Young children's perceptions and constructions of social identities and social implications: Promoting social justice in early childhood

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Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me, it is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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TABLE of CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

xiv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis explores young children's constructions of social identities and the implications these may have in young children's everyday lives at nursery. One of the unique elements of this thesis is the multiple and intersectional approach that it adopts while exploring very young children's social identities and peer relations. It also explores the links between children's experiences and views with educators' social justice and equity pedagogies. Recent attention has been given to the importance of early childhood and young children's rights and participation in theory, research and policy. In the field of social identities, there has been a growing need for further research to explore the contextual, fluid, complex and intersected nature of young children's social identities, moving away from 'static' and 'fixed' notions of identity. Particular gaps have also been identified in relation to exploring age as part of social identity, to exploring cultural aspects of ethnicity and lastly to exploring multiple understandings of parts of social identities (e.g. multiple 'masculinities' and 'femininities') in early childhood. There has also been a need for further research to explore how young children's intersected social identities may impact on pedagogies.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to explore the above, basing the analysis on a one year ethnographic and participatory approach which was conducted in two nursery settings in Scotland, one predominantly white and one multi-ethnic. It draws on a plethora of rich and in-depth conversations and experiences with young children, educators and parents/caregivers to suggest the complex, dynamic, context-specific, fluid but also 'experientially fixed' and intersected nature of children's social identities and relationships, and to acknowledge the challenges that are raised both for early childhood practice and policy. It suggests that children construct multiple and complex social identities which are both fluid and experientially 'fixed', engage in dynamic social relationships and express complex and multiple implicit/explicit discriminatory attitudes, which educators are unaware of or choose to disregard. In most cases, age and gender were part of an overt and explicit identification, and were explicitly and overtly discussed as factors of exclusion by both educators and children. In contrast, ethnicity involved a much more complex process. Although ethnicity was often part of an 'ethnic habitus', variations occurred in relation to the extent to which children developed a strong, explicit and overt ethnic identification. Ethnicity was also considered a rather 'taboo' subject of reference regarding exclusion. Moreover, this thesis suggests that discourses of 'sameness', 'normalities' and difference linked to constructions of social identity were salient in children's lives. Common social identities often promoted positive feelings of belonging and reinforced positive feelings of group membership and self identities between children. Strong and positive feelings of self and group identity and difference, or else 'the other', although not exclusively, were very much considered the basis for exclusion and discrimination. However, complexities arose when the concept of the 'other' changed, depending on the context. Difference was seen more positively by children when it constituted part of what was considered 'norm' or dominant. Traditional developmental approaches and children's rights-based approaches seem to influence educators' practice; however, irrespectively of the educational approach, educators tend to disregard implicit/explicit discrimination that is evident in children's lives. 'Too young to notice' and 'no problem here' attitudes seem to dominate educators' practice and raise limitations in dealing adequately with social justice and equity issues.

Firstly, this thesis suggests the need to move away from 'dualistic' and oppositional dichotomies that seem to have dominated contemporary research and theory, both in relation to theorising children's social identities (e.g. 'fixed'/fluid) and theorisations of childhood (e.g. agents and mature / interdependent and immature). Secondly, there is a need for early childhood pedagogies, practices and policy to 'listen' more actively and closely to young children and to engage with the complex and dynamic nature of their social relationships. It is thus suggested that current early childhood practice should actively promote children-rights based approaches. At the same time, this thesis considers whether we should be moving towards a children's human rights-based approach, which promotes children's rights and goes beyond children's participatory rights, engaging more actively with issues around fairness, unfairness and respect. This thesis also argues for proactive, anti-discriminatory, reflexive and interventionist social justice and equity approaches in early childhood. Thirdly, there is a general challenge both in policy and practice regarding balancing between universalism (collective identities) and specificity (diversity).

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores young children's perceptions and constructions of social identities, paying special attention to children's understandings of similarities and differences, and the social implications these may have in their lives in early childhood. This thesis is concerned with various parts of social identities that seemed to be salient in young children's lives, most notably gender, age/competence and ethnicity. It is placed within the wider disciplines of sociology of education and childhood, and has been influenced by children's rights and human rights discourses. It examines the links between children's experiences and views, and educators' social justice and equity pedagogies and practices. This thesis suggests that children construct complex social identities, engage in dynamic social relationships and express complex and multiple implicit/explicit discriminatory attitudes, which educators are unaware of or choose to disregard.

1.2 Young children's rights, early childhood and social justice: Context and a self reflection

Attention has recently been given to the importance of early childhood and young children's rights and participation in theory, research and policy (MacNaughton, Hughes & Smith, 2008; Alderson, 2008). However, in contrast to older children, there is still a considerable gap in early years scholarship (Pascal & Bertram, 2009; Nutbrown & Clough, 2009). There is also currently much discussion around equity, social justice and the elimination of discrimination in intellectual, political and social spheres (MacPherson & Bond, 2009).

This research was carried out during a period of significant changes both in the UK and within the Scottish context. The recent 'Equality Act 2010'(which will come to force in October 2010) in the UK, the recently established Equality and Human Rights Commission (2007) and the Scottish Human Rights Commission (2008) all signify the increased importance of 'equality' and human rights issues. In the Scottish context, the

'Early Years Framework' (Scottish Government, 2008a) signalled the Scottish Government's commitment to the early years, to young children's rights and to combating inequalities through prevention and early intervention. The Scottish Government has also shown a commitment to 'equality' issues, through its strategy on mainstreaming 'equalities' (2000). Furthermore, key Scottish school curriculum changes have also taken place, with continuous developments of the 'Curriculum for Excellence' (CfE) (Scottish Government, 2004).

Before going into the details of this research, I consider it important to briefly introduce, locate and reflect upon myself and my experiences, as they have shaped this thesis both in relation to the topic and its approach.

My personal interest and commitment into equity issues is rooted in my early age as a dual heritage child of an English mother and a Greek father, and the continuous struggles of 'belonging' that this entailed while growing up in both countries. From an early age, I recognised that difference was in many cases perceived as negative. In my case it was not a visible difference, as I belonged to what was considered in both contexts as the 'norm', being 'white' and fluent in the dominant language of both countries. However, the subtle 'difference' of my personal life history and my dual background, which did not quite 'fit' into the 'norm', was powerful enough for me to be considered in many cases as the 'other'. Of course, my difference was not limited to negativity. Depending on the context, my difference was also valued and seen positively. Complexities thus occurred. The 'struggles of belonging' that I faced as a child (a state of 'being' at that time), combined with the vivid memories of my early childhood experience which I carry to this day, directed my academic endeavour into early childhood and keep reminding me to conceptualise young children as both 'beings' (emphasis on their current present state) and 'becoming' adults (emphasis on their future).

During my MSc in childhood studies, along with a strong commitment to young children's rights, I explored my personal interest in ethnicity, equity and social justice in early childhood even further, only now on a more academic and theoretical level. My

personal interest was also accompanied by a gap that I had identified in relevant literature in relation to young children, racism and educators' approaches, particularly in relation to the Scottish context. My MSc dissertation was exploratory and open-ended in nature, with an aim to develop an understanding of how proactive educators promoted inclusion and anti-racist education in their early years settings, and how their interpretation of childhood influenced their proactive action in this area. Literature reviews, along with fieldwork (interviews with educators), were conducted. During my MSc dissertation, I identified a need for further research to explore children's perceptions of diversity, 'race', 'fairness', 'equality', racism and discrimination, and the impact these may have on pedagogies, policies and practices.

In the beginning of my PhD journey, my initial interest was restricted to ethnicity and physical characteristics like skin colour in particular. However, after ongoing reflections, further study and engagement with current research and theories, and critical feedback from my supervisors and other academics in the field, I developed a much more open and exploratory interest. If I was indeed interested in young children's experiences and views, and committed to their rights and interests, I should open up and explore what children considered important as part of their social identity. My interest thus moved from ethnicity, to a more explanatory and open understanding of children's constructions of social identities. This was also identified as a gap in relevant literature, to which I will now turn.

1.3 The context of the research: Identified gaps and research questions

In the field of social identities, there has been a growing need for further research to explore the contextual, fluid and complex nature of young children's social identities, moving away from 'static' and 'fixed' notions of identity (see Connolly, 1998; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; Browne, 2004). In particular, there has been a growing need to explore children's social identities in interaction (Thorne, 2004; Morrow & Connolly, 2006) and the complexities that these may create both in children's friendships patterns and in 'inclusionary'/ exclusionary and discriminatory practices (Devine & Kelly, 2006).

Particular gaps have also been identified in relation to exploring age as part of social identity (Thorne, 2004 & 2008), in exploring cultural aspects of ethnicity (Connolly, 2003; Connolly, Kelly & Smith, 2009) and lastly in exploring multiple understandings of parts of social identities (e.g. multiple 'masculinities' and 'femininities') in early childhood (Connolly, 2004; for older children Renold, 2005). There has also been a need for further research, not only to explore how social identities intersect in young children's lives but also how these intersections impact on pedagogies (MacNaughton, 2000; Skattebol, 2006).

There were thus four research questions (RQ) which guided this research enquiry.

RQ1. What are young children's emerging constructions and perceptions of identity and difference in Scottish nursery settings?

RQ2. What are the social implications of children's emerging constructions of identity and difference in terms of their views and attitudes towards other children?

RQ3. Do young children experience discrimination, and if yes, how do children construct discrimination?

RQ4. What approaches do educators/staff adopt to social justice and equity education in Scottish nursery settings and how do they introduce issues of diversity and 'fairness' to children?

These research questions were followed by two aims and objectives.

- To explore children's constructions of identity and difference and to understand the social implications that these may have in their lives by listening closely and respectfully to children's views and observing their

everyday lives in nursery.

- To explore educators' approaches and strategies in relation to social justice and equity in Scottish early childhood, their understandings of childhood and the effect that staff beliefs and attitudes may have on children's emerging understandings of difference and 'sameness', by observing their everyday lives in the nursery setting and listening closely and respectfully to their views.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to explore the above, basing the analysis on a one year ethnographic and participatory approach that was conducted in two nursery settings in Scotland, one predominantly 'white' and one multi-ethnic. It draws on a plethora of rich and in-depth conversations and experiences with young children, educators and parents/caregivers, based on participant observation, interviews, informal 'chats', semi-structured activities like drawing and doll activities, and documentary analysis of the nurseries' policies and various children's and educators' documents, artifacts and others.

1.4 Why choose the Scottish context?

The Scottish context was chosen for many reasons, one of which was a lack of research interested in young children's (3-5 years old) identities. As I have already mentioned, my initial interest was linked to ethnicity. Scotland was thus an interesting case, as it has been considered by some as relatively homogeneous (Arshad & Mitchell, 2007). Scotland's population is predominantly 'white'. According to the 2001 Census, the largest ethnic groups were 'white', constituting nearly 98% of the country's population, and including white Scottish, Other White British, White Irish and any Other White background (Scottish Executive, 2004).

Interestingly, anti-racist and multicultural education have very often been considered irrelevant to mainly 'white' settings, as there is often 'a no problem here attitude' (Donald, Gosling & Hamilton, 1995; Arshad & Diniz, 2003; Gaine, 2005).

Some authors like Derman-Sparks & Ramsey (2006) suggest that a considerable step has been made in mainly white settings. Educators are more and more aware of the relevance of anti-discrimination education for 'white' children, but according to the aforementioned authors, there still remains a challenge regarding how to engage children with learning about differences and social justice when diversity and disadvantages may not be obvious. This raises an interesting challenge in the Scottish context, which is predominantly 'white', and the promotion of social justice approaches in relation to ethnicity.

In 2001, the minority ethnic population of Scotland amounted to 2% of the total population (Scottish Executive National Statistics, 2006: 12). In 2001, Pakistanis comprised the largest minority ethnic group followed by Chinese, Indians and mixed background populations (Scottish Executive National Statistics, 2006: 12). Religion was asked for the first time in the 2001 Census (Riddell & Kakos, 2008). According to the 2001 Census, 65.09% said that their religion was Christian; 42.40% of the Scottish population said that they were members of the Church of Scotland, 15.88% Roman Catholic and 6.81% Other Christian. About 1% belonged to other faiths, with Islam being the most common faith, as 0.84% described their religion as Muslim. Over a quarter said that they did not have a religion (Riddell & Kakos, 2008).

The 2001 Census showed that Scotland's minority ethnic population is a young and diverse group. While the total Scottish population increased by 1.3% during the period from the 1991 to the 2001 census, Scotland's minority ethnic population increased by 62.3% (Scottish Executive National Statistics, 2006: 12). Although Scotland has a very small minority ethnic population (2% of the total population) compared with England (9%), the above figures indicate that the number of minority ethnic populations in Scotland is growing significantly, as "Ethnic minority groups have a much younger age profile than the White groups" [Office of the Chief Statistician, 2004: 3; Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2002]. With the exception of the Caribbean group, more that 20% of the population of all minority ethnic groups was less than 16 years old in 2001. Those of mixed ethnicity have the youngest age profile, as

they constitute 44% of persons under the age of 16 (Scottish Executive National Statistics, 2006). The more urban areas of Scotland have a greater percentage of minority ethnic than the rural areas and islands, with Edinburgh having the second highest proportion of non-whites at 4.1% behind Glasgow at 5.5% (City Council, 2001).

Five years after the 2001 Census, the minority ethnic population in Scotland had reportedly risen; part of this can be attributed to a significant level of migration into Scotland from Eastern European EU accession countries, particularly Poland (COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership, 2010). It is generally estimated that around 150 languages are spoken in Scotland, although some have very few speakers. The main languages are English, Gaelic, Scots, the British Sign language and minority/ community languages (Scottish Government, 2007a).

As already mentioned, due to the great attention that has been given to 'equality' and diversity in Scotland and the UK (see also Chapter 3), there has been an increased interest from researchers to explore discriminatory attitudes in Scotland (Macpherson & Bond, 2009). Two waves of research have been particularly important, those on 'Attitudes to Discrimination in Scotland' (Bromley & Curtice, 2003; Bromley, Curtice & Given, 2007). Their findings suggest (Bromley et al, 2007: ix-x) that only a small minority of people hold discriminatory attitudes, but interestingly, discriminatory attitudes vary depending on the group in question. For example, discrimination was particularly strong regarding Gypsies/travellers and transgender people[1]. Gay men and lesbians were most likely the next group to face discriminatory attitudes, followed by Muslims and black and Asian people as a group. Discriminatory attitudes were not that frequent in respect to gender roles, age and disability. However, a significant minority of respondents expressed stereotypical views about the kind of work that women do, and discriminatory attitudes about older, younger or disabled people.

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[1] Bromley et al (2007: ix) define transgender as "someone who has had a sex change operation". The Scottish Transgender Alliance (2011) suggests a more open definition; "In Scotland the terms transgender people and trans people are used as umbrella terms which can encompass all those whose personal experience of their gender differs from the assumptions and expectations of the society they live in".

Racism exists in Scotland, and "statistics show a year-on-year increase in reported racist incidents" over the last five years, a fact which is also associated with an increase in the numbers of asylum-seekers, refugees and European migrant workers (LTS, 2010a). However, it also relates to a growing awareness of racism and a desire to address it (LTS, 2010a). In relation to education, racism, both direct and indirect, was seen as a feature of daily life by minority ethnic pupils (Arshad et al, 2005a). During the period of 2002-2003, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education visited educational authorities in order to see how 'race' equality issues were being addressed, and found that "good practice in tackling racism and promoting race equality is not consistent across Scotland" (HMIe, 2005: 5). Although relevant research in the Scottish context, regarding ethnicity and education, has provided important findings in the area, there is a lack of focus on early years settings (particularly under fives) (e.g. see Donald, Gosling & Hamilton, 1995; Arshad et al, 2005a). Arshad and Diniz (2003) also stress the need for an examination of the extent to which antiracist and multicultural education has been implemented in Scottish education.

Connolly (2003) suggested the need to explore children's cultural understandings of ethnicity, which are not restricted to visible differences. Thus, the mainly 'white' context of Scotland was an interesting case. Two nurseries were approached as a sample for this research, one mainly white and one multi-ethnic which could potentially explore children's visible and non-visible aspects of ethnicity, and the similarities and differences of educators' approaches along with the potential influence of the ethnic make-up of the schools' population. Although the sample nurseries had been approached and had agreed to take part in August 2007, my research design and questions were developed during that time, due to continuous reflections. Therefore, when I started observations in October 2007, a much more open design was considered, to engage with whatever parts of children's social identities were salient to the children, without restricting it to ethnicity.

In relation to gender in 2006, the Scottish Executive undertook a review of Strategies to Address Gender Inequalities in Scottish Schools; among its conclusions

was the fact that there are significant gender-related inequalities in Scottish schools. It was suggested that injustices and inequalities related to gender are in need of being more thoroughly and successfully addressed (Forde et al, 2006).

However, it should be considered that:

"the discourse on gender cannot be separated from debates around social class, culture, religion, different notions of masculinity and femininity, and other aspects of social justice and identity. To move towards effective practice in promoting equity and addressing discrimination it will be necessary in schools to consider the links between different aspects of inequality" (Scottish Executive, 2007b : 2)

Age discrimination is a missing piece in the puzzle above. Current law on age discrimination focuses mainly on age and employment or vocational training. Under the age equality section of Scottish Government policy, there is significant emphasis on older age people (2010a) with restricted reference to younger people merely in relation to employment. Although debates about children and discrimination are addressed by children's rights discourses (e.g. UNCRC, article 2, non- discrimination), they have yet to be related directly to discussions around age discrimination. Age discrimination has been linked mainly to one part of the spectrum related to older people, and there is a need to recognise the negative effect discrimination has on younger children as well. The 2008 Concluding Observations report from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, found that there was a "general climate of intolerance and negative public attitudes towards children" in the UK [Section 3 (33), UK Parliament, 2009]. The 'Joint Committee on Human Rights. Children's Rights. twenty-fifth report of session 2008-2009' proposed that the Equality Bill (now 'Equality Act 2010') should "be amended to extend protection from age discrimination to people regardless of their age in relation to the provision of goods, facilities and services, except where discrimination on the grounds of age can be justified" (section 45, UK Parliament, 2009). It also raised concerns regarding the discrimination that some particular groups of children continue to experience (e.g. migrant children, children belonging to minority groups, lesbian,

bisexual, gay and transgender children). It recommended that the UK should address intolerance and discrimination towards children (UK Parliament, 2009). The majority of these recommendations is of relevance to Scotland, including discrimination-related issues (article 2) (Scottish Government, 2009a).

It is all this academic and legislative activity that makes the Scottish context such an interesting case. Nevertheless, the Scottish context was also chosen for practical reasons, as I was studying in Scotland, and for personal reasons and interests, as I was a resident of Scotland.

1.5 Defining basic terminologies

Before providing the basic arguments and outlining the structure of this thesis, it is important to clarify the basic terminologies that will be used.

1.5.1 Age

Age has been viewed in a plethora of ways in different societies (Hockey & James, 2003). According to Brooker (2008: 5), age is "an increasing marker of changing identity". Hockey & James argue that age is not merely a 'fixed' biological concept, "a measure of the passage of time between birth and death" (2003: 3). The definition of age and ageing in the West has an impact both on how we view ourselves and how others view us. Hockey & James (2003) argue that age is related to social and moral obligations. Expectations are raised about how certain people should act at a certain age (Hockey & James, 2003; see also Brooker, 2008); 'act your age' is a phrase rather well known in Western societies (Hockey & James, 2003; James, 2005). Moreover, age is not only about expectations, but also about being refused certain things (Hockey & James, 2003). Age, therefore, has a powerful effect on people's lives.

1.5.2 Gender

According to MacNaughton,

"narrowly interpreted, 'gender identity' refers to an individual's awareness and acceptance of the fact of being biologically male or female. It involves recognising anatomical differences and associating these anatomical differences with gender. It is sometimes interpreted more broadly to include emotional and behavioural factors" (2006: 16).

The ways in which, "such maleness and femaleness are understood and experienced constitutes 'gender' in society" (James & James, 2008: 65). According to the Scottish Executive's 'Gender Equality: A Toolkit for Education Staff ' (2007b):

"A person's gender is complex, encompassing countless characteristics of appearance, speech, movement and other factors not solely limited to biological sex. Our ideas about masculinity and femininity (our understanding of gender) arise from the roles, attitudes, appearance, values and behaviours attributed to women and men by society."

