

Possibilities and Challenges in Early Childhood Care and Education in Madagascar

*Access and Parental Choice in preschools
in Toliara*

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Possibilities and Challenges in Early Childhood Care and Education in Madagascar

Access and Parental Choice in preschools in Toliara

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*The Possibilities and Challenges in Early Childhood Care and Education in Madagascar:
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IV

Abstract

This study addresses access and parental choice in ECCE in Madagascar. The purpose of the study is to explore the value of ECCE and the factors obstructing access to ECCE, to examine the similarities and differences of the parental choice between public and private preschools in Madagascar and finally, to suggest the measures or strategies improving access to ECCE in the countries with low resource. Social exclusion, social class and school choice within rational action theory and Bourdieu's cultural capital was used as a theoretical framework.

Madagascar was chosen as the site of research since it offers an opportunity to explore the situation of access and parental choice in ECCE in a low-resource context and to investigate the impact of political and economic crisis on access to ECCE and parental choice. The study is designed by a comparative research. Key stakeholders the central and local government officials and a representative of an international organization and civil society, teachers and parents participated in this study. All participants were compared in terms of the value of ECCE and the factors obstructing access to ECCE, the similarities and differences of parental choice between public and private preschool and the measures or strategies improving access to ECCE. Particularly, two parent groups (public and private preschool parents) were selected since it is useful to illuminate the similarities and differences of parental choice in the situation where private preschool that charges much more tuition fees than public preschools and use French as a language of instruction, dominates in Madagascar.

The study shows the four major findings. Key stakeholders, first and foremost, valued ECCE as school readiness and an investment in the future of young children. Secondly, the factors obstructing ECCE were poverty and low commitment on ECCE of the country. Thirdly, in terms of similarities and differences of parental choice between public and private preschool parents, both parent groups made a rational choice as the extent to which parents invest in their children. Public preschool parents chose preschool due to the cheaper cost and on the other hand, private preschool ones made a decision on account of the acquisition of cultural capital, French. Finally, key stakeholders suggested the measures or strategies improving access to ECCE, moderate and radical changes. The government officials and a representative of international organization gave an emphasis on the moderate changes in policy that implicates the introduction of ECCE related law and the promotion of ECCE. On the contrary, parents and a key representative of civil society suggested on radical changes at the policy level such as equitable ECCE policies, including free education and the expansion and quality improvement of public preschools.

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List of Abbreviations

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DEPA	Direction de l'Education Prescolaire et de l'Alphabetisation
DFA	Dakar Framework of Action
DREN	Direction régionale de l'éducation nationale
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
FRAM	Fikambanan'ny Ray Amandrenin'ny Mpianatra (parents' committee)
INSTAT	Institut National de la Statistique
HDI	Human Development Index
MAP	Madagascar Action Plan
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGA	Malagasy Ariary
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOK	Norwegian Krone
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RAT	Rational Action Theory
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WCECCE	World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education
WDEFA	World Declaration on Education for All

1. Introduction

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is an umbrella term that encompasses child development, growth, and education for young children. Marope (2010) defined ECCE as a holistic approach for young children from 0 to 8 years of age including “maternal health and nutrition, child health and nutrition, child education and early stimulation and child legal, social, economic, and emotional protection” (p. 2).

Education for All (EFA), an international movement dedicated to enriching basic education, underpins the value of ECCE with its ‘EFA Goal 1’ by 2015, by “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children” (UNESCO, 2000). This goal emphasizes that all young children are to be raised with good quality ECCE because it has a positive bearing on the survival, growth, development, and later education (ibid). Overall, its underlying idea is closely connected to the importance of ECCE as an early experience that can protect and nurture all young children, including those in an economically and politically marginalized condition around the world. In order to investigate the reach of the goal, the participation rate of pre-primary education is a chief indicator. For instance, the gross enrolment in developed countries is approximately 80 %, while in developing countries – such as the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region and many Arab States – it is less than 10 % (UNESCO, 2006). In particular, SSA has slightly increased its participation in pre-primary education from 12 % in 1999 to 17 % in 2008, but there is still a long way to go, compared to North America, Europe, parts of Asia and the Caribbean (UNESCO, 2010a).

When the goal of improving ECCE is achieved, the greatest beneficiaries will be the most vulnerable children. Many researchers emphasize the value of ECCE as an investment in their future, one that will provide individual or public return (Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Cunha & Heckman, 2007). Therefore, improving ECCE will help to alleviate poverty in the developing SSA region, where 48.5% of the population survives with less than 1.25 USD per day (World Bank, 2010). Although such countries have improved their ECCE record under EFA Goal 2, “providing free and compulsory primary education for all” (UNESCO, 2000), two points require close attention. Firstly, access to ECCE remains very low and it is related to family background (UNESCO, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010a). Secondly, different family incomes determine preschool choice, in a context where the private sector dominates and the quality of public preschools is far inferior (UNESCO, 2010). When exploring the causes that hinder the improvement of ECCE in Madagascar, this study will focus on *access* and *parental choice* in this study.

1.1 Rationale

This section is divided into four parts that answer the following questions: *Why value ECCE?* (1.1.1) *Why investigate access?* (1.1.2), *Why identify parents' decision making (public or private) in relation to school choice?* (1.1.3) and finally, *why Madagascar?* (1.1.4)

1.1.1 ECCE

Why ECCE is valued is easily explained: it is the fundamental education that prepares the child for lifelong learning. It should, first and foremost, be noted that early childhood is a “sensitive period” (UNESCO 2006, pp. 108-109):

- Young children’s physical, mental, social and emotional functioning differs from that of older children and adults, and comprises distinctive stages and milestones of development;
- Numerous progressive transformations occur in children’s physical, mental, cognitive and socio-emotional facilities from earliest infancy to the beginning of schooling. These transformations mark the acquisition of skills and capacities, ways of relating, communicating, learning and playing;
- Early childhood is the period when humans are most dependent on secure, responsive relationships with others (adults, siblings and peers) to assure not just their survival but also their emotional security, social integration, and cognitive skills;
- Young children’s development is especially sensitive to negative effects from early under nutrition, deprivation of care and of responsive parenting, and ill treatment.
- If children’s basic needs are not met, or they are maltreated or abused, the repercussions are often felt throughout childhood and into adulthood;
- While early development can be summarized in terms of universal general principles, the development pathways vary and are linked to individual capacities and special needs, gender, ethnicity, and economic, social and cultural circumstances.

ECCE is, however, often unrecognized as *babysitting*, which is an aid to working women, rather than *education* in itself (Ferguson, 2002). As such, the view of ‘ECCE-as-babysitting’ only emphasizes care, that is, the “natural, instinctive characteristic of being a woman” (Ferguson & Miller 2000, p. 20, cited in *ibid.*). Therefore, it is crucial that early childhood has its unique way of learning in early years. Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky argue that children construct their knowledge by exploring the environment (Broström, 2006; Morrison, 2012). In this sense, children’s interactions with the environment (e.g. adults at home, teachers in ECCE centers, etc.) are a core part of their development (Xu, 2005). Thus, ECCE goes beyond simple *care* to encompass *education*, enabling young children to solidify a strong foundation in their early years as a whole package, stimulating their cognitive, social and emotional and language development (Greenough, Black & Wallace, 1987; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Cole & Cole, 2001; Berk, 2003; Berk, 2006).

ECCE, furthermore, supports the 1989 United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child (UNCRC) defends “the rights that must be realized for children to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse.” (UNICEF, 2005) Such perspective can be realized in an ECCE setting, as it can guard young children and its educators practice that children are centered and they are capable of exploring and learning from the environment, echoing Piaget and Vygotsky. Most importantly, ECCE can contribute for young children to enjoy their right of participating and playing based on their own interest, promoting their development (Lester & Russell, 2010).

Finally, the benefits of ECCE can contribute to the development of the individual, and further, the society. Many economists consider education as a useful tool for the economic growth of countries (Shultz, 1961; Becker, 1964; 1995). The earlier the government invests in young children, the more they will be able to give back in the future (Heckman & Masterov, 2007; Cunha & Heckman, 2007). In their perspective, investment in young children can, ultimately, help not only to increase cost-effectiveness but also to reduce social cost (e.g. remedial programs led by grade retention, high school incompleteness, and even crime). Moreover, it helps to raise individual productivity, benefiting children to prepare for further education and employment (ibid). In this study, it is a key to identify the importance of ECCE, because that will help to assess its value and demand in Madagascar, a country that undervalues ECCE.

1.1.2 Access

The definition of *access* is “the means or opportunity to approach or enter a place” (Oxford online dictionary, 2014), a term that is controversial for its connotation of inequality. Simply put, access to opportunities determines different levels of achievement in terms of results and benefits.

Access to ECCE is defined as the enrolment in institutionalized ECCE – preschools. Their function is vital insomuch as they contribute to improve or compensate the development of economically or culturally deprived children from poorer countries (UNESCO, 2006; 2007; 2010a). Likewise, the negative effect of early experience mainly comes from *poverty* (Duncan et al., 1994; Brown & Pollitt, 1996; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; McLoyd, 1998; Petterson & Albers, 2001; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007; Walkers et al., 2007; Duncan et al., 2010) since children are inevitably dependent on the others, i.e. their parents in terms of food, shelter, access to education and so on. Adults’ poor circumstances in poverty can be categorized into low-income (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007), unemployment (McLoyd, 1998), single mothers and their depression due to it (Petterson & Albers, 2001), low-educational level, and inappropriate neighborhood effect (Duncan et al., 1994; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Unfortunately, poverty negatively influences early cognitive development (Duncan et al., 1994; Petterson & Albers, 2001),

and subsequent school achievement of children (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007) and even, adult attainment such as occupation and income (Duncan et al., 2010). In this study, an analysis of the factors obstructing access to ECCE in Madagascar is pivotal, as it will guide to the development of relevant policies directed at tackling early negative experiences or deprivation rooted in extreme poverty – 81.3 % of the population lives below the international poverty line (\$ 1. 25/ day) (Gentilini & Sumner, 2012). It will, furthermore, help to understand the reasons behind the country's current low access situation in this field.

In terms of factors *obstructing access to ECCE*, the main factor in developing countries is the number of *circumstances marginalizing* young children. (UNESCO, 2006; UNESCO, 2008; UNESCO, 2011). In effect, most of the children in those countries cannot have access to ECCE on account of the factors including income level, urban or rural living and ethnicity (ibid). There is a significant tendency indicating children with a specific background, that is, those who have been brought up in urban or upper and middle classes or ethnic majorities, can participate in ECCE far more in comparison to those having been brought up in a rural area or lower classes or ethnic minorities. This is because most of ECCE provisions are centralized in urban areas, and is privatized which demands tuition fee due to less public ECCE facilities (UNESCO, 2010a). *Mother's education* is, furthermore, one of the factors to impede access to ECCE (UNESCO, 2006). It means that the more a mother is educated, the higher the chances of her children are having access to it as well. For example, in the case of Peru, all children with mothers who had received more than ten years of education, participated in preschool, while those whose mothers had received between zero and four years started primary school without ECCE experience (Woodhead et al., 2009).

The commitment of the government in ECCE is, in contrast, the dominant factor *promoting access to ECCE* in many countries. Specifically, in the United States, so-called early intervention has been introduced by the provision of public ECCE programs to culturally and economically deprived children since 1965 (Currie, 2001). The introduction of Head Start has contributed for a 50% participation in public ECCE programs for children aged three to five with a poor family background (Children's Defense Fund, 2000 cited in ibid, p. 213). In effect, the US government has raised the budget allocation in ECCE from \$96 million in 1965 to \$4.7 billion in 1999 (Currie, 2001). Overall, enriched, or high quality ECCE programs, can improve cognitive, language and social development for children from disadvantaged families in later school life (Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Barnett, 1998; Burchinal, Roberts, Riggins, Zeisel, Neebe, & Bryant, 2000; Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Bryant, & Clifford, 2000; Belsky et al., 2007; Votruba-Drzal et al., 2004; Barnett, 2011), although such programs had been heavily criticized as the effect on most children has been gradually reduced, and in addition, it did not tackle the structural problem of economic and cultural inequality between class differentials,

focusing only on early intervention in a limited condition as a temporizing measure (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Penn, 2008). The Abecedarian project in the United States is, for example, one of the most well-known studies which found a long-term effect on the enriched program for disadvantaged children with parents of low level of income, education and intelligence (Campbell & Ramey, 1994). The study had been conducted when children were from 4.4 months to 21 years old. Those children experienced intensive early intervention including low teacher-child ratio and curriculum fit to every child. As a result, in terms of cognitive development, the group with early intervention demonstrated higher in IQ tests, reading and math scores than the group without it at age 15. Therefore, early intervention can help the contexts where low access rate of ECCE is prevailed.

Not much attention has been paid to the factors influencing access to ECCE in developing countries, apart from some studies conducted in developed countries. In developing countries, some quantitative research has been done (e.g. the enrollment rate to ECCE, or the correlation between access to ECCE and family background in the annual UNESCO Global Monitoring Report) (UNESCO, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010a), but it does not analyze the reasons or factors obstructing ECCE. A study of access to ECCE in Madagascar will, therefore, help to understand inequitable access for young children to an enriched early experience in a low-resource context.

1.1.3 School choice

Worldwide, ECCE is not compulsory, and the private sector predominates except for a few Western countries (e.g. Finland and Sweden), which provide high quality programs (OECD, 2006). In effect, ECCE is often considered a parental responsibility involving the payment of tuition fees regardless of government subsidies (Ferguson, 2002); such responsibility allows for *choice*. Although access is essentially a 'have' or 'have not' question, the varying quality of ECCE services (depending on a different level of costs) adds complexity to the analysis.

Some researchers regard choice as exercising parents' rights in choosing within diverse and innovative school programs depending on religion, language, art, science and whatever fits best the educational philosophy of parents (Brighouse, 2000). Others, on the other hand, discuss inequality in a class differential made by parental choice (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthrope, 1996; Gewirtz, Ball & Bowe, 1995; Reay & Ball, 1998; Reay, 2004; Smala, Paz & Lingard, 2013). Unfortunately, the object of these studies is parents and pupils in secondary education, after compulsory education. They, however, provide the determinant factors of parental choice, parents' different level of *economic* and *cultural background*.

Little literature has focused on parental choice in ECCE concerning these reasons. In terms of economic background, in developed countries, for example, poorer families cannot afford the costs of private ECCE programs even with the subsidies of the state in the United Kingdom (Penn, 2007). Choice is, furthermore, influenced by the cultural background of parents (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Gewirtz et al., 1995; Reay & Ball, 1998; Reay, 2004). Parents' educational history and experience and information are vital to measure their cultural resources (Reay, 2004); these can impact parental choice, and often middle class parents benefit from the ability to decide, while working class parents cannot (ibid). For instance, in ECCE, in the United Kingdom, middle class parents build a social network through gathering, sharing and collecting useful information about child care centers (Vincent, Braun, & Ball, 2008).

Conversely, in developing countries, particularly SSA region, children from urban areas and wealthier families tend to have greater access to private preschools with high tuition fees (UNESCO, 2011). This is because it is hard to avoid inequality of quality among ECCE services since a good quality of ECCE programs of the state hardly exist and the private sector dominates (UNESCO, 2006; Woodhead et al., 2009). Furthermore, private preschools, in general, outweigh the public ones with regard to quality of ECCE, containing teachers, sufficient materials or toys and well-equipped facilities (UNESCO, 2010c). There has, nevertheless, been very little attention to parental choice on ECCE in countries with low resources. This study will, therefore, help to build up the evidence that can demonstrate in unequal access in choice made by parents in public and private ECCE services in such context.

1.1.4 Madagascar

Madagascar is the world's fourth largest Island belonging geographically to SSA. It has a population of approximately 20.5 million, of which 80 % live in rural areas (CIA, 2008). Its official languages are Malagasy and French as the former French colony. It is one of the least developed countries in the world (151 out of 187 in Human Development Index (HDI), according to UNDP, 2013). There are 3.5 million children under age 6 (2005), representing 20.5 % of the total national population (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Recherche Scientifique, 2008).

Madagascar, first and foremost, offers an opportunity for exploring the situation of access and parental choice in a low-resource context. In terms of access to ECCE, the participation rate of is very low, with only 7.4 % (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Recherche Scientifique, 2008). Despite the effort to expand the number of public preschools from the previous government, there are only just 164.063 children enrolled in preschool in a total of 3.5 million under age 6 (ibid). With regards to choice, a comprehensive ECCE service in Madagascar hardly exists and thus, the private sector

dominates, making up for 94 % of total preschools (ibid). In this sense, the possession of financial resource can determine a different choice of parents in public and private preschools in Madagascar. This is because public preschools have considerably lower tuition fees than private preschools.

Madagascar, furthermore, offers the chance to investigate how political and economic insecurity impedes access and choice of ECCE. The commitment of the former government on ECCE has been reduced since the 2009 coup d'état and, while people have struggled with the economic and political crisis. Historically, in 1991, Madagascar ratified the UNCRC (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) claiming it to be an ethical obligation towards ECCE. The interest in ECCE is, however, closely linked to the MAP (Madagascar Action Plan 2007-2012) (Government of Madagascar, 2007) that the former president Marc Ravalomanana initiated, in line with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for the IMF and World Bank (Government of Madagascar, 2007). Overall, MAP aims at reaching the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the MDG (Millennium Development Goals), which the Malagasy government followed under MAP, ECCE-related articles were not included; instead, 100% enrolment for (universal) primary education was the aim set. The MDG was developed by the UN and its main partners (the UNDP, World Bank, IMF, UNICEF, etc.) to reduce extreme poverty rates around the world in 2000. His government, as a whole, paid special attention to primary education, concentrating on the MDGs. Nonetheless, Ravalomanana still made a serious effort to encourage ECCE than the present government, purporting to achieve an access and completion of primary school for *all* Malagasy children, as preschool was essential to place and to keep children in primary school. He took initiatives such as the expansion of ECCE and quality improvement in ECCE was disclosed (Government of Madagascar 2007, p. 52).

Unfortunately, shortly after the existing government took over power, the initiatives on ECCE of the previous government was terminated by the coup d'état in 2009, including the goal of reaching an access rate of at least 20 % until 2012 made by the former government (Government of Madagascar, 2007). The political and economic crisis resulting from the 2009 *coup d'état* in Madagascar has led social problems (e.g., unemployment and food insecurity) worsen by droughts and cyclones every year (Ploch and Cook, 2012). After the *coup d'état*, furthermore, the ODA froze up to 200 million USD in aid (Olsen, 2009). Thus, this was a tremendous loss for Madagascar, especially in the government's ability to provide public services. According to a DEPA official (Direction de l'Éducation Préscolaire et de l'Alphabétisation) (2012-interview), the department in charge of ECCE, the Ministry of Education's investment on ECCE represents only roughly 0.02 % of the total budget. Due to shortages in the national budget, the government partially managed to implement some ECCE policies, including teacher training. The existing government's low priority on pre-primary education (lack of budget on ECCE and termination of ECCE-related policies of the former government) has, therefore,

worsened the situation of ECCE in Madagascar. Overall, Madagascar is the optimal site to study access and choice in a low-resource context under the conditions of a political and economic crisis.

1.1.5 Summary

This study focuses, first and foremost, on *the value of ECCE*, since the recognition on the importance of ECCE as *child development, investment and rights* can focus the attention of various stakeholders – from government officials to parents – upon tackling lack of ECCE provision in low-resource countries. Moreover, considerations of *access* to ECCE are also important because inequitable access on ECCE can give rise to inequalities not only in child development at an individual level, but also in terms of economic growth at a state level. This study, therefore, questions which factors obstruct access to ECCE in order to improve equitable access to ECCE in a developing world. In particular, with regards to the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools, it is claimed that *school choice* clearly occurs, and the choices made by parents from public and private preschools can differ depending on economic and cultural background. Finally, Madagascar will be the best site to explore the *access and choice* issues in ECCE, specifically in low-resource contexts such as the SSA region. Furthermore, it can inform how political and economic change in a nation influences the situation of ECCE from the policy level to the grassroots level.

1.2 Aims

In light of the issues raised in the previous section, the aims of this study are: 1) *to explore the value of ECCE from the perspective of various stakeholder in Madagascar*; 2) *to investigate the factors obstructing access to ECCE in Madagascar*; 3) *to use a comparative qualitative approach to examine the logic behind the parents' choice between public and private preschools in Madagascar*; 4) *to contribute in producing academic knowledge on access to ECCE in the context of a low-resource country and to suggest how to improve access to preschool for all young children in Madagascar*.

1.3 Research questions

Directly related to the aims of the study, four research questions are raised:

- 1) How do the various stakeholders view the value of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Madagascar?
- 2) What are the factors obstructing access to ECCE in Madagascar?

- 3) What are the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attend private or public preschools in Madagascar?
- 4) What measures or strategies are put in place by the government, multilateral agencies, community and NGOs to improve access to ECCE in Madagascar?

1.4 Assumptions

The two assumptions underlying this study were driven by the belief that ECCE is the tool responsible for generating equality or inequality for children in the SSA region. This belief was informed by a vast array of literature on ECCE in SSA and discussions with my colleagues (teachers in Madagascar and Tanzania). Specifically, Madagascar is the country that illustrates this condition most profoundly. In terms of equality of education, it was assumed that despite the commonalities between SSA countries and Madagascar (i.e. the low commitment and low participation on ECCE), the condition of Madagascar's ECCE is more precarious than others, as Madagascar has been through a political and economic crisis since the 2009 coup d'état. Therefore, young children in Madagascar, living in particularly disadvantaged settings, may require ECCE services more desperately, given the degree that their families suffer from food insecurity and unemployment (Ploch and Cook, 2012); thus, it is difficult for their parents to provide a good environment to them. Concerning inequality, the assumption was linked with social class and access to ECCE, since private schooling is, in general, considered as a privilege destined for the upper and middle class due to its high cost. Likewise, it is assumed that there would be different reasons for access between parents in public and private preschools; the reasons behind this being different social backgrounds, determined by the different levels of economic and cultural possession. These were the assumptions held before the study commenced.

1.5 Methodology

This is a *qualitative study* that investigates the value of ECCE, the factors obstructing access to ECCE, the similarities and differences in decision making of access on ECCE between parents in public and private preschools and finally, the strategies or measures to improve access to ECCE in Toliara, Madagascar based on the factors gathered. To best understand the ECCE context, a total of 42 stakeholders were interviewed from the macro- to the micro-level: 3 central and 3 local government officials, 1 international organization member (UNICEF), 1 civil society staff member (Aide Et Action), 5 teachers, and 29 parents. The parents consisted of those whose children had never had access or had dropped out from it and of the children attending either public or private institutions. The teachers were from both the public and private preschools. Furthermore, observations were

conducted in the 5 schools from which the teachers and parents were drawn. In addition, policy documents have also been utilized.

1.6 Structure of thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. In chapter 1, the rationales, aims and research questions guiding the study are presented. Chapter 2 develops the theoretical framework, highlighting the key components of the study (social exclusion, social class, choice by rational action theory and Bourdieu's cultural capital). In chapter 3, I review the literature in detail, presenting knowledge on the general understanding and significance of ECCE and further, access, equity and quality in ECCE in African context. Chapter 4 outlines all the elements of the methodology, including sampling, materials, procedure, ethical issues, analysis, and the validity and reliability of the study. In Chapter 5, the findings are presented in their main thematic categories that emerged from the data gathered. These include the value of ECCE, the factors obstructing access to ECCE, the similarities and differences in decision making in the access to ECCE between parents in public and private preschools, and the strategies or measures to improve access to ECCE. Then, in chapter 6, a discussion follows, with the four research questions being answered based on the findings presented in the former chapter. The thematic that emerged from the data are, in addition, analyzed. Finally, chapter 7 summarizes the thesis, its limitations, and future directions for academics and policy-makers in the field of ECCE.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter focuses upon a set of theories in order to develop a conceptual understanding of the key issues in this study. These theories will be used to address specifically the factors obstructing access to ECCE and the choices made by parents in public and private preschools.

Access is a central theme in the study. Children's rights are protected by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Madagascar does not appear to provide young children the opportunity to benefit from ECCE, with only 9% of children aged 3 to 5 participating in it (UNESCO, 2012). This confirms that the vast majority of Malagasy children are excluded from ECCE services. Hence, a theory for the understanding of the issue of access is required. For this purpose, the concept of social exclusion, discussed by scholars such as Fraser (1989), Kabeer (2000) and Sen (2000), will deserve special attention (section 2.1).

By accelerating the privatization of education with an educational reform in many countries since the 1980s, a market-dominant principle was introduced in education – an area traditionally managed by the government (Ball, 2003). In effect, the emergence of private schools made available to parents a more ample choice in the educational market. Some argue that school choice contributes to exercising parents' rights in choosing within diverse and innovative school programs depending on religion, language, art, science, and whatever fits best the educational philosophy of parents (Brighouse, 2000). In this perspective, parents become 'customers' who can buy a 'product' that satisfies their demands, as the school is regarded as a good in the market. The desire of parents positioned in different statuses can be, however, different or limited, based on the ownership of economic, cultural and social capital. As expected, the market of the libertarian right can, for example, be associated with economic capital as purchasing power, since the money spent by parents governs the choice of buying a 'prestigious' education (ibid.).

