universal preschool programs: "All Brazilian children, rich and poor, have the same constitutionally mandated access to preschool education; however, most public expenditures are disproportionately concentrated on educating non-poor children" (Young, 2002:132). Brazil is thus enjoined to shift to a targeted approach.

The Bank also commends non-formal, community-based programs and public-private partnerships (Young, 2002: 136) as less expensive forms of ECD that build on community partnerships. Such programs also have the benefit of offering local women "employment opportunities." Thus *Investing in Children* argued that:

> Mothers can be effective ECD providers in home-based programs, such as in Colombia and Bolivia. The women receive training and minimum assistance, on credit, to meet facility standards. They are "accredited" as eligible to provide day-care services. Such efforts enable providers to benefit from public subsidies while also participating in a competitive, choice-based system of ECD programs. In addition, they benefit parents by increasing the number and type of care options to choose from (e.g., based on convenience, proximity, flexibility of hours). By helping to create new providers locally, government helps consolidate the players, power, position, and perception of early child development, primarily at the local level. (Young, 1995: 386-387)

Similarly, *Investing in the Future* highlighted a UNICEF sponsored program in Peru in which local women, designated as "community caregivers" and trained in "health care, early stimulation and basic nutrition" provide, for a "small fee," child care for other mothers in the community (1996:8). Yet these not only offer an inferior standard of care than those offered middle class children, they also fail to provide local women with the kind of employment opportunities they hoped for. For example, one of the Bank's "exemplary" programs in Medellin, Colombia "has almost petered out in disarray as women who had been hired as childminders objected to lack of employment benefits and security in the projects" (Penn, 2002:128).

Conclusions

The lines of division between the OECD and the Bank sketched above perhaps exaggerate the differences between the discourses directed to advanced capitalist countries and

[14] www.web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTCY/EXTECD/0,,contentmdk;20260280~menuPK:524346. Accessed 17.01.09

those directed to the Global South. Thus the recent report[15] by UNICEF's research division (Florence-based Innocenti), which is directed at OECD countries, draws on some of the same neuroscientific and economics research as the Bank in making its argument that the current "child care transition" holds the potential for harm as well as for good (Innocenti, 2008). While it ultimately comes down in favour of the kind of universal approach found in Scandinavia and, for children 3 to 6, other Western European countries, it follows the American/World Bank line in arguing that disadvantaged children should be given priority (2008: 9). It also advocates a mix of public and private provision, although here its position is not much different from that staked out in the OECD's *Babies* series.

In fact the *Babies* discourse shares a number of elements with the Bank's, notably the emphasis on the macroeconomic realities essential to economic globalisation and new public management's emphasis on the expansion of private provision, including cheaper forms of child care. This supports Craig and Porter's (2004) argument that the post-Washington Consensus social policy discourses directed to the advanced capitalist countries as well as to the Global South can both be described as "inclusive liberalism," which they regard as simply "roll-out" neoliberalism. Nevertheless, there are important differences. The Bank and its networks draw their inspiration from the residual American social policy model, targeting the poor, while leaving the rest to rely on markets and families. Although there were differences between *Babies* and *Starting Strong*, both show the influence of European social policy models which, especially in the ECEC field, hold to the principle of universality. Another critical difference is in the treatment of women. The Bank, departing from American practice, if not from the "family values" of the American New Right, still emphasises women's (current and future) maternal role. In contrast, both OECD studies echo the European Union's commitment to women's equality with men in the labour market and concomitantly, the importance of shared parental leave.

How can we account for these differences? At one level, the differences can be traced to the particular organisational discourses through which they see the world. In other words, though both IOs can be seen as nodes in the ECEC transnational discourse community, the roles they play within this reflect the distinct organisational discourses which filter their selection of research conducted elsewhere. As we have seen, while both the OECD and the Bank forged new social policy discourses and both have a "social investment" component, they developed these in quite different ways.