Thus, emphasis has now been placed on the social construction, complex and multiple nature of gender, moving away from merely biological deterministic ideas (Browne, 2004).

1.5.3 Ethnicity / 'race'
The ONS "treats ethnicity as a self-defined characteristic" based on the factors below:

• Country of birth

• Nationality

• Language spoken at home

• Parents' country of birth in conjunction with country of birth

• Skin colour

• National/geographical origin

• Racial group

• Religion" (2007: 33)

It is evident that ethnicity encompasses a broader definition and is a concept that

is socially constructed, fluid and contextual (see also Connolly, 2003). Emphasis has been given to both physical and/or cultural markers that people can draw on, without restricting them to physical characteristics, all of which can be seen as an important analysis of the commonly known 'new racism'[2] (Connolly, 2003: 169). However, Connolly (2003: 168) suggests that although racial categorisations and racism are to be conceptualised as "a particular form of the broader social phenomenon of ethnicity", it is also important to note that it should not be implied that ethnicity and 'race' "mean the same thing" (for further discussion, see Connolly, 2003: 169).

According to Connolly (2003: 168), ethnic groups cannot be defined objectively; they are rather socially constructed "through a process that identifies and gives significance to a number of particular traits (whether physical and/or cultural) and uses these as a basis upon which to decide group membership". Jenkins, drawing on Hughes (1994: 91 cited in 2008a: 11) argues that:

"An ethnic group is not one because of the degree of measurable or observable difference from other groups: it is an ethnic group, on the contrary, because the people in it and the people out of it know that it is one; because both the *ins* and the *outs* talk, feel, and act as if it were a separate group. This is possible only if there are ways of telling who belongs to the group and who does not, and if a person learns early, deeply, and usually irrevocably to what group he [or she] belongs. If it is easy to resign from the group, it is not truly an ethnic group".

1.5.4 Nationality

According to the Scottish Government and General Register office for Scotland (2008: 10; see also Scourfield et al, 2006), national identity is "for many (but not all) people… closely related to ethnicity". However, nationality also differs from ethnicity (Scourfield et al, 2006). Nationality is considered a "self-defining concept in which a person

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[2]   'Race' is a term that has historically, been conceived as a signifier of the colour of the body or of biological constitutions of the body (e.g hair, facial characteristics), and political meanings that have been produced, embedded and reproduced by it (Back & Solomos, 2000). In the light of 'new racism', however, 'race' has been replaced by "crude biological arguments with ones that focus on cultural factors" while constructing difference (Connolly, 2003: 167, see also May, 1999).

expresses what country or countries, nation or nations, they feel most connected to" (Scottish Government, 2008b: 6) or has "a strong affinity with" (Scottish Government and General Register office for Scotland, 2008: 10). Nationality, "like ethnicity… involves a range of concepts" (Scottish Government, 2008b: 6). Nationality is thus a "subjective (and sometimes changing) concept which is different, but related to, more concrete concepts such as nationality or citizenship (i.e. passport entitlement) and country of birth" (Scottish Government and General Register office for Scotland, 2008: 10). Nationality is thus connected with constitutional issues, territorial politics and cultural issues (McCrone, 2002; Scourfield et al, 2006). Nationality is the result "of a continually negotiated process" and although it may occasionally be experienced as rather fixed, it is not "essential, given, unproblematic and unchanging" (McCrone, 2002: 307-308).

1.5.5 Religion

Religion is a self-defined characteristic (Hill et al, 2010). The ONS suggests that when asking about religion in surveys, "the harmonised question is used which measures religious affiliation-that is the identification with a religion irrespective of actual practice or belief" (2009: 2-3). The ONS (2009) claims that along with affiliation and practice, survey questions about religion can also involve belief and belonging. A religious belief includes "beliefs typically expected to be held by followers of a religion and how important those beliefs are to a person's life" (ONS, 2009: 2). Belonging, in this case, can be interpreted as "both loose self-identification and active or formal belonging to a religious group. As such some people may respond that they have a religious affiliation but not that they belong to a religion" (ONS, 2009: 3). Riddell et al (2009: 2) have argued that categorical understandings of religion and belief tend to perceive identity as stable and "shaped by an individual's position within wider economic and social structures". The Scottish Census of 2001 "invited individuals to self-identify with regard to religion of upbringing and current religion of belonging, thus implicitly recognising that an individual's religion may shift over time" (Riddell et al, 2009: 3). Although

categorical data are useful, they fail, however, to explain the "subjective meaning of religious labels, which may signify a set of personal beliefs or a cultural allegiance" (Riddell et al, 2009: 3).

1.5.6 'Ethnic minority' and 'minority ethnic'

The term 'ethnic minority' is mainly used to describe people who are:

"in the minority within a defined population on the grounds of 'race', colour, culture, language or nationality" and it involves both visible and non-visible minorities (Arshad et al, 2005a).

There has been a recent attempt to recognise that "ethnicity is a characteristic of all individuals and groups, majorities and minorities alike" (Arshad et al, 2005a: iv) and thus it is suggested that the term 'minority ethnic' should be used as an alternative. Arshad et al (2005a: vi) argue that in the past the term 'ethnic minority':

"tended to suggest that the minority or marginalised status of such a group arose from its 'possession' of ethnicity itself, rather than to the low value ascribed to its particular ethnicity in the wider, 'majority' cultural/ethnic environment".

Thus, the term 'minority ethnic' tends to highlight:

"the commonality of ethnicity and indicates that it is the non-inclusion of particular types of ethnicity which results in minority (i.e. relatively powerless) status. However, it remains a code for 'visible minorities' rather than minorities in general (e.g. Gaelic speakers or adherents to the Catholic faith)".

Taking into consideration relevant discussions and definitions that are included in reports commissioned by the Scottish Executive (now Scottish Government) on minority ethnic issues (Arshad et al, 2005a), this thesis recognises that terms like 'white', 'black' and 'minority ethnic' are problematic and contentious (Ross, Hill & Shelton 2006). While describing participants, terms are used based on current

classifications used within the Census 2001, although these are also under review (Scottish Executive, 2006). This thesis also recognises that current classifications used by the Census 2001 are rather restricted. For example, in the 'Analysis of Responses to the Review of Census Ethnicity Classifications Consultation 2005' the majority of respondents "agreed that several different questions should be used to capture information on ethnic identity instead of a single question" (Granville, Mulholland & Russell, 2005: i). Respondents made reference to the need for a "separate question about national identity" (Granville et al, 2005: ii), something that the current 2001 Census was lacking. Respondents also mentioned other factors of ethnicity like family descent/origin, area of descent/origin, language, including community languages or identification to community or culture all of which illustrate the multiple aspects of ethnicity. The Scottish Government and the General Register office (2008: 5; see also Scottish Government, 2008b) for Scotland's report entitled 'Scotland's New Ethnicity Classification for Scottish Official Statistics and Recommended for Scotland's 2011 Census' suggest also the use of the question on national identity, before ethnicity, as "this allows people to distinguish between their ethnic origin or heritage and their present sense of national identity".

In this thesis, similarly to Ross et al (2006), I use the term 'black and minority ethnic', to refer to groups that form a minority within the majority population of Scotland in relation to race, colour (white), culture, language or nationality. It is used to refer mainly to 'visible' minority groups.

The term 'white' is used to refer to the majority Scottish population ('white Scottish') or else 'majority Scots' and minority ethnic groups ('Other white British' and 'other white') which form a minority of the Scottish population. I also use the terms of the 2001 census like Pakistani, Indian, Chinese, mixed background to define the children.

In Chapter 8 I have made tables based on information I collected from the nursery schools on children's ethnic origin, nationality, religion and home language. Due to the increased attention on nationality, I also add nationality (-ies) wherever

needed to clarify children that are defined as 'other white' (e.g. 'White Polish'), or have mixed/multiple backgrounds (e.g. white Scottish/Greek or Pakistani Scottish to describe children who have Pakistani origin, are born or have lived in Scotland all or most of their lives and identify both as Scottish and Pakistani or merely as Scottish). These additional categories are my own definitions (based on definitions that were used by parents/caregivers and children themselves on various occasions, and on information collected from school forms which were completed by parents/caregivers). Whenever a child describes themselves I use their own definition, given the current emphasis on the complexity of ethnicity and on how individuals describe their selves.

1.5.7 A note about social class

According to the *'Anatomy of economic inequality in the UK. Report of the National Equality Panel',* social class is considered "both an outcome of the labour market and part of the transmission mechanism that affects how people's lives develop" (Hill et al, 2010: 243). The report links social class to occupations, qualifications, employment rates, earnings and incomes. The National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) (ONS, 2010) is an occupationally-based classification, but has rules to provide coverage of the whole adult population. However, such classifications are narrow and need to be complemented by qualitative understandings of what class means for individuals, and how it is acted out in their daily lives and interactions (Reay,1998: 264-265). The concept of class thus moves beyond the economic, and can be defined as "a complicated mixture of the material, the discursive, psychological predispositions and sociological dispositions" (Reay, 1998: 272).

In this thesis, I do not really explore the meaning of social class. I have identified this as a limitation of this research, and emphasise the need of further research in this area (see Chapter 10). Also, I did not specifically ask parents/caregivers for data that could be linked to socio-economic background; there are thus limitations in this area of description. However, from everyday observations and informal discussions with parents/caregivers, educators and children, it was evident that the nurseries contained a

broad social mix of families (see Chapter 4). This is also stated in one of the official School Reviews (City Council, 2004). Also, based on the nurseries' postcode, I collected information on the deprivation category (DEPCAT) of their neighbourhood scores, as indicated by the Scottish Area Deprivation Index[3].

The nurseries did not belong to a specific catchment area, and the children did not necessarily come from the specific nursery area. The information that I thus provide according to DEPCAT is merely indicative of each nursery area, rather than the actual families. Both head teachers suggested that the children came from a broad social mix of families, however they both tended to describe their nursery schools as mainly 'middle class', with some 'working class' families. It is important to stress that the descriptions of the nursery schools as mainly 'middle class' and 'working class' are the head teachers' views, and may not accurately reflect the children and their families. Also, as I do not have more relevant information, it is difficult to explain what educators defined as 'middle class' or 'working class'.

1.5.8 Discrimination

According to the Equality Act 2010 (Office of Public Sector Information, 2010), discrimination is defined by a number of 'protected characteristics', which include:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;

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[3] The Scottish Area Deprivation Index "measures the degree of area deprivation on a scale from 1-7, with 1 signifying the least deprived and 7 the most deprived areas. The areas are linked to current Scottish postcodes to allow easy application of the index. The Scottish Area Deprivation Index is based on six indicators most strongly associated with neighbourhood deprivation. These are the number of income support claimants; employment rate; households living below occupancy norm; index of home contents insurance company premia; non higher education participation and standardised mortality rates (Gibb et al 1998)" (cited in Riddell et al, 2005: 41).

- pregnancy and maternity;

- race;

- religion or belief;

- sex;

- sexual orientation"

How is discrimination defined though? According to the Equality Act 2010 (Office of Public Sector Information, 2010) discrimination can be both direct and indirect. Direct discrimination can be defined as:

"A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if, because of a protected characteristic, A treats B less favourably than A treats or would treat others" (Office of Public Sector Information, 2010)

Indirect Discrimination is defined as following:

"(1) A person (A) discriminates against another (B) if A applies to B a provision, criterion or practice which is discriminatory in relation to a relevant protected characteristic of B's.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), a provision, criterion or practice is discriminatory in relation to a relevant protected characteristic of B's if—

(a) A applies, or would apply, it to persons with whom B does not share the characteristic,
(b) it puts, or would put, persons with whom B shares the characteristic at a particular disadvantage when compared with persons with whom B does not share it,
(c) it puts, or would put, B at that disadvantage, and
(d) A cannot show it to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim." (Office of Public Sector Information, 2010)

Thompson (2003: 13-18) argues that while developing our understanding of discrimination it is important to acknowledge that "it operates at three separate but interrelated levels":

- the *personal*, which is mainly defined as explicit/overt or implicit/covert prejudice often based on stereotypes e.g. name calling, bullying or even murder)

- the *cultural*, which is mainly acknowledged as "sets of patterns shared across particular groups" often by stereotyping and marginalization, and

- *structural racism*, that is often perceived as institutionalised prejudice and discrimination in services. This relates to social factors and issues related to gender, class, race and others, political factors linked to the "distribution of power" and economic factors linked to "the distribution of wealth and other material resources". All of which often intersect.

1.5.9 Beyond 'equality': The case for equity

According to Riddell (2009: 286) "there are different understandings of the nature of equality". Different approaches tend to emphasise equality of opportunity or equality of outcome (Riddell, 2009: 286).

The Equalities Review defines an equal society as one that:

"protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish" and,
"recognises people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be" (2007: 6).

According to Riddell, the above definition combines "aspects of approaches based on equality of opportunity, process and outcome" (2009: 286).

There is a broader debate around whether emphasis should be placed on 'equality of opportunity' or 'equality of outcome' (see for further discussion Riddell, 2009: 286). Regarding Scottish educational policy, Riddell (2009: 288) suggests that emphasis has recently been given to 'equal opportunities' rather than 'equal outcomes discourses'. However, the term 'equality', particularly in relation to equal opportunities or treatment

has been contested [see Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Armstrong, 2002; Roxana, 2003; Philips, 2006]. 'Equality' has "become a highly controversial concept" in feminist thought (see Armstrong, 2002: 67) but also within 'race' related discourses (see Arora, 2005; Arshad, 2008). 'Equality' is commonly used "to refer to the approach of treating people with fairness" (Arshad, 2008: 225), however critiques have commonly focused on two aspects.

On the one hand, concerns occur around 'equality' and the question of difference, with some arguing for example that "equality merely means sameness" (Armstrong, 2002: 67, see also Arora, 2005). Arora (2005: 6) argues that the "central thrust" of an "equal opportunity as equal treatment" approach is that "everyone is treated in the same way, thus ensuring equality of opportunity". Arora (2005: 6) adds that in "practice such an approach could lead (to) ignoring individual differences and varying educational needs" and "assumes that by forbidding unfair treatment, the existing patterns of inequality will automatically disappear". The above 'Equalities' Review' definition of an 'equal society', does emphasise on 'different needs, situations and goals', and is thus not restricted to sameness. However, according to Riddell (2009: 5) it "may over-emphasise individual agency and the politics of identity, and may under-emphasise the immense power of structural forces which reproduce a range of social inequalities".

On the other hand, critiques have been raised in relation to the extent to which 'equality' or more precisely an 'equal opportunity approach' in educational practice has formed a basis for challenging discrimination (see Browne, 2004; Arora, 2005; Arshad, 2008; Arshad et al, 2005a).   Arshad et al (2005a: 76) suggest that 'race equality' is often conceptualised by teachers as an "equal opportunities or human rights approach". Browne (2004: 2) argues that in practice

"equal opportunities approaches…often fail to acknowledge children's diverse life experiences, and the prejudices and discriminatory practices individuals need to negotiate on a day-to day basis are rendered invisible"

Roxana (2003: 214) argues that the commonly used and well-meant phrase "I treat everyone the same", which is often used by teachers "to indicate their lack of bias in a diverse educational setting, in fact *masks* unequal power relations" (see also Chapter 9).

Arshad (2008: 225) supports that equality as a concept :

"might offer learners equal access and rights but does not always take into consideration the additional steps required in order to obtain, as far as possible, equivalent experiences that might allow for equal outcomes".

Armstrong (2002: 68) suggests that one solution is to reject equality as a valuable concept altogether, or to begin to reconstruct equality (see e.g. the notion of 'complex equality', Walzer, 1983 cited in Armstrong, 2002). Gillborn & Youdell (2000) on the other hand refer to the notion of equity, which features in recent debates in the USA:

"equity has replaced the older concept of equal educational opportunity. Both are related to 'egalitarian concepts of liberty, democracy and freedom from bias' (Grant, 1989: 89). But equity places more emphasis on notions of fairness and justice, even if that requires an unequal distribution of good and services (Valli et al, 1997: 254, cited in Gillborn & Youdell, 2000: 2).

Gillborn & Youdell (2000: 2) consider this as an "important shift in the terms of the debate. It represents a further strand in the varied and sometimes conflicting interpretations that are mobilized around the concept of equal opportunity".

Equity is considered the "quality of being fair and impartial" (Soanes & Hawker, 2005: 336). For treatment to be fair:

"issues of diversity need to be taken into account so that the different needs and requirements of individuals are met. An equitable approach in education is one that identifies and takes account of difference in fairly distributing time and resources, and impartially assessing outcomes. In equitable terms educational achievement should be an inclusive rather than an exclusive goal" (Universities Scotland, 2006; see also LTS, 2010b).

Equity is not a "static or unidimensional construct" (Valli, Cooper & Frankes, 1997: 254). Valli et al (see for further discussion 1997: 254-255) identify three changing dimensions:

- *equity of access* ("the need to provide appropriate routes of access that allow everyone to avail themselves of existing educational treatments and benefits"

- *equity of process or participation (treatment)* (includes "the structures and processes that define everyday life in schools"-both the hidden and formal curriculum),

- and *equity of outcomes* ("refers to the result of educational processes: the equitable distribution of the benefits of schooling").

Gillborn & Youdell (2000: 3) suggest that in contrast to the concept of equity of outcome, the concept of equity of participation and treatment "does not receive explicit attention in the British literature". In relation to early childhood and gender equity, Browne (2004: 2) emphasises "fairness in both process and outcome".

Similarly to other authors (see Browne, 2004; Arshad, 2008), I prefer the use of the word equity. However, equity is open to various interpretations (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000) and is a highly contested and complex concept (Valli et al, 1997). For example, questions and complexities may arise regarding what can be defined as socially just or fair (see Griffiths, 1998a). Also, within definitions (see above) and conceptualisations of equity (see e.g. Browne, 2004), there seems to be an overt emphasis on the recognition of *difference* and the politics of identity. I would argue that, in equity definitions, it is important to acknowledge similarities that we share as humans, and also acknowledge and respect differences.

There are other terms that will be used in this thesis like social justice and multicultural and antidiscrimination approach, which I will analyse in the main body.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organized in ten chapters. Chapter 2 explores relevant literature within the field. In this way, it provides the contextual and conceptual background of theories and research which have underpinned the directions for this study, reflecting my theoretical interests. Relevant literature that is explored is linked to basic themes of this thesis including identity, childhood, social justice, children's social identities, friendships and discrimination, and educators' social justice and equity pedagogies.

Chapter 3 outlines in detail the methodological approach that was followed in this study. It begins by describing the theoretical perspectives that have influenced this research (post-structural/post-modern -although, as it will be argued, the thesis moves beyond these- and social construction perspectives). This thesis also pays attention to conceptualisations of childhood, and how these may impact on the way research is conducted. It also stresses the importance of 'active' listening and participation, and critically reflects upon methods in early childhood, particularly 'participatory' and ethnographic methods. Special attention is given to the importance of reflexivity. Lastly, this chapter examines the ethical issues that arise during research with young children, paying special attention to children's informed consent.

Chapter 4 seeks to explore the wider political and legislative context of this research and highlights key policy and legislative developments of significance for equity and social justice issues, particularly in relation to education and children's rights. Particular attention is given to the Scottish context. Attention is also given to the importance of mainstreaming 'equalities' in education, an important strategy of the Scottish Government 2000. This chapter also describes the context of the two specific nursery schools, the children and families that took part in the research, and the policies that they had in place in relation to issues of equity

Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 constitute the findings of the thesis and in particular, Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 explore young children's views and experiences and Chapter 9 explores educators' social justice practice. All chapters are linked and should be read in conjunction with each other. Reality is complex and children's experiences cannot really

be seen as separate to educators' practice and vice-versa; however, separate (although simultaneously interlinked) issues occurred that were in need of more in-depth analysis. Each chapter thus provides the space for a more in-depth and analytical account of each identified theme. In my view, reading each chapter is like seeing through a different 'magnifying lens'. By no means is each specific 'magnifying lens' adequate on its own or separate from the others and this is evident as references and links across chapters are constantly made. However, each chapter has something distinct to offer, with its own complex story to unfold. Thus, the first three findings' chapters (5, 6 and 7) explored young children's perceptions and constructions of social identities in their everyday lives at nursery. All parts of identity had a rather unique element that allowed them to stand alone as separate chapters. However, all of the above, as parts of social identities, intersected in various and complex ways as well, something which was also explored in each chapter separately, and also in more detail in Chapter 8. I chose to structure Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 in this way, as being clear about what identities meant helped understand children's actions. Data showed that meanings and perceptions of identity related to, and were used in actions and interactions, thus raising social implications. This, however, should not imply a one-way process, with meanings coming first and then actions. On the contrary, actions and interactions also contribute to constructions (meanings) of social identities. Chapter 5 in particular explores young children's constructions of age identity. It focuses on three ways that children constructed age, related to a mere 'statement of being', to a 'way of being' and to a "chronological narrative of children's own life course". Attention is given to processes of embodiment linked to 'becoming' and 'belonging' to a specific age group, to issues of superiority and inferiority that occur, and to more sophisticated theorisations of age (being older) linked to independence, choice, freedom and autonomy. Intersections between age, gender and ethnicity are also explored.