With regards to the choices made by parents in public and private preschools, as noted in chapter 1, the fact is that ECCE in Madagascar is dominated by the private sector. However, "unequal distribution of income in society may bias certain markets in favor of the rich and against the poor" (Chubb & Moe, 1990, p. 31 cited in Ball, 1993, p. 10). This state of affairs raises the issue of choice, since public preschools charge low annual tuition fees, while private preschools have prohibitively high monthly tuition fees for most parents. In the latter, French is the language of instruction, thus guaranteeing the acquisition of cultural (linguistic) capital to a minority. It is assumed that there will be a different access pattern between parents in public and private preschools, shaped by the parents' economic, political and cultural status.

Several researchers claim that school choice can lead to class inequalities and social reproduction (Boudon, 1974; Gewirtz et al., 1995; Breen & Goldthorpe, 1997; Reay & Ball, 1998; Bernal, 2005). In this study, theories in relation to social class and choice are used as a theoretical background. As Hatcher (1998) classifies it, school choice can be framed under rational action theory (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthorpe, 1996) and Bourdieu's cultural capital of parents (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991, Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Both discuss social class reproduction in education on choice. The former discusses that choice shaped by class differential is influenced by different calculations, including the process of assessing costs, benefits and possibilities of outcome. The latter concentrates on different levels of ownership of cultural capital, which cannot only have an impact in choosing their children's education, but can also help in reproducing social class. Social exclusion (2.1) and social class and school choice (2. 2) will, therefore, be the core of this chapter.

2.1 Social exclusion

The notion of social exclusion has historically been formulated in the North, with France at the forefront. Throughout time, it was crystallized from the recognition of the types of excluded social groups to the consideration for structural issues encompassing the social, economic and political fields. For instance, in the 1970s, Rene Lenoir identified excluded people as a diverse social group including the poor, old, disabled, mistreated children, etc. (de Haan, 1999). Since the 1980s, with a rampant economic crisis and the skepticism of a welfare state, the notion has re-centered on structural problems, implicating a wide range of social disadvantages such as unemployment, ghettoization and changes in family life (Cannan, 1997 cited in de Haan, 1999, p. 23). Recently, Silver (1995) illustrated the status of social exclusion that considers these historical changes:

[L]ivelihood; secure, permanent employment; earnings; property, credit, or land; housing; minimal or prevailing consumption levels; education, skills, and cultural capital; the welfare state; citizenship and legal equality; democratic participation; public goods; the nation or the dominant race; family and sociability; humanity, respect, fulfillment and understanding (cited in Sen, 2000, p. 1).

Simply put, people can be excluded from the aforementioned elements. It is important to note that a wide range of forms of social exclusion are interrelated, and this is not traceable to individuals, but to the structure (de Haan, 1999; Fraser, 1995; Kabeer, 2000; Sen, 2000). Social exclusion refers to a deprived or disadvantaged status (de Haan, 1999; Sen, 2000). Exclusion is, however, not translated into a single form of deprivation, but rather a mixture of different forms. For example, Sen (2000) indicates that relational deprivation is casually produced by exclusion. He exemplifies how one type of exclusion can be generated by a range of different roots and cause relational deprivations. Hunger can, for instance, be relevant to: "(1) being excluded from enjoying a normal crop, (2) being excluded from employment, (3) exclusion from the food market because of low purchasing power, (4) exclusion from

food subsidy arrangements” (p. 11). This is an example of how deprivation can be either a cause or an effect, interdependent from one another. In Sen’s understanding of deprivation, social exclusion is also based on unequal structure in a given society. In the above case, hunger is the dominant problem in developing countries, and the government is likely to have a deficient social welfare system due to the lack of financial and physical resources. The consequences of the government’s failure are felt by a majority of people stuck in a condition of absolute poverty, while a smaller, wealthier group enjoys access from livelihood to cultural capital.

Fraser (1995) and Kabeer’s (2000) considerations on social exclusion are also grounded by the nature of social exclusion: interrelational and structural. What distinguishes Kabeer from others is his fine-grained perception on exclusion, as he identifies problematic groups, conditions and processes that can cause social exclusion. Besides, Fraser (1995) argues that social exclusion is driven from economic and cultural injustice. To tackle that problem, she develops ways of changing the social, economic and political system in order for developments at the policy level to occur.

Kabeer divides social exclusion in three elements: problematic ‘groups’, ‘conditions’ and ‘processes’ (2000, p. 83), as shown below (Figure 2.1). Altogether, problematic groups, conditions and processes can produce or promote certain types of social exclusion. Problematic groups refer to the individuals at the fringes of society, such as beggars and the unemployed; problematic conditions are linked to marginalization (e.g. poverty and unemployment). Finally, the problematic processes are the systematic exclusionary elements that are driven by exclusion such as the political, social and economic system.

More importantly, Kabeer (2000) supports Fraser’s (1989) analysis on different forms of injustice. Problematic groups, conditions and processes with deprivation or disadvantage can lead to injustice in the economy and culture. In Fraser’s view, there are two different forms of injustice: economic and cultural. Economic injustice encompasses exploitation, marginalization and deprivation, while cultural injustice is related to cultural domination, non-recognition, representation, interpretation and communication (Fraser 1989, p. 21). It is worth highlighting that while most scholars focus on poverty as the main factor causing social exclusion, Fraser sees exclusion as a problem of participation and representation. In other words, limited participation and representation of a certain group brings about exclusion in decision-making and resource allocation. Therefore, the group is not recognized in a given society and the exclusion remains.

Besides, Fraser (2005) calls the economy-based discourse of deprivation in the conceptualization of social exclusion into question. She disagrees that economic disadvantage or injustice alone determine individual or groups’ opportunities in a society; this implies that the excluded are mainly induced by poverty at an individual level, and thus the problem of exclusion is regarded as a matter of individuals or individual households. In addition, economic and cultural injustice does not work separately, but

are intertwined (Fraser, 1995; Kabeer, 2000). For example, in Africa’s post-colonial context, the local elites (the so-called ‘citizens’) still enjoy far better education, employment and conditions of life than members of the dominant culture (Kabeer 2000, p. 8). In other words, the privileged dominate a key part of society and influence from within, by persisting in the decision-making processes related to resource distribution and social arrangement, while the minorities have restricted access to participation and treated as anonymous subjects, remaining economically and culturally poor.

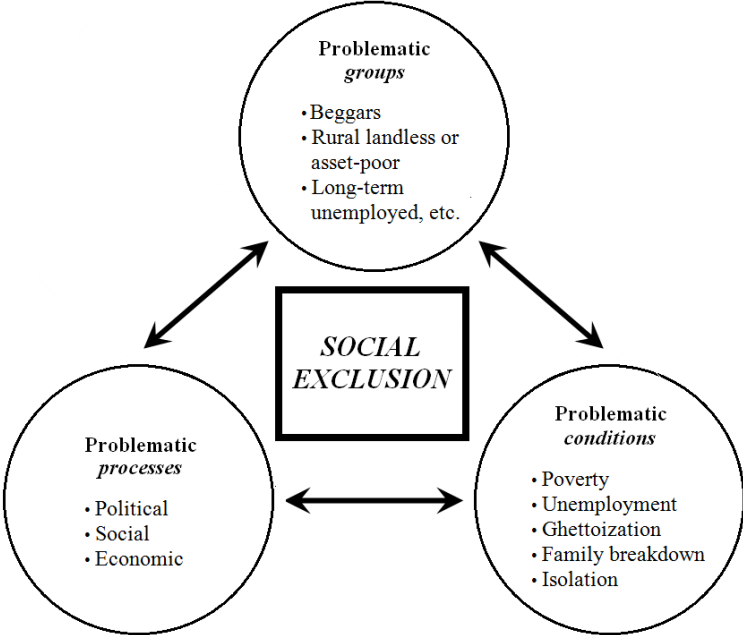


Figure 2.1: The three elements of social exclusion

The concept of *redistribution* and *recognition* (Fraser, 1995), therefore, becomes critical. It suggests that in terms of redistribution, a disadvantaged group can mobilize their interests, and in terms of recognition, identity should be valued for them. There are two kinds of remedies to address economic and cultural injustice: affirmative and transformative (ibid). The former revalues the marginalized group in a given society, but does not deal with class differentiation, while the latter not only valorizes this group, but also destabilizes an inequitable social structure. In terms of class differential in economic terms, *affirmative remedies* provide aid to groups such as the underemployed working class or the unemployed. However, it creates a stigmatized group that can become endemically needy and deficient. Therefore, this remedy implies disregarding such a group. In contrast, *a transformative approach* tackles the injustice of redistribution and recognition; it considers “universalist social-welfare programs, steeply progressive taxation, macro-economic policies aimed at creating full employment, a large non-market public sector, significant public and/or collective ownership, and democratic decision-making basic socioeconomic priorities” (ibid, p. 85). With this strategy, disadvantaged groups are

hardly noticeable, because it helps to address both injustice of redistribution and recognition. In this case, the government should play a core role in implementing policies of redistribution that tackle the economic disparity between the advantaged and disadvantaged, while recognizing the wide range of identities in a society, since the problem of exclusion is not an individual one, but public.

2.2 Social class and choice

Many studies of parental choice have a linkage with social class, since class differential is, in effect, an important factor guiding choice as a result of unequal socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. This section will begin with a discussion of social class (2.2.1). With regards to school choice, there is little literature dedicated specifically to preschool choice (Lloyd & Penn, 2013). Rational action theory (2.2.2) and cultural capital (2.2.3), however, account for the factors influencing choice in the literature, and will be used to understand parents' decision-making when opting for public or private preschools.

2.2.1 Social class

Social class division, or social stratification, means that human groups are vertically ordered and, in this hierarchy, people possess a similar amount of resources and retain a similar type of lifestyle from generation to generation (Marger, 2005). In the beginning of the industrial revolution, Karl Marx coined the concept of class, focused on the unequal distribution of ownership between landowners and peasants in the agricultural society, and between the capitalists and the working class – this can be simply defined as a 'degree of economic ownership' (Marger, 2005; Kerbo, 2000).

More recently, class is, in general, divided in three: upper, middle and working class. Because of the complexity of modern society, professions have become more diversified, and the group that absorbs more professional knowledge (such as that in the fields of medicine or technology) has emerged as a new middle or upper class, echoing Weber's reflections on social status (Marger, 2005). In Weber's terms, the concept of social class is extended, adding the notion of status (a non-economic attribute) by which certain groups are more recognized in relation to honor, privilege and power. It is important to highlight that social status can be an invisible resource which transmits privilege or power to the next generation, since its moving force depends on skills and professional knowledge linked to credentials. In this way, between the upper and working classes, the middle class emerged. This class is composed by the skilled and professionalized individuals that through formal education and professional training hold the necessary credentials to emerge, sustain, and reproduce their power (Brown, 1995).

To identify social classes, many scholars have developed instruments to measure levels of possessions within each class. Bourdieu's (1986) work is remarkable since it introduces the concept of different

capitals: economic, cultural and social. His classification of different types of capital is useful in this study as it helps to identify different classes (i.e. upper or middle and working classes). Bourdieu finds that the upper or middle classes have cultural and social capital, unlike the working classes. To begin with, economic capital as a traditional element of class division refers to property ownership, which can be converted into money. However, in a modern society, owning economic capital alone is not enough to maintain class privilege. According to him, in order to legitimate the privilege of the upper or middle classes, society demands different kinds of capital, including a high level of education, skilled employment, honor, and so forth.

Cultural capital and social capital relates the aforementioned argument as an implicit asset that is constructed on the culture of society and can often be transformed into money under certain circumstances (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital represents a core part of Bourdieu's classification of forms of capital; it refers to non-economic assets such as education, skill, language and knowledge that offer individuals a high social status. Social capital is accumulated with resources within a social group in terms of nobility. The size of networks determines the volume of capital, and particularly, it is characterized as exclusivity. Furthermore, it is necessary to have a minimum resemblance between the agent and the rest of the members in a group to gain access to social capital. However, he believes that the different forms of capital play a critical part in producing or reproducing the division of social class (upper, middle and working class). Moreover, when three types of capital – economic, cultural and social capital – are taken altogether, they yield a hidden effect of cultural dominance of the privileged (Bourdieu, 1986). Nevertheless, it is critical to highlight that cultural capital is not separable from economic capital, since money can make cultural capital affordable and sometimes, accessible. In fact, cultural capital, equivalent to money, is also valued in the market (ibid).

2.2.2 School choice and rational action theory

Many parents have been more careful about which school they choose for their children, since the needs of parents, depending on class (which is grounded by a level of economic, cultural and social capital) can be different, as noted above. With regards to the issue of choice, rational action theory (RAT) has been elaborated since the 1970s. RAT theorists acknowledge that there is class differential and, nonetheless, the choice made by a different class stems from different calculations considering cost. Supporters of RAT regard school choice as rational choice that evaluates the costs, benefits and possibilities of outcome in the markets (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthrope, 1996).

Several researchers agree that the probabilities of choice in class differentials are shaped by different possession of economic capital and different aspirations (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthrope, 1996). Firstly, the degree of possession of economic capital can be a determining factor of

whether costs, benefits and probabilities are taken into consideration. For example, school choice by the working class parents tend to be highly dependent on the cost of school, since they have a greater probability of surviving on manual or temporal work with a low or irregular income.

Erikson & Jonsson (1996) elaborated two economic reasons for class differentials: “the extent of inequality of economic condition between classes and the degree of economic security, i.e. the likelihood of fluctuations in parents’ income due, for instance, to unemployment that will reduce the ability to provide economic support” (cited in Hatcher, 1998, p. 10). Stated differently, conditions differ between two groups: one is more advantaged, while the other is more disadvantaged.

Echoing Boudon (1974), the different conditions can be further supported by identifying the concept of social distance between the upper or middle and working class. For example, children of working class families have higher aspirations, but are farther away from a privileged position (profession) than their counterparts from higher classes (ibid). The possibility and capability to achieve the anticipated aspirations are, therefore, far closer for teenagers in the upper or middle classes than those from the working class, owing to specific variables surrounding them, including parental cultural capital (i.e. education level) and their economy. Parents from the upper or middle class tend to actively participate in the school selection process by guiding the decisions of their children and utilizing information to the fullest (i.e. from their previous educational experience to recent information in relation to a range of schools); on the other hand, working class parents are not inclined towards making a choice for their children, considering first and foremost the proximity of the school’s location (Gewirtz et al., 1995; Reay & Ball, 1998).

Secondly, the different aspirations of the different social classes affect choice. Again, these are not separable from the diverse conditions of classes, since aspirations can be amplified or restricted by their conditions. There is an assumption that pupils and parents from the working class are more likely to have lower aspirations when making a decision than those from the upper or middle class (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthorpe, 1996). For instance, choosing a vocational track or leaving school after compulsory education can be a social demotion for upper or middle class students; on the other hand, such an option for a working class pupil can still signify a social promotion that ultimately leads to a skillful occupation with stable income, regardless of the degree of reputation and income in relation to the profession (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996). As Goldthorpe (1996) suggests, education in itself is an investment that can guarantee not only sustaining a privileged class, but also protecting the degradation of social status with the outcome of qualification or credential.

To sum up, rational action in school choice emerges the considerations of costs, benefits and probabilities of outcome that are represented by future (economic) return between an upper or middle and working class. Moreover, it is important to note that different economic conditions and aspirations

for a future carrier between the two groups can lead to social reproduction. This means that apart from the degree of the ownership of economic capital, different aspirations from both groups can be facilitated or hindered by parental cultural capital (i.e. previous educational level and information on schools). Therefore, it is possible to say that despite the fact that the groups act rationally at their own level, as Sen (2000) argues, the outcomes depend on their capabilities, which are determined by their social condition.

2.2.3 School choice and cultural capital

On the issue of choice, although Bourdieu's work did not directly examine the relationship between social class and parental choice, his work on cultural capital that is produced by the embodied, objectified and institutionalized state is worth discussing, because choice itself can be determined and mirror individuals' backgrounds (Hatcher, 1998; Lareau, 1989). Many scholars have studied the gap in parental choice made by the middle and working classes (Bernal, 2005; Ball, Bowe & Gewirtz, 1996; Reay & Ball, 1998; Smala et al., 2013). This body of research appears because middle classes have emerged through the accumulation of cultural capital and are represented as a holder of such capital, as noted above.

Bourdieu (1986) divided cultural capital into three states: *embodied*, *objectified* and *institutionalized*. *The embodied state* is defined as the individual characteristics and habits formulated by the person's social surroundings, whereas *the objectified state* refers to the accumulation of valuable objects such as books, instruments and machines. In addition to these two cultural components, *the institutionalized state* is heavily linked to official educational qualification and training, such as educational credentials or certificates. This last component must not be overlooked, as it relates to the accumulation of cultural capital acquired from educational institutions (e.g. schools and training centers), as opposed to that gained through family heritage.

Bourdieu's cultural capital has, in general, been discussed in the perspective of reproducing class hierarchy (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1991; Swartz, 1997). In this context, possessing cultural capital reflects a type of exclusivity. This is to say, the upper or middle class, holding cultural capital, tries to preserve the monopoly of knowledge and cultural attitude as their own attributes. Such cultural capital consists of individual's habits and characteristics inherited by their families, the accumulation of knowledge through books or other sources, and knowledge from formal education and training that creates credentials and certificates (Bourdieu, 1986). Key to this is Bourdieu's attempt to reveal that the rich cultural language, attitudes and habits from one's family implicitly (but strikingly) influence the sustenance or reproduction of one's privilege in the social hierarchy.

Language is one of the broader concepts of cultural capital. Specifically, Bourdieu had worked on linguistic capital in his book *Language and symbolic power* (1991). Although he predominantly wrote about all aspects of ‘high culture’ in that book, this study focuses specifically on linguistics because of its relevance. The measurement of linguistic capital can be based upon the mastery of language (Fang, 2011). In his view, a legitimate language is the potential to reproduce the legitimacy of the dominant group, offering it the capacity to speak the language in a legitimate way – for example, French in France. The interplay between linguistic capital and power contributes to preserve the prestige of the linguistic elite group in the social, economic and political system. Naturally, the class division between the upper or middle and working classes is more distinguishable due to the difference of style of how each speaks, the language skills acquired from their close relatives, and educational experience.

Most importantly, Bourdieu (1991) stresses the relationship between one’s competences of linguistic capital and institutional markets (e.g. education and employment). This is relevant since Madagascar, the research site of this study, values the acquisition of the colonial language, French, as the official language in the institutions, in particular in higher education and the administration.

The generalization of the official language is a by-product of “a dimension of the unification of the market in symbolic goods which accompanies the unification of the economy and also of cultural production and circulation” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 50). The establishment of a legitimate language is not separable from the constitution of the market (such as education, labor market and administration) (Bourdieu, 1991). Simply put, the education system contributes primarily in transmitting a legitimate language, while the labor market produces a place that is equipped with linguistic competence where human resources compete with one another. In addition, the administrative market, functions to impose the usage of the ‘legitimate language’, denying a ‘popular language’. Finally, a language is legitimate and official through the constitution of the aforementioned market processes, at the same time that it degrades the other languages (such as a popular language).

Bourdieu’s term *field* should be highlighted, as it can be a major determinant in positioning the different kinds of social space such as education, employment, power and politics (Jenkins, 1992). Bourdieu (1991) defines field as:

[...] a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents, or institutions, by their present and potential situation... in the structure of the distribution of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relations to other positions (cited in Jenkins, 1992, p. 84).

It is striking that the key to access a privileged position in a given field can be dependent on the extent of possession of capitals such as economic, cultural and social capital (ibid). It follows that children from the upper or middle classes tend to obtain “linguistic competence” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 61)

gauged by academic criteria such as academic qualification, with benefit from “familiarization” (ibid.), which refers to the extent of exposure of a legitimate language from both family and education. In this respect, children with linguistic competence are given a head start to achieve a better position in the labor market. However, linguistic capital itself does not lead to profit in market competition; it also requires particular conditions, such as “the unification of the market and the unequal distribution of the chances of access to the means of production of the legitimate competence, and to the legitimate places of expression” (ibid.).

Consequently, a local language is less recognized than an official language which the upper and middle classes proficiently employ in the fields of education and employment. For example, in post-colonial Madagascar, local languages are undervalued; in contrast, the colonial language (French), which was used in the markets at that time, remains highly valued as the first or official language. In the case of Hong Kong, previously under British colonization, English language remains the most powerful tool to obtain a high position in the education and occupational structure and to determine social status (Lai, 2005). Further, in Africa, the usage of a local language is hampered by colonial prejudice against it (Stroud, 2001).

In terms of choice, many researchers have made a linkage between the ownership of cultural capital and parental choice (Ball & Vincent, 1998; Bernal, 2005; Gewirtz et al., 1995; Reay & Ball, 1998; Smala et al., 2013), as noted above. In this study, identifying the relations between cultural capital and school choice is critical, since the main difference between public and private preschool in Madagascar is its medium of language. As noted in chapter 1, public preschools use Malagasy, while private preschools with high tuition fees employ French. Learning French as acquiring cultural capital might be one of the factors influencing parental choice. Therefore, there is potential for the demand of language competence as cultural capital impacting choice made by parents in Madagascar. Upper or middle classes are more likely to hold cultural capital, unlike working classes, and thus they can utilize it when selecting schools for their children. Taking advantage of cultural capital allows the privileged to pass down their status to the next generation.

Reay’s (2004) understanding of the relationship between cultural capital and choice in the UK is in line with the findings of this study. She determined that choice issue is closely connected with the mother’s educational experience and information. Further, such characteristics are the main factor in differentiating classes (i.e. upper/middle and working class parents) in her analysis.

With regards to education level, parents from the middle classes are well-educated and have a rich educational history and experience that can be applied to positively affect the interaction with the teachers of their children, unlike parents in the working classes (Lareau, 1989; Reay, 2004). Therefore, the former are well informed about their children’s school life and interactions with teachers, while the

latter are uncertain or ignorant in such information (Reay, 2004). Overall, parents in the middle classes are more capable of utilizing the school system effectively (Hatcher, 1998).

Reay (2004) further argues that the emergence of parental choice has ultimately maximized inequality in education. She argues that middle class parents tend to self-exclude themselves, remaining behind a boundary where only the families with a similar cultural and economic background can stand in (Reay 2004, p. 80). By the same token, Ball (2003) stresses that “running through the processes of schooling and choice for middle-class families is a strong sense of boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘others’ – a sense of ‘other’ families as not ‘normal’, as not intelligible in terms of ‘our’ values, attitudes and behavior” (cited in Vincent 2003, p. 33).

As Bourdieu (1986) indicated, only holding cultural capital is not enough to formulate an exclusive group. In addition to cultural capital, a high level of economic capital is required, and it will allow parents to afford better private schooling in perhaps a different area from where they live (Reay, 2004). Most middle class parents are equipped with both economic and cultural capital, whereas those parents holding only cultural capital among middle classes (e.g. teachers and single mothers) tend to move out to the areas where ‘good’ schools are concentrated, making financial sacrifices such as taking loans (ibid). Unfortunately, this opportunity is more likely to be barred to the working class.

Bridging Bourdieu’s cultural capital to Reay’s (2004) above discussion on cultural capital and choice, while parents in the middle classes are inclined to uphold their self-exclusion through their decisions, they tend to reinforce their cultural capital that provides an advantage in their power relations. On the other hand, since those in the working classes are more likely to remain uninterested in the acquisition of cultural and economic resources, they tend to choose state schools closer to home. By doing so, they fail in adapting to the so-called ‘good schools’, again, due to the restriction of cultural capital, although they could get a position in such schools (ibid).

2.3. Summary

This chapter has focused on several theories that support this study. The concept of *social exclusion* (Fraser, 1995; Kabeer, 2000; Sen, 2000) was considered as a theoretical foundation to look at the factors obstructing access to ECCE. Furthermore, major concepts such as *social class and choice* were discussed since ECCE in Madagascar is marked by the prevalence of private preschools which create inequalities in tuition fees and languages of instruction between public and private preschools. This means that there are different levels of income and cultural status, and thus choice is bound to be made differently. Firstly, social class was considered to explore the meaning of class differentials in terms of holding economic, social and cultural capital through the work of Bourdieu (1986) and Marger (2005).

Secondly, in terms of the issue of choice, it was required as a theoretical foundation which can account for why choice is made. Therefore, this study utilized both theories: choice influenced by *rational action theory* (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthorpe, 1997) and by parents' *cultural capital* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1986, 1991), which can be found in Reay's (2004). A vast array of literature on ECCE is presented in the next section.

3. Literature Review

This chapter will introduce a wide range of literature in order to provide a background to the topic of early childhood care and education. The significance of ECCE will be illustrated in three aspects: *child development, investment and children's rights*. Within each, the international and Sub-Saharan African contexts are addressed, including the issues of access and equity in low-resource countries that share similar characteristics with Madagascar.