More broadly, one might point to the impact of their geo-political location. That the Bank's social policy model bears a strong resemblance to the residualist American social policy model is not accidental. As Wade has noted, not only does the US control the largest share of votes and act as the largest single contributor to the Bank's soft loan affiliate. All Bank Presidents have been American. Moreover,

> The large majority of Bank economists have a postgraduate qualification from a North American university, whatever their nationality….The Bank's location in the heart of Washington…plus the fact that its staff read US newspapers and watch American TV, plus the fact the English is the only language of business, mean that American pressures structure the very mindset with which most Bank staff promote development. (2002:318)

The OECD shares some of these characteristics with the Bank. The US also contributes the largest share to the OECD's budget as financial contributions are related to the size of each member's economy. While the Secretaries General have been chosen from a variety of countries, the norm has been to have an American occupying one of the Deputy Secretary General posts.[16]

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[15] This report is especially interesting as it brought together members of the two OECD teams: Bennett, author of the background paper, and Pearson, who is in charge of DELSA's social policy unit. Bennett's paper developed 15 potential benchmarks, which in many ways tried to capture the philosophy behind *Starting Strong*. Discussion with the team of advisors, however, winnowed these down to ten. The final report was authored by a former colleague of James Grant, the man behind "adjustment with a human face. Bennett's (2008) paper continued to stake out a position that was in marked contrast to the Bank's on issues like universality, the role ECEC can play in combating child poverty (limited) and the balance between decentralisation (favoured by the Bank) and cross-national coordination.

[16] Initially there were two posts, now there are four, and one of these is occupied by an American.

More broadly, as Dostal (2005) has pointed out, among the OECD's professional staff of 858, Americans (133) were only exceeded by the French (182).[17] Many of these are economists, trained in neo-classical economics, a discipline where the US increasingly sets the standard.

At the same time, the OECD's headquarters are in Paris, the majority of member states are European and Europeans constitute the majority of its professional staff. Jackson (2008) suggests that this has enabled the addition of social democratic ideas to the policy mix, especially with the victories of Left governments in key European states during the latter half of the 1990s. In addition, there are strong connections between the European Commission and the OECD. The European Union is an active participant in many of its committees and has representation on the Ministerial Council. The two organisations collaborate on various projects, although the OECD's longer research involvement around labour market and social policy issues and larger staff complement means that it is the Commission that looks to the OECD rather than the reverse.[18]

One final difference is the addressee. The Bank focuses its attention on the Global South, which is to be admonished to follow "best practices" of the advanced capitalist countries. As Rojas suggests, "the power of aid stems from the way it represents the Third World as in need of government, converting recipient countries into subjects of intervention and donors into their natural rulers. Aid establishes a relation between donor and recipient regulated by the promise of transforming the recipient country" (2004: 97-8). While the OECD is broadening its reach, its membership consists primarily of advanced capitalist countries. *Babies* and *Starting Strong* examined the policies and practices of these countries, taking as their exemplars European social models. When the OECD addresses the South, however, its tone changes. As Deacon and Kaasch have argued "even if it is possible to characterize the OECD in terms of its views on national social policy for *developed* countries as even-handed and concerned as much with universalism, public provision, and equity as with targeting and market efficiency, this is not always the case with regard to its view on social policy in a *development* context" (2008:236). This is especially clear in the work of its Development Assistance Committee (Ruckert, 2008). Thus while IOs geo-political headquarters may leave a strong imprint on the social policy and child care discourses they develop, these discourses are also reflect, and help to reproduce, deeper inequalities between the North and the South.

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[17] The US was followed by 90 from the UK, with Canada, Germany, Japan and Italy accounting for between 51-62 professional staff each.

[18] DELSA and the Commission began to cooperate on employment in the late 1990s (Noaksson and Jacobsson, 2003) and, since the Lisbon process, on social policy too. More recently they are working together on a family data base (Email communication with Mark Pearson, 05.04.07).

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