Chapter 6 focuses on young children's constructions of gender identity, and explores both 'fixed' and multiple constructions of gender, or else 'ways of being' a girl or a boy. Multiple and experientially 'fixed' ways of being a boy or a girl lead to

constructions of both dominant and non-dominant 'masculinities' and 'femininities'. This chapter also focuses on how children's notions of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' were linked to primary (hetero) sexual identities. Intersections between gender and ethnicity are explored.

Chapter 7 focuses on children's constructions of ethnic identity and explores multiple, complex and varied ways of constructing ethnicity, in relation to both cultural and physical markers of difference. In particular, children seem to draw on physical characteristics, language, religion, culture and nationality. This chapter also focuses on children's perceptions of specific categorical terms of nationalities that seemed to occur in their everyday lives. Attention is given to children's 'fixed' and 'open'/ 'fluid' notions of ethnicity, all part of an 'ethnic habitus'. Reference is made to intersections between gender and ethnicity.

Chapter 8 then turns to the social implications that children's constructions of social identities seem to have in their lives. In this way it draws Chapters 5, 6 and 7 together and examines how children's multiple social identities come to play, in a complex, intersecting and contradictory way. This chapter suggests that discourses of 'sameness', 'normalities' and difference play a salient part in children's friendship groups and inclusionary/exclusionary, discriminatory practices. This chapter suggests that children's peer relations are complex in nature, as groups and subgroups are formed constantly and children's inclusionary and exclusionary practices are dynamic processes. Explicit/'overt' and 'implicit'/'subtle' forms of exclusion and discrimination were salient in children's lives.

Chapter 9 explores the links between children's friendship groups and discriminatory and exclusionary practices, with educators' practice. Particular attention is given to educators' social justice and equity pedagogies and practices, and the extent of intervening in children's play and friendship. This chapter suggests that educators in both nurseries share a lot of similarities and differences in relation to their equity approaches and in the ways that childhood was perceived. However, all educators showed commitment to promoting social justice and equity. Limitations in dealing with

equity and social justice issues were identified in both nurseries regardless of theoretical background and commitment to children's rights, or educators' practice and the different approaches that were used.

Lastly, Chapter 10 brings all of the findings chapters together, draws on key findings and arguments and examines the implications of the theories and findings presented for early childhood education. This chapter focuses on the links between children's lived experiences and educators' pedagogies. This chapter also explores the implications that 'listening' to young children and educators' views raises for theory and research, policy and practice. The aim of this chapter is to contribute to existing knowledge on young children's social identities and early childhood educators' pedagogies, to provide fertile soil for further reflection and a way forward for current theorisations and policy on identity, childhood and discrimination, and to suggest thoughts for further research directions.

Chapter 2

Reviewing relevant literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore and provide a contextual and conceptual background of theories and research linked to the main concepts of this thesis which are: identity(-ies), childhood, social justice and equity in education. This chapter does not provide an exhaustive or complete picture of the literature, instead its aim is to explore literature that has provided the underpinning directions for this study and reflect my theoretical interests.

An overriding theme of this chapter is that social construction and post-structural/post-modern theories have influenced the theoretical orientation of this thesis, through which identity(-ies) and childhood have been perceived in this research. However, definitions of post-structuralism/post-modernism tend to reject 'fixity' (see Chapter, 3). Thus, although this thesis is informed by post-structuralist/postmodernist theory, it moves beyond post-sructuralism/post-modernism, as it tends to explore and suggest the importance of both 'fixed' and fluid understandings of identity and childhood. This thesis has also been hugely influenced by the discipline of 'sociology of childhood' and related policy initiatives like the UNCRC 1989 and the General Comment No. 7 on implementing child rights in early childhood (UNCRC 2005).

This chapter will begin by exploring the concept of identity. It will continue by discussing the concept of childhood. Then it will explore relevant research and theory linked to children's social identities, by exploring gender, ethnicity and age. It will continue by discussing research and theory in children's friendships and links to social identities. It will then seek to conceptualise issues around social justice, 'equality', equity and 'inclusion'. It will continue by exploring early childhood perspectives and practices and will end by examining educators' pedagogies towards fairness and social justice.

2.2 Constructions of identity (-ies)

The root of the word identity is the Latin idem (same) and relates to "the sameness of objects" and "the definiteness and distinctiveness of something" (Jenkins, 2008b: 17). Identity can be described as the "human capacity… to know 'who's who'… a multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities" (Ashton et al. 2004 cited in Jenkins, 2008b: 5). Identity can also be defined as part of a "paradoxical combination of sameness and difference" as it is also about "people's uniqueness, their *difference* from others" (Lawler, 2008: 2). Jenkins (2008b: 17) suggests that identity "can only be understood as a process of 'being' or 'becoming' " and that it is "always multi-dimensional, singular and plural... never a final of settled matter".

Modernist thinking, influenced by the Enlightenment philosophical tradition which emphasised universal truths about the world and the individual, conceived identity as essential, singular, unitary, fixed and unchanging (Grieshaber & Cannella, 2001). During the 1990s, more complex and contested theories of identity emerged (Riddell & Watson, 2003). In the light of postmodernist/post-structuralist thinking, modernist and essentialised notions of identity were criticised. Emphasis was thus placed on the social construction nature of identity. Identity is now characterised by multiplicity, complexity, ambiguity; a dynamic and interactive process perceived as fluid and individualised (Giddens, 1991; Hall, 2000; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006).

Post-structural thinkers emphasised that rather than possessing a simple fixed identity, individuals are "constantly engaged in negotiating identity" (Riddell & Watson, 2003: 8). Individuals are considered to be free to choose their identity instead of having it imposed on them by factors such as birth (Beck, 1998). Importance has also been placed on reflexivity and identity (Giddens, 1991), which emphasises "a continual reassessment of who we are and who we want to be" (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008: 40). However, the individualism that underpins post-structuralist and post-modernist thinking raises problems regarding the possibility of a "construction of a shared political vision" (Riddell & Watson, 2003: 8; Callero, 2003). Gewirtz & Cribb (2008: 40) stress that even

though to a great extent individuals play an important and active role in choosing and negotiating their identities, their "choices are limited by the discourses that are available to them". "Processes of identity construction take place within networks of power and differential access to economic, social and cultural resources" (Bauman, 2004: 38 cited in Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008: 40). It is argued that social identities are shaped by a combination of structural forces and individual agency (Vincent, 2003).

2.2.1 'Us' and 'them': Belongings and boundaries

Identity is seen as an active and complex process, linked to that of identification (Jenkins, 2008b: 18; Lawler, 2008) and can also entail a collective aspect (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008). Jenkins (2008b: 40-46) refers to the model of "the dialectical interplay of processes of internal and external definition" according to which all identities, both individual and collective, are constituted and can be understood. The process of identity construction is not a "neutral or innocent one but involves us strategically positioning ourselves in relation to others" (Gewirtz & Cribb 2008: 40). Hall (2000: 17) also suggests that identities are constructed through difference, as "it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not … its 'identity'-can be constructed".

Gewirtz & Cribb (2008: 40) suggest that "processes of identification necessarily involve the construction of boundaries and exclusions". While defining who we are, we are simultaneously separating ourselves from who and what we are not (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008; Jamieson, 2002); a process of 'dis-identification'. Identity is thus very much linked to classification, through the use of categories. Categorisations contribute to the everyday reality, or else realisation of group identities, and "categorisations of out-groups is intrinsic to in-group identification" (Jenkins, 2008b: 12). In order to talk about a collectivity, people need to have something in common. Recognition of similarity(-ies) simultaneously evokes differentiation; "logically, inclusion entails *ex*clusion, if only by default" (Jenkins, 2008b: 102; Jamieson, 2002). Collectivities are thus about recognising similarities and differences between people, and "having something in common, whether 'real' or imagined, trivial or important, strong or weak" (Jenkins, 2008b: 132).

Drawing on work by Cohen (1982, 1985, 1986, 2002 cited in Jenkins, 2008b), Jenkins argues that 'community' entails notions of 'us' and 'them', which create boundaries in which feelings of belonging occur. Defining 'us' involves defining 'them', and develops a feeling of threat to sustain 'us' and how things are done 'here' (Jenkins, 2008b). A feeling of belonging is based on imagined symbols of similarities, however it is by no means imaginary (Jenkins, 2008b). Boundaries are to be found in "interaction between people who identify themselves collectively in different ways" (Jenkins, 2008b: 127). Therefore, identity is "a matter of boundary *processes"* (Jenkins, 2008b: 127*).* Collective identification and its boundaries are "*flexible, situational* and *negotiable"* (Jenkins, 2008b: 131) and symbolise exclusion and inclusion (Jenkins, 2008b).

2.2.2 Identity(-ies), stereotypes and exclusion

According to Jenkins (2008b) some authors have questioned the extent to which identification on its own can cause behaviour. However, Jenkins (2008b: 6) suggests that identity and knowing 'who's who' is a complex process, beyond "a matter of neutral classification"; classification goes hand in hand with evaluation. Due to the fact that 'identity work', or identification, takes place within relationships, "there are hierarchies or scales of preference, of ambivalence, of hostility, of competition, of partnership and co-operation, and so on" (Jenkins, 2008b: 6). It is in this context that Jenkins (2008b) suggests that identification is connected to motives of behaviour. Also, other people play an important role in actively constituting our identity without merely perceiving it, not only by naming and categorising, but also in relation to how they respond to or treat us (Jenkins, 2008b: 96). Classifications of self and others, however, are multidimensional and not always consistent (Jenkins, 2008b: 6). In short, although "identification may be connected to motivation and behaviour, the connection is not straightforward or predictable" (Jenkins, 2008b: 6). Identification may play an important role, but in no case a detrimental one (Jenkins, 2008b).

Stereotypes are powerful symbols that often occur in the insider-outsider debates during identification and classification (Jenkins, 2008b; Jamieson, 2002). It is important

to stress that stereotypes are not necessarily hostile (Jamieson, 2002; Jenkins, 2008b). However, Jenkins (2008b: 153) suggests that "group membership... demands…some consistent similarity in what individual members do". Of course, this does not necessarily imply that non-conforming behaviour is immediately rejected or challenged (Jenkins, 2008b). Nevertheless, "powerful signals about conformity and deviance, dramatising group membership and boundaries, are easily expressed as stereotypes of insiders and outsiders" (Jenkins, 2008b: 154) which often lead to exclusion. Hall (2000) suggests:

"identities can function as points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to exclude, to leave out , to render 'outside', abjected…So the 'unities' which identities proclaim are, in fact, constructed within the play of power and exclusion, and are the result, not of a natural and inevitable of primordial totality but of the naturalized, over-determined process of 'closure' " (Hall, 2000: 17-18, emphasis in original).

2.3 Constructions of childhoods

Another important underlying concept in this study is childhood. Constructions of childhood influence how children are treated by adults (Christensen & Prout, 2005), how research with children may be conducted (Christensen & James, 2008) and how relevant policy and practice is shaped (Woodhead, 2006). It is important, therefore, to devote space to exploring the concept.

Childhood is a concept that has been widely and historically used (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998). However, childhood has not always been perceived in the same way (Archard, 1993). Childhood is considered a "particular cultural phrasing of the early part of the life course, historically and politically contingent and subject to change" (James & James, 2004: 13). Childhood is characterised by "rapid physiological and psychological development and represents the beginning of the process of maturation to adulthood" (James & James, 2008: 22), as such it can be seen as common to all children, irrespective of culture. However, these developmental processes are considered by Woodhead (1996, cited in James & James, 2008: 22) as culturally relative.

Childhood is not a universal concept; instead, it is rather contextually specific (James et al, 1998; James & Prout, 1997). Aries (1962), a historian, has suggested that in medieval society, childhood did not exist. This is something that has been criticised by other historians (James & James, 2008) but nevertheless emphasises the social construction nature of childhood and how differences are core to the cultural politics of childhood (James & James, 2004). Authors like Qvortrup (2009) highlight childhood as a structural form, "a *permanent form* of any generational structure" (Qvortrup, 2009: 23). Childhood is thus "*both* constantly changing *and* a permanent structural form within which all children spend their personal childhood period" (Qvortrup, 2009: 26).

Dominant theories of childhood have evolved from various disciplines such as developmental psychology, anthropology and sociology (Prout, 2005; Kehily, 2009). During the early twentieth century, the psychology of child development was considered the dominant paradigm for studying children and for professional practice in education and care (Woodhead, 2009: 18). Developmental psychology referred to stages relating to age, physical development and cognitive ability that children would go through in order to reach adulthood; these stages were mainly based on Western childhood (Kehily, 2009). Little attention was given to the social and historical context of childhood (Prout, 2005).

Sociological approaches, in contrast, were interested in issues of socialisation, exploring how children learn to become members of society (Kehily, 2009). In this way, value was given to children, because through socialisation they become fully human/adult beings (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). Sociological approaches, while acknowledging the social and cultural context, neglected viewing children as individuals with value in their own right. Children were seen as 'becomings rather than beings' (Qvortrup, 1994); as 'our' future. Interestingly, despite seeming differentiation between the two disciplines, Woodhead (2009: 18) has argued that by the 1970s boundaries between "discipline-based paradigms were already unclear"[4]. Woodhead (2009: 18-19)

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[4] "Psychologists began to take greater account of the way social context and social processes

suggests that 'more radical critiques' were also occurring with an increasing demand for a very "different kind of 'childcentred' scholarship" (Woodhead, 2009: 19).

Postmodernist and feminist post-structural perspectives also challenged modernist thinking of how childhood is understood (James & Prout, 1997; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005) and moved away from the notion of the universal child, an "innate phase in human development that constitutes childhood", to viewing childhood as a social construction (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006: 6).

The commonly known 'new' sociology of childhood or 'new social studies of childhood' (James & Prout, 1997; James et al, 1998) was considered a 'paradigm shift' (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008) which challenged dominant discourses and theories of childhood that evolved from various disciplines as developmental psychology, sociology and anthropology (Prout, 2005; Kehily, 2009). Gallacher & Gallagher (2008: 500) view the 'new social studies of childhood' as "a reaction against some of the assumptions that had come to dominate child research, and which subordinated childhood to adulthood".

Developmental psychology (e.g. Piagetian theory), under the light of the 'new' sociology of childhood, was criticized for treating children as a homogenised group and for adopting the notion of the universal child (James & Prout, 1997). Child development, in this sense, was viewed as "a journey towards the acquisition of logic" (Penn, 2005: 15), a 'stage-like journey to mature, rational, responsible, autonomous, adult competence" (Woodhead, 2009: 27). Respectively, adulthood is perceived to be the desired destination and children are viewed as 'human becomings' rather than 'human beings' (Qvortrup, 1994). Woodhead (2009: 27), however, states that "these critiques risk overstating their case, jettisoning wide-ranging scholarship labeled under the broad heading 'child development'". Sociological approaches were criticized, as they were considered to fail to view children as active participants in society (Prout, 2005). Critiques emphasized on the necessity of studying and exploring children in their own

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shapes children's development" and "sociologists found attractions in more individualistic accounts of socialisation offered by symbolic interactionism" (Woodhead, 2009: 18).

right (Holloway & Valentine, 2000).

Thus, dominant notions of 'universal', 'immature', 'incompetent' and 'developing', 'in a state of not yet being' or 'becoming adults' were all criticized under the light of the 'new' paradigm (Woodhead, 2009). The 'new' social studies of childhood were calling for children to be acknowledged as agents, as competent social actors in their own right, as participants, and 'beings' rather than 'becomings'. Vandenbroeck & Bouverne-de Bie (2006: 127) argue that "in many respects, this paradigm shift can be viewed as a 'step forward' ". The above ideas highlighted the importance of children's rights discourses, and ran alongside policy developments like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.

While there has been wide acknowledgement of the importance of the 'new sociology of childhood' paradigm (see Kehily, 2009; Qvortrup, Corsaro & Honing, 2009; Christensen & James, 2008), recently authors have begun to critically reconsider some of its assumptions and positions (see Prout, 2005; Tisdall, 2010). Prout (2005) suggests that there is a need of 'moving' away from dualistic and oppositional dichotomies that the 'new social studies paradigm' seemed to reproduce. For example, although, childhood is a social phenomenon, it cannot be entirely described as social; there is a need to develop "an interdisciplinary approach and an open –minded process of enquiry" (Prout, 2005: 2). Nowadays, sociology of childhood has become increasingly interdisciplinary (see Tisdall, 2010; Tisdall, Davis & Gallagher, 2009; Woodhead, 2009). I will refer to and analyse some of the recent critiques in Chapter 10 as they link to some of the main arguments that I will suggest.

2.4 Children's social identities
2.4.1 Gender

Developmental psychology has been rather prominent in the field of gender development. Kohlberg (1966), by adapting Piaget's (1929) theories of "universal stages of development, argued that children at particular ages notice differences between people, learn their gender label and act accordingly" (Kohlberg, 1966; Piaget, 1929 both

cited in Morrow, 2006: 93). According to MacNaughton's review (2006) children most commonly have established a gender awareness and identity by the age of three. Essentialised and biological perspectives seemed to dominate, up until the 1960s, in relation to theorisations on gender formation (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). However, such theorisations have been criticised for underestimating children's abilities to 'do gender' and for not taking into account the socially constructed nature of gender (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006) and the diversity and complexity of children's experiences (Morrow, 2006).

In sociology, there has been an active attempt to emphasise children's agency, highlighting the importance of social context and diverse experiences, although a tendency to generalise about 'all boys' and 'all girls' has been noted (Morrow, 2006: 93).

In Skelton & Hall's (2001) review regarding '*The Development of Gender Roles in Young Children',* two schools of thought were identified: the sex roles theories, and gender relational theories. Sex role theories, which have played a significant role since the late 1970s, argue that children merely learn through observing people on how to act and "by being rewarded or punished" for acting the role well or not (Skelton & Hall, 2001: 2). Children thus "model their behaviour on same-sex members" of their environment (Skelton & Hall, 2001: 2).

On the other hand, gender relational theories place emphasis on the children's active role in (re)-constructing gender identities, avoiding generalisations that conclude that all girls and boys have similar interests and behaviour (Skelton & Hall, 2001). Gender is seen in the light of complexity, fluidity and contextuality, and is seen to intersect along with other understandings of ethnicity, social class, religion, age, ability/competence and culture (Skelton & Hall, 2001; Connolly, 2004; Renold, 2005). Thus, children are not restricted to categorical statements of gender, rather they are involved in complex and fluid processes of 'doing' gender (see Skelton & Hall, 2001; Browne, 2004).

In trying to understand children's conceptualizations there has been a great deal

of research that has been conducted at the school level, in and outside the classroom (Thorne, 1993; Jones, 1996; MacNaughton, 2000; Epstein et al, 2001; Connolly, 1998, 2004 & 2006; Browne, 2004; Renold, 2005). What is interesting is that such research provides an attempt to explore how children (re-)construct gender identity, drawing on children's constructions of 'male' and 'female'. Interestingly, links are also made between gender and sexuality (girl = feminity, boy = masculinity) (see Connolly, 1998; Renold, 2005). Connolly (2006; see also Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006) argues that most of the research, however, is conducted with older children.