3.1 General understanding and trends of ECCE

UNESCO (2006) defined early childhood care and education (ECCE) as follows:

Early childhood care and education supports children's survival growth, development and learning – including health, nutrition and hygiene and cognitive, social, physical and emotional development – from birth to entry into primary school in formal, informal and non-formal settings. Often provided by a mix of government institutions, non-governmental organizations, private providers, communities and families, ECCE represents a continuum of interconnected arrangements involving diverse actors: family, friends, neighbors; family daycare for a group of children in a provider's home; center-based programs; classes/programs in schools; and programs for parents (p.15).

The rise of nuclear families and women's participation in the labor market have required strong institutionalized child care programs since the 1950s (UNESCO, 2006). Therefore, *traditional home care* of young children, which women were responsible for, evolved into *institutionalized ECCE*, especially in the developed countries which succeeded to provide for “children's safety and health needs; a comprehensive array of services that meet children's physical, social/emotional and intellectual needs; educational and readiness programs and activities that support children's abilities to learn and that get them ready for school; collaboration with families to help them care for and educate their children” (Morrison, 2012, P. 75). On the other hand, in developing countries, mostly relying on the agricultural sector, such role of women remains unaltered. Thus, they are inclined to depend on other females, such as grandmothers and aunts; only in urban areas has institutionalized ECCE rapidly emerged (UNESCO, 2006).

The gap in enrollment of ECCE between low and high income countries is, furthermore, very wide (UNESCO, 2012). For example, in low income countries, only 15% of children were enrolled in pre-primary education in 2010, whereas 82% of those did so in high income countries (ibid).

First and foremost, to make institutionalized ECCE successful, the policy making and implementation processes should reflect firstly the circumstances and needs of a variety of citizens, such as children and their families. More importantly, the processes should be accompanied by the commitment of the

government in policy practice, enacting or amending of relevant laws, financing and high endorsement. High income countries share strong policy commitment in ECCE in terms of policy making and budget allocation (OECD, 2006; UNESCO, 2010d). For example, in regard to policy making, most European nations, including Denmark and the United Kingdom, founded inter-departmental or intergovernmental co-ordination bodies to develop and implement an integrated ECCE policy framework, including the above-mentioned issues and needs of ECCE (OECD, 2006).

Low income countries including African countries are, in contrast, far from providing access to, and quality in, ECCE – very low budgetary allocations and the low priority given to ECCE are responsible for this state of affairs (Aidoo, 2008; UNESCO, 2010c). For instance, the history of institutionalized ECCE, specifically in the SSA region, is relatively short, as its development only began after the 1990 World Conference Education for All, which focused primarily on the expansion of access to ECCE (Haddad, 2002). According to UNESCO (2010c), by the end of 2008, the majority of SSA countries were committed to ECCE programs, either at the stage of policy planning (20) or implementation (19), with only one fourth (12) having not yet begun this process. Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia are examples of countries that do not have national policies in relation to ECCE, suffering from the prioritization problem and budget allocation for ECCE from their governments (Aidoo, 2008).

Secondly, establishing a structure for the national policy on ECCE can lead to a better budget allocation. Investment is crucial, since public expenditure in ECCE is closely linked to its qualitative improvement in developed countries (OECD, 2006; UNESCO, 2010d). Compared to public spending on primary education (roughly 34%), the share directed to ECCE programs worldwide was only 4.4% (UNESCO, 2010a). Furthermore, the disparity in the median share of budget on ECCE is stark, ranging from around 29% in North America and Western Europe to only 0.3% in SSA (ibid). For example, in the Western high income countries, governments have spent more to provide decent ECCE services for young children, according to the regulations and standards that measure quality (UNESCO, 2010d). For example, in the UK, high quality, public-funded ECCE services had an extremely positive impact on school attainment and social behavior of 3000 children aged 3 to 11 (Sylva et al., 2011). In low income countries, on the other hand, owing to the government's low allocation of resources, several issues are yet to be seriously addressed, such as the lack of facilities and the quality of ECCE programs in terms of teachers and physical environment (Haddad, 2002; Sifuna & Sawamura, 2010; UNESCO, 2010c).

3.2 The importance of Early Childhood Care and Education

In this section, three major perspectives that highlight the importance of ECCE will be presented: ECCE from an early childhood development perspective (3.2.1), ECCE from an investment perspective (3.2.2), and ECCE from a rights perspective (3.2.3).

3.2.1 ECCE from an early childhood development perspective

Child development and ECCE has been intertwined in order to counter deficiencies in development and at the same time, to promote child development (Greenough et al., 1987; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Cole & Cole, 2001; Berk, 2003; Berk, 2006). The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 2005) stressed that ECCE should be a part of early childhood development: “the Committee recommends that States parties consider making early childhood education an integral part of basic/primary education as a tool to nurture the child’s evolving capacities in a stress-free environment” (UNICEF/BvLF 2006, p. 27). In other words, early childhood is a critical period in human development and thus, an enriched experience during that particular period plays an important role in enhancing early childhood development. This linkage between child development and ECCE has helped to attract the attention of policy makers and parents, making them aware of the importance of early childhood.

Developmental psychologists also believe that young children develop at a rapid pace from 2 to 5 years of age and describe early childhood development as a holistic developmental pattern, embracing physical, cognitive and linguistic, social and emotional development (Cole & Cole, 2001; Berk, 2003; Berk, 2006). Specifically, in terms of brain development which governs a wide range of early childhood development, the total nervous system continuously grows and the number of synapses significantly increases in size and density in early childhood (Huttenlocher, 1994; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). In addition to the increase of synapses, the process of overproduction or elimination of synapse (known as ‘pruning’) is absolutely dynamic. By the first year, synapse overproduction refers to a neural system more pronounced than is actually required and which continues throughout early childhood. In later childhood, pruning, which gets rid of unnecessary neurons as the brain becomes more attuned to its environment, is actively performed, developing wiring capacity of a specific area of the brain (ibid).

Several studies on brain development have illustrated the importance of early experiences at home or in a childcare setting on child development (Greenough et al., 1987; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Brain plasticity is a key means to show the relationship between early brain development and early intervention. It can be defined as “the capacity of the brain to recognize its structure or function,

generally in response to a specific event or perturbation” (Shonkoff & Phillips 2000, p. 31). It is noteworthy that early childhood has greater potential of changing the capacity of the brain than later in life (ibid) and thus, an enriched experience in early years reinforces neurodevelopment.

To give young children with an enriched experience, ECCE has been supported by child development theories and evidence, as mentioned above, when designing education and care for them. Concerning child development, several philosophers have contributed on designing enriched ECCE programs (i.e. curriculum, activities, and environment). Piaget and Vygotsky, both constructivists, focus more on the process by which young children construct (learn) knowledge from their environment. However, Piaget outweighs the child’s active role in learning, while Vygotsky concentrates on the child learning from social interaction with others (e.g. the peers, brothers and sisters, or adults) (Xu, 2005). This perspective has shifted the traditional position on ECCE that regarded it as either only protecting children, or teaching them by rote (Hart et al., 1997). In this case, children become active learners who are capable of discovering.

Bronfenbrenner (1994) devoted much attention to how the environment can promote child development. His concept, the ‘ecological model’, entails the microsystem (family, peers and school), the mesosystem (the linkage between individuals and microsystems), the exosystem (industry, mass media, neighbors and social services) and the macrosystem (attitudes and ideologies of the culture) (pp. 39-41). These interdependent ecological systems ultimately promote or hinder child development. Therefore, efforts in providing a rich environment for children should be made from the individual (family) level to schools, the community, and the country.

In this sense, ECCE is, pedagogically, one of the environments that influence young children. Its contents (i.e. curriculum, playing and activities) have been developed based on these thinkers’ theories. First, ECCE recognizes the young children’s own developmental stages, and thus offers appropriate activities for their development (Morrison, 2012); it rejects presenting them with abstract materials (e.g. text books), but rather concrete materials (e.g. toys and natural materials such as wood and sand). Second, ECCE values the child’s active position in exploring their environment and gaining knowledge from it. In doing so, the teachers’ role is also important in the planning and practice of ECCE, considering their interaction with young children (Currie, 2001; Morrison, 2012). To draw the children’s active nature, play is a central part in encouraging their activeness in ECCE. This is because during play with peers, children participate within their interests and show their own autonomy, learning to set their own play, planning and following it, while respecting other players’ feelings, thoughts and action (Bruce, 2012).

3.2.2 ECCE and investment perspective: Children's future or Adult's future?

Children have been regarded as those that should be protected due to the nature of their 'inherent vulnerability' (Lansdown, 1994, p. 34), in the sense that they are physically and intellectually immature and weak. Furthermore, 'structural vulnerability' (ibid., p. 35) makes children heavily rely on the economic and political level of their parents. This reinforces the traditional idea that children belong to their parents, that is to say, 'child as property', as Morrison (2012) describes it. Traditionally, it has been assumed that parents have the right and absolute authority over their children, regardless of their opinion, because they are regarded as the parents' belongings, who can, therefore, make their children do what they want them to do (ibid). The discourse on investing in the future on young children starts from the abovementioned idea, since it assumes that "children represent future wealth or potential for parents and the nation" (ibid, p. 117). That is to say, under future expectations and desire, both are agents in the name of the child's future successes in life, and children must in return act to satisfy them, being placed in the context or situation chosen by the adults.

Outcome, return and pay-off have been driven by a future investment-based principle based on human capital theory. Human capital theory was formulated by economists in 1960s. Its main idea is that education is not consumption, rather *investment* that can bring individual success for individuals and economic growth for the country (Shultz, 1961; Becker, 1964, 1995). From the parents' perspective, children should succeed in their later life by educational attainment and well-positioned or well-paid professions in order to compensate for the parents' financial investment. In the developing world, which has led an ECCE field with development-driven principles and future preparation, the present situation of the child is enormously regulated by the expectations of adults (Lester & Russell, 2010). With the demand of the parents focused on the children's future in relation to school readiness, attention has been paid to cognitive development, while the need for a holistic development of children has been overlooked. As a response, 'schoolification' emerged in ECCE. Kaga et al. (2010) define it as "the downward pressure of primary school approaches (classroom organization, curriculum, teaching methods, child: staff ratios and conceptions of childhood) on early childhood pedagogy" (p. 9). As Morgan (2011) mentioned, unlike ECCE professionals with understanding on the nature of play as promoting whole development, adults view play as something unproductive and wasteful, and thus require curriculum reform in ECCE. It is not surprising that many parents in some countries, including the United States, enroll their children in curricular ECCE programs (focusing, for example, on literacy and mathematics) to improve school readiness (OECD, 2006) Although adults pursue long-term goals, children are interested in concrete issues surrounding them – the 'here and now' (Sommer et al., 2010).

It is taken for granted that most ECCE policies emphasize investment in the future of young children. Under human capital, an investment perspective implies that "a linear relationship exists between

human capital investment and rates of return in early childhood, with benefits well above costs, but also shows rapidly diminishing returns from investment during later childhood” (Woodhead, 2006, p. 15). For the best interests of the nation, children should not grow to become potential criminals or troublemakers, but productive human capital, contributing for the economy in the future. Governments believe that children who have experienced ECCE are healthier, earn better money, adapt better and participate in society (Arnold, 2004). In particular, many governments regard ECCE as an investment in the young child’s future life and that the support the economists’ cost-effective perspective offers with early intervention is less costly than later intervention, such as remedial program of teenagers or adults (Cunha & Heckman, 2007). In other words, investment in ECCE prevents underprivileged children from low attainment, grade retention and remedial programs and plays a role in increasing high school graduations. As a result, the effectiveness of ECCE can contribute not only to securing human capital and ensuring social security (Heckman & Masterov, 2007), but also in upgrading the human development index (i.e. education and health) (Arnold, 2004).

In spite of its merit, it is difficult for the investment discourse to avoid the criticism that it perceives children as an instrument of employment and capital for economic productivity, prescribing their needs and development from the nation’s perspective (Woodhead, 2006). It is therefore relevant for North America, Europe, and East Asia (including Japan, South Korea and Taiwan) to prioritize early school achievement (UNESCO, 2006). For example, in the United States, early intervention for disadvantaged children has been criticized with public ECCE programs that focus on cognitive development (e.g. IQ) for school readiness such as early numeracy and literacy (Almon, 2003). This is because evidence has illustrated that children from low-income families have a low cognitive development (Duncan et al., 1994; Petterson & Albers, 2001) and low school achievement in later schools (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Duncan & Magnuson, 2005; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007). Furthermore, the government regards those children as a potential for social deviance, such as juvenile delinquency, and as a result, investment in ECCE has not aimed at being comprehensive for all young children, but serve as preventive care for underprivileged children (Hendrick, 2005).

3.2.3 ECCE and rights perspective: Children’s present

What lacks in the investment discourse is the child’s present rights, not only their future life (Dahlberg et al., 1999; Lister, 2006; Penn, 2008). Under this assumption, children are no longer perceived as potential adults or ‘becomings’, but valorized as ‘beings’ (Fawcett et al., 2004, cited in Lister 2006, p. 321). Children in the ‘here and now’ context become more independent and active than in the ‘future’. They therefore acquire “the rich image of children who are strong, powerful and competent and who have the ability to connect with adults and peers” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 155).

The emergence of a new perception of the child is reinforced by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). Here, children are deemed as human beings regardless of their race, color sex, language, religion, and political views, where they were born or who they were born to (ibid). The UNCRC intends not only to protect every child, but also to respect diversity and to address inequality and discrimination (Woodhead, 2006). One hundred and ninety two countries, excluding the United States and Somalia, have ratified the UNCRC, its values and articles being implemented in the policy and practice of those countries. This means that every child is entitled to care and education in his or her best interest (Woodhead et al, 2009).

Since UNCRC includes a broad age range (from 0 to 18 years old), it covers very little on children's rights during early childhood apart from some directives on health care, such as immunization and malnutrition (Doek, 2006). Concerning ECCE, unlike primary education, UNCRC does not mention compulsory schooling (ibid). Nevertheless, its perspective is that ECCE is to be comprehensive, rather than simply focusing on children in poverty:

Framing policy for ECCE services from a right perspective is not about charity towards the young, needy and dependent. Children are no longer envisaged merely as the recipients of services, beneficiaries of protective measures, or subjects of social experiments. Nor should early childhood be seen as an investment opportunity, about exploiting human capital (Woodhead, 2006, p.28).

Moreover, the UNCRC's four general principles entail respect of the present rights of children, as stated below (Arnold, 2004, p. 5):

- Best interests of the child (Article 3) – all actions concerning the child shall be in his or her best interests.
- Survival and development (Article 6) – children have the right to survive and to develop and fulfill their human potential.
- Non-discrimination (Article 2) – all rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination (whether based on race, gender, culture, religion, abilities, political affiliation of their parents etc.) and take positive action to promote their rights.
- Participation (various articles) – children have the right to participate in their society and in the creation of the shared social fabric, and have their opinions respected in decisions affecting them.

Apart from the right to *survival* and *development* which has been perceived as having a main role in ECCE, it is worth considering *the best interests of the child*, *non-discrimination* and *participation* in ECCE. This is because these principles shed light on children's rights in a 'here and now' context and perceive the child as an agent who can make a decision.

In terms of *non-discrimination*, the convention applies to all children including the vulnerable ones. Many scholars have indicated that ECCE programs in many countries have targeted children who are very poor (Hendrick, 2005; Mahon, 2010). Yet, children all over the world (such as the disabled, girls,

or children from low castes and ethnic minorities) suffer from different types of marginalization which barely secure their right to survival, development and education (UNICEF, 2006). As Penn (2008) argues, ECCE, for a purely economically disadvantaged group, does not tackle the deep-rooted inequalities and cultural tradition surrounding children. The article on non-discrimination can offer the chance for the government or international agencies to recognize social or cultural exclusion and, at the same time, apply such awareness in law or practice. A good example is Northern Kenya's ABET (Alternative Basic Education in Turkana), which has a mobile ECCE program that targets nomadic people and ensures that programs fit into the nomadic life style of the arid places which are excluded from education in relation to physical and human resources (Ruto et al., 2009).

With regard to *the best interest of the child* and *participation*, children in early childhood do not hold a very important position, since the idea that children are too immature to have their opinion is prevalent. "We tend to think of young children as very vulnerable because they are small and have relatively limited vocabularies" (Penn, 2008, p. 137). Adults, therefore, often exclude children from the process of negotiation and thus, it is taken for granted that adults always make a decision on their behalf.

The different kinds of participation that young children can be included in ranges from the right to know to the right to make a decision (Alderson, 2008), and should not be downplayed. Thomas (2002) stresses that "adults must ensure that the children have: choice over whether they participate; sufficient information; some control; a voice in discussions; support to speak; and some autonomy and independence" (cited in *ibid*, p. 93). Children cannot, therefore, be alienated in the decision-making since they are informed and can choose and participate as a result of their own interest obtained through information. Here, children are no longer a passive subject, but rather an active agent that can share and negotiate with adults in their daily life. In this vein, children can be protected from child abuse and neglect and they can, furthermore, learn the skill of respecting others and gain self-esteem and confidence on the basis of being respected in their participation (*ibid*).

More specifically in ECCE, for young children, play is the best way to enjoy the right to participation, since it freely and frequently emerges at home and within the ECCE program setting. It allows them to become an agent capable of choosing how and with what to play and take part in, since it does not focus on forced tasks such as paper work, but rather on free activities that allow children to explore and understand the world around them. Recognition for playing can, hence, strengthen the right of participation mentioned in UNCRC. In addition to the pedagogical role of play, it can be a powerful tool to express children's own thoughts and subjectivities. Children express their thoughts through different forms of expression such as music, movement, dance, drawing, painting and so forth (Lester & Russell, 2010). Adults should, therefore, value play as the channel for respecting the right of participation of young children and the enjoyment and happiness of their present.

3.3 Critical history of international ECCE

Analyzing the different situations of poor children in the North and the South, Penn (2008) concludes that “we are faced not just with differing cultural descriptions but also with a global socio-economic system” (p.102). Poverty in the South heavily affects children’s survival in daily life. According to UNESCO (2012), 7.6 million children under the age of five have died (IGME, 2011 cited in *ibid*, p. 40) and child mortality under that age is mainly concentrated in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, malnutrition being the main cause of death. Unlike the North, the South hardly provides social protection such as health and education. In terms of education, 67 million children at the primary school level do not have access to education at all (UIS, 2011). Particularly, the enrolment rate of pre-primary education is the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (17%) and Arab States (22%) (UNESCO, 2012). It is not surprising that less than 1% of the education budget in developing countries is channeled to ECCE (Arnold, 2004).

Awareness of relative deprivation and disadvantage of children from the South, compared to the North due to inequitable economic condition, has attracted the interest of many international donor agencies (such as the World Bank), organizations (such as UNESCO and UNICEF) and NGOs (such as the Bernard van Leer Foundation). Their objective is to scale up ECCE in order to reduce the prevailing poverty in the South (Rosemberg, 2003; Penn, 2011). For example, World Bank has had a major part in ECCE due to their economic power as a main donor agency since the 1990s. The World Bank’s principle of investment in ECCE implies poverty reduction by tackling malnutrition and underdevelopment of children based on positive neuroscientific evidence and cost-effective analysis on the long-term benefits of ECCE (World Bank, 2011). Its underlying framework is an investment perspective, as they advocate solid spending in ECCE in order to raise potential human capital that can positively affect economic growth.

In addition to the general commitment of international organizations, there are four critical moments in which ECCE was targeted by international agreements: *the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC) (1989), *the World Declaration on Education for All* (WDEFA) (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF & World Bank, 1990), *the Dakar Framework of Action* (DFA) (UNESCO, 2000) and *the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education* (WCECCE) (UNESCO, 2010e).

The UNCRC (1989) has, first and foremost, established a foothold in international ECCE, by raising concerns on the rights of young children and by enacting the best interests of the child (Article 3), survival and development (Article 6), non-discrimination (Article 2) and participation (various articles). The UNCRC therefore contributes in elevating the individual level of protection of children, normally the family, to the state level, which helps in implementing the principles into practice. In international ECCE, the UNCRC has great implications for the South, where millions of children remain under-

developed, malnourished, and excluded from education. As noted above, 192 countries ratified and have submitted the UNCRC monitoring report. In particular, 80 countries enacted the laws in relation to ECCE and 30 countries have a year of compulsory pre-primary education (Marope, 2010).

The second critical moment of international ECCE history was the WDEFA (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF & World Bank, 1990), agreed in Jomtien, Thailand. This conference highlighted the significance of basic education and in particular, Article 5, which emphasizes the value of ECCE, stating that ‘Learning begins at birth.’ Yet, the position of ECCE in the conference remained as a sub-category of basic education. More important in the history of international ECCE was the DFA (UNESCO, 2000) signed in Dakar, Senegal, where the status of ECCE was enhanced, being included as the first of five goals of EFA: “expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children”. For the first time, ECCE was taken into consideration in its own right by the international community rather than a part of basic education. By using the term ‘comprehensive ECCE’, it was perceived as a right for an universal opportunity for all children – including the marginalized ones. Finally, Moscow’s WCECCE (UNESCO, 2010e) was an important initiative to address equitable access and security of quality, reaffirming the EFA 1 goal, given the several problems on equity and quality (especially in the South) related to the quantitative growth of ECCE throughout the preceding decade.

3.4 ECCE in Africa

This section will present the present-day situation of ECCE in Africa. It will comprise the general status of ECCE (3.4.1) and access and quality (3.4.2).

3.4.1 General Status of ECCE

According to World Bank (2010), 48% of the population in Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries was living on 1.25 USD a day. The area of research interest, Madagascar, is also located in this region and thus, it is worth looking at the literature concerning ECCE in Africa.

There are three dominant characteristics across SSA. First and foremost, child development in deprived conditions in the South is different from that in the North. Child poverty in the South is mostly related to risk and the needy suffer from “stunting, inadequate cognitive stimulation, iodine deficiency and iron deficiency anemia” (Walkers et al., 2007, p.145). Thus, the very deprived environments can impede the fundamental development of child. On the other hand, children in the North suffer from relative poverty. For example, in OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, child poverty can be observed in the “under-employment of parents, income inequalities,

insufficient social transfer payment, and in some instances, by lack of affordable child care possibilities” (OECD, 2006, p. 33). Nevertheless, here, the prevalence of extreme poverty is residual due to the partly or fully subsidized public social welfare systems.

Secondly, the governments of SSA countries do not provide the same level of social welfare, health and education as in industrialized countries. UNESCO (2012) reported that the rate of child mortality (from 2010 to 2005) was 153% and severe stunting of growth for children under the age of five is 39%, which makes it the worst-ranked region worldwide. In education for young children aged three to five in SSA, the gross enrollment of pre-primary education accounts for only 17%, which is the lowest level around the globe (ibid).

Thirdly, the SSA nations put less commitment on ECCE planning and financing (Aidoo, 2008; UNESCO, 2010c) than the other low-resource countries. With regards to policy making, the low prioritization of ECCE is clear: 34% of the region’s countries have not developed norms and standards of ECCE and its relevant planning (ibid), while in 76% of SSA there is a need for a proper funding mechanism so that ECCE policy can be well implemented. This highly influences the allocation of public spending, as shows the budget on primary education, which is more than 13% over that of ECCE (UNESCO, 2010c).

Concerning the financing of ECCE, international financial support is closely connected to the national budget, given the dependency on foreign aid due to harsh poverty. In effect, economic communities and donor agencies have also paid little attention to the funding of ECCE, which generally accounts for only 2% of the aid given (UNESCO, 2010c), although unfolding programs (such as center- or community-based) and funding offers have emerged – yet, expanding ECCE programs and enhancing their quality remains a formidable challenge. Finally, these organizations, such as World Bank, are characterized by a cost-effective investment (i.e. non-formal ECCE, including community programs with untrained teachers); thus, it is of low quality and not sustainable (Penn, 2011). Most importantly, lack of budget in ECCE has provided the grounds for private pre-primary education to dominate.

3.4.2 Access, Quality and Equity

As mentioned earlier, young children in SSA have the lowest participation in pre-primary education around the globe. In general, they do not have access to ECCE services due to inaccessibility (i.e. insufficient public services) and unaffordability (i.e. the domination of private services) respectively (UNESCO, 2006; Woodhead et al., 2009; UNESCO, 2010c, 2011, 2012).

Concerning the *access* and *equity* issues, two major factors can lead young children in SSA to exclusion. *Firstly, economic disadvantage impedes access to ECCE.* Evidence shows that poverty is the

main factor which lowers the participation rate in ECCE in the region (UNESCO, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012). This is because comprehensive ECCE programs are very different in nature from those provided in the North. Parents must, therefore, consume some amount of money on private ECCE services. It is unsurprising that only 5% of the economically disadvantaged participate in ECCE, while 50% of the advantaged group did so in Ethiopia (Woodhead et al., 2009), because the parents' purchasing power is a determinant factor. *Secondly, cultural exclusion is also imperative in delivering ECCE to young children.* Ethnic minorities are less likely to have access to ECCE programs (UNESCO, 2006; 2010c; 2011; 2012). In particular, SSA is composed by various ethnic groups which are widely dispersed from the capital or center of the state (UNESCO, 2010c). Only two out of five children of an ethnic minority attend ECCE programs because of shortage of preschools and consideration on ethnic characteristics, such as culture and language, are normally downplayed in terms of curriculum (ibid).