There is also a tendency for most of the existing work to reinforce the two universal forms of gender identity, "with boys being progressively socialised into being masculine and girls into being feminine" (Connolly, 2006: 141). Little attention has been given, especially in early childhood, to the existence of diverse and multiple masculinities and femininities which would reflect the diverse social and economic contexts that children are situated in (Connolly, 2006: 141; Connolly, 2004). Connolly (2006: 141) suggests that although there has been an emerging body which explores a "much more critical and contextualised understanding of gender in early years" (see Browne, 2004; MacNaughton, 2000; MacNaughton & Smith, 2009), there is a gap in exploring diverse masculine and feminine identities (Connolly, 2004; Connolly, 2006).

Connolly (2004) has explored dominant forms of masculinity among working class and middle class boys (5-6 years old), how they tend to influence boys' attitudes towards schooling, and some of the negative effects of masculinity. Connolly's research explores, in this sense, issues of intersectionality[5] (between gender and class), another important gap in current research (Connolly, 2004; see also MacNaughton, 2000). Connolly (2004) provides an important step in exploring more complex gender identities in relation to masculinity; a step further would be to explore multiple forms of femininities, along with masculinities in early childhood.

In relation to masculinity, Connolly (2004: 58-59) draws on Connell (1995) to

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[5] Intersectionality can be defined as "the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations" (McCall, 2005: 1771).

explore power dynamics, and the "way that different forms of masculinity are hierarchically structured in relations of domination and subordination". Connell (1995) suggests that although there are diverse masculinities, in practice, they can be grouped into four types: hegemonic, subordinate, marginalised and complicit masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is the dominant form "or culturally accepted form of masculinity within a setting or society" (Browne, 2004: 69 drawing on Connell 1995) which "achieves the highest status and the greatest influence and rewards" (Connolly, 2004: 58-59). Other forms of masculinity may "coexist with the hegemonic form but it is the dominant form of masculinity that determines what it means to be a 'real' man or boy" (Browne, 2004: 69). It is not fixed, however, and it takes various forms in different contexts (Renold, 2005). Some characteristics of hegemonic masculinity in Western contexts are:

"...physical strength, adventurousness, emotional neutrality, certainty, control, assertiveness, self-reliance, individuality, competitiveness, instrumental skills, public knowledge, discipline, reason, objectivity and rationality" (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997: 121, cited in Connolly, 2004: 59).

Browne (2004: 69) argues that, amongst others, hegemonic masculinity emphasises "men's (and boys') superiority to women (and girls)".

These three remaining types of masculinity are linked to hegemonic masculinity.

- "Subordinate masculinities represent those that directly conflict with some of the key features of hegemonic masculinity and thus tend to be actively repressed...

- Marginalised masculinities reflect the differing positioning of men resulting from the interplay of social class and ethnicity. [6]

- Complicit masculinities ...refer to those men who, even though may attempt to

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[6] For example: "while working class and/or Black masculinities may incorporate and attempt to reproduce some of the key features of hegemonic masculinity, their class position and ethnic background still act to marginalise them in relation to the dominant form of hegemonic masculinity..." (Connolly, 2004: 59).

distance themselves from or even be in opposition to hegemonic masculinity, still benefit indirectly from it" (see Connolly, 2004: 59-60 for further discussion)

Robinson & Jones Diaz (2006: 128) suggest that current theorisations of constructs of gender in young children's lives "do not adequately deal with the way in which gender in inextricably constituted within and normalised through the process of 'heterosexualisation'". There is, however, an emerging body of research with younger children exploring the above issues (see Connolly, 1998; Blaise, 2005; Robinson, 2005). Drawing on Butler (1990), "through the processes of gendering, children are simultaneously constructed as heterosexual beings" (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006: 128). Butler's (1990) notions of 1) the 'heterosexual matrix', which "regulates gender and gender relations so that heterosexuality becomes the "normal", right, and only way to be" (Blaise, 2005: 22) and 2) the salience of 'gender perfomativity', whereby gender is conceived as a performance and which is about "the effects of repeating, performing, and embodying gender norms through language and actions" (Blaise, 2005: 22), are important in such theorisations (for further discussion, see Butler, 1990; Blaise, 2005; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006).

MacNaughton & Smith (2009: 167-168) argue that gender is a "political experience... intimately connected with power relationships", linked to children's everyday decisions and choices about what to do and who to do it with. There is research that suggests that constructions of gender identity influence peer relations and friendships and lead to discriminatory and exclusionary attitudes, including early childhood (see MacNaughton & Smith, 2009; Browne, 2004; Thorne, 1993).

2.4.2 Ethnicity

Children's development of ethnic awareness has been explored quite extensively from social psychologists through experimental studies from the 1920s (Connolly, 2007; see e.g. Aboud 1988). Similarly, cognitive and developmental psychology, has dominated since the 1990s (see for an overview MacNaughton, 2006), by drawing on Piagetian,

stage theories, and cognitive development, has focused on children's development of 'racial' awareness, attitudes, preferences and prejudice (MacNaughton, 2006). One of the key findings that arose from such research is that children can become aware of ethnic differences from around the age of two, and are also able to develop negative attitudes and prejudices from about the age of three (Connolly, 2007).

Research with children that has been conducted mainly by sociologists has also provided important findings in the area. Based primarily on qualitative studies (particularly ethnographic), it has provided an attempt to conceptualise children's social worlds and the salience of ethnicity in such (see Troyna & Hatcher, 1992; Wright, 1992; Connolly, 1998; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; Lewis, 2003; Connolly & Healy, 2004). Such research has paid attention to the complex, context-specific and fluid nature of children's ethnicity, moving away from 'fixed' ideas. Children are seen as playing an active role in (re)-constructing ethnicity, challenging the dominant and traditional view that children merely imitate uncritically the adults that surround them (see Connolly, 2007).

All of the above research in children and ethnicity has provided an important contribution to our understanding in this field of enquiry. However, critiques highlight that there has been emphasis on physical rather than cultural markers of children's ethnic identities (see Connolly, 2003; Connolly et al, 2009). Recently, studies from the psychological domain have explored children's understandings and feelings of nations and national groups (for an overview, see Barrett, 2002 & 2005). Aforementioned research is extremely important, but does not really explore children's perceptions of such concepts in their everyday life.

Most of the current research about children's notions of nationality has been conducted with older children (see Carrington & Short, 1995 & 1996; Holloway & Valentine, 2000; Scourfield et al, 2006) and has explored meanings of particular nationalities and discriminatory attitudes. In most of these cases, researchers enter the field with predefined interests, asking children about specific categorical notions e.g. what being 'British' or 'Welsh' may mean for children. Such research focuses mainly

on interviews and focus groups, and does not really include extended everyday observations of children's lives for a considerable amount of time. Everyday observations would explore the extent to which children may or may not use such categorical concepts of nationality, and if they do, how they would use such. Therefore, there is not only a lack of understanding on how children construct ethnicity in their everyday lives at nursery, particularly in terms of more cultural constructions (Connolly, 2003; Connolly et al, 2009) but also on how children, generally and more specifically younger children, perceive, (re-)construct and use categorical notions of ethnicity/nationality in their everyday lives. There has been some emerging research, however (see Connolly, Smith & Kelly, 2002; Connolly & Healy, 2004), that has focused on the development of ethnic awareness and prejudice among young Catholic and Protestant children in Northern Ireland.

There has also been research with older children around other parts of identity linked to nationality like language (for an overview, see Scourfield et al, 2006; McGonigal & Arizpe, 2007) and religion (Smith, 2005). However, the above research has been conducted with older children in school settings. There is a gap in relation to younger children's experiences of both language and religion (see for language Jones Diaz, 2003; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006).

Current research with younger and older children (see Scourfield et al, 2006; Barron, 2007) seems to be grappling with whether ethnicity is linked with an explicit awareness of identity; the extent to which ethnicity is expressed as a source of children's identity that is culturally filled linked to overt identification. There is a tendency from some authors to suggest that rather than overt identification, younger children were more likely to recognise boundaries in relation to difference (Barron, 2007; Scourfield et al, 2006). Connolly (2003: 176) also suggests, in relation to 5 and 6 years old and ethnic identity, that while "the general parameters of their identities and beliefs were being set in place there was still a fair amount of work required to fill these in and build them up". However, Connolly (2003) continues by suggesting that early years represent a time when ethnic identities along with prejudices develop and "take place at an increasingly

intense rate". Between the ages of three and six, many children begin to identify with a specific ethnic group and make negative comments. Of great importance here is Connolly's notion of 'ethnic habitus' (1998; 2003). I will briefly elaborate on this as it will be used in Chapter 7.

Connolly borrows Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) concept of 'habitus' to refer to the concept of 'ethnic habitus' (cited in 2003). For Bourdieu:

"the habitus represents all of those ways that each person has developed of approaching, thinking about and acting upon their social world. They are ways of thinking and behaving that are the product of their lived experience and that have been accumulated over time to become now largely taken-for-granted and instinctive aspects of their lives" (Connolly, 2006: 143).

Thus, an 'ethnic habitus' is "a particular set of predispositions and ways of behaviour (i.e. 'habits') that are learnt and internalised over time and that tend to structure the way people think about and interact with their social world" (Connolly, 2003: 172; 1998; 2009). According to Connolly (2009: 3) 'ethnic habitus' can be evident in young children's preferences towards "cultural events, symbols and practices of their own community", in "taken-for-granted preferences to want to be with others 'of their own kind", in other words in-group preferences, and according to some in a "negative disposition towards those who are different from themselves", or otherwise out-group prejudices. Ethnic identities are not fixed, but are evolving in time, and are fluid and contradictory (Connolly, 2003). However, at a particular time, someone's ethnic identity is "*experienced* as a fundamental and permanent aspect of their sense of self" (Connolly, 2003: 172).

Barron drawing on Verkuyten (2005 cited in Barron,2007), argues that there has generally been limited research regarding how people conceptualise ethnic identity in their everyday experiences (see also Jamieson, 2002). By drawing on Hall, Barron highlights the need to "decouple ethnicity, as it functions in the dominant discourse, from its equivalence with… racism" (2003: 93 cited in Barron, 2007: 740). There is also

a need for further research to engage with an exploration of a more in-depth understanding of children's multiple perceptions of ethnicity, and the complexities of how ethnic identity is experienced, practised and performed within a setting (see also Barron, 2007). [7]

Barron's work (2007: 749) with young children (3 -4 years old) in their homes and nurseries, can be viewed as an attempt to conceptualise children's multiple meanings of ethnicity. Barron (2007) suggests that both "fixity and fluidity in relation to skin colour, religion and cultural celebrations" were apparent, as elements of children's ethnic identity. Barron (2007) argues that children were making links between skin colour and religion, suggesting a construction of ethnic identity and religion based on skin colour and differences. Skin colour was also viewed as a cultural marker. However, observations of the children in the nursery related to specific celebrations (Eid and Christmas). It is important to explore children's constructions of ethnicity on an everyday basis without restricting it to specific events (see also Madge, 2001, regarding young people).

Research (particularly with older or primary school children) has shown that education can be an arena in which prejudice, discrimination and racism takes place not only through direct and obvious attitudes, but also indirectly, unintentionally and even due to ignorance (Troyna & Hatcher, 1992; Connolly, 1998; Gillborn, 2006a & 2006c; Devine, Kenny & Macneela, 2008). Devine et al (2008: 370), however, suggest that "there may be some dispute as to the extent and nature of prejudice towards differing ethnic groups among younger children". Nevertheless, there has been research that suggests that discrimination and prejudice in relation to ethnicity is evident in early years settings (see MacNaughton & Davis, 2009; Van Ausdale & Feagin; 2001; Van Keulen, 2004; Connolly & Healy, 2004). MacNaughton (2006: v) suggests that there is a need for further research on racial and cultural understandings of young children,

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[7]   For example, Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001: 48) suggest that children provide varied and complex notions of 'race', showing that children "were wrestling with a multiplicity of abstractions". There is, however, a main emphasis on physical differences and especially skin colour, although limited reference is made to other factors such as language, nationality, festivals, etc.

"because bias in the early years appears to be susceptible to change".

Relevant research regarding ethnicity in the Scottish context has provided important findings in the area, but has not really focused on early years setting (under fives) (see Ross et al, 2006; Caulfield, Hill & Shelton, 2005; Arshad et al, 2005a; Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, 2001; Donald, Gosling & Hamilton, 1995).

2.4.3 Age

Hockey and James (2003: 5), argue that:

"though identity has been addressed within the social sciences, there have been relatively few attempts to account theoretically for the contribution of age to social identity, and those that have largely fail to explain this as both an experiential and a situated process".

Thorne (2004, 2008) also highlights the need to examine age as part of social identity, an aspect that has been widely neglected. As stated in the introduction, there is a "general climate of intolerance and negative public attitudes towards children" in the UK (UK Parliament, 2009) which signals the existence of age discrimination.

There has been an attempt from a few studies to conceptualise age away from the mere 'fixed', stereotypical categorical and biological way. Hockey & James (2003), for example, draw on social theory and theorisations of identity and the body to move away from viewing age as "fixed and repetitive sequence of ages and stages within human life and experience" (Hockey & James, 2003: 5). In their view, age embraces both social and physical meaning in varied ways, and for that reason they adopt the use of the word 'life-course' (Hockey & James, 2003). The aforementioned authors move away from notions of identity as 'fixed' and embrace notions of fluidity, where identity is "emerging out of and through people's social relationships" (Hockey & James, 2003: 6).

Without ignoring the importance of biological understandings of age and the body (in terms of symbols of ageing), Hockey & James (2003) argue that the individual has the power to take on whatever identity they want (individual agency) however the

authors also acknowledge the importance of power and institutional and structural constraints (social structure). Hockey and James (2003) conceptualise the body in order to provide a better understanding and explanation "of how bodily-based concepts of age work to mark out different kinds of aged identities across the life course" and how "as social actors, different people experience and make sense of the movement from one aged identity to another" (Nicholson, 1995 cited in Hockey and James, 2003:15). Hockey & James (2003) viewed ageing as an "embodied process", and explored how this "bodily condition of life is-or is not- managed and negotiated by individuals in different ways" (Hockey & James, 2003: 9).

James (1993), in her book "Childhood Identities", was interested in children's understandings (3-9 years) of difference, identity and their impact on friendships. James (1993) focuses mainly on children's perceptions regarding the physical body (particularly interested in disability), touching upon gender and age. James (1993) refers to children's perception of categorical age in relation to the body (physical size), but also in relation to more sophisticated notions that relate age, and particularly being older, with autonomy and independence in contrast to the denial of such in younger ages.

James' (2005) work on children's perspectives of age, agency and memory across the life course, is also influential. James (2005), drawing on empirical data from an earlier study (see Christensen & James, 2000), provides a first attempt to conceptualise children's perceptions of age. However, emphasis is given to older children (10 year old children). James' (2005: 254) work suggests that children's narratives show that they refer to the "importance of chronological thinking about the passing of time". Children also placed importance on age as an experiential, rather than simply chronological status, and their perception of age related to discussions relating to 'biographical narratives across the life course' linked to the past and the future (Hockey & James, 2003; James, 2005). James (2005) suggests that mythical qualities in relation to age were apparent, although this was not always linked merely to age-related beliefs.

In the field of early childhood, Skattebol (2006) explored children's gender, ethnicity and development identity (age) in Australia. Importance was given to the role

of embodiment as a 'technology of identity and belonging', rather than as a state of being (Skattebol, 2006). In relation to age, Skattebol (2006) suggested that children draw on age identity as a categorical term, associated to ideas about certain 'things' one can do when older or younger, with emphasis on the privileges of 'becoming' older. Often children would state that they were older, not only through words but also through embodiment; bodily performance that legitimised their statement. Not all children, however, succeeded in their attempt to be recognised and authorised in the category membership they were seeking

There is a general lack in research in relation to the impact of age, as part of social identity, and on children's friendships in early childhood settings, with the exception of research from James (1993) and Skattebol (2006). Again, however, there is a need to explore how children use age on an everyday basis in relation to friendships.

2.5 Children's friendships, social identities, multiplicity and intersectionality: The missing piece?

There are no universally agreed and acknowledged criteria for defining friendship (Allan, 1996). However, some authors in Western societies have argued that one form of the experience of friendship can be seen as a social relation which "binds people to one another through …bonds of affection" (James, 1993: 206; see also Hill & Tisdall, 1997). According to James & James (2008) children's friendships and social relations have been the focus of research since the 1930s, when developmental psychologists began to use sociometric research techniques in order to discover the patterning of children's relationships with their peers. Emphasis was given to children who were isolated or showed unstable friendships, and researchers would "plot out their inter-relationships by noting down peer-group interactions" (James & James, 2008: 60). In this way, network diagrams of children's relationships were created which helped to reveal which children needed support while making friends. Critiques, however, were raised about such techniques, as they could merely show popularity rather than friendship.

Other research has sought to explore the nature of children's friendships. Such

research has suggested that children's friendships change form depending on the age. "Friendship was seen as developing over time in a series of stages from unstable, fleeting relationships to more durable and intimate ones" (James & James, 2008: 60). This type of research did not, however, seem to take into account the varying forms of friendship that also take place in adult relations, from close intimacy to mere acquaintances. There was a need to explore the meanings of friendships, rather than simply their forms (James & James, 2008).

There is a variety of insightful literature and research on children's friendships related to children's meaning of friendships (Corsaro, 1985, 2003, 2005 & 2009; Deegan, 1996; James, 1993; Dunn, 2004; James & James, 2008). Early work by Corsaro (1985) suggested that even young children aged 3 or 4 are involved in close relationships with other children. Young children under 2 years of age are capable of "engaging in fairly extended and sophisticated social interactions" which can "find their optimal expression in early friendships" (Foot, Chapman & Smith, 1995: 7; Corsaro, 2005). Most commonly, literature in the field of children's friendships suggests that the beginning of friendship occurs from the ages of two and five, and that more than half of preschoolers "establish relatively stable reciprocal friendships" (Erwin, 1993: 89; Smith, Cowie & Blades, 2003).

A critical part of children's social identity and selfhood is the experience of having and being friends (James, 1993). As already mentioned in previous sections, research has explored the significance of social identities, particularly gender and ethnicity, in children's friendships (see Thorne, 1993; Connolly, 1998; MacNaughton, 2000; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; Browne, 2004; Renold, 2005). Research generally suggests that children tend to choose their friends on the basis of gender, ethnicity, class, academic achievement, interests and attitudes to school (Deegan, 1996; Hill & Tisdall, 1997). However, the actual experience of friendship patterns and the varied influences that may guide such patterns are rather complex, with multiple and intersected factors coming into play (Devine & Kelly, 2006; Devine et al, 2008).

Currently, most studies in early childhood seek to explore social identities and

inclusionary/exclusionary practices in peer relations, mainly in relation to one aspect of social identity. For example, Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001) have mainly emphasised on 'race', and Browne (2004) on gender. In this way, 'race' or gender are seen as the only way to conceptualise children's peer relations, thus neglecting the complexity of children's friendships groups, where multiple parts of identity may play a key role at different times or would intersect.

There has been a growing need, stressed by various authors (see Thorne, 2004; Phinney, 2008; Morrow & Connolly, 2006), for research to explore multiple social identities in interaction, rather than focus on various individual parts of identity on their own. MacNaughton (2000) also argues that there is a gap in research in relation to how various parts of social identity intersect in young children's lives. There is a growing body of research particularly with primary or older children, but research in early childhood is still limited (for primary school children, see Connolly, 1998; for older children Devine & Kelly, 2006; Epstein et al, 2001). There has also been limited research in relation to age as an aspect of social identity (Thorne, 2004; for studies see James, 1993 & 2005; Hockey & James, 2003) and the complexity of interactions that may occur.

A step forward would be to explore issues of social identities and intersectionality in friendship groups, particularly in early childhood. For example, Devine & Kelly (2006) explore the above with older children with particular emphasis on gender and ethnicity, although they also refer to social class, dis/ability, age and sexuality. In this sense, the aforementioned authors explore the complex dynamics of friendship groups and issues around intersectionality. Connolly's research with 5 and 6 year olds has provided an important contribution towards exploring issues of intersectionality between gender and ethnicity (1998; 2000) and gender and class (2004) and the impact these constructions have on children's lives. There is a need for further research to explore complexity and intersectionality between various parts of social identities and in children's friendship formations and exclusionary/inclusionary practices.