Regarding *access* and *quality*, they remain very low in SSA and are linked with the aforementioned characteristics (i.e. lack of the government commitment on planning and financing ECCE) (Sifuna & Sawamura, 2008). In effect, most countries in this region barely have norms and standards of quality management for ECCE. Plenty of literature has shown that there are challenges as to the quality of ECCE in SSA (UNESCO, 2006; Sifuna & Sawamura, 2008; UNESCO, 2010c). Firstly, in terms of human resources, teachers are not well trained by the authorized institutions; to make matters worse, the Teacher Pupil Ratio (TPR) is usually too high (UNESCO, 2010c). Secondly, the physical environment is not well-equipped due to the shortage of facilities, equipment and pedagogical materials or toys for the children's development. Wealthier parents in SSA choose, in general, private ECCE programs that meet their needs regarding curriculum, teachers, facilities and teaching resources, while the poorer ones do not have access to preschool except for public facilities if they are available or accessible, or to cheaper and lower quality private education.

Finally, with regards to pedagogy, a national curriculum is rarely developed in most countries in this region (ibid). For example, in Madagascar, there is only teacher training material for preschool teachers that includes daily and monthly activities for a year (2012-interview). Therefore, well-planned curriculums reflecting young children's needs, interests and abilities provide the opportunity for teachers to guide their action (Bredenkamp, 2011). Specifically, curriculums authorized by ECCE professionals can be most useful for teachers who are not well-trained in this region. In addition, they can protect child-centered ECCE programs in private preschools, including playing and other concrete activities, since fee-paying parents make demands pushing them to educate their children through academic-based activities such as the 3Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic) and a foreign language, such as English and French, a consequence of the colonial legacy (2012-interview).

3.5 Summary

This chapter, first and foremost, focused on the literature concerning the general understanding of ECCE; then, its importance was examined in the child development, investment and rights perspective, making evident the importance of access to ECCE. From the child development perspective, ECCE has a central role in promoting young children's whole development. Second, in an investment perspective, it is worth investing in ECCE since it can help bring individual and public return. In contrast, the rights perspective stresses the value of ECCE, considering it as the child's own rights that should be fulfilled regardless of their race, sex, language, religion, political views, where they were born, or who they were born to (UNCRC, 1989). Literature on ECCE in Africa was referred to because it echoes similar concerns regarding *access*, *equity* and *quality* with Madagascar, the research site. Private preschool is prevailing, since the government does not provide enough public ECCE services and, at the same time, the upper or middle classes demand private pre-schooling for their children. In contrast, most parents, particularly those from the working classes (the culturally and economically disadvantaged group) barely participate in ECCE. The following chapter (Chapter 4) outlines the design of this study.

4. Methodology

Exploring participants' views that are involved or engaged in specific situations, events and experiences helps the researcher to better understand the meaning of their world (Maxwell, 2005). This is the key feature of qualitative research and, therefore, this study was conducted using qualitative methods in order to illuminate the in-depth meaning and perceptions of various stakeholders on ECCE.

The chapter looks over the methodology and methods conducted, examining the diverse stakeholders' values and perceptions of early childhood education, especially for children aged 3 to 5. This section covers the research questions (4.1.), the sampling process (4.2), materials (4.3), procedure (4.4), ethical issues (4.5), methods of analysis (4.6), reliability and validity (4.7), and ends with a summary (4.8).

4.1 Research Questions

Reiterating from Chapter 1, the research questions are presented below:

- 1) How do the various stakeholders view the value of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Madagascar?
- 2) What are the factors obstructing access to ECCE in Madagascar?
- 3) What are the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attend private or public preschools in Madagascar?
- 4) What measures or strategies are put in place by the government, multilateral agencies, community and NGOs to improve access to ECCE in Madagascar?

4.2 Sampling

This section outlines the different stages of sampling, country and city (4.2.1), schools (4.2.2) and participants (4.2.3).

4.2.1 City

The rationale behind studying Madagascar was presented in chapter 1. Toliara, with a population of 186,819 in its inner (Toliara I) and outer (Toliara II) regions (INSTAT, 2009), is located in the southern region of Atsimo Andrefanana. There were two dominant reasons for selecting this city as the research site. First and foremost, there is a need to look at the status of access to ECCE for a

population that is confronted with the painful choice of purchasing *either* food, *or* education, as ECCE is not comprehensive in Madagascar. Geologically, Toliara is a marginalized area that consists mainly of dry soil. In fact, only 54.9% of households in Atsimo Andrefanana farm the land, much below the national average of 80.6% (INSTAT, 2010). Therefore, the population of this city suffers from food insecurity and has to import most of what it eats from other fertile regions, such as Vakinankaratra, in the central highlands. Additionally, suitable roads and effective transportation are yet to be developed, so food prices are high and access to food is difficult for the majority of the population.

The second reason for the choice this location for the study is that the majority of young children are likely to be marginalized due to the low value that parents attribute to education, added to the lack of financial resources. The Atsimo Andrefanana region is notorious for its low socio-economic and educational status, with a 34.7% unemployment rate and 74.9% poor households (INSTAT, 2010). Most people in Toliara work in small businesses (selling fish, snacks and crafts, doing manual labor, etc.), usually as temporal or part-time occupations. Those which migrated to Toliara from nearby towns in order to earn money work mostly in the construction sector, as rickshaw drivers, or as housekeepers and guards for wealthy families. Regarding mothers' education, an important indicator that influences access to ECCE (Fernald et al., 2011), 45.3% of Atsimo Andrefanana's mothers have never received any education, placing the region in the second-last place out of 22 (INSTAT, 2010). Coincidentally or not, only around 25% of children complete primary school in Atsimo Andrefanana (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Recherche Scientifique, 2008). Hence, Toliara is the optimal research site that can explore the challenge and possibility of access to ECCE in Madagascar through the understanding of the factors obstructing ECCE.



Figure 4.1: The research site: Toliara, Madagascar

4.2.2 Schools

In Madagascar, preschool or pre-primary school is called ‘*préscolaire*’. In addition, there are two kinds of preschools: those which are operated by the government (‘*préscolaire public*’), and those that are run by private owners (‘*préscolaire privé*’). In general, public preschool accepts children aged 3 to 5 and private preschool children aged 1 to 5. Public preschools in Toliara have, in general, a short history, as most have been built only from 2007 onwards, following the MAP (Madagascar Action Plan) (Government of Madagascar, 2007) initiative from the former government. The difference in the number of public and private preschools is extreme: from a total of 8317 preschools in Atsimo Adrefanana, 97.8% are private (Ministère de l’Éducation Nationale et de la Recherche Scientifique, 2008), the remaining being operated by the government.

The differences that follow between public and private preschools can be a good starting point to identify the reasons behind the choices parents make as to which kind of preschool their children attend. There are three major differences between public and private preschools. First and foremost, the language of instruction: Malagasy is used in public preschools, while French is the medium of language in private preschools. In terms of curriculum, public preschools follow the curriculum based on teacher training materials from the government; in contrast, private preschools focus on teaching French to the children. Finally, the cost difference between public and private preschools is stark, since public preschool charges 833 MGA (Malagasy ariary) monthly, while private preschools charge from 5000 to 35,000 MGA.

Preschools	Owner	Cost (monthly)	
		MGA	NOK
École Maternelle Clarinette	Government	833	2.16
École maternelle La Coccinelle	Government	833	2.16
École maternelle La Colombe	Private (highest cost)	35,000	90.86
École maternelle l’Indienne	Private (middle cost)	17,000	44.13
École Maternelle Radisson	Private (lower cost)	5000	12.98

Table 4.1: Selected preschools in Toliara

In this study, in order to reflect the different school choices among parents in public and private preschools, since the disparity in the tuition fees is so huge, 5 preschools were selected in Toliara (see Table 4.1): 2 public preschools (*Clarinette* and *La Coccinelle*), 3 private preschools (*La Colombe*, *l’Indienne* and *Radisson*). These schools were chosen from the list of preschools in Toliara with the

help of a DREN (local government) official. In terms of public preschools, only 2 (*Clarinette* and *La coccinelle*) exist in Toliara, and the surveying was authorized by a research permission that included the selection of participants (parents and teachers) and one day of class observation (i.e. physical environment and activities). In terms of private preschools, a list ordered by the cost of tuition fees was elaborated, from which 6 schools were selected from the lower and upper end. After the refusal of 3 schools to cooperate in the study, 3 other schools (*La Colombe*, *l'Indienne* and *Radisson*) were finally selected. However, there is the gap in monthly tuition fees among three schools: *La Colombe* charges the most, the second is *l'Indienne* and finally comes *Radisson*.

4.2.3 Participants

To begin with, all the participants were selected to investigate the value of ECCE and the strategies and measures improving ECCE. A total of 42 stakeholders involved in ECCE were selected as participants: parents, teachers, government officials of DEPA (Direction de l'Éducation Préscolaire et de l'Alphabétisation), under the Ministry of Education, the central government, and of DREN (Direction Regionale de l'Éducation Nationale), under the local government, an international organization (UNICEF) and civil society (Aide et Action) staff (see Table 4.2).

Type of participants		Focus group interviews	Individual interviews
Government	Central (MEN)	1 (3 persons)	-
	Local (DREN)	1 (3 persons)	-
International organization (UNICEF)			1
Civil society (Aid et Action)			1
Parents	ACCESS	5 (16 persons)	5
	NO-ACCESS	1 (4 persons)	4
Teachers			5
Total		8 (26 persons)	16

Table 4.2: List of participants

The government officials and a representative of the international organization and civil society were placed in the group reflecting a position at the macro-level, while teachers and parents were located at the micro-level. The government officials from the central and local government were the main suppliers, at the macro-level, of information on planning and practice of ECCE-related policies. In addition to them, the choice of the international organization and civil society is explained by the

government's heavy reliance on financial support and planning advice (i.e. preschool establishment, teacher training, teacher stipend and teaching materials) – even though many donor agencies and organizations withdrew the aid due to the 2009 political crisis.

At the micro-level, teachers and parents were interviewed. Teachers are permanently in contact with ECCE policies of the government, children and parents, and one per school was selected (a total of 5). Most teachers had taught in primary schools for more than two years before they moved to preschools. Moreover, some teachers worked in preschools after graduation from high school and two weeks of training administered by the government. In general, teachers from private preschools had at least a college degree and were experienced, while those from public preschools had graduated from high school and were less experienced.

Most importantly, 29 parents whose young children did and did not attend preschool (public or private) were interviewed. The average age of the parents or caretakers is 38 years old, ranging from 19 to 75 (a grandmother). In particular, to shed light on the factors obstructing ECCE and the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools, they were classified in two groups: 'ACCESS group' (parents whose young children have attended preschool, public or private) and 'NO-ACCESS group' (those whose children have not attended preschool or dropped out from it) (see Table 4.2 above).

First, NO-ACCESS group was drawn together through neighbors introduced by the researcher's gatekeeper and friends of participants that had already joined. There were 8 parents in this group, including those which never attended preschools (6) or had dropped out from them (2). Three of those were fathers and 5 were mothers (including 3 single mothers). Most of the participants in this group did not complete primary school education themselves, except for 2 parents which had the secondary school certificate. In terms of employment, all the participants had a single income family, relying on the father's salary (as to the 3 single mothers, they too worked). All of them belonged to the low-income category (street vendor, guard, servant for the wealthy or in school, rickshaw driver and construction worker).

Second, ACCESS group was selected within the abovementioned 5 schools, authorized by the directors of each. The group includes 21 parents: 8 from *Clarinette* and *La Coccinelle* public preschools and 13 from *La Colombe*, *l'Indienne* and *Radisson* private preschools. Out of the 21 participants, only 4 were fathers. Most parents had around 5 children. This group was interviewed so as to compare the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools. In this group, there was an underlying assumption of class differential between choosers of the two types of preschool. The professions and education level was the critical index for measuring respectively economic and cultural capital (see chapter 2), as used in numerous studies carried out in developed

countries (Gewirtz et al., 1995; Reay & Ball, 1998). The *income* level of parents was a reflection of their *occupation* (or, in the case of women, of their spouses). For public school parents, as no-access parents, most were situated at the low-income category, working primarily in small businesses, temporal and part-time jobs. In contrast, parents from private schools worked for the military, as senior civil servants, office workers, doctors and teachers, being, therefore, placed in the high or middle income categories. In terms of *education level*, the gap between parents in public and private preschools was wide. Among 8 parents in public preschools, only 2 possessed a high school diploma, while the rest had only attended primary school, not all of them having completed it. On the other hand, among 12 parents in private preschools, half had a college diploma, one had a high school diploma, 3 owned a secondary school diploma, and only 2 had not completed primary school.

4.3 Materials

A voice recorder and a video camcorder were used to collect data. An overview of the interview and observation schedules (4.3.1) and the challenges posed by language (4.3.2) follows.

4.3.1 Interview and observation schedules

The purpose of interviewing the various stakeholders' on ECCE was to investigate their perception in relation to the value of ECCE, the factors obstructing access to ECCE, the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools and finally the strategies and measures for improving ECCE. Taking into consideration the characteristics of the interviewees, four kinds of interview schedules were developed: for government officials (Appendix 5), for a representative of the international organization and civil society (Appendix 6), for teachers (Appendix 7) and for parents (Appendix 8). Semi-structured interviews were conducted (both individual and focus group). Before starting the interviews, the interview guide for each stakeholder was structurally formulated in order to achieve the information that each research question could lead to. It was, however, continuously modified, since the researcher had elaborated the personal account of each participant, by adding deeper open-ended questions in both individual and focus group interviews. Besides, the interviewees were given the chance to share their individual perspective and to discuss it in focus group interviews. Overall, although the structure of the interviews was predetermined, there was always room for the participants to voice their own perceptions. The quality imperative developed by Myers (2006, pp. 24-26) was employed to the physical environment and pedagogy of each preschool, eliminating some items (educational management and relationships with families and communities) as follows: 1) Available physical and human resources, 2) The educational process, and 3) Health, safety and hygiene (Appendix 9).

4.3.2 Language

The official languages of Madagascar are Malagasy and French, and the researcher does not speak any of them. Thus, in order to communicate and understand the participants, a translator that understood both languages and was fluent in English was recruited. In order to collect the best possible information in terms of relevance and quality from the interviewees, it was important to carefully prepare and conduct the interviews – this ranged from briefing the translator about the study at an initial stage, to the transcription of the data from the original sources. The discussions with the translator were very useful throughout the information-gathering. Before starting an interview, the translator was given substantial knowledge on the goals, design and interview questions, as well as a general understanding of ECCE. Throughout the fieldwork, the researcher consistently gave a detailed account of which kind of data she would like to find and how he could elaborate and extract comprehensive answers from the participants. For example, when the interviewees answered simply ‘yes’ or ‘no’, he would repeat the question in a different way, stimulating their critical sense and facilitating communication. In focus group interviews, it was useful to translate briefly what individual participants had said, instead of a word-by-word translation. By constantly hearing small summaries of the information gathered by the translator, new questions could be formulated, even while several participants spoke at the same time. On the other hand, all the data from interviews and observations was kept in a voice recorder and a video camera, and then translated and transcribed in great detail. In the translation and transcription stages, the translator’s lack of knowledge on the field’s technical jargon was compensated by his detailed descriptions of what had been recorded, which I subsequently adapted to educational terminology.

4.4 Procedure

The study was carried out from September to October in 2012. This section highlights its conduction process. The major method to collect information, focus group and individual interviews, were recorded, translated and transcribed. Observations and documents were used as a supplement to complete data collected by focus group and individual interview.

Focus group interviews are a useful method to gather shared understanding from individuals (Creswell, 2012). In the study, *focus group interviews* had a significant role in examining the comprehensive perception of parents. In total, 20 participants in 6 groups were interviewed, including 3 to 4 parents per group. Various parents with children aged three to five were targeted. After getting permission to interview in this location from the directors, all focus group interviews took more than one hour and a half at each school. *Individual interviews* were also conducted, and these were important to supplement the general thinking from focus group interviews and to gain individuals’ history and

details that are not easy to discuss publicly. In total, 9 participants were interviewed. The interviews took roughly 30 to 40 minutes at parents' homes and in the offices for teachers, government officials and the representatives of the multilateral organization and civil society. *Observations* in 5 preschools were required in order to investigate the physical environment (i.e. teaching materials and facilities, such as classrooms and bathrooms), curriculum, and activities and teacher-child interaction. These were conducted for 5 days, and on each day, half a day was spent in each school from 9 to 12 o'clock. 5 classes with children aged 3 to 5 were observed per preschool. All observations were also recorded, translated and transcribed. Finally, the following *documents* were collected from Ministry of education: *Republic of Madagascar: Madagascar Action Plan 2007-2012 (2007)*; *Madagascar: Éducation pour tous (2008) (Madagascar: Education for All)*.

4.5 Ethical issues

The data collecting respects the ethical guidelines for this kind of investigation. An informed consent form was developed, abiding the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) before my travel to Madagascar, entailing the following information: the goal, intention and methods of the study; its voluntary nature; the possibility of withdrawing data; confidentiality; anonymity of the participants' information. In Madagascar, its Malagasy version was written by the translator so that participants were entirely aware of its contents. Typically, before starting an interview or observation, participants were given the information in relation to the abovementioned elements, and on recording their voices through voice recorder. All of them were orally consented, nodding or saying 'yes'. This introduction made them reluctant to fill out a written form which had exactly the same information. Consequently, although most participants promptly signed the form, others refused, claiming that they had already listened to the information and orally approved it. (In some cases this may have happened due to time shortage). Nevertheless, all participants attentively listened to the notice in connection with informed consent and agreed to participate. Finally, to preserve the respondents' confidentiality, the data was processed to be anonymous.

4.6 Analysis

To analyze the data collected, two major categories recommended by Maxwell (2005) were used: *substantive categories* and *theoretical categories* (pp. 97-98). *Substantive categories* are originated by participants' concepts and words during the data collection (ibid). This category was presented with grounded theory related to generating theory from data. As Bryman (2012) indicated, however, grounded theory is the creation of general and tentative concepts rather than theory through the cyclic process of data collection and analysis. In this study, data provided general concepts such as 'poverty', 'school readiness' and 'French'. *Theoretical categories* place coded data into a more general or

abstracted framework (Maxwell 2005, p. 97). The concepts of my thesis as a theoretical framework were operationalized with the assumption that parents' perception of having access to preschool or not is related to the concepts of 'social exclusion', 'social class' and 'school choice'. Therefore, data was also evaluated into theoretical categories in accordance to the concepts.

4.7 Reliability and validity of the study

Although validity and reliability originates from quantitative research, qualitative researchers also consider these elements for the validation and trustworthiness of a study (Golafshani, 2003; Bryman, 2012; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). Gall et al. (2007) suggest three strategies to secure the validity of qualitative research: *to meet the user's needs*; *to ensure through data collection*; and *to reflect a sound research design* (pp. 474-476).

To meet the user's needs, the researcher can use "truthfulness and reporting style" (ibid, p. 474), which can help obtaining information as precise as possible from the participants by clarifying their responses. For example, in this study, the researcher described the data through direct extracts of the participants' opinions.

To ensure through data collection, 'triangulation' can be utilized, i.e. employing multiple methods to avoid the bias of simple methods (Maxwell, 2005). A wide range of tools (i.e. individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations and documents) were used to cross-check the information from the participants in this study. For instance, some parents who participated in 'NO-ACCESS focus group' interview were later selected for an individual interview in order to confirm the information provided in the first interview.

Furthermore, a 'thick' description of the findings in one study as "contextual competence" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 475) can be an important index for future researchers to judge the potential of future research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, cited in Bryman 2012, p. 392). This study, therefore, focused on securing a 'thick' description within the context of Toliara, Madagascar. For example, in the interviews, the researcher provided each participant the opportunity to take as much time to answer questions in order to obtain as much in-depth information as possible. In addition to this, she tried to best understand the surroundings of each participant, from the general atmosphere of the country (Madagascar), to the specificities of the city (Toliara), the schools (5 in total), and even the homes. She often talked to local people (i.e. translators, friends, street vendors, owners of markets, rickshaw drivers, etc.) and observed life in Toliara in the markets and streets. Visiting the parents' homes for individual interviews enriched the knowledge in a different setting – individual households – so as to 'feel' the atmosphere, witness the living standards, the interaction between adults and children, and so forth.

Reflecting sound research design, ‘peer examination’ (Gall et al., 2007, p. 476), which refers to the consideration on comments from peers on the findings or the draft of the research, is crucial. In the research planning and fieldwork process of the study alone, the researcher had exchanged many ideas with her peers from Madagascar. Since interviews were widely used in this study, she tried to formulate interview questions essential to collect reliable data leading to accurate findings encompassing the major concepts of this study, such as *exclusion* from access to ECCE, *social class* and *school choice*.

4.8 Summary

In this chapter, the methodology of the study was introduced. In summary, it was fundamentally guided by qualitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews. The analysis was carried out in Toliara, Madagascar. Key stakeholders of ECCE in took part in the study (i.e. parents, central and local government officials, an international organization (UNICEF) and civil society (Aide et Action) staff and teachers). Furthermore, parents with access to public or private preschools were collected in 5 preschools. To gather data, mainly focus group and individual interviews were conducted. In addition, observations were made and documents consulted. Ethical issues were complied with through a permission from all participants and guaranteeing anonymity for the interviewees. The data was analyzed by substantive and theoretical categories. Finally, the validity and reliability of this study was tested. The following chapter presents the findings of the study.

5. Findings

In this chapter the findings extracted from data are presented. They are based largely upon interviews of participants including parents, teachers, government officials (central and local), and a representative of an international organization and a civil society. The analysis process included identifying and categorizing patterns of responses by the informants. Categories were both generated in a bottom-up approach, and guided by the theoretical framework; specifically the focus was upon the issues of social exclusion, social class, language, and cultural capital. The findings are structured around four main themes, which correspond to the four research questions: the value of ECCE (section 5.1); the factors obstructing access to ECCE (section 5.2); the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools (section 5.3); and strategies and measures to improve ECCE (section 5.4).

5.1 The value of early childhood care and education in Madagascar

There was a great deal of consensus of perspectives regarding the value of ECCE. Most of the stakeholders (the government official, a representative of international organization and civil society and parents) classified the value of ECCE as *school readiness*. Stated differently, for them, ECCE is instrumental in preparing children for later education. Nevertheless, the focus was slightly different for some of the participants. The government official, for example, focused more on public return, aiming at achieving EFA goals 1 and 2, whilst the parents regarded the value of ECCE as the means of individual return to their children. *Protection of children* was also perceived as the value of ECCE among parents, in particular working parents. These views will be elaborated below.

The government official and UNICEF staff in charge of implementing international and national education policies prioritized the value of ECCE as the instrument to achieving MDG 2 (universal primary education). In accordance with ECCE policy planning and implementation, the government entirely relies upon international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and Aide et Action. For instance, the government is collaborating with UNICEF to provide ECCE kits in schools and funding the budget for teacher training and teacher salaries in some public preschools. Unsurprisingly, their comments were similar regarding the value of ECCE and concentrated on *the public return*, that is, the achievement of EFA goal 1. A local government official mentioned that “we can see that thanks to access to ECCE, the repetition rate of primary school will decline and young children will be ready for the future in education and social life.” A UNICEF employee, said:

Preschool is needed for the community... when the kids go to preschool, it will decrease the repetition rate of primary school, you know? When you miss the exam, you should come back to primary school... and, of course, it will increase the access rate of primary school. The repetition rate is strongly interconnected with preschool, primary school and secondary school.

As above, they deemed ECCE as a means of school readiness that can offset the enrollment and repetition rate of primary school in the name of *public return*.

Meanwhile, the words of most of the parents were in line with those of the government official and the UNICEF staff member, focusing on school preparation of their children. Unlike a government official and UNICEF staff, their values on ECCE were, however, characterized by the emphasis on the *individual return*, including the stimulation of academic skills and protection. Most parents mentioned that ECCE helps their children to promote academic skills, such as cognitive development, that can be useful for later education, particularly for primary school adjustment. One of the informants was the mother of a child enrolled in *l'Indienne* private preschool whose husband is a police officer in Toliara. In her home, equipped with furniture and electronics (sofa, table, television, computer, and so forth) that revealed a higher living standard, she mentioned that “ECCE is to prepare children for their future education... then, if they are at the primary school, it will be much easier for them to follow academic studies”. One parent of *La coccinelle* public preschool also viewed the value of ECCE as educating academic skills to their children. She said that “they can count 1, 2, 3... Every parent wants to send his or her children to preschool because they know the importance of writing and reading”.

In the meantime, for the parents, most of whom were working during the day, the value of ECCE was child protection. They simply regarded ECCE as an instrument to protect their children while they were at work. The response of some parents reflected their desire to shield their children in an insecure community:

Nowadays, so many people are jobless. So many bad things are around here, Toliara. So if your children are not protected, I think they are much easier to be influenced by the bad things. For example, here, I see girls and boys pickpocketing at the markets. The problem is that I cannot always be near my children and so, always manage them. (a mother of No-ACCESS group)

During the political crisis, as people in Toliara were losing their regular employment and inflation was rising, most parents drew attention to social insecurity in Toliara. Hence, they considered that ECCE was compensating their absence from home. As a mother of *La Colombe* private preschool said, “kids are safe in the preschool because you never know what will happen if they stay at home while I am working”. They did not want ‘street teachers’ for their children instead of parents or teachers.