Lastly, Nutbrown & Clough (2009: 192) suggest that although there have been several studies about practitioners' (and other adults') views on inclusion, there is a gap in relation to young children's views "of what it is to be included" or "to 'belong' to a group, a school, a setting, or a community". A step forward would also be to explore children's perceptions and experiences 'of what it is to be excluded' and 'why to exclude'.

2.6 Conceptualising social justice: Exploring links with education

Griffiths (1998b: 179) has argued that recently "a way forward has been found: using the term 'social justice' in preference to 'equality' or 'equal opportunities'. Throughout this thesis, I prefer the use of the words 'social justice' and 'fairness' (Arshad & Mitchell, 2007; see also Griffiths, 1998a). Similarly to Griffiths (1998c) I find these concepts broader than for example 'equal opportunities' or 'equality'. I also feel that in contrast to 'equality', which has been criticised for emphasising sameness, social justice and fairness can encompass both similarities and differences and place emphasis on power dynamics and to challenging discrimination.

Riddell (2009) suggests that social justice, equality and inclusion are complex and inter-linked concepts, and that tensions and competing understandings occur within theories regarding the aforementioned. Many social justice theories now acknowledge both politics of redistribution, the distribution of both material and social goods (Riddell, Tinklin & Wilson, 2005), and recognition, relating to more cultural claims (see Young, 1990; Riddell, 2009).

Riddell (2009: 284) also suggested that according to Young (1990) a politics of redistribution based merely on class was "no longer defensible" and that there was a need to focus on differences based on gender or race. According to Riddell (2009: 284), Young (1990), "maintained in her writing that there was a need to balance concerns with redistribution with those of recognition", whereas authors like Honneth (1995) tend to argue that "recognition is the fundamental concept of justice and can encompass distribution". Authors like Fraser (1997) were rather critical of the work of Young (1990) and Honneth (1995), and argued that a focus on identity politics (the politics of

recognition) diverts attention away from rectifying economic injustices, which in turn leads to a lack of social respect. Fraser (1997) states that the politics of redistribution seem to emphasise unity and removing differences between groups, whereas recognition gives emphasis to recognising and emphasising on differences; Fraser thus considers them as "fundamentally contradictory" (cited in Riddell, 2009: 284). Phillips (1999) tries to reconcile these two positions (politics of recognition and redistribution) arguing that we need to pay attention to both cultural and economic spheres.

This thesis tends to pay attention to the politics of recognition. However, it is important to clarify that this emphasis does not imply that politics of redistribution are less important. On the contrary, it is difficult to be committed to social justice without acknowledging the importance of both politics of redistribution and recognition.

The recognition of difference, which is highlighted throughout this thesis, is contested. For example, there is a tendency for advocates of recognition of difference to emphasise merely on *difference* (see for example Trifonas, 2003; Browne, 2004) neglecting similarities. However, tensions occur while treating everyone 'equally' and emphasising on the similarities that people share-their 'sameness' as human beings and holders of rights, and at the same time respecting and acknowledging differences. According to my understanding of the recognition of difference, there is a need to balance between treating everyone 'equally' (e.g. 'equal' access, opportunities and rights) and emphasising on their universal humanity (their sameness), and acknowledging differences and power relations. However, I prefer the use of the word equity instead of 'equality' (see Chapter 1), as according to Arshad (2008: 225) "it is a term that…more accurately reflects what is possible".

In my understanding of the recognition of difference there are some contradictions, which need to be acknowledged from the start. For example, while discussing my understanding of the term equity (see Chapter 1) I recognise difference as a positive aspect. However, when I describe discriminatory practices (see Chapter 8), I consider responding to difference as a negative aspect. The 'recognition of difference' is thus viewed in this thesis both in a positive and a negative way, depending on the extent

to which the recognition of difference is followed by respect, fairness and socially just attitudes and practices, or on whether it is followed by negative and discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Emphasis is now placed to the 'multi-dimensional nature of justice' (Gewirtz, 2006) and the tensions that may occur between these different 'facets' (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003). Influenced by post-modern thinking, emphasis is thus placed on the temporal and contextual dimension of social justice, characterised by complexity, fluidity and subjectivity (Griffiths, 1998a; Vincent, 2003). In this sense, what counts as justice in education can only be understood 'within specific contexts of interpretation and enactment' (Gewirtz, 2006: 70). However, Gewirtz suggests that there is a danger of drifting towards an "extreme form of relativism", and thus any model of justice should aim to combat all inequities and "contribute to the development of more just practices in education" without detracting "from the moral and political obligation to promote justice" (2006: 80).

Arshad & Mitchell (2007: 1) also 'trouble' the concept of inclusion, as they consider this essential for an "effective embedding of equity, diversity and anti-discrimination into... practice". By drawing on Benaron, the aforementioned authors suggest that the concept of inclusion 'obstructs clarity' and that processes of inclusion have often aimed towards assimilation rather than appreciation of diversity. In this way, a more deficit model of thinking is in place, placing the blame on the individual, who has to adjust to the 'norm'. Social justice, equity, fairness and respect are thus concepts that are preferred and used in this thesis (Arshad & Mitchell, 2007).

2.7 Early childhood perspectives and practices

Woodhead suggests that early childhood policies and practices are formed by "competing images and discourses of the young child" and refers to four common perspectives: a developmental perspective, a political and economic perspective, a social and cultural perspective, and a human rights perspective (see for further 2006: 4). The above perspectives also seem to have influenced social justice educational approaches. I

will briefly elaborate on the perspectives that provide a basis for an understanding of the findings of Chapter 9.

2.7.1 Developmentally perspective

Developmental perspectives have greatly influenced early childhood education, and have been based on principles of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (Yelland, 2008). DAP reflects "traditional child-centred values" reinforced by Piagetian theory (1962, 1965 & 1977 cited in Connolly, 2004). DAP views children's learning in terms of universal stages of development, emphasis on children's self-directed play, exploration and discovery (Connoly, 2004; Woodhead, 2006); curriculum planning is based on children's emerging needs and interests and the educator is viewed as a guide providing support (Woodhead, 2006). DAP emphasises on adults demonstrating, questioning, modelling, suggesting alternatives and prompting reflections (Stephen, 2006: 3). However, direct adult intervention is viewed as problematic in the name of self-directed learning (MacNaughton, 2000; Browne, 2004). Critiques have been raised linked to:

- the universal and homogenised idea of children that DAP promoted and the westernised assumptions of the idealistic view of early childhood (Woodhead, 2006; Wood, 2007),
- the 'child-centred' ideology which highlighted "activities rather than outcomes"and which emphasised on needs and interests while planning the curriculum content (Wood, 2007: 123)
- and the lack of addressing issues of fairness and equity in the name of traditional notions of 'child-centred' education (Wood, 2007),
- the fact that focus is merely given to individual development (Kessler, 1991; Browne, 2004).

The " 'facilitating' role of adults was prioritised, and there was insufficient

clarification of proactive pedagogical approaches" (Wood, 2007: 123).

2.7.2 Socio-cultural perspectives

Developmental researchers have begun to acknowledge the social and cultural context of early development, especially drawing on Vygotsky's 'social constructivist' theory (Woodhead, 2006). Social and cultural perspectives that emerged emphasised: children's engagement with a range of settings, relationships, activities and skills, scaffolding children's acquisitions and ways of communication and children acquiring "culturally-located competencies and identities" (Woodhead, 2006: 20-21; see also socio-cultural model by Rogoff 2003). Without denying the "universal maturational processes", early childhood was also understood as a "product of specific economic, social and cultural processes" (Woodhead, 2006: 21). More radical critiques of traditional theory and research derive from post-modern/post-structural perspectives (see MacNaughton, 2005). The aforementioned criticise "narrow conceptualisations of what is natural, normal and necessary" and acknowledge "a more historical and political perspective on institutions, policies and practices as well as on the ways theories, knowledge and beliefs about young children regulate their lives" (Woodhead, 2006: 21). Woodhead (2006) makes reference to the 'Reggio Emilia approach', which I will discuss separately later on. From the " 'individually developing child' attention is given to the competent social actor, within a complex network of social and cultural influences" (Wood, 2007 : 125; Rogoff 2003). Wood (2007: 125) suggests that 'child-centred education' is re-conceptualized. Educators should form goals and aims based on "observations and documentation of children's interests and activities", "connect children with substantive curriculum content", and address diversity and equity issues (including challenging stereotypical and discriminatory practices). While social and cultural perspectives challenged "over reliance on normative developmental accounts" and acknowledged diverse practices, they were criticized for relativity which may also "appear to justify moral and political relativity" (Woodhead, 2006: 23).

2.7.3 Human rights perspective

Critiques of traditional and dominant early childhood discourses have lead to a more "politically conscious scholarship on behalf of young children", which recognised "structures of social control, oppression and social exclusion, social inequalities and injustices" (Woodhead, 2006: 24). These debates run alongside policy developments, like the UN (Convention of the Rights of the Child, 1989) which acknowledged and promoted young children's universal rights. Woodhead argues that while in the past there was heavily reliance on scientific evidence linked to children's universal needs and development, "the strength of the UNCRC rests on political consensus" now (2006: 24). Children's rights principles are thus promoted to be embedded in both policy and practice. The UNCRC has been criticised for taking a "western liberal and individualistic discourse" of childhood; this is also a very general statement which allows various interpretations (Woodhead, 2006: 25). There is a recent model of the child as a "rights-bearing citizen" (see MacNaughton et al, 2008; MacNaughton & Smith, 2009), which connects a model of the child as a social actor to a rights holder. Particular emphasis has been placed on the right of participation in policy formation. In relation to pedagogy, drawing on Reggio Emilia pedagogies attention is placed to the "pedagogy of listening" (Rinaldi, 2001, 2006; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005) which promotes "children's participatory rights as rights- bearing citizens in practice" (MacNaughton & Smith, 2009: 163). MacNaughton & Smith (2009: 163) suggest that children's participatory rights in early childhood education does not always link with a "call for a broader spirit of human rights" in early childhood education. Thus, MacNaughton & Smith (2009: 163) suggest a "human rights-spirited early childhood curriculum".

"In a human rights-spirited early childhood curriculum, the child's ideas and perspectives on their relationships and experiences become the starting point for a curriculum whose intention goes beyond children's participation in decision making to create a spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity through it" (MacNaughton & Smith, 2009: 166).

I will discuss this further in Chapter 10.

2.7.4 'Reggio Emilia approach'

The 'Reggio Emilia' approach in early childhood, founded by Loris Malaguzzi (1998), has been particularly influential worldwide, including the UK (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1998; Browne, 2004; Rinaldi, 2006). Attempts have also been made towards 'adapting'/'translating' aspects of the 'Reggio Approach' to the Scottish context (LTS, 2006). The "Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5", which was the main policy document that guided Scottish educators' practice at the time of the research (2007-2008), was considered to be "close to the Reggio philosophy" (LTS, 2006: 35). The 'Reggio approach' is a social constructivist model (LTS, 2006) which acknowledges and respects children's rights.

There have been detailed descriptions and explanations of what characterizes the 'Reggio Emilia approach' (e.g. Edwards et al, 1998; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999; Abbott & Nutbrown, 2001). Some of the basic characteristics are:

- child-centred curriculum (child-originated and educators framed),
- children as subjects of rights rather than needs; children as active, competent and powerful agents, co-constructors of knowledge
- importance of the expressive arts
- teachers as 'partners, nurtures, guides' (Edwards, 1998: 179); as facilitators and learners; as 'pedagogical researchers' (Gambetti, 2001 cited in Browne, 2004: 43)
- *Progettazione:* flexible planning with a 'range of possible outcomes and ends', emphasis on children's previous knowledge and experience which guide possible directions and objectives (Browne, 2004: 44); educators 'listen' and observe children closely, value children's ideas and interests, create strategies which allow children to build upon their experiences
- learning through collaboration with others, importance of relationships and of feelings of 'trust'

- community and parent-school relationships and participation

- documentation both for learning process and for future learning and planning

- importance of the environment (LTS, 2006: 7; Browne, 2004: 42-45)

There have been critiques towards the above, particularly in relation to social justice and equity, which I will discuss in the following sections.

2.8 Educators' pedagogies[8] towards 'fairness' and social justice

In this section, I will discuss dominant educational approaches towards 'fairness' and social justice in early childhood, and how these link to dominant discourses of childhood.

While exploring literature in the field of equity and social justice in early childhood, different strands appeared; either interested in gender and equity (MacNaughton, 2000; Skelton & Hall, 2001; Browne, 2004) or ethnicity and equity (Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Knowles & Ridley, 2005; Lane, 2008). MacNaughton (2000) has identified a need for research not only to explore how gender, 'race' and class intersect in young children's lives, but also how these intersections impact on pedagogies. There are of course some notable exceptions, which attempt to look into the above (e.g. Derman- Sparks, 1989; Van Keulen, 2004).

2.8.1 Childhood, age discourses and social justice approaches

Dominant and traditional developmental discourses, which feature prominently in early childhood education, view children as 'too young' to engage in or understand discriminatory practices, as 'not seeing' differences and as passive recipients 'just mimicking' or 'soaking up' adult behaviour (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). In the name of 'childhood innocence' issues around equity and discrimination are often neglected,

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[8] Pedagogy is "about learning, teaching and development, influenced by the cultural, social and political values and principles....and underpinned by a strong theoretical and practical base" (LTS, 2005b: 9).

and thus existing power relations are reproduced. Educators ignore the relevance between discriminatory incidents at early years settings and broader social, economic and political inequalities (Skattebol, 2003; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). Thus, the child is not really acknowledged as a 'political agent'.

Interestingly, issues around age and discrimination between children, and age and equity in general, are neither acknowledged nor referred to in relevant literature on equity and social justice. This could be linked to a wider lack of acknowledgement in both current law and policy on age discrimination, regarding younger children (see Chapter 1 and 4).

2.8.2 Social justice approaches towards gender equity

Gender has been an important equity concern in early childhood education (MacNaughton, 2000; Browne, 2004; Connolly, 2004; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). However, Skelton & Hall (2001: ii), while reviewing the literature on gender and children, suggested that most early years practitioners tend to "obscure gender issues". Robinson & Jones Diaz (2006) suggest that although educators are aware of gender issues (stereotypes or exclusionary practices), they do not link these to discrimination or power discourses, and most importantly do not provide a proactive or interventionist approach.

Browne (2004: 105) refers to common beliefs that can be identified in educators' practice which link to relevant gender equity strategies. According to Browne, there are:

- educators who believe that gender differences are innate; there are no strategies exploring and extending children's views on 'masculinities' and 'femininities' and deviations in gender norms will be a cause of concern ('biological deterministic approach')
- educators who believe that children learn through 'mimicking' others; emphasis is on "positive reinforcement and 'moulding', and strategies include providing non-

stereotypical role models and materials (sex-role socialization theory') (see also Skelton & Hall, 2001)

- educators who advocate that children learn through discourses which they have access to will find the above strategies unsuccessful in the long term, because they do not acknowledge that children position themselves and are positioned by others in different discourses.

This latter can be described as 'gender relational theories'[9] (Skelton & Hall, 2001). Gender relational theories suggest "direct intervention" in children's gender development, so that children will understand conventional gender stereotypes (Skelton & Hall, 2001: iii).

The image of children as "sponges that soak up sex roles" has prevailed in early childhood education (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). Most common gender equity strategies are based on 'sex-role socialisation theory', which assumes that individuals learn gendered behaviour through both indirect and explicit teaching. These strategies include: adult modelling, encouragement of non-sexist behaviour, encouraging children to play in various 'gendered spaces' which may be dominated by one gender or the other, use of non-stereotypical resources (e.g. books, stories, dress corner clothes etc.), non stereotypical activities, inviting community members who do not conform with traditional role occupations to speak about their job as role models and others (MacNaughton, 2000). The idea is that children, as 'sponges', will be able to 'soak up' social justice messages that are being promoted through the creation of a physical and social environment; commonly known as the "sponge identity formation" (MacNaughton, 2000: 19-20).

The above approach and strategies have been criticised by many contemporary scholars (see Browne, 2004; Connolly, 2004; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006) as they tend to reinforce the image of the child as passive recipient of these new non-

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[9]   Gender relational theories suggest that children actively construct their gender identity, and that concepts of gender are constantly changing according to the context (Skelton & Hall, 2001).

stereotypical roles without any resistance. Therefore, denying that children may "selectively construct meanings", may receive many messages from society not just one and may actively resist the varied ways of being 'masculine' and 'feminine' (MacNaughton, 2000: 22). Educators' role is restricted to that of a "model, an encourager and a reinforcer", that of a "creator and curator of the 'right' environment" (MacNaughton, 2000: 20-23). Moreover, traditional strategies towards gender equity place importance on equal access and opportunities approach. These have been criticised for not recognising and disrupting power relations in children's lives (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006).

Current theorisations suggest an interventionist approach, which would enhance dialogue and 'listening' and that would challenge sexism through direct involvement in children's play (MacNaughton, 2000; Browne, 2004). DAP have been sceptical about intervention and direct intervention; however, in this way they contributed to social injustice (Browne, 2004). Gender equity approaches should be about "struggling with gendered power relations… stopping sexism between children… increasing children's discursive repertoires… intervening in, and extending, children's storylines" (MacNaughton, 2000: 238; see also Skelton & Hall, 2001).

Lastly, Browne (2004: 50) provides a critical stance towards the 'Reggio approach' as it "does not adequately deal with gender issues and the concept of gender equity". According to Browne (2004) 'Reggio approaches' seem to be influenced, to an extent, by developmentally appropriate practices and are therefore not seen to deal adequately with equity issues. Browne suggests that 'Reggio approaches' provide little emphasis to educators' approaches and roles in engaging and supporting children to think critically about the "dominant discourses that are shaping their understandings of gender" (2004: 53).

2.8.3 Social justice approaches linked to ethnicity

In early childhood practice there is a common belief that children are unaware of ethnic differences and are 'too innocent' and 'immature' to understand complex phenomena like

discrimination, yet alone to act in any discriminatory or racist way (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006; MacNaughton & Davis, 2001). There is a common belief that children are most likely to act in a stereotypical way due to ignorance rather than internalising or perpetuating dominant discourses of power that persist in society (MacNaughton, 2005). Childhood innocence is therefore considered a strong criterion upon which teachers stand on, and which has an impact on how social justice education is promoted in early childhood (Skattebol, 2003).

According to Riddell, there is a general unresolved debate regarding the concept of equality, which is concerned with whether differences should be 'blurred' in order "to soften boundaries" or "promote identity politics", with emphasis on the "recognition, or the celebration of the diverse group identities" (2003: 886-887; see also Phillips, 1997). Two educational approaches are currently in the debate of 'race' equality education; multicultural and antiracism education. Many scholars bring the two together (e.g. Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006).

Vandenbroeck (2007: 21) suggests that diversity and equity in early childhood have been constructed "from the ideology of homogeneity over multicultural education to the anti-bias curricula of the 1990s".

2.8.3.1 Multicultural education

In the 1980s and 1990s the term 'multicultural' education was particularly popular in early childhood education (Vandenbroeck, 2007). Multicultural education can be described as the main educational approach in the early years settings (Derman-Sparks, 1989; Brown, 1998). It is about acknowledging and celebrating differences in culture, faith, language and ethnicity in the school ethos curriculum and home-school-community partnerships. Cultural ignorance is perceived, in this approach, as the root of intolerance, prejudice and racism (Rizvi, 1993). Therefore, its role was to fight existing ignorance, prejudice and misunderstandings of children's attitudes in order to promote 'race' equality (Gillborn, 2006b). The aim is thus to increase children's awareness of different cultures by introducing resources that reflect the home cultures of other

children (e.g. cooking sessions, celebration of festivals) (Siraj- Blatchford, 1994; Brown, 1998). Gewirtz & Cribb (2008) suggest two versions of multicultural education; 'naive versions' or 'shallower forms', and 'more sophisticated versions'. Multicultural education, especially associated to 'naive versions', has been criticized for:

- perceiving cultures as static, fixed, unchangeable and predetermined (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006: 65)
- providing a rather tokenistic approach often referred to as 'the three S's approach' (saris, samosas and steel bands) (Troyna & Carrington, 1990)
- failing to challenge "social, legitimized and institutional inequalities based on difference" (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006: 65).