5.2 Factors obstructing access to ECCE in Madagascar

Parents who had no access to preschool or who had quit from it were asked why their children did not have access to ECCE. *Poverty* and *low commitment of the government on ECCE* towards the teacher strike were the most mentioned reasons hindering access to that kind of education.

5.2.1 Poverty

(Sighing) Since 2010, my life has become far harder. I think this is because we don't have a president. Because of that, there are no longer factories which are open, and therefore there are no jobs.

These are the views of one parent, a rickshaw driver, whose child did not have access to preschool. He was not alone in his views; poverty proved to be a significant factor in the obstruction of access to ECCE. Since 2009, as mentioned earlier, Madagascar has undergone a political crisis. It brought about a prolonged economic recession and social insecurity. In particular, the economic crisis has made the life of Malagasy people far tougher than before. Toliara is an arid place surrounded by sea, not providing farming jobs as noted in Chapter 4. After the previous president stepped down following a political crisis (coup d'état), factories all around Madagascar, which had been built by the former government, were destroyed by his opponent. Toliara was no exception, thus drastically affecting employment. Sadly, most of the parents from the working classes became unemployed. Currently, they survive on temporary or daily contracts. These activities give them a modest profit between 20 to 50 MGA (0.13 NOK) per day. Their salaries are too low to support their families, at the same time as they lack job security. For instance, a mother of a child attending *Radisson* private preschool, married to a fisherman, said that her husband "went to the ocean, sometimes he got fish and the other day, he didn't... It depends on whether the ocean gives fish or not". Troubled by the hardship of seeking a job and feeding his family, a father working as a construction worker remarked:

(Staring at his children playing around him on the floor) Every morning, I try to find small jobs, such as construction assistant or rickshaw driver, as many as possible to get my family fed. If I can't find food, I must borrow some money from my friends so that my family can eat. (A father from the NO-ACCESS group)

To make matters worse, there has been high price instability for basic necessity products, including rice, the main Malagasy foodstuff linked directly with the problem of survival. This fact makes it harder for parents to support their families, adding to the geological marginalization of Toliara (most vegetables and products are imported from other areas, such as Antananarivo or Antsirabe, taking more than one day to transport due to the poor roads and transportation). A father, construction worker, described how his family survives:

(Indicating a translator) The t-shirts! If they cost 500 ariary in Antananrivo, they will cost 2000 ariary here. A cup of rice was usually cost 200 ariary, now it increased to 400 ariary. So, if I had money to buy two cups, nowadays I can just buy one cup of rice. We just cook the rice and make *sooa be rano* (rice soup made with water and little rice). My children are never full with it, so we suffer a lot. (a mother from *Maternelle Clarinette* public preschool)

In the same vein, paying preschool tuition fees for ‘no-access parents’ was conceived as a luxury, although they desire to get an education for their children. A father expressed his grievances:

I am a father who likes to educate my children. I am talented, so I can do many kinds of jobs and make crafts. Due to the political crisis, I can’t find any job. I just became the guard of this public preschool. *(Indicating his children playing in the ground)* I have two daughters who always watch the school from outside. They always tell me “Papa, we want to go to school”.

In an interview conducted sitting on a straw mat next to the impoverished huts, a father who had just arrived at home after his construction work said with a tired voice:

Life is hard... so hard... *(sigh)* For example, if I can’t find a small job for this month, my children must stop going to school because the teacher will never accept those who don’t pay the tuition fees. If you don’t have a stable job, you have to work having in mind what you will be eating today, not the tuition fees. So you must sweat and work hard to find food. It is better for children to stay at home than to be sent to school if you can’t afford the tuition fees”.

Apart from the main tuition fees for preschool, indirect costs also prevent the parents from access to preschool. Two mothers shared a similar concern about indirect costs and decided not to send their children to preschool, since Malagasy people in general feel too ashamed to showing their neighbors that they are enduring economic difficulties. A mother said that “the children must have nice and clean clothes to go to school. But the price of soap is increasing. So, I can’t afford it”. Likewise, preparing childrens’ school bags and uniforms is also costly altogether. In addition, buying a small meal daily is the hardest part for many parents, as they have to provide their children with biscuits and a drink for the scheduled snack time at 11 a.m. every morning (except for weekends). In effect, in the observation of *La Coccinelle* public preschool, 10 out of 30 children in one class did not have anything to eat at that time of the day, and just drank water or looked at their peers eating. Therefore, the parents of the excluded children feel that it is preferable not to send them to preschool.

Unsurprisingly, parents whose children did not attend preschool did not seem to understand the concept of ECCE, confusing preschool education and primary education. As noted above (Chapter 4), most of the participants among them did not complete primary school education except for 2 parents, which had the secondary school certificate. Therefore, they themselves had never had a proper educational experience that could be guided by their parents due to the perpetual poverty cycle that carries on from generation to generation.

One of them pointed out the needlessness of ECCE:

We don't know about the meaning of preschool. (He gave the example of his friends instead of talking about his own experience.) Some friends think preschool is just a waste of time, since it is not focusing on how to read and write like in primary school.

For them, education means to write and read their names; interest in ECCE which focuses upon play, therefore, is a luxury, even something extravagant. Moreover, they recognize their children's limited success in the future, complaining that "if my older sons and daughters were studying but did not succeed, why is my younger child going to preschool?" (a father from 'no-access group'). Although they desired that their older children got educated and succeed in getting employed, the hard reality was that they could not have a stable occupation, and by extension, their sons and daughters were stagnating due to their social status.

5.2.2 Low commitment of the Government

Pre-primary education was, as mentioned above, controlled by the central government (DEPA) and the local government (DREN). A representative of civil society, who has been collaborating with the local government in ECCE since 2010, criticized the passive nature of government officials and demanded a more responsible and professional attitude from them towards their work:

They [the government] are not responsible for their work. Projects or work always initiates from these organizations which knock at their door to propose some form of co-operation. They have never had any initiative. If you don't believe me, go to DREN and ask about their action plan annually or monthly... they don't have it... they never had. (*shaking his head*) In addition, the minister of education doesn't have the action plan... we should not say it is because of the impact of the political crisis. At least, we have to try, because we are not the only ones who suffer with the political crisis, but also every Malagasy. Even though we Malagasy people are politically stable, there is an economic crisis in the world. That will be their excuse again.

The representative from the civil society seemed well-placed to understand the nature of the government officials through experience with his local government. In his eyes, the government officials do not regard their work as a duty to the people, but as a mere job. Therefore, it seems hardly possible for them to grapple with low access to ECCE, as the government's complacency, in his opinion, was rampant; it either made excuses about the lack of budget due to the withdrawal of international aid, or declared to be waiting for proposals from international agencies.

The government officials from DEPA and DREN, on the other hand, tried to justify why they could not prioritize ECCE. The following statement was made by one official from DEPA:

Even our minister... he is a minister of education. But he is not motivated to scale up preschools. The problem is that the primary school sector is always prioritized in education sectors. For him, increasing the budget in preschool is troublesome.

The priority on primary education is deeply rooted in the Ministry of Education, while on the other hand, there is an absence of will from the central government towards ECCE. This low commitment to ECCE has negatively affected the practice of the local government:

We can't manage the preschools in rural areas because we don't have a motorcycle to reach them. All we can do is to sit and wait for their report. (A government official from DREN)

He criticized the central government for indifference to, and lack of support for, local government. Meanwhile, in *La Coccinelle* public preschool's focus group, the incompetence and low commitment of the local government, however, was exposed:

The government saw our situation, but it didn't really care (*All parents shrugged in agreement*). (*A teacher interrupted*) That is why I am going to Antananarivo once again to beg for our school to be remodeled for the last time. Now, four years have passed since our requests for something to be done, such as remodeling the building and constructing a fence for the school. (*One parent insisted*) Our school should be remodeled. We are very scared because someone can just get in the school and steal our children. If you put money in the hands of the government, the school will never be developed. If it is you who wants to support our school, we will definitely rely on you. (*Finally, a teacher said assertively*) I will go to Antananarivo to call for our need for the last time.

It would seem that both the central and local governments are showing indifference to ECCE. Finally, the government's low commitment sparked off the teacher strike in public preschools. Unfortunately, the conflict had a negative impact on all parents whose children were attending public preschools, since the children could no longer attend them. The strike occurred because the government failed to pay the teachers on a regular basis. One teacher from *Clarinette* public preschool explained that they could not help going on strike last year due to the delayed salary payments:

My monthly salary is 30,000 ariary (82 NOK) from FRAM, the parents' committee. When you also get the compensation, it is supposed to rise to 100,000 ariary (274 NOK) monthly. The problem is that you don't get it every month. Sometimes you only get it every two, or even four months. It is not regular at all. For example, the salary for last May and June... I got it yesterday [September 19].

The weak will of the government on ECCE led to the allocation a low budget in ECCE and made the government lose the capacity to pay the public preschool teacher's salaries on a regular basis. To solve the budgetary problem, the government introduced two types of financial resources: FRAM (the parents committee) and UNICEF. As mentioned above, FRAM collects the annual tuition fee (40,000 ariary) from parents from public preschools and should pay the salary of the teachers monthly. However, due to the financial instability of parents, they have often been overdue, and thus FRAM could not pay salaries or had to postpone the payments. Therefore, some teachers received money from UNICEF regularly, while others did not from FRAM, which could not manage to mobilize money from parents. The teacher strike (understandable, given the difficult financial situation of the

teachers and their families) led to the dropout of children in public preschool, since the refusal to work persisted from the fall semester in 2012. One parent who quit public preschool said angrily protested:

Parents preferred spending 10,000 ariary (27 NOK) for the education of their children than keeping them at home. Nothing happened after that decision... You know? Like me, I didn't have enough education. So I tried hard to give my kid an education. Even though I was trying, it was not going well. Now, some parents told me that "last year we sent our children for only three months. This year, believe me, there will be no school again".

For parents sending their children to public preschool, the annual tuition fee, only 833 MGA, was not easy to afford, since most parents in public preschool were on the breadline. Consequently, the low commitment on ECCE of the central and local government created a chain of effects, from the teachers' strike to the dropout of children who previously had access to public preschool.

5.3 The similarities and differences in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools

Both similar and different choices were made by parents in public and private preschools. Parents who had access to public preschools were, in general, from poorer backgrounds, and on the other hand, those with access to private preschools from richer backgrounds, the cost of tuition fees delimiting clearly the two groups. Despite the disparity in economic status between both parent groups, parents shared the view that early childhood care and education was an *investment for a successful life for the children*. However, there were differences between the two groups in school choice. For parents in public preschool, *cheap school cost* was a determining factor when deciding which school to send their children to. The decision of the parents for private preschools was, on the other hand, made with two corresponding perceptions: *language, privilege* and *distrust in public preschool*. These themes are discussed below.

5.3.1 The similarities in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools: Investment for a successful life for the children

The motivation of both the public and private preschool parent group was to invest in an experience which could benefit their children's future life:

I have a strong belief that education will bring change for my children. I am very glad that my children are smart. Also, I wish that they will not become a thief or killer, or do the laundry for the rich. It is always nice that the children have education. That makes me happy.

The above was said by a mother of a child attending *Clarinette* public preschool, who worked as a maid for wealthy families. By putting his child in the public preschool, she desired that her child was not ruined or demoted. For parents who had access to public preschool, giving their children the chance to be educated was the only hope for a successful life, since their offspring would not benefit from any inheritance.

Education is the only *luva* (heritage) that parents can give their children. That is why I am sending my child to preschool. When I was a child, my parents sent me to school. So I have to try hard to send my child to school, even though I have nothing.

This was said by a grandmother of a child attending *La coccinelle* public preschool, who is raising her grandson with the money made from selling home-made bread in the market. A significant number of parents in public preschools shared the same idea as this lady. The grandmother did not explain the value and benefit of education sophisticatedly, but valued education as the heritage or property that parents can realistically provide given their context of financial marginalization.

A parent of a child attending *La Colombe* private preschool, a teacher married to a doctor, viewed preschool from a different angle:

I will always support my child, giving private education since I want my child to succeed. That is my main goal. I really want my child to become a doctor like her father.

Her statement was firm and goal-oriented, as she aspired for her child to be successful in ‘inheriting’ her husband’s employment. She thought that providing private education for her daughter was the best way to achieve that objective.

Behind the desire for the future success of children, both public and private preschool parents were making sacrifices, although the extent of those sacrifices differed depending on how much they could afford. One parent, a street vendor, of a child attending *Clarinette* public preschool, calmly explained:

We are human beings... We have the same feeling inside of our hearts. Like... (*Pausing*) When you see your neighbor’s children, who are very clean and go to the school, you will be very sad... I ask myself, “Why can’t I do the same with my children?”. And sometimes, we are blaming *God*... So the only thing I can do, if I could cook two pots of rice, I just cook one pot to save money and send my children to preschool, because I feel sad not to give them the same chance as the other children going to preschool. I will do what I can to send my children to preschool. If they are not going to school, sometimes, they could become spoiled. Of course, as a mother, I am going to feel very sorry for my children. So I can do everything to place my children at the same level as the others.

When parents in private preschools, who totally rely on regular salaries, made a decision about access, they could not overlook the burden of high tuition fees. One parent of a child in *La Colombe* private

preschool, whose husband worked for the government, admitted her difficulty in supporting their children:

We sacrifice a lot to send my child to this school. For example, we are living in a very small house. We are wearing the cheapest clothes. My neighbors told me “Why don’t you move out to a nice place? Both of you (*her and her husband*) are working and are well paid”. But I always answer, “It is better to live in a very simple way as long as I can give the best education to my children”.

Both public and private preschool parents, therefore, chose their schools in the light of the investment for their children’s successful life. Interestingly, regardless of whether the parents send their children to a costly private preschool or a more affordable one, both groups shared the eagerness to sacrifice their own standards of living by stretching their budget proportionally to their earnings in order to aim for the best choice.

5.3.2 The differences in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools

5.3.2.1 Access to public preschool: Cheaper school cost

Parents from public preschools chose them because “we are sending our children to the public preschool because that is all we can afford.” (A mother from a child attending *La coccinelle* public preschool) One parent in *Clarinette* public preschool indicated the public school choice as the second best:

Because we can’t afford the higher monthly tuition fees of private schools, and all the materials that kids need in school. So, it is better to send our kids to public preschool. If we send them to private preschool, it will destroy the mind of our children because we can’t even afford the snack for break time and nice clothes. Also, we just pay 833 ariary every month, and we save the money from January by saving a small amount of money every day.

As we can see from this passage, this mother could only afford the cheaper tuition fees from public preschools, not those requiring additional costs such as materials and meals from home. Her words also implied anxiety that her children could lose their dignity if she sent them to a private preschool because she could not meet the same standard of living of her children’s classmates. In the same line, a widow whose child attended *Clarinette* public preschool felt the same way, explaining the reason of her children’s transfer to public school:

I transferred my children because the father, who was the only one to support family, passed away and I didn’t have any job. So, I couldn’t afford the monthly tuition fee of the private school. I just transferred my first kid to a public preschool since the school charges a very reduced annual tuition fee. (*She pointed at the child*) I am really sad for her.

For public preschool parents, the cheaper tuition fees in public preschools was the main reason of access to that kind of institution. Nevertheless, public preschools were not the first priority for them, and the parents tended to select public preschool as the second best choice for the education of their children. This meant that they judged the private preschools better equipped in terms of teacher quality and learning, since those teachers were more educated, had better working conditions and received a higher salary than the public preschool teachers, which was reflected on the tuition costs. Most parents in public preschools tended to feel guilty that their children could not have access to private preschools.

5.3.2.2 Access to private preschool: Language and privilege

In Madagascar, a former French colony, knowledge of French is regarded as a privilege. To make their children achieve that privilege, private school parents' aspire that their children speak fluent French for cultural and practical reasons. One teacher's explanation in *La Colombe* private preschool revealed how teaching practices had to reflect the parents' expectations of the preschool:

That is why the school is *école d'expression française* (French expression school). We don't speak Malagasy. When you arrive at the classroom, you are not allowed to speak Malagasy anymore, teachers included. Yes, that is how it is. You see? When you just come inside to see us, we only spoke French. That convinces parents on the nature of our school. If you just listen to children without seeing them, you can think that they are *Vazaha* [French]. But they are Malagasy children.

In a cultural perspective, the parents' admiration towards French culture and language stands out in the decision making of private preschool choice. In general, Malagasies tend to hold the double standard about the *Vazaha* (white French). At the same time that they perceive them as admirable, modernized and wealthy individuals, they disliked them due to their colonial legacy. Yet, the former feeling is dominant. Furthermore, the term *Vazaha* is often used when people call the white French, white foreigners, the military, government officials, professors, doctors, foreigners, and so forth – in other words, those who look affluent, modernized and positioned at the highest level of the Malagasy society. Fluent French speaking, therefore, plays a decisive role by providing the *Vazaha* a special status: not only can they become privileged, but also freely communicate with other *Vazaha*. By the same token, private preschools satisfy parents by preparing children to become *Vazaha* and using French as the language of instruction. As a civil society staff indicated:

Most people think that private preschool is privileged and the most ideal. Therefore, we find it difficult to change their mentality. For example, if there is a pair of jeans made in Madagascar, we don't like it. If it is made in France, but manufactured in Madagascar, they will definitely like it. This kind of mentality should be absolutely corrected. In this line, if you can afford to send your children to private preschool, you will be privileged. You feel like you are in a higher position. Also, you presume that your child will be more culturally advanced due to the benefit of learning French.

In effect, most parents in private preschools felt superiority from what it represented for their children to attend *La Colombe* private preschool:

Most children are foreigners such as French and Indian in this school. It is very nice because it makes Malagasy child develop more and understand more about foreign knowledge. For example, after the summer vacation, those foreign children told my child about what they have seen from abroad.

A parent sending her child to *l'Indienne* private preschool mentioned, bragging about her child who can communicate in *Vazaha*:

If my kids know how to speak French, when they see *Vazaha* in the street, they can really speak to them in French.

For private preschool parents, their choice was, therefore, the symbol of their superiority and privilege embodied in the acquisition of French, implying a more advanced culture and language than Malagasy.

From a practical perspective, for parents selecting private preschools, the acquisition of French knowledge was regarded as instrumental in leading their children to an affluent life. French acquisition is of paramount importance in the institutional setup of the country, from education to employment in Madagascar. Mastering French is, therefore, the indispensable tool that gives access to power in such institutions, as a parent from *Clarinette* public preschool said:

It will be much easier for kids to find a job because they can speak French fluently. Nowadays, it is hard to find a job if you do not speak French, even though you have a diploma from a public school with Malagasy as the language of instruction. I think you will not get a job unless you speak French.

A parent in *l'Indienne* private school mentioned in relation to the huge value of French speaking that “everywhere you go, you can see French letters... This makes the private preschool more famous and powerful than public preschool since French is its priority”. Because of this practical reason, private preschools are highly popularized by the parents at the middle and upper classes.

Most importantly, what differentiates the fluent French speaking students from the less fluent ones is their score in a national high school leaving examination carried out in French. Passing the national examination not only means being given the opportunity to enter higher education, but also determines which level of tertiary education and employment the young adult will enjoy. Therefore, it is assumed that parents choosing private preschools seriously considered the national examination result, which will only happen after children become high school graduates. A parent of a child attending *l'Indienne* private preschool chose the school because of its high reputation on the national exam result:

It is because of the result of the national exam. It is about which school has the highest results in the national exam. We just send our children to the school which has a 100 percent chance of passing the national exam.

In general, a private foundation runs the whole education level from preschool to upper secondary school. The private schools that gained a high reputation in national examination results are, therefore, highly popular and recognized by parents aspiring for the best possible score, even though their children were too young to think about the examination. The critical point is the language of the test. Public preschools, hence, tend to be ignored by those who selected private preschools because their medium of language is Malagasy. For most parents, including public and private preschools, providing public education for their children was akin to sentencing them to miss an opportunity to become upwardly mobile in society. Another parent from *l'Indienne* private preschool ridiculed the ignorance of children from public preschools towards French language:

Imagine! If you ask them “what is your name?” in French in a public preschool, they will just stare at you while saying nothing. If you ask them in Malagasy, they speak more than you expected (*laughing loudly*).

The parents were, therefore, inclined to send their children to private preschool where French is taught in order for them to be equipped with such language skills as early as possible. Another parent from *l'Indienne* mirrored how much Malagasy society values the mastery of French, and the consequences of the gap between French speakers and non-French speakers reflected in education and employment. In a modern society, the type of education and employment that one holds is the determining factor for a successful life. As expected, most of the parents in private preschools made their choice clear when agreeing with the views of the parent from *l'Indienne* private preschool: “I want my child to express himself well in French, and that is why I send my child to *La Colombe* private preschool. Private preschools are totally focused in employing French”.

5.4 Measures and strategies to improve ECCE in Madagascar

At the policy level, there were differing viewpoints between government officials, the representative of the international organization and civil society, and parents. The government officials and the international organization staff were in favor of changes in policy, including *legislating ECCE-related laws* and *promoting ECCE*. In contrast, parents and the civil society staff member prioritized the implementation of *equitable ECCE policies* (i.e. free education and the expansion and improvement of quality of public preschools).

The government officials and a representative of the international organization made a proposal in accordance with *the legislation of ECCE* and *the promotion of ECCE*. They were inclined to adopt a

macro view in improving ECCE, compared to parents. The establishment of a legal background for ECCE was mentioned by a central government official:

The government is unsure about the application of the documents on law and norms with regards to ECCE. There are already some norms and rules in to monitor preschools and train teachers, but there is the need to enact ECCE-related laws that can apply to the national, regional, community and school levels.

The development and implementation of policies of the state comes, in general, after the establishment of the law that primarily accompanies it. Therefore, the absence of ECCE-related laws can have a negative impact on improving ECCE, since this can depend on the creation of standards for the establishment of preschools and its associated facilities (such as bathrooms and outdoor playgrounds, equipment, curriculum, the qualification of teachers, and so forth).

In addition to the formulation of ECCE-related laws, the central government official emphasized the significance of its endorsement, stating that “Malagasy people have no conception of ECCE and thus, it is obvious that the access rate to preschool is low in Madagascar”. Of course, in the case of parents whose children did not participate in preschools, they seemed ignorant about ECCE – as one of them expressed, “most of parents do not know even whether preschool exists around here”. Nevertheless, the central government official did not give a concrete answer when asked about how the government can promote ECCE door-to-door, clarifying only that “FRAM (Fikambanan’ny Ray Amandrenin’ny Mpianatra), the parents committee, gathers parents in a community and endorses information on preschool and its strength”. The government official seemed to be an expert in ECCE theory, but did not seem to have a thorough knowledge of practice acquired through collecting public opinion (i.e. the demands of parents).

Unlike government officials and an international organization representative, all parents and civil society staff urged the introduction of free education that can be substantively advantageous to them. One father of a child attending *Clarinette* public preschool raised his voice:

First of all, if there is a meeting between the director and the teachers in the school and they say to send your children to preschool, they will give the *teny gasy* (literally ‘I will hurt you’) to the parents, imposing the tuition fee, 833 ariary per month. That is the reality. The parents will think that “now you tell me, to send my small children to preschool for 833 ariary... it is as if you were sending me to jail for stealing money to give them an education”.

As above, in response to paying the small annual tuition fee, parents were very upset with the prospect of spending the money. The abolition of direct and indirect costs in preschool seems necessary for parents to have access to preschool, as another parent in *Clarinette* public preschool stated:

Now the tuition fee is 833 ariary monthly. For example, I have three children. Where can I find 29, 988 ariary to send my three kids to school? But if the government says that sending their children

to preschool is free, I think this classroom is not enough for the children. And if we get some support for materials that can be needed in the classroom like books and toys, I think the parents will gladly send their children to preschool... If everything is arranged by the government, the parents can worry only about the child's lunchboxes.

For him, free education, as well as books and materials, are need for young children. If, in the future, this is accomplished by the government, an increase in access to preschool is certain.

Additionally, all participants desire *the development and implementation of substantial ECCE policies*. The emerging suggestions of participants were concentrated on how the government should deal with other pending issues, namely the increase in public preschools and the improvement of their quality. Firstly, one *Clarinette* public preschool parent pointed that the number of existing preschools is insufficient for all children in Toliara to be enrolled.

Secondly, most parents placed the improvement of teachers' quality in public preschool as a priority. As most participants agreed, a wage increase for public preschool teachers is the most pressing issue for them not only to get motivated in the classroom, but also to improve quality. One of the parents recognizes that a pay rise can be a significant barometer for valuing teachers:

The government must take the responsibility of education. They have to pay more to the teachers. If the teachers request something from them, they should analyze and try to satisfy them.

A teacher of *Clarinette* public preschool tried to sell me the little souvenirs that she weaved with Malagasy traditional textures when I had an interview with her. Public teachers often have second jobs. This necessity can not only distract teaching, but also devalue the dignity of teachers as the main agency to raise the potential for an improvement in the future of Madagascar's society.

Most informants, furthermore, believe that the gap in physical resources between public and private preschools should be tackled. One parent whose children transferred from a private to *Clarinette* public preschool due to the death of her husband spoke about the disparity between them, attributing to the government less commitment to the public preschools as well as suggesting the solution to quality improvement:

Preschools must be the same... because teachers do not come from abroad and the teachers are all from Madagascar. This happens because the government is not serious about public schools. For example, young children need bathrooms, toys and gardens, but public schools do not have that basic equipment. That is why most of the parents send their children to private preschools, because their kids receive adequate treatment there. Parents think that private preschools can educate their children better. If there was more government investment, I believe that every parent would enroll their children in public preschools.

In the observation, the quality disparity between public and private preschools was abysmal in terms of facilities and materials. For example, in sanitary terms, private preschools were equipped with a toilet and a wash basin for young children; public preschools lacked such facilities (the children had to use the floor in a corner behind the school, crowded with boys and girls). Therefore, it seemed to be taken for granted that the participants required the government to strive for the investment in quality management so that public preschools no longer lag behind in quality of education.

5.5 Summary

This chapter presented the findings extracted from the observations of the key ECCE stakeholders: government officials, a key representative of an international organization and civil society, teachers and parents. In terms of *the value of ECCE*, both the government and parents agreed that ECCE is valued as an investment for young children. In terms of *the factors obstructing access to ECCE*, parents who never had access to ECCE and dropped out from it pointed out that poverty and low commitment of the government as the reason behind it. On *the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attended private or public preschools*, in terms of similarities both public and private preschool parents shared the view of ECCE as an investment, accompanying financial sacrifice. Regarding differences, public preschool parents pointed out the lower tuition fees, contrasting with the private preschool parents, which heavily emphasized the acquisition of French language in order for their children to secure a bright future. Finally, on *the measures and strategies improving access to ECCE*, parents and a representative of civil society called for the implementation of equal ECCE policies (i.e. free education and the expansion and quality improvement of public preschools). The government officials and a representative of international organization, on the other hand, suggested the enactment of ECCE-related laws and changes in policy directed at the promotion of ECCE. In the next chapter, the findings of this section will be discussed.

6. Discussion

Analysis of the data demonstrated the importance of *the value of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)*; *the factors obstructing access to ECCE*; *the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attended private or public preschools*; and *the measures or strategies improving access to ECCE*. I will now integrate the findings with additional literature in order to gain a better understanding of the situation in Madagascar and draw upon the theoretical framework (i.e. *social exclusion, social class, school choice* shaped by *rational action theory* and the *cultural capital* of parents) (section 6.2). First, however, a summary of the findings (section 6.3) is presented, framed by the four research questions (section 6.1).

6.1 Answering the Research Questions

6.1.1 Research Question 1: The Value of ECCE

The first research question was: *How do the various stakeholders view the value of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Madagascar?* The hypothesis was that the various stakeholders had little value, since the access rate of preschool in Madagascar is markedly low – only 7.4 percent (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Recherche Scientifique, 2008). Most respondents highlighted that ECCE is needed in order for them to be ready to enroll in further education, particularly primary school, as *school readiness*. Nevertheless, the government officials and the representative of the international organization explained that *school readiness* is required to achieve EFA goal 1, since the enrollment in preschool reduces the rate of repetition and dropout of primary school, favoring *public return*. On the contrary, parents, especially those who had access to preschools, linked school readiness to *individual return*, which can help to build a successful life for young children as well as their families. For parents who did not have access to preschool, ECCE itself is a strange and unfamiliar concept; therefore, they chose not to comment about the value of ECCE.

6.1.2 Research Question 2: The Factors Obstructing Access to ECCE

The second question was: *What are the factors obstructing access to ECCE in Madagascar?* The goal of this question was to explore which factors obstructed access to ECCE in Madagascar. In order to answer this question, parents who had never had access to preschool or had dropped out from it were interviewed in individual and focus group interviews. In a micro-level, the participants regarded *poverty*, that is, the hardship of life, and particularly the burden of payment of tuition fees, as the

major factor hindering access to preschool. On the other hand, the same participants, including those with access to public preschools, blamed the irresponsible government. In other words, the government was barely committed to ECCE, not even being able to solve the fundamental issue of the payment of the teachers' salaries. This alone triggered the major teacher strike that closed down public preschools in the Autumn semester in 2011. *Low commitment of the government and the teacher strike* therefore had an impact on impeding access to preschool.

6.1.3 Research Question 3: The Similarities and Differences in the Choices made by Parents Whose Children attend Public or Private Preschools

The third question was: *What are the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attend public or private preschools in Madagascar?* To answer this, parents who have access to public (*Clarinette* and *La Coccinelle*) and private (*La Colombe, l'Indienne* and *Radisson*) preschools were interviewed. In reaction to the different nature of both schools, the reasons behind the decisions of parents between public and private preschools was, in general, distinct, being shaped by the language of instruction (Malagasy or French) and the monthly tuition fees [833 MGA (2 NOK) or 5,000 to 35,000 ariary (13 to 91 NOK)]. The *similarities* in the choices made by parents in public and private preschools was presented as an investment for their children's future success in a preschool choice that entails a sacrifice. Despite the similarity in the decision making in the access to preschool, *differences* of choice made by both parent groups were identified: public preschools were selected based on affordability, while private preschools were chosen having in mind the acquisition of cultural capital, i.e. French language skills.

6.1.4 Research Question 4: The Measures or Strategies are put in place by the Government, Multilateral Agencies, the Community and NGOs to improve ECCE

The fourth research question was: *What measures or strategies are put in place by the government, multilateral agencies, the community and NGOs to improve ECCE in Madagascar?* In order to suggest improvements for access to ECCE in Madagascar, key stakeholders on ECCE were interviewed, as noted above. The suggestions of the participants vary. The government officials and the representative of the international organization, in charge of national and international education policy, prioritized *legislating ECCE-related laws* and *promoting ECCE*. The opinions of the representative of civil society and parents, on the other hand, reflected the grassroots level, urging the government to implement *equitable ECCE policies* (i.e. free education and the expansion and quality management of public preschool).

6.2 Themes and Discussion

Four major themes arising from the findings will be discussed: *the logic of investment* (6.2.1); *poverty and low commitment of the government* (6.2.2); *school choice: affordability or cultural capital?* (6.2.3); and *moderate and radical changes in ECCE* (6.2.4).

6.2.1 The Logic of Investment

Since 1980s, neo-liberal, market-driven policies applied to education have dominated worldwide. This trend was established after the libertarian economists' critics to the failure of Keynesianism in policies representing social welfare (i.e. education and health care), since many nations (e.g. the UK) had struggled with economic recession (Ball, 2006). The main aim was to reduce government intervention and, on the other hand, to increase the introduction of a free market system in the public sector, attracting citizens with individual freedom and choice (ibid). The purpose of education seemed to raise *competitive* human resources to meet the demands of the market. Interestingly, although human capital theory emerged in 1960s, before neo-liberalism in education, it shared many of its tenets. This perspective prioritizes an investment in the sector aiming at increased productivity of individuals, and thus to provide the return to both individuals and the nation (Shultz, 1961; Becker, 1964). Recently, Becker (2006) pointed out that the accumulation of skills and credentials is the key to maximize productivity of the individual income (cited in Brown & Tannock, 2009). Hence, in order to reach the competitive edge in the market, acquiring skills and credentials seems not to be *optional* anymore, but a *necessary* condition for a highly reputable employment with high income.

Madagascar, the site of this study, is not part of the developed countries where high-skilled workers in the post-industrial context are in high demand. Nevertheless, in the responses of key stakeholders to the value of ECCE, the logic of investment in education prevailed. Most importantly, they tended to view it as an *opportunity*, rather than its pedagogical benefit (i.e. curriculum and activities to promote child development). Government officials and the representative of the international organization and civil society agreed that ECCE can be a useful tool to increase the productivity of the nation. In contrast, parents valued it as an instrument for their children, at the individual level, to seize an opportunity for their future.

The responses of government officials and the representative of the international organization and civil society implied that ECCE is an investment for the future of young children, a means to secure individual productivity. However, their discourse of investment was not made in a vacuum, but was part of a strategy guided by the thought of international development. Because the budget for ECCE is dependent on international aid, *human capital theory* and a *cost-effective* approach were always present (Penn, 2008). This is closely related to many economists' perspective on ECCE that early

intervention reduces the cost of the state (i.e. remedial programs due to grade retention, school dropout, and high school incompleteness) (Cunha & Heckman, 2007; Heckman & Masterov, 2007). In the light of aid, international organizations such as the World Bank and UNICEF interpret ECCE as an intervention and promote ECCE as a panacea to reduce poverty in the South – Madagascar is no exception. In the MAP (Madagascar Action Plan 2007-2012) (Government of Madagascar) of the former government, improving ECCE is one of the aims to be achieved. Overall, according to MDG 2, international aid expects the governments from donor-receiving countries to provide primary education to every child. The MAP, therefore, foresees the expansion of public preschool, the empowerment of preschool teachers, the development of curriculums, and so forth, to achieve 100% participation in primary education. The response of the government officials, hence, replicated the statements of international organizations such as UNICEF and the World Bank, stating that the value of ECCE is to make children ready for primary school, adapt well to it, and ultimately achieve the MDG1 and EFA goals. They seem more focused on the prevention of the effects that could negatively impact the participation of primary school education than the benefit from ECCE itself for children. Their answer on future investment was, in effect, limited to primary school age, that children at early years will encounter, satisfying the demands of donors.

In the parents' perspective, *school readiness* was valued as *individual return*. It is difficult to separate the issue of school readiness from future achievements and entry at this level can also correspond to the desires of parents for their children's future success. Unlike primary school, preschool education is not free in Madagascar, and parents had to make sacrifices, such as reducing the amount of food in a meal (or simply skipping it), or living in a smaller house, in order to afford the tuition fees. Therefore, from their answers, the investment in education in a *cost* perspective led to the expectation that their children acquire pre-requisite learning for primary education, such as the '3Rs' (reading, writing and arithmetic). In this sense, *school readiness* mirrors the accumulation of *skills* that help children to prepare for later education, specifically, primary education, as identified by Becker (2006 cited in Lauder et al., 2006). Overall, they understand ECCE as a 'stop' where they need to pass so as to reach the 'destination', that is, primary school (the first step in a ladder that leads up to university), but not as a destination in itself that strengthens the basis of the holistic development of the child.

There was, nevertheless, a contextual reason for ECCE to be regarded as an investment for the future, lined to an *opportunity* rather than *the importance of ECCE itself*. The parents' central concern was social insecurity and unemployment, respectively. Stated differently, they understood that society in Toliara is becoming dangerous (i.e. pickpocketing and violence perpetrated by the youth). Moreover, employment opportunities are very restricted, with only limited occupational positions (e.g. small business sellers, guards and rickshaw drivers) available. These facts, in effect, made them rely more on the future in the name of hope. Above all, they were not satisfied with the existing conditions, and

tended to project satisfaction into the future, that is, their children. In terms of social insecurity, as some parents responded, ECCE is the place where their children can be protected from social insecurity in Toliara, including getting along with the so-called ‘bad’ children. Echoing rational action theorists (Erikson & Jonsson, 1996), they seemed to be afraid that the next generation, i.e. their children, faced further social demotion, for example, as becoming thieves or pickpockets, as one parent said. On the issue of unemployment, parents seemed to view ECCE through the lens of *the earlier, the better*. For them, accumulating *skills* from an early stage was the only answer to prepare for such an uncertain and complex context. Finally, the value of ECCE reflected the aspiration of social promotion and reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Although all parents wanted to provide children with the chance of enjoying a better life as well as themselves, some desired upward mobility for their children at their own level and, in contrast, the other wanted to assure the prolongation of their prestige.

Overall, framing ECCE only in the light of the logic of investment is not desirable, since investment inevitably requires time and, as a result, there is a high probability of overlooking the needs of young children. To be more precise, the logic behind it has an assumption that the existing period, that is, early childhood, is deficient and must, therefore, be fulfilled. According to the findings of this study, adults, including parents and government officials in Madagascar, in effect, did not seem to regard young children as ‘the being’ (Fawcett et al., 2004 cited in Lister 2006, p. 6) who deserved respect, but ‘becoming’ (ibid). In this vein, children are more likely to be a passive subject who will eventually become an adult, meeting up to the expectations of their parents and the government. Therefore, in order to value and promote ECCE, there is the need that young children must be centered as a main actor and further, the principles of CRC (i.e. best interests of the child, survival, development, and participation) should be taken into account in Madagascar.

6.2.2 Poverty and low commitment of the Government

The reason why no-access parents (i.e. those whose children never had access to preschool or were removed from it) were excluded differed. The former was closely tied to *poverty*, implying that they could not afford to pay tuition fees and were unable to enroll their children. On the contrary, the latter were a consequence of the teacher strike in the 2011 fall semester, against their own will.

For parents whose children never attended preschool, poverty was the main factor obstructing access to ECCE. Poverty cannot, however, be easily defined. Sen (2000) argues that poverty is led by relational deprivation in (see chapter 2). The central idea is that the issue of exclusion must not be dealt with as an individual issue, but as a structural problem. This is because an individual’s deprivation is never separable from the structural deprivation created by the institutions (the government, education, employment, etc.) in a social, economic and political context. In Madagascar, poverty is generated by

relational deprivation that ranges from a complex structure of institutions. In general, according to the findings, at the macro-level the poverty of the nation is related to the price instability of the market, the provision of employment for parents and of salary for teachers. On the contrary, at the micro-level, poverty of individuals is associated with the exclusion mainly from basic life necessities – mainly food – and, as a result, education.

To crystallize the insight of no-access to ECCE as exclusion in ECCE, looking back at the theoretical framework, the *three elements of social exclusion* (Kabeer, 2000) are fit for giving an account of the aforementioned items: *problematic group, problematic situation and problematic process*. According to the findings, it is interesting to see that the problematic group, situation and process are interrelated.

Firstly, the category of *problematic group* was strongly related to parents whose children never attended preschool. In Kabeer's description (2000), the problematic group includes beggars, rural landless or asset-poor, long-term unemployed, etc. (see chapter 2). The parents matched, in effect, this classification, as they did not have an occupation on a regular basis and thus, a stable income for supporting their family.

Secondly, the *problematic group* was already situated in *problematic conditions* in Madagascar. Problematic condition consists of poverty, unemployed, ghettoization, family breakdown and isolation (Kabeer, 2000) (see chapter 2). Madagascar is one of the least developed countries in the world, ranked 151 out of 187 in Human Development Index (HDI) (UNDP, 2013). 81.3% of the population lives below the international poverty line (1.25 USD daily) (Gentilini & Sumner, 2012). Underemployment – rather than the lack of jobs – is the greatest problem in Madagascar, as workers' earnings come mainly from the informal sector, mostly linked to agriculture, with an extremely low income level (ILO, 2010). Specifically, since Toliara is a marginalized area that consists mainly of dry soil which is unsuitable for growing crops, only 54.9% of households in Atsimo Andrefanana farm the land, much below the national average of 80.6% (INSTAT, 2010), as noted in chapter 4. The employment market is, therefore, very limited, only providing temporal work (i.e. as rickshaw drivers, house guards for the rich, etc.) and small businesses (i.e. as food sellers, craftsmen, etc.) with income levels which are insufficient to feed a family.

Thirdly, the *problematic conditions* were worsened by a *problematic process*: the political and economic crisis in Madagascar. Ultimately, the *problematic process* also contributed to expanding the *problematic group* and at the same time, to losing purchasing power of parents who never had access to ECCE through unemployment and price insecurity. The political process has had an impact on the economic process in the context of Madagascar. As many parents in this group mentioned in the findings, the coup d'état led by Andry Rajoelina in 2009 has brought about several negative changes. As noted above, the former government aimed at the growth of the economy and education. Of course,

during the earlier president Ravalomanana's term, it cannot be said that Madagascar tackled poverty and accomplished a rapid economic growth, as it still remains a poor country. However, it is undeniable that Ravalomanana was not only able to attract a lot of foreign investment projects from companies based in other countries (i.e. South Korea and Australia), but also to acquire a considerable amount of aid from international bilateral and international agencies (Ploch & Cook, 2012). Furthermore, in terms of education, the introduction of MAP was a positive influence in expanding schools and reinforcing teacher quality.

In the existing president, Rajoelina's term, the economy has, however, steeply decreased with the fall of GDP from 7% (2008) to -3.7% (2009), followed by 0.5% (2010) and 0.7% (2011) (the Economist Intelligence Unit, cited in Ploch & Cook, 2012, p. 15). Unfortunately, Rajoelina failed to implement the educational policies of the former government due to the political and economic reasons (lack of budget allocation as a result of the withdrawal of international donor agencies).

According to the interviewees, unemployment has increased as a consequence of the economic downturn, while purchasing power also lowered dramatically. From the findings, parents who used to work in factories built by the former government lost their jobs because the opposing party destroyed them in order to eliminate that legacy, while those with temporal work have been affected greatly by the declining economy. Finally, the labor market for the economically disadvantaged in Toliara has been more and more restricted.

What is worse is that the price rise of the basic necessities such as rice, the most sought after foodstuff in Madagascar, contributed to a vicious circle together with lack of income to make the problematic group's life harder. Hence, this group could not be able to give the opportunity of access to ECCE to their children because of the burden of additional expenses, that is, the barrier of direct and indirect costs of preschool. In effect, for most parents in this group, there was no room to think about the future, as they battle for survival daily. By the same token, Crossley's interpretation of Bourdieu's argument in his book *Disposition* (1984) is useful to understand how the lack of access to basic necessities can determine the difference in quality of life between the working and middle class (Bourdieu, 1984, cited in Crossley 2008, pp. 91-92). The middle class does not typically feel the permanent pressure of satisfying basic needs; consequently, it enjoys the opportunity to cultivate its life through education or cultural activities. In contrast, the quest for daily survival blocks the working class from this kind of enrichment. It is, therefore, assumed that children out of ECCE under this context can be more distant from the social, political and economic system (e.g. education and employment), as opposed to their counterparts who had access to ECCE.

For parents who had to remove their children from preschool, *low commitment of the government* was another factor obstructing access to ECCE. As stated by both teachers and parents in a public

preschool, they were on a six months strike in 2011 because they could not receive a regular salary; the consequences of this action was the closure of public preschools for one year and the parents were forced to stop sending their children to the preschools. Although these parents blamed the teacher strike for losing their tuition fees, we cannot blame only the teachers for the drop-out, because the problem is strongly related to low commitment of the government, and its negative impact on the budget allocation for ECCE. Furthermore, as one central government official commented, ECCE was not the priority of the Ministry of Education, at the same time as the central and local government official used the budgetary constraints to justify their negligence. In effect, the government did not assign the budget for teacher salaries. Instead, teachers in public preschools received the salary from either FRAM (the parents committee) or UNICEF in the form of a stipend. Because the teachers were dependent on FRAM to receive their salaries, the overdue payment of parents from public preschools delayed their wages, culminating in a teacher strike. Many impoverished parents, which had sent their children to public preschools at great cost, were left disappointed by this happening and skeptical about having access to ECCE, as they feared that such a situation could occur again. In the end, low commitment of the government towards ECCE blocked such parents' access to ECCE.

6.2.3 School choice: affordability or cultural capital?

School choice in Madagascar is more likely to take place from early childhood, unlike some welfare countries such as the Nordic countries, in which preschool is fully or partially subsidized by the government and the need for choice is less pressing. Private preschools are dominant over public preschools in Madagascar, making up for 94% of total preschools (Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Recherche Scientifique, 2008), as noted above. Therefore, it is natural that the various options in preschool selection (either public or private preschools) raise serious issues about choice at the ECCE level. Furthermore, most private foundations in Toliara offer education from ECCE to upper secondary school, resulting in a greater chance that children enrolling in private preschools remain in the same foundation up to upper secondary school.

In the theoretical framework, *rational action theory (RAT)* was presented in relation to school choice evaluating the *cost*, *benefit* and *probabilities* of outcome in the markets (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthrope, 1996). The underlying idea of RAT is that there is class difference, underpinning the fact that it has a strong bearing on rational action in school choice. It is necessary, therefore, to consider how this differential manifests itself in Madagascar. As mentioned in chapter 4, *profession* and *education level* as a social-economic index were important to define upper or middle and working classes. In general, parents in public schools belong to the working class, with the lowest educational level and labor or temporal labor occupations that provide the lowest incomes, while the parents in private preschools are characterized by a higher educational level and skillful professions

(the husbands more than the wives) at a high or middle income level. Of course, the education level and type of profession influences the extent of their commitment towards their children's education (i.e. financial and academic support) between the upper or middle and working classes (Gewirtz et al., 1995), since education level (cultural capital) can be converted into the ability to secure employment (economic capital) (Bourdieu, 1986). The class differential between parents in public and private preschools was clear, and RAT is useful to clarify the findings of this study.

Most of the studies of RAT had, however, been relying on secondary education, since this is the period where compulsory education ends (Hatcher, 1998). ECCE in Madagascar, however, may be considered along the same lines, since it crosses the crucial transition period for young children entering primary school, which is compulsory. Choice can be used in the case of Madagascar to differentiate between children from the middle and working class in primary school, and by extension, the labor market. As a whole, parents in public preschools focus more on *cost* issues, while those in private preschools are more concerned with their high aspirations, that is, *the acquisition of cultural capital* (proficiency in French) that will prove of great advantage in the job market.

In Madagascar, parents both from public or private preschools also contemplate the *cost, benefit and probabilities* of future return when faced with school selection – the main concern of RAT. To begin with, in terms of the reason of access to public preschool, *cheaper cost* is, in effect, the determinant factor for the majority of the working class parents, confirming former studies (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthrope, 1996). Erikson & Jonsson's (1996) two classifications concerning economic reason of choice can fit into the context of Madagascar: "*the extent of inequality of economic condition between classes and the degree of economic security*, i.e. the likelihood of fluctuations in parents' income due, for instance, to unemployment, that will reduce the ability to provide economic support" (cited in Hatcher, 1998, p. 16). Public preschool parents showed serious concerns in their answers about financial resources. Among them, most of the female parents (except for a few single mothers) were typically housewives, while their husbands were working in small businesses (such as rickshaw drivers or construction workers, symbolizing the uncertainty of income). It is, therefore, confirmed that public preschool parents are economically disadvantaged, and under this condition they are hardly capable of financially supporting expensive private preschools. As argued by rational action theorists (Boudon, 1974; Erikson & Jonsson, 1996; Goldthrope, 1996), different aspirations arouse from different classes. It is interesting to note that public preschool parents admitted that private preschools are better than public preschools (quality of teaching in general, physical environment, and French language teaching). Yet, these schools were out of their reach, so they had to settle for the more modest public preschools. Indeed, the average monthly tuition fees for private preschools was approximately twenty two times more expensive than that for public preschools. Therefore, the disadvantaged parents were forced to recognize that there is a long distance between their aspirations

(access to private preschools to contribute to their children's future success) and outcome because of the economic gap separating them from parents in private preschools. Finally, public school parents made a rational choice, and tended to be satisfied with having access to it, seeing it as *luva* (heritage) that they could pass down to their offspring. For them, having access to public education was like giving their children the opportunity of *social promotion*, expecting that they might find a stable occupation with a regular income, regardless of the weaker reputation of the public preschool.

Parents in private preschools, on the other hand, made a rational choice with a higher *cost*, *expected benefit*, *probabilities* and *aspiration* than their counterparts in order to promote their privilege, emphasizing cultural capital – French. Such group includes the middle class with skilled professions, a consistent income, and a high or middle-education level (see chapter 4). In total, the husbands had a higher education level and profession status (i.e. businessmen, doctors, teachers, civil servants, military, etc.) than their wives. The middle class parents in Madagascar can, hence, be identified not as inherent beholders of cultural capital transmitted by their parents, but more likely as owners of institutionalized cultural capital attained by formal education or training. What is at stake is that unlike public preschool choosers, private preschool parents had the capability to realize their aspirations for economic capital, and most importantly, cultural capital.

Bourdieu's *cultural capital* is closely linked to the sustenance of the professional status of private preschool parents, and even the aspiration to move upward in the social ladder by giving the best option (education) to their children. Unlike public preschool choosers, private preschool parents were supported by their cultural capital to realize their aspirations. In order to account for the value of cultural capital of private preschool parents, one needs to look at the *superiority of culture (language) of French* ideologically and the *acquisition of cultural capital (i.e. the institutionalized state)* practically. In terms of *the superiority of culture (language) of French*, the parents wish that their children become *vazaha*. *Vazaha* in Madagascar is identified literally as 'white French', as well as a culturally and linguistically competent and professional person (regardless of language). This results a from the colonial bias against African (local) culture and language (Stroud, 2001). Stated differently, cultural colonization in institutions (primarily in education) indoctrinates the superiority of culture and language of the colonizer over the colonized, while devaluing and alienating the local culture and language (Orelus, 2007). Not surprisingly, the parents pointed out that public preschools used Malagasy, and thus they did not trust their quality. In this circumstance, it is understandable that in African countries "members of the white colonial elite were treated as economically and culturally privileged 'citizens' and those of the colonized black majority as devalued 'subjects'" (Mamdani 1996, p. 61 cited in Kabeer 2000, pp. 85-86). The idea that French culture (language) is far better than Malagasy was deeply rooted in the respondents minds. Therefore, selecting a private preschool was an

ideological choice aiming at securing cultural status, presenting the superiority of *vazaha* through education in French.