However, more 'sophisticated versions' of multicultural education, like critical multiculturalism (May, 1999) has "shifted from a focus on cultural pluralism to critical thinking" (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006: 3). Critical multiculturalism aims to challenge identities, beliefs, values and assumptions and rethinks components of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008: 42-43). Multicultural education is considered important, but insufficient on its own and so it needs to be embedded within an anti-discriminatory framework (Kapasi, 2006).

2.8.3.2 Anti-racist education towards anti-discrimination education

Critiques of the multicultural approach have lead to an anti-bias approach, which was developed in the United States (Vandenbroeck, 2007). One of the most influential publications was the work of Louise Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force (1989). In the literature, authors used anti-bias, anti-discrimination and anti-racist education. In most cases, anti-racist education was used mainly for issues around 'race' and ethnicity, whereas terms like anti-bias or anti-discrimination were used either to include all inequalities or for 'race'.

Anti-racist education seeks to challenge inequalities, going beyond a 'touristic' approach; in addition to celebrating culture and difference, issues of power, justice and inequality are included within the formal and hidden curriculum to help pupils understand and deal with racism, prejudice and stereotyping (Gillborn, 1995). In this way, anti-racist education seeks to challenge racism at all levels- personal, cultural and institutional (Thompson, 2003). In early childhood education there is now a history of this work (see MacNaughton & Davis, 2009; Brown, 2008; Lane, 2008; Derman-Sparks and Ramsey, 2006; Connolly & Hosken, 2006; Van Keulen, 2004). There have been many interventions with a specific interest in early childhood education, that concern training and resources for antiracist education [for examples, see the National Early Years Network (Lane, 1999), the Working Group Against Racism in Children's Resources (WGARCR), Persona Doll Training website and training (2010), the Media Initiative For Children in Northern Ireland (Connolly et al, 2006)].

It has been suggested that staff should support children to feel good about themselves, enhance children's participation to their full potential, enhance positive relations, support children to recognize what is fair and unfair in their everyday relationships with each other and support children to stand up for themselves and for others who are treated unfairly, enhancing children's critical thinking at the same time (Derman-Sparks, 1985: 5; MacNaughton, 2000: 227).

However, there have also been critiques towards antiracism education, which include:

- lack of effectiveness; being more of rhetoric than a reality (Gillborn, 2006a & 2006c)
- being restricted to a 'meaningless slogan' and in need of a systematic theoretical and practical approach (Gillborn, 2006c: 14 & 18) as there were limitations in implementation in practice (Gillborn, 2006b & 2006c; see also Vandenbroeck 2007: 26)
- it has been based on a 'racial dualism', emphasizing on 'colour racism', neglecting cultural racism (Modood, 1996) and reproducing the idea of two 'races', the

'white' and the 'black', the first being the ones with the racist attitudes (perpetrators) and the latter being the victims (minority ethnic individuals) (Vandenbroeck, 2007; Modood, 1996; Short & Carrington, 1996; Gillborn, 1996)

- neglects the complex and dynamic character of identity, 'race' and culture (Gilroy, 1990), reproducing a homogenized picture
- it has mainly focused on 'race'; ethnicity and other factors of diversity are ignored (May, 1999)

As already discussed in Chapter 1, issues of diversity, particularly linked to 'race'/ethnicity in mainly white schools were very much associated with a 'no problem here' attitude (see Donald et al, 1995; Gaine, 2005; Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006). Derman-Sparks & Ramsey (2006: 2) suggest that there has been a recent change in attitudes, and that although teachers now recognise the relevance of an anti-bias/multicultural education for white children, they are not aware of how to do so "in the absence of obvious diversity and disadvantages to work with".

Lastly, an effective antiracist education is an educational approach that is not restricted to 'race', but explores interactions with issues of gender, class, disability and age. [10]In this way, a more holistic approach is provided, which tackles the roots of racism and discrimination (Bhavnani, Mirza & Meetoo, 2005). It is now most common to use anti-discrimination to encompass all aspects of discrimination. This is evident both in current trends in legislation (see Chapter 4) and in the Scottish Government Equality strategy (Scottish Government, 2000) and the "Framework for Mainstreaming Equality into A Curriculum for Excellence" that is provided by the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) (2009a).

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[10]   It is worth mentioning the emergence of critical race theory, "a scholarly movement born in the legal academy committed to problematizing law's purported colour-blindness, neutrality, and objectivity", especially as it applied to intersectionality during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Nash, 2008: 2).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explored relevant literature in the field, and attempted to provide a conceptual and contextual framework of this research. The basic aim of this chapter was to sketch out relevant bodies of work, both in theory and research, related to children's social identities and issues of social justice and equity in early childhood. Theories that have influenced this research include social construction and post-structural theory, which have been the overriding theories of most of the concepts that I have explored. According to the above theories, attention has moved from 'fixed' to fluid notions of identity and childhood, to the importance of context, complexity, multiplicity and intersectionality, with links to all concepts of identity, childhood and social justice. However, it is important to stress that even though post-structuralism/postmodernism has informed the theoretical orientation of the thesis, the thesis itself moves beyond post-structuralism, given the need to explore what is 'fixed', as well as what is fluid. This thesis has also been hugely influenced by the discipline of 'sociology of childhood' and related policy initiatives like the UNCRC 1989 and the General Comment No. 7 on implementing child rights in early childhood 2005 (OHCHR 2005), which highlight the importance of young children's rights.

In relation to children's social identities in early childhood, there has been a growing need for research to explore multiple and complex notions of social identities in interaction. Particular gaps have also been identified in relation to exploring age as part of social identity, to exploring cultural aspects of ethnicity and lastly exploring multiple understandings of parts of social identities in early childhood, e.g. multiple notions of 'feminities' and 'masculinities', multiple notions of ethnicity and others. Lastly, there is a need for further research to explore complex friendship patterns and inclusionary/exclusionary practices, and the multiple influences that may guide these patterns (for older children, see Devine & Kelly, 2006). While exploring literature in the field of equity and social justice in early childhood, different strands appeared; either interested in gender and equity or ethnicity and equity. MacNaughton (2000) identified a need for further research not only to explore how gender, 'race' and class intersect in

young children's lives but also how these intersections impact on pedagogies.

Traditionally developmentally appropriate practices feature prominently in early childhood staff's equity approaches. Social constructionist and children's rights-based approaches (e.g. 'Reggio Emilia') have also gained increased prominence, particularly on a theoretical level, with a recent move towards human rights-based approaches. However, dominant and traditional developmental discourses of the 'innocent child' or 'too young' to understand, prevail in early childhood around issues of equity, discrimination and social justice. In the name of 'childhood innocence', issues around equity and discrimination are often neglected. There is a need for interventional and anti-discriminatory approaches, particularly influenced by post-structural theories, which will enhance children's critical thinking, challenge, disrupt and deconstruct 'normative', stereotypical and discriminatory beliefs and will enhance children's understandings in relation to fairness and unfairness (MacNaughton, 2000; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006; Browne, 2004).

The next chapter will outline the methodological approaches that were adopted, and will discuss the reasons behind their use.

Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach followed in this study. It starts by describing the theoretical perspectives that have influenced this research, with emphasis on post-structural and social construction perspectives. As already discussed, even though post-structuralism has influenced this thesis, it is important to stress that the thesis moves beyond post-structuralism. It also seeks to explore conceptualisations of childhood and how these can impact on the way research is conducted. It pays special attention to the differences between 'listening', consultation and participation and argues for the importance of 'active' listening and participation of children. It seeks to examine research in early childhood and current debates around methods, critically reflecting on the current attention given to participatory methods. It is suggested that a participatory approach, which includes both traditional methods like ethnographic methods along with more semi-structured 'participatory' methods, was the most appropriate way to approaching this research. This chapter also draws on the importance of reflexivity. This chapter ends examining the ethical issues that are involved during research, including research with young children, and pays special attention to children's informed consent.

3.2 'Ways of knowing': Post-structural/ postmodern influences

Western societies have often been described as 'postmodern' (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002). Postmodernism provides a critique of modernist perspectives, which were influenced by the Enlightenment (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). At the core of modernity are assumptions about "the unity of humanity, the individual as the creative force of society and history, the superiority of the West, the idea of science as Truth and the belief in social progress", all of which can be said to comprise modernism (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002: 2). The above assumptions are considered *foundationalist* on the

basis that they argue for the "rational, independent subject as the ground of both *ontology* (being) and *epistemology* (theories of knowledge)" (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002: 2, emphasis in original). Dualistic binaries (either/or) are also central to modernism (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002: 2).

Postmodernism incorporates a range of perspectives (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006; see also Corker & Shakespeare, 2002). Post-structuralism is "a subset of the broad range of theoretical, cultural, and social tendencies, which constitute postmodern discources" (Best & Kellner, 1991: 25 cited in Robisnon & Jones Diaz, 2006: 15). Post-structuralist theories question the above foundationalist assumptions of modern Western thought and argue that "modernism's focus on the individual as an autonomous agent needs to be deconstructed, contested and troubled" (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002: 3). Thus, post-structuralist theories argue that "subjects are embedded in a complex network of social relations" (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002: 3). Postmodernist approaches play an important role in 'the realm of knowledge', and although they may vary, they share "an implicit sensitivity for the *complexity* of the social world" (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002: 4, emphasis in original). In contrast to the single and essential principles that guide modernist approaches, post-modernism approaches suggest that there is no single 'truth' about the complex reality(-ies).

Although there is no single definition of post-modernism some authors have attempted to provide helpful summaries of broad characteristics of post-modernism which include, but are not restricted to:

- "an ontological emphasis on uncertainty, instability, hybridity, contingency, embodiment and reflexivity
- a methodological emphasis on… deconstruction and situated knowledge" (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002: 4)
- "rejection of fixed notions of reality, knowledge , or method
- acceptance of complexity, lack of clarity, and multiplicity;

- acknowledgement of subjectivity, contradiction and irony;

- deliberate intent to unsettle assumptions and presuppositions;

- refusal to accept boundaries or hierarchies in ways of thinking;

- disruption of binaries which define things as either/or " (Atkinson, 2003: 36)

Post-modernism approaches avoid taking things for granted, emphasise the social constructed nature of reality (-ies) and recognize multiple 'truths'[11], views and 'voices' about the world (Atkinson, 2003). There is a tendency for postmodern/post-structural definitions, as the ones above, to reject 'fixity', something that will be discussed further and in a more critical way in the conclusion. However, at this point, it is important to highlight that this thesis moves beyond post-structural and postmodern influences, as it emphasises both 'fixity' and fluidity.

Critiques have been raised towards postmodernism, as it is considered to be a relativist, 'theoretical framework in which anything goes" (Corke & Shakespeare, 2002: 6; see also Vincent, 2003). Davis (2000: 199) suggests that problems relating to cultural relativism can be overcome "by synthesising notions of agency, culture and structure". Davis (2000: 198) argues that there is a need to provide a balance between "explanations of peoples' everyday experiences with accounts of how those experiences are linked to wider societal influences". This can also help overcome problems of essentialism and universalism (Davis, 2000). Post-modernism seems to criticise "grand narratives", but is also critiqued by some as creating its own grand narratives (Atkinson, 2003).

3.3 Conceptualising children and childhood in research

Traditionally, adults were considered key informants about childhood and children's lives, and thus were approached to speak on behalf of children (Christensen & James,

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[11]   'Truth' "is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements. 'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it. A regime of truth" (Foucault, 1984: 74 cited in Atkinson, 2003: 40-41).

2008); in this way, children were excluded from research. This was challenged partially by perspectives which conceived children as "possessing distinctive cognitive and social developmental characteristics... which the researcher... must consider in his/her research design and methodology" (Christensen & James, 2008: 2-3). Although such approaches are 'child-focused', they do not give researchers space to learn from children's own perspectives and experiences of their everyday lives. Children are not thus recognised as "integral to the process and practice of research nor acknowledged as reflexive participants" (Christensen & James, 2008: 3).

There has been increasing interest in recognising children as active citizens with rights, among others, to be involved in decisions and actions that affect them, and to express their perspectives and feelings (UNCRC, 1989; Lansdown, 2004: 4; MacNaughton et al, 2008). Recently, the 'General Comment 7' stressed the explicit recognition of 'Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood' (UNCRC, 2005). The 'new social studies of childhood' movement (James & Prout, 1997; James et al, 1998), as it is commonly known, criticised traditional and dominant views of children as incompetent, vulnerable and 'becoming adults' who are subordinate to adults. There has thus been a significant change in focus towards children being the *subjects* rather than *objects* of research (Tisdall, Davis & Gallagher, 2009; Christensen & James, 2008); from research *on* and about children, towards research *for* and *with* children (Clark & Moss, 2001; Mayall, 2002).

Gallacher & Gallagher (2008: 500, emphasis on original) argue that the transition from objects to subjects is not enough, and that emphasis should also be given to children as "*participants* in the research process, if not as *researchers* in themselves".

Recognition of children's agency, children's involvement as research participants and children's citizenship are arguments which are highly recognised, at least in principal, as important dimensions of research with children (Tisdall et al, 2009: 2-3). Emphasis has also been placed on the socially constructed and contextualised nature of individual childhoods (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). It is also important to acknowledge that childhood is also "a segment in the life course and... a structural

feature of society" (Qvortrup, 2008 cited in Christensen & James, 2008: 4). The way that childhood and children are conceptualised, as seen above, impacts on the differing ways researchers may undertake research with children (see Thomson, 2007).

3.4 Listening, consultation and participation

Listening to children is an important factor for understanding children's experiences (Clark, 2004) which focuses on the role of the adults in relation to the child (Clark, McQuail & Moss 2003). Listening also implies an active or a passive process of exchanging meanings and understandings (Clark et al, 2003: 12). Rinaldi talks about a 'pedagogy of listening':

"Listening in an active verb, which involves giving an interpretation, giving meaning to the message and value to those who are being listened to" (Rinaldi, 2006: 4).

Consultation involves listening while at the same time "seeking the views of children as a guide to action" (Borland, 2001 cited in Clark et al, 2003: 13). Consultation may imply a power imbalance both in relation to adults seeking views and choosing themes and questions asked, and in choosing what to do with the views sought (Davies & Artaraz, 2009).

Participation, on the other hand, implies that power is shared between everyone involved, and is considered in general terms as the act of taking part (Alderson, 2008); however, it is often viewed as "consulting and making decisions" (Alderson, 2008: 79). Hart (1997) provided a "Ladder of Participation" related to children's participation, adapted from Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation that concerned adults. Hart describes eight possible levels of participation, the three lowest being 'manipulation', 'decoration' and 'tokenism', and not really considered as true participation. There are five increasing degrees of participation, which include: 'assigned but informed', 'consulted and informed', 'adult initiated but decisions shared with children', 'child-initiated and directed'; at the top level is 'child-initiated and decisions shared with

adults'. Alderson (2008: 169) argues that critiques have been raised about how the ladder, for example, is 'adult-centric', and suggests that the ladder should not be used "so much as markers to measure progress up the levels, but as ways of clarifying and checking how much children are involved in each part of a project, and how much more they might be involved depending on what is practical and effective".

3.5 Children's involvement in research: A form of participation?

In the light of the 'new social studies of childhood', the child rights-based agenda (see Freeman, 2007; UNCRC, 1989) and the increased interest in children's participation, "'participation' has become both an *aim* and a *tool* in an ethical quest towards 'empowering children" (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008: 501).

There has been much debate regarding research with children and methods, and in particular about whether different methods from those used traditionally with adults should be used (Punch, 2002a; Greene & Hill, 2005; Thomson, 2007; Tisdall et al, 2009).

Age/development is often used as a criterion upon which researchers design their research methods or techniques (Christensen & James, 2008). O'Kane (2008: 126) argues that participatory methods are important while conducting research with children, mainly because of "children's understandings and experience of the world being different from that of adults", with emphasis on the way children communicate and "the disparities in power and status between adults and children". O'Kane (2008: 130) suggests that participatory methods, in contrast to ethnographic methods, are less time consuming, "less invasive and more transparent". Emphasis is given to how participatory methods should be developed according to the setting, culture, language, ethnicity, ability and others (O'Kane, 2008).

In contrast to traditional research methods, participatory methods have been considered much more emancipatory and democratic, highlighting children's agency and treating children as individuals in their own right (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Tisdall et al, 2009). Participatory methods enable children to articulate their views and

perspectives, rather than emphasising adult/researchers perspectives about children's lives (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; O'Kane, 2008). In this sense, there is a tendency to view participatory methods as 'better' than more traditional approaches (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008: 502) as they can produce " 'authentic' knowledge about children's subjective realities" (see Grover, 2004). Participatory methods are also viewed as 'more ethical', especially under the light of the UNCRC, as these methods are considered to 'give voice' and control to children, and are seen as "in tune with children's ways of seeing and relating to their world" (Thomas & O'Kane, 1998: 337). Lastly, participatory methods are viewed as empowering children (Gallagher, 2008). Power plays a central part in research, including research with children (Morrow & Richards, 1996) and participatory methods are seen as eliminating power dynamics between, most commonly, powerful adults and powerless children. Children are viewed as active agents.

With an aim to be participatory, childhood researchers have experimented with a variety of 'child-friendly' methods which are considered 'innovative', fun, 'suitable' for children, diverse and flexible (for example, Barker & Weller, 2003).

A number of techniques have been used, including child-led photography (Barker & Weller, 2003), drawings (Punch, 2002b), mapping exercises, child led tours, role play exercises and storytelling (Clark & Moss, 2001), the use of props and visual prompts like dolls, puppets, photographs, pictures and others (Greene & Hill, 2005; MacNaughton, 2005), responding to scenarios and vignettes (see Barter & Renold, 2000), diaries, worksheets, spider diagrams (Barker & Weller; Punch, 2002a) and others (see Coad & Lewis, 2004; Clark et al, 2003 for an overview of participatory techniques used). All of these techniques can be seen as engaging with the 'hundred languages of childhood' (Edwards et al, 1998).

3.6 Research in the early childhood context

Clark, Kjørholt and Moss (2005) argue that although there has been a move towards taking children's views into account, little attention has been given to listening to young

children's views below the age of six or seven. The 'General Comment No. 7' argues that young children have "often (been) voiceless and invisible within society" (UNCRC, 2005: 7). Most of the writing about children as social actors is about older children (MacNaughton, Hughes & Smith, 2007).

However, there has been a considerable step forward caused by a growing body of research evidence, including young children's views (see Clark & Moss, 2001; MacNaughton, Hughes & Smith 2007; Alderson, 2008; Pascal & Bertram, 2009: 251; Schiller & Einarsdottir, 2009). Such research showed that young children were 'capable, competent, and active thinkers who had views on issues which affected them" (Schiller & Einarsdottir, 2009: 125). Nevertheless, theorists argue that children's voices and power are still absent in early childhood research (Pascal & Bertram, 2009; Davies & Artaraz, 2009). Pascal & Bertram (2009: 261) suggest that although the UNCRC is part of our thinking, "it is far from being realised in our actions", and highlight the importance of ensuring that "children's right to active participation maintains a high profile in practice as well as in theory".

Clark, McQuail and Moss, provided a detailed review in a DfES research study that focused on the examination of various research projects interested in listening to children's views in and about early childhood education and childcare (Clark et al, 2003: 32). As the aforementioned authors argued, observations have a strong tradition in ethnographic research in early childhood, particularly important with pre-verbal children, and are often the basis for the use of other methods including participatory (Clark et al., 2003: 1-8). Interviews, focus groups and questionnaires have also been used; some have been adapted for use with young children. For example, there has been particular focus on types of language, the structure and setting of the interview (Clark et al. 2003: 8). Structured and multi-sensory methods have also been used. Creative methods were designed as a response to a critique that research has often failed to recognise children's capacities because "they (adults) assess children from an adult perspective and through an adult filtering process which diminishes children's contribution because they are young" (Lansdown, 2004: 5). Creative methods were thus

developed to suit young children's competences, knowledge, interest and context (Schiller & Einarsdottir, 2009: 125).