With regards to *the acquisition of cultural capital* (institutionalized linguistic capital) in practice, private preschool choosers believed that ability in French is useful in the markets for their children. In the context of Madagascar, French as a linguistic capital was the most important tool to measure cultural capital. However, French is acquired only through formal education or training, not in the daily environment surrounding children. Therefore, French plays a vital role in achieving credentials or qualifications to promote and preserve the upper or middle class in Madagascar.

Meanwhile, it is important to stress the definition of middle class in the Malagasy context. Simply put, in Bourdieu's (1986) conception of middle class, cultural possession is interpreted in a different way than in this study. Cultural capital was presented in the theoretical framework, entailing individual characteristics and habits from the environment that surrounds it (*the embodied state*), the collection of valuable objects including books, instruments, etc. (*the objectified state*) and the official educational qualification, such as educational credentials and certificates (*the institutionalized state*). Possessing the three kinds of cultural capital makes it possible to apply *symbolic power*; it implicitly legitimizes the power of the privileged, and because symbolic power is not visible (unlike material possessions), the working classes often misrecognize the actual power relations in the social, political and economic system (such as money and property) (Bourdieu, 1991). Hence, symbolic power can be crucial in reproducing the privilege of the upper or middle class in the institutions of society, such as education and the labor market in a legitimate way (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bourdieu, 1991).

Bourdieu's view on middle class and cultural capital can apply only partially to the context of Toliara. Firstly, Madagascar belongs to a group of low-resource countries, where the middle class also lacks cultural capital, as does the working class. The means (i.e. books and arts) to accumulating cultural capital in Bourdieu's conception seldom exists in Madagascar. Cultural infrastructures (such as art galleries, museums and libraries) are rare. Books are conceived of as 'text books' rather than for cultural purposes. Concerning access to computers, an essential technology for the acquisition of a wide range of information, only those parents whose children are enrolled in the most expensive preschools have access to them, although others occasionally have internet access in cafés or their offices.

Secondly, Bourdieu's views would imply that the middle class in Madagascar, in general, holds enriched French language skills (i.e. a special way of speaking and complex vocabulary). This is not the case and, in fact, French language is not the mother tongue. Some parents from the middle class were equipped with a good command of French, while the others did not. Further, most parents spoke to their children in Malagasy outside of school, as happened during home interviews. Finally, using French between home and school does not happen, and thus, it is difficult to say that such parents

culturally stimulate their children in French. By the same token, Bourdieu (1991) claims that familiarization with French language depends on the extent to which children are exposed to French by their families; this is rarely expected in the context of Madagascar.

Cultural capital in Madagascar is, therefore, not *embodied*, but *institutionalized*, because it is acquired mostly from private schooling. Ultimately, it is the tool that maintains the prestige of private preschool parents. They reasoned practically that French, as institutionalized cultural capital, can promise a successful return in the markets for their children. Furthermore, future return and success can be characterized by the nature of conversion between cultural and economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). By applying it to the context of Madagascar, parents in private preschools invested economic capital (cost) in achieving cultural capital (French) and, as a result, their cultural status. In contrast, their children will employ the institutionalized cultural capital in further education (i.e. the high school final examination) and the labor market, which can subsequently be converted into financial gains in the future. Ultimately, because there are so few people equipped with the ability to master French, linguistic capital is, in effect, the symbolic power that makes available a ‘profit’ in the markets of Madagascar. Compared to parents in public preschools, those in private preschools fully understood the high value of French acquisition in the markets and at the same time, had the capability to afford a private program that provides French as the language of instruction. Hence, there is a greater chance for their children to maximize that utility. In this line, unfortunately, a different starting line between children in public and private preschool due to unequal distribution can lead to a limited access to the markets for those who do not have French proficiency through public education.

Amidst the eagerness of parents for their children to learn French in private preschools, the mother tongue of Madagascar is undervalued. Equipping children with cultural capital (French) is, of course, important to prepare for their future in a meager employment market. However, early childhood is critical to acquire and develop language, especially the first language, since learning more languages before the development of the mother tongue (the first language) can lead to linguistic developmental delay (Páez, Tabors & López, 2007). Therefore, valuing Malagasy in private preschools is needed for the following reasons: firstly, it can be difficult for children in private preschools to be helped by their parents after school (e.g. help with homework). As Benson (2002) points out, use of the local language in school contributes for parents’ involvement with children’s learning at home. This is relevant to the Malagasy case, because most of the parents whose children attended private preschools are not fluent in French. Secondly, it is doubtful that young children fully understand what is said in classroom when the language of instruction is strictly French. Many scholars point out the pivotal role of the mother tongue for a higher quality education (Benson, 2002; Trudell, 2005). Therefore, children might be confused with both languages and have difficulties in understanding, aggravated by the fact that the teachers are not native French speakers as Lightbown (2008, p. 8, cited in Ball, 2010, p. 40). However,

the introduction of education in the mother tongue for every preschool does not seem realistic since, as noted above, French is the dominant language in the Malagasy institutions (i.e. education, administration and employment).

6.2.4 Moderate and radical changes in ECCE

Most of the participants acknowledged the dominant challenges of ECCE identified by this study: *chronic poverty* as the factor obstructing access to ECCE and *inequality of quality between public and private preschools*. Nevertheless, the measures and strategies considered to respond to these challenges differ between international and national officials, parents, and a representative of civil society. International and national officials emphasized *legislating ECCE-related laws* and *promoting ECCE*, while parents and the civil society staff member prioritized the implementation of *equitable ECCE policies* (i.e. free education and the expansion and quality improvement of public preschools).

In the theoretical framework, Fraser's (1995) two remedies for injustice were presented: *affirmative* and *transformative* approaches. In short, from the findings, by regarding inequitable access to ECCE as one form of injustice in education, the government was inclined to use an *affirmative* remedy, whereas the grassroots community seemed to urge a *transformative* remedy from the government.

In its attempt to increase access to ECCE, the government has recognized the economically disadvantaged and thus, public preschools have been established for them, charging the smallest annual tuition fees possible as an *affirmative approach*. Nevertheless, the establishment of public preschools is certainly not the panacea to improve ECCE, since in Madagascar there is not a comprehensive program for all young children. Firstly, public preschools are not free of charge, although their tuition fees are very small compared to private preschools. For the *no-access group* (parents whose children never had access to ECCE or removed their children from it), even modest tuition fees were too a big burden. In addition, because the portion of the budget allocated to ECCE is so small, the number of public preschools is markedly low. In this situation, they perhaps lose their opportunity to build their whole development and by extension, to promote their social status that can be supported through the enriched experience of ECCE, unlike the *access group* (both public and private preschool parents).

Secondly, the quality of public preschools was far lower than that of private preschools in terms of teacher and physical environment. Public preschool parents in the *access group* were, hence, alienated from *equitable quality provision of ECCE* due to the gap in cultural and economic capital. Moreover, according to the responses of both parent groups, in terms of human resources, teachers in private preschools worked more responsibly due to their higher wages. As regards physical resources, private preschools were also far better than public preschools, according to the observations. Further, French

as the language of instruction in private preschools helps children to get better prepared for further education and employment Malagasy in public preschools, as discussed above. Therefore, the latter had an unfair quality of education, while those in private preschools had a greater chance not only to benefit from access to ECCE, but also to maximize or reproduce their parents' privileged status in the long-run. In the process of policy implementation of the government, two excluded groups, the *no-access group* and the *public preschool parents in access group*, were identified. Although the government recognizes the excluded group under the *affirmative* remedy and provides public ECCE programs so as to increase participation of ECCE, it fails to capture the problem of inequality of the class differential.

In reality, in their measures and strategies to improve ECCE, the government has, however, focused on changes in policy (i.e. the legislation of ECCE-related laws) and the promotion of ECCE, as it links the improvement of ECCE to the very limited budget of ECCE. Despite the ratification of the UNCRC in 1991, stating the right to education of young children in Madagascar, its articles were not translated into ECCE-related laws. In general, policy making and practice comes after the establishment and enactment of the law. Therefore, the absence of ECCE-related laws can lead to losing the ground to improve ECCE, since it depends on the creation of the standards for the establishment of preschools and its associated facilities (such as a bathrooms and outdoor playgrounds, teaching equipment, curricula, the qualification of teachers, and so forth). Ultimately, Malagasy children can only be protected and reap the benefits of ECCE within the directives that have legal force. In terms of public relations on ECCE, although the government acknowledged the significance of its endorsement to the public, it did not present a substantial agenda.

Analyzing their responses, parents and a civil society staff member, in contrast, sought a *transformative* remedy. They were the interested parties in the condition of ECCE denied in Madagascar, and therefore, proposed measures and strategies for ECCE improvement more vigorously than their counterparts. They demanded *equitable ECCE policies* (i.e. free education and the expansion and quality improvement of public preschools) to address the challenges of ECCE. Stated differently, their suggestion mirrored not only the valorization of the excluded groups from access to ECCE, but also the shortening of the gap between the classes, suggesting the end of tuition fees and equal treatment between public and private preschools.

What is at stake is that their consideration on the introduction of equitable ECCE policies was closely linked to universal or comprehensive ECCE for all young Malagasy children as the right to education. To be more precise, the chief concerns on the right to education encompass "the government as the provider and/or funder of public schooling, the child as the bearer of the right to education and of the duty to comply with compulsory education requirements, the child's parents who are the first educators, and professional educators, namely teachers" (Tomasevski 2003, p. 55). In this line, comprehensive

ECCE can require funding from the government, the child as the duty and right bearer of ECCE, and parents and early childhood teachers as certain education requirements. By bridging the suggestions of the parents and a civil society staff member with the right to ECCE, first and foremost, ECCE can be free for all as a public good, rather than for only those who can afford direct and indirect school costs. Secondly, it can be increased so that all children enjoy ECCE. Thirdly, it can provide equitable quality management between public and private preschools in human and physical resources, by enacting and abiding by the educational requirements of ECCE. Yet, we are left with the problem of the acquisition of French between children in public and private preschools. Some of the aforementioned problems might be solved, as long as the government either abolishes French as an official language in the markets, namely education and employment, or introduces bilingual education from the ECCE level.

6.3 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the findings of the study, relating to the four research questions below:

- Key stakeholders (i.e. the government officials, a representative of an international organization and civil society and parents) linked *the value of ECCE to the logic of investment* in the future of children that is consistent with *human capital theory*. This happens in the context of Madagascar, which pursues economic growth through increasing productivity of nations, accompanied with an increase in participation rate of universal primary education of the MDG at a macro-level. At a micro-level, parents focused on the value of ECCE as the tool for accumulating skills to prepare children for their uncertain and complex future in terms of unemployment and social insecurity.
- The factors obstructing access to ECCE were closely connected with social exclusion from access to ECCE for no-access parents whose children had never attended preschool or had dropped out. For the children that never had access to ECCE, poverty was the main reason obstructing access to ECCE. Specifically, the reason behind poverty was hidden by the exclusionary process of this group. According to Kabeer's (2000) categorization on social exclusion, *the problematic group* had emerged in *problematic conditions* (mainly poverty and unemployment of the parents). The problematic situation was worsened and the problematic group was expanded through a *problematic process* (political and economic crisis). In terms of those removing their child from public preschools, the other factor obstructing access to ECCE was *low commitment of the government* that triggered *teacher strike*.
- *Similarities and differences between choices made by parents whose children attend private or public preschools in Madagascar* were found. In terms of similarities, both groups of parents chose preschools through *rational action*, considering *cost, aspiration and probability* for their children's successful outcomes. However, with regards to differences, public preschool

parents were affected by the issue of *cost*, expecting, nevertheless, the *social promotion* of their children. In contrast, private preschool parents made the choice in favor of *sustaining their prestige* through *the emphasis on language, French*. Therefore, they made an investment when choosing private preschools and paying for their costly tuition fees. They hope that their children are not negatively influenced by the other classes (i.e. working classes) and on the other hand, the social status of their children is *promoted* or, at least, *sustained*, revealing a higher aspiration than their counterparts.

- *The measures and strategies improving ECCE in Madagascar gathered between the international and national official and parents and a civil society staff member differs. The former made moderate suggestions (i.e. the legislation of ECCE-related law and the promotion of ECCE), considering the restricted budget in ECCE, while the latter proposed radical changes at the policy level (i.e. equitable ECCE policies, including free education and the expansion and improvement in quality of public preschools).*

7. Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis. It comprises a summary of the study (section 7.1), its limitations (7.2), recommendations for policy-makers and for researchers (section 7.3), and a final statement on the findings (section 7.4).

7.1 Summary of the thesis

Rationale

The rationale of the study was subdivided into four parts:

- ECCE is valued because it covers the critical period when child development is solidifying. It is not only the arena where children can enjoy their right to develop, participate, and play; ECCE also contributes to the achievement of individual and public return in order to raise future potential.
- Low access to ECCE, particularly in developing countries, is pervasive. Nevertheless, ECCE can compensate early negative experiences or deprivation by promoting child development. It is, therefore, important to clearly identify the factors obstructing ECCE so as to increase access and provide young children the opportunity of an enriched early experience in a low-resource context.
- Preschool choice is prevailing in developing countries, since the private sector in ECCE is dominant. However, much attention of the literature on school choice is directed at the lower or upper secondary schools in developed countries. It is, hence, important to understand parental decision-making between public and private preschools in a low-resource country.
- Madagascar fits for this study because it not only struggles with the common issues affecting other SSA countries (i.e. low participation rate in ECCE, dominance of private ECCE programs and lack of government financial support towards ECCE (UNESCO, 2010)), but also provides an opportunity to study ECCE in a marginalized context, given the country's endemic political and economic crises.

Arising from these four points, the following research questions were developed:

1. How do the various stakeholders view the value of ECCE in Madagascar?
2. What are the factors obstructing access to ECCE in Madagascar?

3. What are the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attend public or private preschools in Madagascar?
4. What measures or strategies are put in place to improve access to ECCE in Madagascar?

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study has focused on the concept of *social exclusion* (Fraser, 1995; Kabeer, 2000; Sen, 2000) with regards to *access* to ECCE. Additionally, *social class* and *school choice* have been weighed, as different social classes (i.e. upper or middle and working classes) can shape parental choice, depending on the economic and cultural background. In terms of *social class*, Bourdieu's different forms of capital (e.g. economic, social, and cultural capital) were mainly chosen to account for class differential. With regards to *choice*, *rational action theory* and *cultural capital of Bourdieu*, they have been considered as a useful tool to investigate the similarities and differences of parental preschool choices.

Methodology

This study was carried out in Toliara, Madagascar. On the one hand, it identified the value of ECCE, the factors obstructing access to ECCE, and the measures or strategies improving access to ECCE; on the other hand, it also compared parental choice between public and private preschools. A total of 42 stakeholders of ECCE were interviewed. At the macro-level, the government officials (3 central and 3 local) and a representative of an international organization and civil society responded. On the micro-level, 5 teachers and 29 parents were interviewed; 21 of the parents (part of the *access* group) had children enrolled in 5 preschools, 2 of them public and 3 private. In contrast, the other 8 parents had no children enrolled in preschools, or had dropped out from them. In the 5 preschools, observations were made in order to understand their conditions and functioning, i.e. physical environment (teaching materials and facilities, such as classrooms and bathrooms), curriculum, activities, and teacher-child interaction. Finally, the policy documents were also considered.

Findings and Discussion

In this study, four key themes arouse: *school readiness and the logic of investment; poverty and low commitment of the government; school choice: affordability or cultural capital?; and moderate and radical changes in ECCE*. The findings from the analysis were that parents, government officials and an official representative from an international organization valued ECCE as an *investment* and, in doing so, overlooked the value of ECCE as the right of the child. With regards to the factors obstructing access to ECCE, among 'no-access parents', those whose children did not have access to preschool were excluded from ECCE due to *poverty* in a problematic process (economic and political

crisis) and problematic conditions (financial deprivation, unemployment and low level of education). In contrast, those whose children dropped out of ECCE were forced to do so due to the low commitment of the government that triggered the teachers' strike in 2011. In terms of *choice*, 'access parents' (both of public and private preschools) make a rational choice thought of as an *investment*. Nevertheless, in this selection process, public preschool parents chose their school for its *cheaper cost*, while private preschool parents make a choice on account of *higher cost, expected benefit, probabilities and aspiration* prioritizing French learning as *the acquisition of cultural capital*. Finally, with regards to the measures and strategies to improve ECCE, the statements of the government officials differed from those of the international organization official and the parents. The former focuses on *the legislation of ECCE-related law and the promotion of ECCE* as a moderate change in policy, whereas the latter draws attention to *equitable ECCE policies*, including free education and the expansion and quality improvement of public preschools as a radical change.

7.2 Limitations of the study

Apart from UNESCO and UNICEF's sets of statistics and a few policy documents, literature in relation to ECCE in Madagascar was not really available. However, a vast array of literature on ECCE and developing countries, including sub-Saharan Africa, was helpful to provide a theoretical foundation on ECCE; Madagascar, a SSA country, shares the same difficulties regarding ECCE (i.e. low participation and the dominance of the private sector) as its regional neighbors.

7.3 Recommendations and further research

This section will present *recommendations* for policy-makers (7.3.1) and suggest directions for *further research* (7.3.2).

7.3.1 Recommendations

There are some issues that might help policy making for the government, as well as future ECCE studies for researchers. The government should, first and foremost, consider ECCE in a rights perspective. Madagascar ratified the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) in 1991, which includes the article of the best interests of the child, survival and development, and participation with regard to ECCE. Nevertheless, the emphasis on investment in ECCE of the informants as individual and public return does not imply that the contents of the CRC are practiced at the macro- and micro-level in Madagascar. Here, ECCE can play a vital role in providing the rights of the child, and in this sense, the position of children can be respected as it is. Firstly, in terms of survival and development, ECCE can enhance the development that formulates the foundation of young children by improving

the brain, language, cognitive, social and emotional, and physical development (Greenough et al., 1987; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Cole & Cole, 2001; Berk, 2003; Berk, 2006). Secondly, play, the major medium of learning for young children in ECCE, can be a critical part in maximizing the best interests of the child and participation (Lester & Russell, 2010; Bruce, 2012). Moreover, it helps children to become an agent capable of making a decision about how and what to play depending on their own interest, of participating in it freely and frequently, and in the end, exploring and understanding the world around them. Through the consideration on those articles in ECCE, children in Madagascar can be the agents who can acquire “the rich image of children who are strong, powerful and competent and who have the ability to connect with adults and peers” (Dahlberg & Moss 2005, p. 155). Here, early childhood *per se* can be recognized as a critical period in developing active learners questing for knowledge and understanding surrounding their environment. What is noteworthy is that the role of ECCE can, therefore, be played in granting young children an enriched experience for them to live and enjoy fruitful moments. For both parents and government officials, there were, however, no comments on the present of the lives of the child, only their future. This is because parents and other caretakers should provide for their children’s wellbeing and thus, adults often appear as the main agency in early childhood, since they have the right and authority over their children (Morrison, 2012).

Practically, as for the government, it is challenging to make recommendations, as it clearly lacks the budget for ECCE. In the light of this insufficiency, ECCE policy implementation may be unrealistic. Nevertheless, the strategies and measures (e.g., the legislation and practice of ECCE-related law, as well as equitable ECCE policies, i.e. free education and the expansion and quality improvement of public preschools, as discussed in chapter 6) that key stakeholders of ECCE in Madagascar suggested are worth implementing to improve ECCE. Simply put, in order to increase the access rate of ECCE in Madagascar, the government should embrace ‘no-access parents’ as well as some parents in public preschools that are in danger of quitting them for financial reasons.

ECCE-related law, as the legal basis for implementing *free education* and *improving quality*, should be produced in Madagascar. First and foremost, the government should establish more public ECCE services from village to village so that schools can be accessible. Further, *free education* should be guaranteed. As noted earlier, ‘no-access parents’ cannot afford tuition fees, while ‘some public preschool parents from the access group’ managed to pay annual tuition fees since the salary of teachers and maintenance of public preschools are covered by them. Hence, if the government is responsible for the salary of teachers and maintenance of public preschools, the burden of the parents on tuition fees will be alleviated.

In terms of quality, if no minimum standard is set in terms of facilities and classrooms (e.g. bathrooms and outdoor playgrounds, teaching equipment, curricula, the qualification of teachers, etc.), the quality

of education cannot be adequately managed. Interestingly, allocating an adequate budget for public ECCE services is critical, since it is closely connected with improving quality (UNESCO, 2010c). As noted in chapter 5, there is a gap in quality between public and private preschools, since the latter spends more money on teachers and the physical environment than their counterparts. However, in public preschools, as noted above, the tuition fees collected from parents are spent by FRAM (the public preschool parents' committee) on teachers' salaries and school maintenance, which includes supplying teaching materials (e.g. paper, crayons, paint, and so forth), checking the equipment (e.g. chairs and tables) and the facilities (e.g. classrooms, bathrooms and the playground). In contrast, only the government can be in charge of teacher training. However, since some parents could not afford the annual tuition fees, they often postponed paying them. Thus, public preschools have been suffering from budget shortages, thus negatively influencing the quality of public preschools. Concerning the quality of human resources, teachers in such schools lack motivation, as their wages were paid late. With regards to the physical environment, facilities were outdated, the equipment required replacement, and materials for classroom activities were lacking. Overall, if the government allocates the budget for teachers' salaries and school maintenance, breaking in effect the barrier of tuition fees, free education can be achieved, and 'no access parents' will finally have the opportunity to provide schooling to their children. Further, the quality of public preschools can be improved, accompanied by an adequate government budget for public preschools on a regular basis.

Thirdly, a bilingual education program should be considered, since mother tongue education is the ground for young children to improve literacy and learning (UNESCO, 1953; Watson, 2007). As discussed in chapter 6, the language of instruction was an important element in parental choice among schools, since French as cultural capital can guarantee to raise children fit for the markets. In contrast, children in public preschools do not have the opportunity to hold such capital from an earlier stage and it becomes too difficult to meet the needs of the market, which requires French fluency. It is assumed that this problem could be solved simply by introducing Malagasy in every school, and at the same time valuing it in the markets. However, it will presumably take a long time for this change to happen, since French remained the official language even after the independence from the colonial power in 1960, and the introduction of bilingual programs is costly, since they require the development of bilingual curricula, resources and teacher training (Ball, 2010). Nevertheless, valorizing both languages equally is essential, since the acquisition of a second language relies heavily on mastering the mother tongue (Ball, 2010; Cummins, 2000). Children in public preschools can benefit from learning French in order to participate in the educational and occupational structures, competing in an equal footing with those from private preschools.

Most importantly, the government should concentrate its efforts in placing *ECCE as the right of the child*. In this sense, with an honest commitment from the government, room is open for the discussion

of strategies aimed at tackling the aforementioned problems. The final proposals could be then presented to bilateral organizations and their implementation made in collaboration with them, as a representative of civil society suggested.

7.3.2 Further research

Further research in this field is necessary. Firstly, a deeper understanding of the longitudinal impact of ECCE in developing countries in an *investment* perspective, since most research has been conducted in developed countries (such as the issue of early intervention in the United States) and the contextual differences between developing and developed nations differ completely. Developing countries have weak social welfare systems (i.e. education and health care), and further longitudinal research in such countries would not only help to explore the benefit of ECCE in low-resource contexts, but also to compare the difference of results between the developed and developing regions. Ultimately, it could contribute to disseminate the value of ECCE and to increase access to ECCE in the developing world.

Secondly, as for the *rights* perspective, the concern with quality of ECCE matters specifically in the low-resource contexts, since all children should participate in, and learn with, an enriched ECCE. In this study, the disparity in quality between public and private preschools was clear from interviewing parents and observations. However, parents' information on quality of both public and private preschools was not clearly approved by thorough observation (e.g. the language of instruction, curriculum, interaction between children and teachers, teachers' qualification, physical environment, i.e. facilities and materials tailored for children in a low-resource context), since the observation period for this study was short (only 5 days in 5 schools, respectively). Therefore, it is evident that an assessment of the quality of preschools cannot be evaluated only through the information gathered from parents and simple observation, since most parents agreed that private preschools are better than public preschools in terms of quality. Hence, in Madagascar, more literature concerning quality through observation should be produced to confirm the difference in quality between public and private preschools. Specifically, with regards to French, parents in private preschools seemed to view that language as a critical measure of quality. However, a different language of instruction does not automatically mean that the private preschools are better than public preschools – especially in the early years, learning is related to interactions between children and teachers, and an environment that stimulates the exploration of knowledge (Morrison, 2012), rather than memorizing vocabulary and expressions in a foreign language. Hence, there is the need to identify the quality in teaching and learning of both public and private preschools in Madagascar, and whether or not providing French learning really contributes to better quality of learning and the promotion of the child's development.

7.4 Concluding remarks

The initial concern of this research was why *access* to ECCE is too low in Africa, although ECCE is critical in terms of perspectives of child development, rights and investment. Furthermore, the study analyzed the domination of the private sector in ECCE and how it influences the *choice* of parents. This study has, therefore, explored the value of ECCE, the factors obstructing ECCE, the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attend public or private preschools, and finally, the measures and strategies improving access to ECCE in Madagascar.

The value of ECCE was identified as an investment of the government and parents. This relates to the situation of the country that has suffered with unemployment and social insecurity under a continuous economic and political crisis. It means that as the life conditions hardened, people tended to rely heavily on the future benefit of ECCE as an opportunity rather than the present benefit of learning. This was a different angle from developed countries, which emphasize the acquisition of skills fit for the industrialized markets (Becker, 2006, cited in Brown and Tannock, 2009).

The factors obstructing access to ECCE and the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attend public or private preschools were formulated by the concern on ECCE inequality. The former is simply associated with those having access or not; the latter implies unequal access between public and private ECCE services among ‘access parents’.

Firstly, the factors obstructing access to ECCE implicate exclusion, as a result, a learning opportunity. This study established the actual reason of no access: poverty and low commitment of the government in a low-resource context. The results are different from international literature, which emphasize how ECCE can compensate early negative experiences from poverty (since such studies were conducted in developed countries, such as the United States, which secures a great number of ECCE services and provides full or partial subsidy for participation in ECCE). This study, therefore, contributes to shed light on the reason of low access as absolute poverty in the complex exclusionary process, where the parents whose children never had access to ECCE live in a precarious economic condition, having lost the purchasing power to pay tuition fees due to unemployment and price insecurity caused by the political and economic crisis in 2009.

Secondly, the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attended public or private preschools concluded that the difference in choice between public and private preschool parents led to a different level of benefit: learning French or not. Both parents chose preschool, using rational action, as an investment. However, public preschool parents focused on cheaper tuition fees while, on the other hand, private preschool parents considered the acquisition of cultural capital, French. As most literature on choice uncovers, the degree of possession of economic and cultural capital was an important factor for both parents’ choices. This study is worthy of notice

for two main reasons. First and foremost, it identifies that ECCE is an area where parental choice is active in particularly low-resource contexts – current literature on choice has been conducted at the secondary education level, because it covers the period where compulsory education finishes (Hatcher, 1998). In developing countries like Madagascar, where public ECCE services are not yet developed, the private sector is, nevertheless, prevailing over the public sector. This study, hence, shows that parental choice in ECCE actively emerged depending on the economic and cultural level of the parents. Second, the study illuminates that the reason of choice in ECCE and the local context is inseparable. For parents having access to private preschool, the reason of choice was for their children to acquire cultural capital, i.e. French skills and the societal value attached to it, which is deeply rooted since the colonial period. In this context, the benefits of enrolling in private ECCE services was very concrete, since the parents could predict the future benefit of French acquisition in the markets, unlike the parents in the other context which equate ECCE with school readiness.

Finally, consideration on the measures and strategies improving access to ECCE sought the possibilities for increasing access to ECCE that can convey an educational benefit to young children and for reducing the inequality in choice between public and private preschool parents. This study found a different perspective on the measures and strategies improving access to ECCE between the macro- (government and a key representative of international organization) and micro-level (parents and a key representative of civil society). The former suggested moderate changes in policy (i.e. introduction of ECCE related law and the promotion of ECCE); in contrast, the latter insisted on radical changes at the policy level (i.e. equitable ECCE policies, including free education and the expansion and quality improvement of public preschools). Therefore, this study can help designing ECCE-relevant policies in developing countries in order to improve access, producing knowledge on the needs of key ECCE stakeholders.

Most importantly, ECCE should be regarded as the universal right of young children. The African proverb “*it takes a village to raise a child*” underlines the shared responsibility of the community as a whole, not just the parents, in that endeavor. In this sense, ECCE can be extended as a right. Stated differently, *all* young children have the right to be raised by the society; on the opposite side, the society has the duty of providing for them. In doing so, *all* young children can be included in ECCE and enjoy its benefits in promoting their whole development – regardless of social status, ethnicity, religion, and so forth. Therefore, ECCE must go beyond being a mere tool to achieve full participation in primary school; it should not be an instrument for the privileged families’ children to gain unfair advantage over the others. Accordingly, it must provide fair opportunities and equitable quality education, since early childhood is the first step of human life. In Plato’s (428-348 BC) words,

The first step... is always what matters most, particularly when we are dealing with the young and tender. This is the time when they are taking shape and when any impression we choose to make leaves a permanent mark. (Clarke & Clarke, 2000, p. 11).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Language and ECCE in Post-Colonial Context

This section will present ECCE and language development (1.1), imperial language in a post-colonial context (1.2) and finally, imperial language, education and exclusion in a post-colonial context (1.3).

1.1 ECCE and language development

Language as a means of communication is the unique characteristic of only human beings which makes it possible to exchange meaning with certain linguistic rules such as grammar that can be accepted in society (UNESCO, 1953). Language development in early childhood is crucial and, simply put, is fundamental to communication. It is strongly linked to cognitive development because “it is a system of symbols by which we categorize, organize and clarify our thinking (Stice, Bertrand & Bretrand, 1995 cited in Otto, 2010, p.2)”and it can, in a sense, be the solid foundation of school preparation and achievement (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

How do young children acquire language? Ball (2010) summarizes theories of early language development into three dominant perspectives: behaviorists, nativists, and contemporary psychologists (p. 15).

- Behaviorists (Skinner, 1957): Infants continue to produce and to learn the properties of language (e.g., sounds, vocabulary, pragmatics, etc.) that are positively reinforced by the child’s caregivers and other members of the child’s social community.
- Nativists (Chomsky 1965; 1975): children have an innate grasp of how language works. Thus, while language input activates their inborn capacity for learning language, their learning is internally guided.
- Contemporary psychologists: developmental psychologists have applied contemporary theories of learning to explain language acquisition. They argue that language is a uniquely human, biologically-based capacity, and that the inherent potential to learn language depends on the language environment – effectively, a bio-cultural perspective.

On a general note, early childhood is a critical period to achieve linguistic development since young children acquire language with their own biological capacity, and the environment, like adults (e.g., parents and other caregivers) that can encourage linguistic development. ECCE considers both the child’s own capacity and the enriched language experience of adults at home or the ECCE setting. In other words, children’s active attempts to interact with the world promote their language development in their daily life (Otto, 2010). In addition to their attempts, enriched experience such as appropriate communication with adults (teachers and caregivers) can help children to better understand and apply

the function and rules of language with the purpose of communication with society (Berk, 2006). For example, home literacy environment including “learning activities (e.g. daily book reading), parenting quality (e.g. responsiveness) and learning materials (e.g. age-appropriate toys and books)” (p.4) enhances children’s learning and language (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

Furthermore, bilingual ECCE programs have been considered in the countries which use several languages with regular immigration such as the United States, the role of mother tongue is crucial since the acquisition of the second language is based upon mastering the mother tongue (Cummins, 2000). Lightbown (2008, p.8) analyzed the studies on bilingualism at early years below (cited in Ball, 2010, p. 40),

- (1) Children are capable of acquiring two or more languages in early childhood.
- (2) Languages don’t compete for “mental space” and bilingualism doesn’t “confuse” children.
- (3) Given adequate input and opportunities for interaction, the developmental path and the outcomes of multiple language acquisition are similar to those observed in the acquisition of a single language.
- (4) Some cognitive advantages are associated with the development of proficiency in more than one language.
- (5) Early learning is no guarantee of continued development or lifelong retention of a language: languages can be maintained or forgotten, depending on circumstances.

This bilingualism is, however, grounded by mother tongue as language of instruction which is a critical element to improve literacy and learning of young children (UNESCO, 1953; Watson, 2007). For example, in a comparative study of oral language and early literacy skills between bilingual children using English and Spanish and monolingual ones using only Spanish in ECCE, the latter were better in oral and literacy assessment than the former (Páez, Tabors & López, 2007). Such result implies the importance of the mother tongue in early years. The claim of several scholars that bilingual young children can suffer in the early stages of language development compared to monolingual ones is also confirmed (Thordardottir, Ellis Weismer, & Smith, 1997). Therefore, in order for young children to acquire several languages successfully, policy development on bilingualism and well-designed bilingual program is required including bilingual teacher training and resource development such as books and materials in other languages or dual-language books (Ball, 2010).

Concern regarding bilingual programs is also felt in relation to countries that have emerged from a colonial context, such as the African nations and some in Asia. In general, these countries have a first

language (native language) and second languages, such as English, French or Spanish (official language). This will be discussed in the next section.

1.2 Imperial languages in post-colonial context

Most of African nations have colonial experience from European imperialist countries such as England, France and Portugal in their history. Imperial language such as European languages is one of the colonial legacies. Phillipson (1992) introduced ‘linguistic imperialism’ as follows:

Linguistic Imperialism is a ‘subset of linguicism’ which in turn he defines as ‘ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language’ (Phillipson 1992, p.47 in Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2006, p. 78).

In the post-colonial context, many former colonies have been influenced by so-called linguistic imperialism which is firmly legitimized by the colonial and post-colonial power (Altbach & Kelly, 1984; Tollefson, 1991; Lin & Martin, 2005; Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2006; Hornberger & May, 2008). After the liberation of the colonies, many African countries tried to restore their mother tongue and indigenous languages. They realized that spreading imperial language meant being treated by the colonial power as inferior people who must be civilized by superior Westerns with Western language and values (Chimbutane, 2012).

In spite of their attempts, there are several causes which led them to fail. Altbach & Kelly (1984) raise three dominant reasons. Colonial tradition on language is, first and foremost, deeply rooted in the whole system from the legal system and administration to writing academic work and thus, it is hard to eliminate the colonial language. Secondly, the colonial language is the power to solidify the monopoly of ruling elites who are fluent in it and maximize their language skill as cultural capital. Besides, Mar-Molinero & Stevenson (2006) stress that imperial languages such as English still remain influential because “they provide access to power and prestige, and broaden horizons beyond local worlds towards a global cosmopolitanism” (p. 59). Finally, former colonies which are mostly inseparable with international aid, should meet the need of international development in order to sustain the use of European languages which are strongly interrelated with dominant global politics, the economy and intellectual life in this globalized era.

1.3 Imperial Language, Education and Exclusion in Post-Colonial Context

In former colonial countries, the government contributes to preserve imperial languages through its language policy and practice. As Chimbutane (2012) has pointed out below,

How the choice of languages of wider communication (LWC) for high functions (e.g. government and formal education) and or certain national languages for low functions (e.g.

communication in informal and intra-ethnic domain) contributed to the production and reproduction of social stratification and to an increase in inequalities in post-colonial contexts (p.168).

Imperial languages such as English and French still function highly in a formal as well as an informal context. In other words, the promotion of LWC produces the domination and exploitation of ruling elites with language competence in social, political, economic and educational process (Philipson, 1992 cited in Chimbutane 2012, p.168).

Since the former colonies gained independence, they have attempted to introduce a new language policy-in-education which displaces imperial languages and instead, encourages the use of the local language as the language of instruction, since mother tongue education is not only closely linked to scale up quality of education in terms of children's learning (Alidou et al., 2006). This is because children are learning well (Trudell, 2005) and thus, children have better attainment in school, accompanying with parental involvement at home (Benson, 2002).

Unfortunately, their effort lags behind unsuccessfully, with several factors having hampered it. Planning was not fully implemented into practice in education because of the lack of trained educators and the scarcity of materials in the local language (Hornberger & May, 2008; Chimbutane, 2012). It is not surprising, therefore, that in Africa most of the text books in school and universities are not written in the local language, but in European languages (Bgoya, 2001). Another factor is their dependency on former colonial power and international aids which provide financial support and by extension, political influence, disseminating official documents and materials in European languages (Altbach & Kelly, 1984), as above noted.

The resistance of the elites who persist on using European language as an instrument of reproduction of privilege should be not downplayed in the factors. First and foremost, this is because of the devaluing of local languages in such context. For example, in Africa, the domination of colonial prejudice against local African languages significantly hinders to use African local languages as an official language (Stroud, 2001).

The major factor is that in post-colonial context such as Hong Kong, as the result of LWC by the government, European languages are the majority languages which can provide access to higher education and competitive occupation (Lai, 2005; Lai & Byram, 2003). There is, therefore, strong intention that colonial or post-colonial elites solidify their privilege with language competence as cultural capital and here, education plays the essential role to transmit their power to next generation. It means that they tend to send their children to school, mostly private which use imperial languages as a medium of language from preschool to university. Upper or middle class parents hence strive to choose a 'good school with European language as language of instruction' for their children from their

early years. Here, there is a distinction between upper and middle class in terms of school choice. Upper classes aim to succeed in passing on their linguistic prestige to their children, while the middle classes send their efforts to make their children upwardly mobile (Lin, 1996). For example, in a study by Woodhead et al. (2009), the working classes were also found to be trying to give their children the opportunity for its children to learn English, by sending them to private schools that should be paid due to their desire of moving upwardly. For example, both rich and poor parents choose a private preschool, Aganwadis ECCE center, in India since they expect that the medium of instruction is English instead of their mother tongue, Telugu. What is noteworthy is that due to the burden of increasing tuition fees, most poor parents transfer their children to public school that uses Telugu after a period of the private school.

It is quite predictable that there is exclusion in this process. Giddens (1987) has argued that a group with minority language such as local language is easily restricted access to the mainstream which symbolizes better life with better employment and has much effect on the society, compared to a majority group with an international language. Hence, these people are more likely to be excluded from the social, political and economic system. Unlike the upper or middle classes who try to maintain their position, they cannot help remaining with their unprivileged status without linguistic capital. According to Gordon (1996, in Walter & Benson, 2012), 2.3 billion people are not given education in their first language and around 40% of people in the globe are negatively influenced by their language of instruction in the education system. Furthermore, in post-colonial context, using imperial languages as a language of instruction in school can be the critical factor to determine the quality of student's learning. For instance, in many post-colonial countries, a European language is used as a language of instruction in primary from 4th grade (Alidou, 2004 cited in Chimbutane, 2012), secondary and tertiary education (Watson, 2007). Unfortunately, children who do not speak European languages have been marginalized, attaining low achievement (Macdonald, 1993). They struggle to fully understand what the teacher and textbook say since they have not been exposed to those languages from family as a colonial elites' heritage has. Furthermore, there is a disparity between children in public school and private. Phillipson (1996) argued that state school mostly selects a dominant local language as a medium of language and struggles from shortage of financing as policy makers themselves send their children to private school sufficiently funded by upper or middle class parents and using European languages. Therefore, it is assumed that in comparison, children without linguistic cultural capital are not able to have the same opportunity as children without, provided government and international organization does not choose European languages as LWC.

Appendix 2: The Map of Madagascar



Appendix 3: Consent form for individual and focus group interviews (English)

Consent Form

Request to participate in an interview in connection with a thesis

I am a graduate student in comparative and international education at the University of Oslo and am now in the process of writing the master thesis. The theme of this study is access and choice in ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) in Madagascar, and I will examine the value of ECCE, obstructing access to ECCE, the similarities and differences in the choices made by parents whose children attend public or private preschools in Madagascar and finally, the measures or strategies improving access to ECCE in Madagascar. To figure these out, I want to interview 42 adults who are the government officials, a key representative of international organization and civil society, parents and teachers. I will use the voice recorder or take notes to gather the information. The interview will take about an hour and we will agree on a time and place. All the information collected by such interviewees will be utilized only for this master thesis.

It is voluntary to join and you have the option to withdraw at any time along the way, no need to explain this further. If you withdraw, any data collected about you will be anonymous. The information will be kept confidential and no individuals will be recognized in the final task. The information is anonymized and recordings are deleted when the task is completed by the end of 2013.

If you would like to participate in the interview, it is nice if you sign the attached consent form and send it to me.

If you have any questions please call me at +261 33 03 504 62, or send an e-mail jiyeankpark@gmail.com. You can also contact my supervisor Fengshu Liu at Department of Education Research at the telephone number +47 22 85 61 63

The study is reported to the Privacy Ombudsman for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).

Sincerely

Jiyeank Park

Olav M Troviks vei 28 H0716

Kringsja Studentby Oslo 0864

Consent form:

I have received written information and am willing to participate in the study.

Signature Telephone

Appendix 4: Consent form for individual and focus group interviews (Malagasy)

Taratasy fifanekena momba ny fanaovana fanadihadihana irery na an-tarika

Fangatahana momba fandraisan'anjara amin'ny fanadihadihana hatao mba hanoratana boky fianarana amin'ny oniversite.

Mpianatra hanao “metrise” momba hoe: “Fanabeazana” izay atao any amin'ny oniversite any Oslo any Norvezy ny tenako, ary andalam-panoratana ny boky famaranana ny fianarako aho ankehitriny. Ny lohahevitra amin'izany dia ny fahafahan'ny olona mampianatra ny zanany any amin'ny “prescolaire” sy ny safidy misy amin'izany eto Madagasikara. Hijery ny zava-misy momba ny fianarana “prescolaire” eto aho ary ny antony mahatonga ny olona tsy mandefa ny zanany mianatra sady ny fahasamihafana amin'ny safidin'olona mandefa ny zanany mianatra amin'ny sekolim-panjaka na ny sekoly prive. Hojerena ihany koa ny mety azo hatao mba hampitombo ny fahafahan'ny olona mampianatra ny zanany any amin'ny “prescolaire”.

Mba ahafatarako izany dia te hanadihady olon-dehibe 42 isa aho, ao anatin'izany mpiasam-panjakana, solontenan'ny soritr'asa “internationale” ary ihany koa ray aman-drenin-jazakely sy mpampianatra ao an-tsekoly. Hampiasa fitaovana andraisana feo amin'izany aho ary haharitra ora iray eo ho eo ny fanadihadihana. Ny toerana sy fotoana anaovana izany dia iaraha-manaiiky ny roa tonta. Ny zava-drehetra voateny ao anatin'izany fotoana izany dia tsy ampiasaina anaovana na inona na inona afa-tsy ilay boky famitana fianarana.

Tsy an-tery ny fandraisan'anjara amin'ireto fanadihadihana ireto ary azo ajanona avy hatrany koa ilay izy na tsy milaza ny antony aza raha toa ka tsy te hanao intsony ilay voahadihady. Raha ajanona ny fanontaniana dia tsy hisy hahalala momba ny zavatra noteneninao na ny anaranao aza. Ny zava-drehetra voateny ao anatin'ny fanadihadihana dia ho tandremana tsara mba tsy hivoaka amin'olon-kafa ary tsy hisy anarana hiseho ao anatin'ny bokiko ka tsy hisy olona hahafantatra ny fandraisanao anjara tamin'ilay fanadihadihana. Ny teny rehetra voaray nandritra ny fotoana nanaovana ny fikarohana dia hofonanana rehefa mivoaka ny bokiko amin'ny faran'ny taona 2013.

Raha toa ka te handray anjara amin'ity fanadihadihana ity ianao dia angatahina ianao ny mameno ny taratasy izay manaraka eto ambany ary mamerina izany amiko.

Raha toa ka manana fanontaniana fanampiny ianao dia aza misalasala ka antsoy aho amin'ny finday nomerao +261 33 03 504 62, na mandefasa mailaka any amin'ny adiresy: jiyeankpark@gmail.com. Afaka mifandray mivantana amin'ny mpampianatra miandraikitra ahy koa ianao, Ramatoa Fengshu Liu ao amin'ny “Department of Education Research” manana telefonina nomerao +47 22 85 61 63.

Ity fikarohana ity dia nampilazaina tany amin'ny “Privacy Ombudsman for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD)” any Norvezy.

Hoy,

Jiyeank Park
Olav M Troviks vei 28 H0716
Kringstja Studentby Oslo 0864
Norvezy

Fanekena fandraisan'anjara amin'ny fanadihadihana:

Nahazo fanazavana momba ny fanadihadihana hatao aho ary manaiiky ny handray anjara amin'izany ny tenako.

Sonia Nomerao finday

Appendix 5: Interview schedule for the government officials (Central and local government)

1. Do you think what the value of ECCE is?
2. Why do you think ECCE is less prioritized compared to primary school or secondary school?
3. What is the role of the government in ECCE in Madagascar? (central and local government)
4. Why do you think access rate of ECCE is so low in Madagascar?
5. How is the social, political and economic situation of the country, Madagascar? (to central government)

How is the social, political and economic situation of city, Toliara? (to local government)

6. What is the history of ECCE in Madagascar?
7. What is the general information of ECCE in Madagascar?
 - Budget
 - System of ECCE (cooperation between central and local government)
 - Access rate
 - Quality (curriculum / teacher qualification and training / physical environment
 - Parents involvement and parents' committee (What is the role of parents committee?)
8. Why are private preschools much more than public private schools?
9. What is the difference between public preschool and private school (tuition fees, quality and so forth)?
9. What can be the measures or strategies to improve ECCE in Madagascar?

Appendix 6: Interview schedule for a key representative of international organization and civil society

1. Do you think what the value of ECCE is?
2. Why do you think ECCE is less prioritized compared to primary school or secondary school?
3. What is the role of your organization in ECCE in Madagascar? (international organization and civil society)
4. How do your organization co-operate with the government in ECCE?
5. Why do you think access rate of ECCE is so low in Madagascar?
6. How is the social, political and economic situation of the country, Madagascar? (to international organization)

How is the social, political and economic situation of city, Toliara ? (to civil society)
7. What can be the measures or strategies to improve ECCE in Madagascar?

Appendix 7: Interview schedule for teachers (public and private preschools)

1. Do you think what the value of ECCE is?
2. Why do you think ECCE is less prioritized compared to primary school or secondary school?
3. Why do you think access rate of ECCE is so low in Madagascar?
4. How is the social, political and economic situation of city, Toliara?
5. What is the general information of your preschool in Madagascar?
 - Budget (Supported by the state or parents)
 - Tuition fees
 - Quality
(curriculum / teacher qualification and training / physical environment/ teacher salary)
 - Parents involvement and parents' committee (specifically to public preschool teachers)
 - : What is the purpose of building parent's committee?
 - : Who is eligible to become parent's committee?
 - : What is the role or function of parent's committee?
 - : How much budget do you have and how does the parent's committee mobilize the money?
 - : How does parent's committee spend the money (for what)?
 - : Could you explain how the parent's committee collaborates with the government and preschool?
 - : What is the challenge of parent's committee?
 - Parents needs and parents income level
6. What are the difficulties as a teacher in preschool?
7. What can be the measures or strategies to improve ECCE in Madagascar?

Appendix 8: Interview schedule for parents

For NO-ACCESS parents (whose children never attended preschool or dropped out from it)

1. Background information (submitted with personal details for privacy)

(Name / Age / Education level / Profession/ Number of family members and children)

2. Do you know about preschool?

3. Do you think what the value of ECCE is ?

4. Why did you not to send your child to preschool? (Parents whose children never had access to preschool)

or

Why did you remove your child from preschool? (Parents whose children dropped out from preschool)

5. How do you spend time with your child at home?

6. What can be the measures or strategies to improve ECCE in Madagascar?

: Which condition should be guaranteed if you send your child to preschool?

For ACCESS parents (whose children go to public or private preschool)

1. Background information (submitted with personal details for privacy)

(Name / Age / Education level / Profession/ Number of family members and children)

2. What do you think the value of ECCE is?

4. Why do you send your child to preschool (public or private)?

5. Can you explain about strength and weakness of your preschool?

6. How do you spend time with your child at home? (e.g. reading books or play)

7. What can be the measures or strategies to improve ECCE in Madagascar?

Appendix 9: Observation Schedule for Preschools (modified from Myers (2006)'s quality imperative (pp. 24 - 26)

Name of school:

Date:

Issue	Details	Field Note
<p>Physical environment</p> <p>&</p> <p>human resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Infrastructure and space (indoor and outdoor, design and maintenance, safety) - Materials (sufficiency, cultural pertinence, variation, organization and accessibility, appropriateness to age or development) - Teaching staff and directors/ administrators, and sometime with auxiliary personal (knowledge, orientation and training- pre-and in-service--health, motivation and commitment, ability to communicate with children and adults) - Group size and adult-child ratios 	
<p>The educational process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedagogical methods (most indicators are based on a child-centered approach and on active learning -- children initiate, explore, play, communicate; variation in individual, small and large group activities) - Adult-child interaction (respectful, responsive, affectionate, treats children equitably) - Adult-child interaction related to discipline (no physical punishment, uses conflict resolution) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child-child interaction - Attention to special needs - Evaluation of children and feedback to parents - Classroom management/administration (organization of space and time, planning) - Classroom environment that is attractive, caring - Daily routine - Time spent on educational matters 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Health, safety and hygiene</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health of the staff (periodic checks) - Toilet facilities and availability of drinking water - A healthy and clean environment (regular cleaning, proper conditions for food preparation) - Personal care routines (washing hands, brushing teeth, independence to go to the bathroom, grooming) - Safety (of the premises, emergency procedures for accidents – someone trained in first aid -- or for natural disasters) - Diagnostic and referral procedures for children - Attention to nutrition (growth monitoring, providing for a proper diet and hygienic facilities if cooking is involved, not allowing children to bring or buy junk) 	

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