One of the best known approaches to listening to children is the 'Mosaic approach' (Clark & Moss, 2001; Clark et al, 2005), inspired by the work of Italian preschools of Reggio Emilia, and considered a "multi-method", "participatory", "reflexive", "adaptable", "focused on children's lived experiences" approach (see for further discussion Clark, 2005: 30-31). The 'Mosaic approach' can be described as a plethora of techniques or methods that can be used (e.g. drawings, cameras, bookmaking, tours, map making alongside observations and others) to listen to three and four year old children's perspectives on their nursery provision (see Clark & Moss, 2001).

Specific activities have been developed in order to listen to young children's views, like role playing, using toys and puppets as 'intermediaries', storytelling and continuing 'teddy's' unfinished story, audio-recording, arts activities (Clark et al., 2003: 32-34), drawings (e.g. Dockett & Perry, 2005), persona dolls (MacNaughton, 2005), cameras and photographs (Einarsdottir, 2005), tours and mapmaking (Clark & Moss, 2001) and others.

All of the previous activities are mainly used in the light of conducting "research as a form of participation" (Brownlie, Anderson & Ormston, 2006: 12). Until recently, therefore, they had not undergone any systematic critique; and this is the point to which I now wish to turn.

3.7 Are participatory methods truly participatory?: A more critical stance

Generally speaking, there has not been any systematic critique of participatory methods until fairly recently (Thomson, 2007; Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Holland et al, forthcoming). Current critiques seem to challenge the extent to which participatory methods are 'better' than other research methods, and empower participants (Holland et al, 2008).

First of all, Gallacher & Gallagher (2008) criticise the fact that participatory

methods seem to assume that children need to be empowered in order to use agency, reinforcing in this way the traditional model of children as incomplete and incompetent. Gallacher & Galagher (2008: 503) argue that "the very notion of 'empowerment' implies that without aid and encouragement from adult-designed 'participatory methods', children cannot fully exercise their 'agency' in research encounters".

Gallagher (2008: 144) refers to the ambivalent and dynamic nature of power, where multiple relations of power take place between researchers and children, something that has not been widely recognised within a literature that "constantly draws attention to the varied forms of children's agency". Gallagher (2008: 137) suggests that participatory techniques "may reinforce rather than challenge hierarchical power relations"; he also questions the extent to which researchers 'give' power to children through participatory techniques (see Burke, 2005, cited in 2008: 143) and suggests that children "exercise power by resisting, redirecting or subverting those very techniques", or other techniques, such as participant observation. Multiple and shifting dimensions of power dynamics between adults and children, and also between children, seem to take place (Gallagher, 2008). Lastly, they suggest that 'participation' implies a predefined activity which the participants can take part in; in this way it can be conceived as an adult imposition where certain "norms of appropriate engagement" (Gallagher, 2008: 507) may take place implying that "children should 'participate' in certain ways and not in others" (Gallagher, 2008: 508). Although they do not see something wrong with that, they find it incompatible with claims relating to "empowering children as researchers". Although both Gallacher & Gallagher (2008) do not suggest that participatory methods are 'wrong', they question their assumed privilege over other research methods. Gallacher & Gallagher (2008) view participatory methods as an extension and enhancement, rather than replacement of ethnographic approaches.

Thomson (2007) is critical of the polarised, 'fixed' and separated identities, (e.g. 'child versus adult') that seem to be present in relevant debates about research with children, and whether this is different to adults. Thomson (2007: 211) suggests that all individuals (both adults and children) have multiple and fluid identities and that the

above understandings share "an unquestioned pre-imposition of the social categories of 'child' and 'adult'". This categorical imposition contradicts with current theorisation of identity "which recognises both the structural influence of society's social categories and an individual's agency in negotiating and resisting their social identity" (-ies) (Thomson, 2007: 211). Thomson (2007) argues against labels on diverse groups of individuals (in this case children), relating to how to conduct research with children and what methods should be used prior to entering the research context.

Christensen & James (2008) suggest that research with children should not take for granted the "age-based adult/child distinction" and that methods should be chosen on the basis of the particular context, the specific people involved and the research questions posed. Assumptions should not be made that children are in need of 'special methods' while conducting research (Tisdall et al., 2009; Christensen & James, 2008). Special attention should be given to the 'culture of communication' of children that would guide researchers to use the most appropriate methodologies (Christensen, 2004). This, however, is not restricted to research with children, as any research, including of adults, should reflect the specific particularities of the participants (Prout, 2008). Christensen & James (2008: 8-9) suggest that researchers should not "adopt different methods *per se,* but adopt practices that resonate with children's own concerns and routines. This is what makes the research *participant* friendly, rather than child friendly".

In early childhood research, innovative or participatory methods have acquired a prominent place especially during the increasing interest in promoting young children's participation and rights. Early childhood researchers, like Pascal & Bertram (2009: 260) highlight the need for further exploration of "methodological techniques to ensure all children can express themselves fully in the dialogues". This emphasis on participation and the development of participatory techniques, however, has discouraged researchers from taking the time to reflect critically on these. There has been some critical reflection within the field about the use of participatory methods (e.g. Waller, 2006; Woodhead, 2008), particularly in relation to children's agency and power. However, there seems to

be a lack of a systematic critique of participatory methods within early childhood research.

3.8 Ethnography

Ethnographic research falls within the sphere of qualitative research and has a long tradition in social research particularly in anthropology (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography entails a variety of meanings, and lacks absolute definitions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In general, however, it "means writing about people" (James, 2007a: 246).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007: 3) provide a useful description:

"Ethnography usually involves the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts- in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry"

The focus is usually on a few cases of "fairly small scale" in order to facilitate an in-depth and exploratory study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 3).

Ethnography has often been applied in studies of children and childhoods, including early childhood education, and in many sociocultural contexts, highlighting in this way the multifaceted nature of childhood (Clark et al., 2003; James, 2007a; Corsaro & Molinari, 2008; Mukherji & Albon, 2010). James (2007a) argues that ethnography has recognised children as research participants, thus recognising that they can be studied in their own right within social sciences.

Most earlier ethnographic studies, however, did not really emphasise children's own perspectives, in contrast to more recent studies, including the 'new social study of childhood' paradigm (see Connolly, 1998; Thorne, 1993; Renold, 2005). The latter view children as social actors, active participants, competent informants and interpreters of their own and others' lives (James, 2007a). Ethnography can place children in the centre

of analysis.

Ethnographers do not seek to test a hypothesis or examine the 'causality between variables'; instead, their focus is given to "individuals' understandings of their social world" and to gaining an insight into the everyday lives, "habits, beliefs and language of the group they are studying" (Mukherji & Albon, 2010: 70). Ethnography is thus considered a study concerned with people and their everyday lives and practices in naturalistic settings (Mukherji & Albon, 2010) and is associated with an interpretive act of 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973). Ethnographers seek to analyse or understand " 'the structures of signification' which inform people's actions" (Geertz, 1973: 9-10, cited in James, 2007a: 247). James (2007a: 247) suggests that "the commitment to an interpretive approach", which facilitates the engagement with children's own views, is central to ethnography.

Observations, and especially participant observations along with informal conversations, are important methods of ethnographic research. Varying degrees of participation can take place (Emond, 2005; James, 2007a), such as participant observation, semi-participant observation, non-participant observation and so on. A key point of ethnographic research is the role of the ethnographer (Davis, 2000). Some have argued for non-participant observation with a general role of not 'disturbing the field', (Mukherji & Albon, 2010: 70) or being ignored (see e.g. King, 1984), whereas other, more recent approaches suggest that this is not possible and thus acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher with intense importance towards the role of reflexivity (Connolly, 2008a; Davis, Watson & Cunningham-Burley 2008; Okely, 1975). I will discuss reflexivity in more detail later on.

Observations are often accompanied by other methods like interviews and documents. Interviews in ethnography most often take the "form of naturalistic conversations", rather than "highly structured interview schedules" (Mukherji & Albon, 2010: 74). Fieldwork is an important part of ethnography which I will also discuss further in relation to my own research, while describing my research design.

James et al (1998) suggest that ethnographic research with children is beginning

to employ as part of its method a plethora of differing techniques (e.g. task based activities like drawings, stories and others, see above for participatory methods) which are designed to engage with children's various interests and abilities. James argues that such techniques, particularly emphasising on 'task-centred activities', are particularly important under the light of reflexivity. Such techniques are considered "to draw children in as research participants, thereby furthering the research dialogue" and also they can "encourage childhood researchers to be reflexive" about the data and how they will reproduce it (James, 2007a: 253).

In terms of epistemology, "knowledge of childhood is produced through the interpretation of children's cultures. This interpretive knowledge is not seen as 'out there' waiting to be collected, but as constructed through interaction with children" (Gallagher, 2009: 72).

3.9 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a process of 'self -analysis' and 'political awareness' (Callaway, 1992 cited in Davis et al., 2008), a 'critical gaze' towards oneself (Finlay, 2003) and it is achieved "'through detachment, internal dialogue and constant (and intensive) scrutiny' of the process through which the researcher constructs and questions his/her interpretations of field experiences" (Hertz, 1997: vii, cited in Davis et al, 2008: 224). Being reflexive not only "contributes to producing knowledge that aids in understandings and gaining insight into the workings of our social world but also provides insight on how this knowledge is produced" (Pillow, 2003: 178). Reflexivity is considered a project through which the researcher examines and explores critically his/her impact on the research process, including interpretation (Finlay, 2003). Reflexivity is about questioning personal preconceptions that may influence interpretation, and consistently reconsidering one's own beliefs by analysing the potential effect that we as researchers may have on the research settings; a process which can uncover cultural assumptions (Davis et al, 2008).

Reflexivity is also linked to "de constructing the author's authority", both in

research and in the writing process. Emphasis has thus been given on writing processes, which highlight "less authoritative and more self-critical texts" (Finlay, 2003; for example see Geertz, 1988). This can be done partially by providing multiple voices which may be contrary, complimentary or from different contexts (see also Davis, 1998).

'Less authoritative and more self-critical texts' acknowledge that research findings are always partial and dependent on the specific social context. Post-modern and post-structuralist researchers argue towards a 'reflexivity' which embraces the "negotiated, relative and socially constructed nature of the research experience", and pay attention to "the discursive and macro-sociopolitical forces shaping research narratives" (Finlay, 2003: 4).

Reflexivity is considered an integral part of the research process (Davis, 2000). Under the light of reflexivity, the role of the ethnographer is that of a learner (Davis, 2000); "in ethnography, the process of learning involves constant scrutiny of the ethnographer...which allows for the researcher's effect on a fieldwork setting to be examined as a source of cultural understanding" (Davis, 2000).

Ethnographers are expected to examine throughout their fieldwork their "own subjectivities as the basis from which to understand other people's cultures" (Davis, 2000: 193), and to explain the research roles adopted while reflexively analysing their role in relation to producing research findings. Reflexivity is "an engagement that tries to find a way of being open to them (participants) and a way of learning from them, and which, having tried once, will return and try again, renewing, renewing, renewing (Campell, 1995: 237, cited in Davis, 1998: 331). Reflexivity understands the 'variety of selves' that one brings but also creates in the field (Reinharz, 1997). Practically, under the light of reflexivity, researchers are expected to describe their decisions and dilemmas during their fieldwork experience (Finlay, 2003).

The result of all of this reflexivity "is to produce research that questions its own interpretations and is reflexive about its own knowledge production towards the goal of producing better, less distorted research accounts" (Hertz, 1997, cited in Pillow, 2003:

178). Reflexivity is thus partially linked to providing valid and legitimate qualitative data (Pillow, 2003). Although discussions relating to validity have been challenged in qualitative research (Bryman, 2004), reflexivity is seen as an important part of showing awareness of one's research limitations and of potentially validating the research by raising questions about the research process.

There have been critiques of reflexivity which are mentioned by Pillow, including a critique from Daphne Patai (1994: 69-70, cited in Pillow, 2003 :176-177) about whether "all this self-reflexivity" will actually "produce better research?". Patai suggests that "we do not escape from the consequences of our positions by talking about them endlessly". Pillow (2003), although agreeing with Patai's latter suggestion and critique, does not dismiss the importance of reflexivity. She argues for a "reflexivity of discomfort", that "pushes towards the unfamiliar"; "a positioning of reflexivity not as clarity, honesty, or humility, but as practices of confounding disruptions" (Pillow. 2003: 192). Pillow (2003: 192) suggests that reflexivity should be used in a way that will "continue to challenge the representations we come to while at the same time acknowledging the political need to represent and find meaning".

3.10 Research design and methodology
3.10.1 Research questions
There were four research questions (RQ) which guided this research enquiry:

RQ1. What are young children's emerging constructions and perceptions of identity and difference in Scottish nursery settings?

RQ2.What are the social implications of children's emerging constructions of identity and difference in terms of their views and attitudes towards other children?

RQ3. Do young children experience discrimination, and if yes, how do children construct discrimination?

RQ4. What approaches do educators/staff adopt to social justice and equity education in Scottish nursery settings and how do they introduce issues of diversity and 'fairness' to children?

Two research objectives were identified in order to answer my research questions:

- To explore children's constructions of identity and difference and to understand the social implications that these may have in their lives by listening closely, and respectfully to children's views and observing their everyday lives in nursery.

- To explore a) the approaches and strategies that educators were currently using in Scottish early childhood in relation to social justice and equity, b) their understandings of childhood and c) the effect that staff beliefs and attitudes may have on children's emerging understandings of difference, by observing their everyday lives in the nursery setting and listening closely and respectfully to their views.

3.10.2 Why use qualitative methodology?

Qualitative research "consists a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible"; in other words, it is concerned with making sense of natural settings and everyday practices by interpreting and understanding phenomena through the "meanings that people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 3). Qualitative research seeks to explain events and actions "in the words of the people involved" (Hughes, 2001: 53). The 'fluid' and contradictory nature of children's identities and the importance of the social context within which children construct their identities and discourses about similarities and differences, highlighted qualitative methods as an ideal tool for listening

to children's and educators' views about these issues, without any assumptions from the researcher (see also Connolly, 1998). Moreover, I was interested in researching "the web of interactions" between the child and the educator, and the impact these interactions may have on each other, something that can be best achieved with qualitative research (Edwards, 2001: 117).

In this study, emphasis was given to processes, meanings and day-to-day interactions among children and educators regarding concepts of diversity and equity, which could not really be examined through experiments or measures offered by quantitative methodologies.

In particular, this study was not interested in frequency and numbers that would allow generalisations; instead, it was concerned with an in-depth inquiry of how "social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 10). This social experience of how children construct difference/similarity, and the social implications this may have on their lives, can be best explored through an in-depth case study approach.

This research was based on a case study approach, "a process of inquiry" about the specific case and "the product of that inquiry" (Stake, 2005: 444). My starting point was that people in the social world interpret and re-interpret reality, and that the detailed study of the local - case studies - can shed light on general social problems or issues, acknowledging, however, the limitations of generalization and that relationships are complex, situational and problematic (Stake, 2005; Bryman, 2004). Case study approaches also allow multi-method approaches (Lewis, 2005).

3.10.3 Fieldwork

Fieldwork was conducted for one academic year from August 2007 to July 2008. More systematic fieldwork particularly participant observation, started in October 2007.I attended four days a week, two days in each nursery, one multi-ethnic and one mainly white, spending on average 2,5 to 3 hours each day. In the first two months, initial

contact was made with the staff of the two nurseries, and leaflets and consent forms were handed out to staff and parents/caregivers.

3.10.4 Sample

This research conducted two case studies in two Scottish nursery settings. One could be described as a multi-ethnic nursery and one as predominantly 'white'. Both nurseries had visible and non-visible minority ethnic and 'white' Scottish, children, although there were differences in the ethnic make-up and the numbers of the minority ethnic children that each nursery had (see Chapter 4).

The sample can be described as purposive. As already discussed in the introduction in the initial stages of this research design emphasis was given to children's constructions of ethnicity both in relation to visible and non-visible aspects, but also in exploring potential similarities and differences in relation to educators' pedagogies in 'mainly white' and multi-ethnic nurseries. However, due to a continuous critical and reflexive stance which begun before I actually started the fieldwork and continued throughout, a more open approach was applied, giving space to children to express what aspects of their social identities were salient to them.

Additionally, my initial research design had a specific focus on nurseries that were generally considered as 'good practice'[12] in the area of 'race equality'. This research could provide information on what 'good practice' may look like currently in Scotland and whether the different ethnic make-up of the two nurseries, impact on the educational approaches followed in each, but it could also provide a picture of potential gaps. Thus, I contacted the Principal Equalities Officer, along with Quality Improvement Officer (focus on the early years) of the specific council which recommended nurseries, including the ones of the sample. One of the nurseries recommended was a multiethnic nursery which I knew as I had previously interviewed the head-teacher for my Msc

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[12] Based on characteristics of 'good practice' which are provided by official guidelines and documents such as the HMIE (2002; 2005), Mitchell & Cowper (2007) and DfES (2003).

research and in which I had volunteered the previous year. This raises issues in relation to potential bias as in the beginning of the research I generally felt more confident in the multiethnic nursery. However, I chose to conduct this research in a different class of the multiethnic nursery from the one in which I had volunteered. I did not know the educators (with the exception of one of the part-time teachers who was also the headteacher) nor the children. Thus, both samples were unknown in this respect.

However, what constitutes 'good practice' in the promotion of 'racial' equality and inclusion, is a highly contested issue (Bhavnani et al, 2005). The concept of effectiveness or 'good practice' is quite difficult to define, as what is conceived as effective may vary according to different groups of interest (Drever, 1991), time and contexts (Gillborn, 2006b; Thrupp & Lupton, 2006). The nurseries, as recommended 'good practice' nurseries, may portray a more 'active' or positive picture of the extent to which social justice and equity are currently taking place in Scotland in contrast to other nurseries. Thus, the picture of the findings could be different, as in any different case, if the nurseries were randomly selected, were of other areas of Scotland or were not the ones that were recommended to me by 'experts'. Reflexivity was an important process of identifying, working thorough and rethinking potential biases and assumptions.

Both nurseries could be described as socially mixed (see Chapter 4), although both head teachers tended to describe the families as predominantly middle class.

One nursery class was observed in each nursery school. Before choosing a specific class, I spent a week in all classes (two in each school) to get to know all the children and staff of both schools. In the multiethnic nursery, the staff suggested choosing the upstairs classroom, as this had a larger number of children, and also at that particular time it was already formed as a classroom. This helped me get to know the children and develop rapport without having a lot of changes in the meantime. In both nurseries during the first weeks of getting to know the children, interesting cases were identified that I thought would be interesting to explore further. For example, I had observed in the mainly white nursery that the few minority ethnic children of the class

were always on their own, which I thought would be interesting to explore as a case.

In the multiethnic nursery, which in total had around 39 children, I had permission from all the staff (10 in number) and parents/caregivers about their children, except for two, to participate in my research. In the mainly white nursery which in total had around 45 children, I had permission from all the staff (9 in number), parents/caregivers about their children, except for two, to participate in my research. In this research, 22 children and 5 members of staff in the multi-ethnic nursery, and 25 children and 6 members of staff from the mainly white nursery are considered the basic sample, and have formed the core basis of this thesis. Of course all members of the two nurseries which have consented have contributed in one sense or the other as part of a complex relationship network, either by directly observing or interacting with them, or due to their interactions with participants of the basic sample of this research.

In the multiethnic nursery I interviewed 4 members of staff and 9 parents/caregivers (including 3 fathers, 4 mothers, and 2 grandmothers). In the mainly white nursery, I interviewed 5 members of staff and 11 parents/caregivers/family members (including 1 father, 1 sister, 1 grandmother and 8 mothers). The interviews with parents provided a more holistic and clarifying account of the children and their lives at home. For a detailed account of the characteristics of the children, staff and nursery settings which participated in this study, see Chapters 4 and 8.

3.10.5 A synthesis of ethnographic and participatory approaches and methods

This research was mainly based on an ethnographic approach, and particularly on naturalistic observations through participant observation and informal conversations which were conducted throughout the year for a rough total of 9 months. Influenced by the notion of the 'pedagogy of listening' (Rinaldi, 2006), in which listening is a "multi-method", "participatory", "reflexive", "adaptable", "focused on children's lived experiences" process (for further discussion see Clark, 2005: 30-31) and the recent salience that has been given to participatory methods, I applied a mixed-method

approach. The latter, combined the more traditional methods of observation and interviews with more "structured", "multi-sensory" and participatory methods (Clark et al, 2003; Punch, 2002a).

During the 9 months of the research, and particularly towards the end, I used more participatory methods (drawing activities and story activities through persona dolls) along with observations. The methods can be summarised below:

- Participant observation
- Informal conversations
- Interviews
- Use of field-note book and a voice-recorder (particularly during and after the 'participatory' techniques started) on an everyday basis, where children told me what to write
- Drawing activities and making stories
- Persona Dolls

A three month pilot study was also conducted in a different nursery school which helped me try out different methods and reform initial ideas which were all taken into account for the main study. A participatory approach was followed throughout the research process, and was not restricted to participatory methods, as I will discuss in more detail later on.

3.10.6 Participant observation and informal conversations: A form of 'active' participation

Participant observation is a common research method while conducting research with young children (Mukherji & Albon, 2010).

Participant observation was conducted for 9 months (October 2007- June 2008). In the mainly 'white' nursery, all children attended part-time and came to the nursery

only for two 2,5 hours a day, so I observed from 9:00-11:30 am. In the multi-ethnic nursery, the children attended on a full time basis, so I stayed for 3 hours, either from 9:00-12:00 am or from 12:00-3:00 pm.

Concrete and detailed descriptions of observations were written, along with direct quotations of what participants said in a field-notebook (a separate one for each nursery) written immediately while observing. However, immediate note-keeping was not always possible, so in cases where children would prefer just to talk or play, I tried to write the notes as soon as I could in the same day or just after the event. These notebooks had no interpretations, only thick descriptions. Whenever something occurred, brief notes of initial interpretations were written on the spot, to help me remember particular incidents, feelings and initial analysis.

The field-notebook was open to educators and children to look at and read if observations were written for them individually. It was agreed that no one should read the observations of other people, unless of course relevant permission was given. Through the course of the research, no adults really asked to read the notebook, in contrast to the children. As the children could not read, whenever they asked I read the notes about them to them.

The field-notebooks consisted of a record of dates and times of the situation being observed, as well as the physical location and a description of the main characters. Both verbal and non verbal communications were recorded, as were descriptions of the tone of voice and body language in order to provide a precise picture of what was going on. Generally speaking, I kept notes of:

- Context,
- Spaces, objects and resources, and time,
- People, actions and interactions,
- Feelings,
- Activities and events,

- Documents,

- Goals: both educators' and children's long-term and short-term wishes and desires

My aim was to write in such a way so that if one was to read the field notes, he/she could have a complete understanding of the scene, or even visualise it. However, as the research progressed, there were times when such thick descriptions were not feasible, due to various factors; children were sometimes taking my notebook or asking me to participate in their games. There were times, therefore, when I only had time to write down key words or sentences, that I would then make into thick descriptions at home. All my 'messy' field notes were written into the computer at home/office in two separate files (one for each nursery). In my reflexive diary (see below), I put the data in order, adding more contextual details where needed, and described in more depth people's emotions, body language, and feelings, which at the end of the day were still fresh and vivid in my mind. In this way, a more complete story was provided, with a fuller picture of the events and their context.

The notes were written in such a way that would help me relive the moments and feelings experienced. In order to recall the feelings, including my own, a separate reflexive diary (Okely, 1975) of each setting was kept. As suggested by Connolly (2008a), there was a need to be critical and reflexive. Connolly, drawing on Bourdieu (1990, cited in Connolly 2008a: 174), had suggested that researchers should take " 'two steps back' from the research process"; firstly the traditional one, taken by researchers while trying to gain an overall impression of what is going on, and secondly, step "back from themselves in order to understand how they are as much a part of and contribute to the unfolding social milieu as everyone else".

In my reflexive diaries records of my thoughts and feelings were kept, as well as any theoretical ideas that emerged. I also kept notes of how my presence might have impacted on the environment. I would reflect critically both on what I was doing and

what I needed to do further. For example, I had noticed that I had focused a lot on the children and not on the staff, so then I focused on staff as well. I also had a lot of observations of children that would always hang around with me, so being reflexive was important in order to observe and listen to other children that were more 'silent' or did not hang around with me. I kept notes of the difficulties I was facing, of my changing thoughts and feelings about the fieldwork, of the relationships between the participants but also between the participants and myself, and how they developed. This played an important role in researcher reflexivity, and how I was becoming part of the social word I was participating in.

The beginning of keeping field notes was very scary, tiring, overwhelming and confusing. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) have talked about the initial exploratory nature of ethnographic research and how ambiguities occur in the beginning. Trying to figure out how to keep notes, where, what and when to observe, where to sit and many other factors was all very confusing. I started off with a rather open-ended approach regarding keeping field notes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), as this was the time that I was getting to know the context, the children, staff and parents/caregivers and the space. My first notes started off with a map of the nurseries' spaces. Eventually, as the research progressed and emergent issues were identified guided by my research questions, the notes became more focused. It was not possible to write everything down; although there was a temptation to do this, out of fear of missing important things out, this was suppressed in order to produce 'good-quality' notes. Critical incidents were particularly important, as they provided a "vantage point from which… (one is) able to recognize and understand some of the underlying dynamics evident" (Connolly, 2008a: 177). Reflexivity and reading my notes made me think about my observations and initial interpretations, and to rethink the process.

An important technique during participant observation was to ask children about what to write down, and to repeat the exact words that they used which I then read out to them so that they would approve them.

Along with observations, I conducted informal everyday conversations with

participants throughout the research, something common in ethnographic research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Christensen, 2004). I also followed and applied Connolly's advice (1996) regarding more unstructured interviews and general questions through informal conversations on a daily basis, asking children what they did in the playground, who they played with etc.

Informal conversations would take place naturally on an everyday basis while observing or participating in activities, while walking or sitting on the floor, either inside or outside. They took place in the familiar social context of children's classroom or outside area (see also Mayall, 2008) and were informal in nature. Informal conversations, depending on the context, took place with individual children, or with bigger groups. Just being part of conversations and then listening to the dialogues between children, was often particularly important, as was respecting children's and staff's 'cultures of communication' and giving them space to raise issues that concerned them (Christensen, 2004).

Some authors have characterized unstructured interviews and particularly group conversations with children as successful with young children (see Connolly, 2008a; Mayall, 2008). This, however, did not really work in my research, especially when it was planned. Informal conversations with children or groups of children seemed to work better when children were and acted in a familiar way and context. More structured and focused interviews were also conducted during participatory methods, which I will discuss later on.

Participant observation and informal conversations were important in getting to know the children, developing rapport and reducing power dynamics. The aforementioned methods helped obtain detailed accounts of how children construct their identities in their natural surroundings and how that impacts on their everyday lives. Participant observations and informal conversations were participatory, with children showing agency. However, it was not always possible to ask the children about interpreting their actions; there were thus limitations regarding the extent to which my observations and my adult interpretations represent the specific children's thoughts.

Nevertheless, I did try to minimise this by engaging with the children and continuously asking them about the things I was observing. There was also a dilemma in relation to the extent to which the children were active in the research process. Depending on the context, it was difficult to ask children to explain actions without feeling pressure, when it came to real circumstances.

3.10.7 Power relations

Before elaborating on my role during participant observation, it is important to discuss power relations. My research role(s) were influenced by the context, which played a major part in the power relations dynamic (Kellet & Ding, 2004: 171).

Power is considered an important aspect during research, given particular importance during research with children (MacNaughton & Smith, 2005; Robinson & Kellett, 2004). The researcher (adult)- child relationship is a relationship of power (MacNaughton, 2005) which can be said to be reinforced by the "more general cultural notions of power and control in generational relations between children and adults" (Christensen, 2004: 168). Many authors highlight the marginal role that children have in society in relation to adults, suggesting that adult researchers in many cases will have control over children, or that children are used to having adults control their lives in various spheres (Punch, 2002a; Mayall, 2008). The child may thus do things just because of the presence of an adult, neglecting his/her own feelings (Greene & Hogan, 2005). However, other authors seem to remind us that power relations are fluid and more complex. Christensen (2004) argues that "in the process of research, power moves between different actors and different social positions, it is produced and negotiated in the social interactions of child to adult, child to child and adult to adult in the local setting of the research". Connolly (2008a: 175) argues that in this sense, children are active in "resisting and challenging the relationships created between themselves and the (adult) researcher". But also power is "played out around the subject positions created through wider discourses on race, gender and childhood" (Connolly, 2008a: 175). Research with young children can thus be described as dynamic, context specific and

contested (Connolly, 2008a: 175).

Conversation and expressing views, listening and respecting were often ways to respond to power relations and conflicts.

3.10.8 Role: Researcher / helper / friend / 'unusual adult'

There have been various arguments about the role of the adult in research with children; for example the 'least adult role' (Mandell, 1991), which has been challenged by authors like Mayall (2008) who suggests that power relations between adults and children can not be ignored. The role of the 'unusual adult' (Christensen, 2004), the role of the 'friend' (Fine & Sandstrom, 1988). Post-modern critiques of identity challenge the adult-child binary and suggest that both adults and children have multiple identities which are reproduced and performed on an everyday basis (Tisdall et al, 2009). Davis et al (2008) discusses the more complex, fluid and often contrasting roles that can be applied throughout the research process, such as the role of the 'friend/mediator/entertainer' and 'authoritarian/non-authoritarian/helper'.

Negotiating my role was one of the most difficult parts of the research, especially in the beginning. Feelings of confusions and conflicts about the roles I preferred to have and the roles that were expected of me both from staff and children were also evident. Generally speaking, my role varied from that of a participant observer to that of an observer. Mukherji & Albon (2010: 76) refer to the role of 'not knowing', which can describe my general stance towards both adults and children. This role suggests that participants are invited to 'explain what they do and why they do it' but it also seeks to understand participants' knowledge and experience. I also adopted the role of the friend, (for both children and educators), in the presence of whom they would speak and act freely. Building trust, respect and a non-threatening environment was important. However, the two nurseries varied in their approaches towards children (see Chapter 9) so my role as a 'friend', therefore, was easier to establish in relation to the children in the multiethnic nursery than in the mainly white nursery.

In the beginning, staff expected that I would adopt more or less the same role as

them, i.e. protecting children, solving fights, show control when needed, following educators' routines in terms of going out and observing children's play. However, I discussed with educators the roles that they were expecting me to have, the roles that I wished to take on, and negotiated the possibilities with them. Educators were happy for me to take on the role that I preferred however the 'less controlling role' was always in need of negotiation, especially in the mainly white nursery where staff would forget.

My role changed according to the context. For example, there were times when roles like those of 'adults as protectors' was always there in order to ensure that children were safe and this implied some power and control. Reducing power however was an important goal. Thus, in both nurseries, I did not really interfere in fights or arguments or comment if a child was being 'naughty', and would not really act in a 'teacher' way with the hope that children would share my desire and that I would establish an 'insider' profile.

In many cases I felt weird though; the children were disappointed or confused when I did not provide help through my adult authority, and all this troubled me as to how to behave. I questioned my stance. Would a friend not help or intervene when fights or arguments occurred? In most cases of negative attitudes like fights I would immediately ask for a member of staff to come along. However, I felt unease when watching children fight and not helping them if I was the only one around. Therefore, I decided that it would be better to express my concern to the children and to be more truthful, rather than acting weirdly and like I was not caring. I would question their actions, I would ask about their emotions and I would also express my emotions, and through a dialogue we seemed to negotiate occurring problems. This was a technique that was used with staff as well. On most occasions however, educators would intervene. As time went past, both children and staff got used to my 'less controlling or non-authoritarian role', and staff actually tried their best to treat me as a friend rather than as a member of 'staff' with certain responsibilities. I would argue therefore that being clear to others and explaining and negotiating roles openly and truthfully was a successful way of getting closer to the role I wished to have that of 'less controlling'.

I was called in both nurseries by my fist name, even in the mainly white nursery, where all staff were called Mrs. in front of their name. Less power and authority were shown by bending down and sitting on my knees so that I could be at the children's height level, making eye contact, not telling children off or controlling them in any way, not telling the staff when children were behaving 'naughty' (with the exception of fights or when I felt that children were in danger) showing with my whole body language that I would like to be a friend, that I was on their side and that I was genuinely interested in their views. I was often in a difficult position when children would say nasty things or discriminatory comments about other children in front of me. Following Connolly's (1996) advice, I decided to listen to children's beliefs without interrupting, but nevertheless challenge discriminatory ideas when they were expressed. I would challenge discriminatory beliefs by further questioning what children said, and by asking them to explain why they believed it. I personally did not disclose my views because I did not want to influence what the educators or children said to me, and I also did not want them to feel that I was critical towards their views and practices. This was challenging when participants would express views that I would disagree with but nod to, which implied that I was agreeing.

In many cases throughout the research I was poised between familiarity and strangeness, both a stranger and a friend with staff and children (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

Another role that I adopted was that of the researcher which was discussed with children and educators in the beginning, during the initial consent period but also throughout the research. Discussions varied from individual conversations with children and small group discussions by myself, to whole group discussions with an educator in the multiethnic nursery. Verity (educator, multiethnic nursery) described the role of a researcher as somebody who gets a lot of information by reading books, and/or from talking with and watching people (through e.g. keeping notes, taking photos etc.). Then all of the information would be put into something like a book, and reference was made to their own personal books/files. Children got used to the word researcher and would

refer to it on occasions. For example, according to Farah a researcher is somebody that does not know about things and wants to find out about things, trying to find out about boys and girls.

Power was always present, negotiated and shared. Also power was rather fluid depending on the context (see Christensen, 2004; Connolly, 2008a; Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). The fact that I tried not to exercise power and authority, meant that I was often in very powerless situations. Children also exercised power and authority over me and there were times when I felt powerless and even scared from some children's reactions. For example, my relationship with Farah, Aleemah and Seema A varied from being friends to the girls exercising power and authority over me often dictating to me what to do. There was one incident when we were outside and the girls were all over me, lifting up my t-shirt, being strict as to what I should do and generally having fun, while making me feel very uncomfortable at the same time. Many times, one of the educators had to intervene and talk about how that was not nice. Also, children would snatch my notebook, taking control over it, telling me what to write, drawing on it, hiding it, and writing their name on it.

The fact that I had developed very close friendly relationships with the children made my role as a researcher difficult. Children were seeking my attention, wanted to play with me or discuss with me. Some children would get very annoyed with me when I would focus more on the observations, or when I would spend time with other children or let other children write in my book. They would thus snap my field-notebook, or would write over my writing and in some cases try to make the words unclear to read.

My role differed according to the child and the context; it varied from that of a close friend to that of a helper but always under the light of a researcher. Throughout the research, children referred to me as a 'teenager', 'a boss', something 'like a teacher', a friend, a 'big kid', and a researcher. The role and the feeling of an 'unusual adult' was evident however I was also associated to more traditional adult roles.

In relation to staff, educators were rather uncomfortable with me keeping notes, particularly in the beginning, as it was considered as a judgement. Staff would say on

occasions "hope you are not going to write that down are you?" or would ask me about their practice ("what did you think?"). I would then remind them that I was not there to judge, but to learn and listen to their views. Nevertheless, being there 'when it is one of those days that it doesn't seem to go right' was difficult for the staff. In the mainly white nursery I struggled more to feel accepted in contrast to the multiethnic nursery. This could be because the multiethnic nursery knew me from previous years (see introduction), but also I think it was a general issue. As a lot of children and staff like nursery nurses would feel less confident than in the multiethnic nursery. This could also link to issues of leadership and the general ethos of respect. Some staff particular nursery nurses showed lack of confidence and a fear of potential judgement about their practice.

Of course, my presence influenced both staff and children. For example, staff would occasionally do certain things because of my presence (e.g. enacting activities/discussions about diversity with children and seeking my attention, or conducting an activity to enhance good relations between children, telling me 'this is for you'). Children that would not really play together would come together because of my presence, and excluded children like Hassan would rely on me as a friend. In occasions when discriminatory attitudes were the main focus of some of the children's discussion with me, like in the case of Ahmed, it made me feel uneasy and wonder about why Ahmed was talking to me about this whenever he would see me, and whether I had influenced this. I caught myself wanting to change the conversation and wanting him to stop. The fact was that I had shown an interest in learning about Ahmed's view when he first discussed this to me, and although I questioned him further about it I did not 'tell him off'. On the contrary, I kept notes and I even took out the recorder every time Ahmed talked about that. This implied that it was important to me, which I think also influenced our discussions. Therefore, I tried to talk about other issues, but Ahmed was persistent. This made me more distant and was a limitation, as I could have explored Ahmed's deeper views or at the same time it could have given us the chance to expand our conversations.

3.10.9 Participatory methods

Although a participatory approach was followed throughout the research process, I also used what is commonly known as 'participatory methods' towards the end of the research. Through observations and everyday conversations I understood that children talked a lot about their selves and their identities, friends, family and home. In order to get more detailed accounts of these themes that had come out from the children, I chose to conduct the drawing and persona doll activities.

3.10.9.1 Drawing activities

Drawing activities are widely used in research with children (Veale, 2005; Punch, 2002a). Drawing is seen as "one method of creating a methodological frame that children could fill with their own meaning" (Veale, 2005) and in most cases children explain the meaning of their drawings or make stories (Christensen & James, 2008; James et al, 1998).

The drawing activity was conducted mainly in February, in the nursery class and area which the children attended normally. It is important for the activities to be conducted in places that children are used to.. The process was that I would go into the nursery class, I would sit at the drawing table, take out some blank white papers, and put some crayons out, which included their everyday nursery crayons along with some added ones of different shades of skin tone just in case children wanted to be precise. All the crayons were mixed together and children were free to pick whatever they liked.

All discussions were recorded after explaining why the activity took place, and asking for permission from the children. The children were asked to draw a picture of themselves, a picture of their family and a picture of children in the nursery (if the children were confused then I would suggest drawing their friends). The children were invited to talk to me or create a story about the drawing. Children were free to draw all of the themes or as many as they liked, and were free to stop whenever they liked.

For the children that were not fluent or could not speak English, I asked their mothers to come and translate during the drawing activity. The Polish and the Korean

mothers, therefore, came along.

This activity worked well with some children, but not with others. Not all of the children felt confident, enjoyed or wanted to take part. Even if some children liked drawing, they did not want to explain it, or did not find the questions relevant. I felt that most of the things I had come to know were through observing and talking to children on an everyday basis, and that drawing was beneficial in terms of getting to know the children better, spending individual time with them, finding out things about their lives and elaborating on their beliefs. The drawing activity was not a one-off activity, as it would take place on a regular basis, whenever children felt it was relevant.

3.10.9.2 Persona Doll activity

Through everyday observations and conversations, I had noticed that children would not really provide explanations about their actions and beliefs. This troubled me particularly in relation to interpreting their actions and views. Explaining why was a particularly difficult question, especially in relation to why children might not play with somebody, or why they behaved in a particular way. In many cases they felt that this was like telling them off. From observing their everyday life, I had come to understand that gender, age, ethnicity, language, clothes, and other such factors were salient aspects of their lives. I noticed that children were quite open about discussing aspects like gender and age, whereas for aspects like ethnicity, although important, discussions took more subtle and implicit forms. I was also interested in why children might not play with others, and as this was a difficult question to answer, I decided that the dolls could be a useful tool to explore these themes further with the children.

Persona dolls were invented by Taus Kay, a nursery teacher, in order to confront prejudice and discrimination in early years settings (CERES, 2006). The dolls represent different cultures, skin tones and have "their own individual personalities, life histories, likes and dislikes" (Persona Doll Training, 2010). The dolls are used as "powerful tools for exploring, uncovering and confronting bias" (Persona Doll Training, 2010). Glenda MacNaughton had also used persona dolls in a research study regarding young

children's identities in Australia (MacNaughton, 2005; MacNaughton & Davis, 2009).

In this research the persona doll activity was used in two ways[13]:

a) as a free play, getting to know activity

b) as a sad and happy story activity

I brought into the nursery six persona dolls, three girls and three boys.

Emily, white Scottish, 4 years old girl

Nikolas, white Polish, 4 years old boy

Meena, Pakistani, 4 years old girl

Kim, black Scottish, 4 years old girl

Young, Chinese, 4 years old boy

Ali, Pakistani, 4 years old boy

Each doll had a persona which included a name, language, nationality, age and of course gender. The dolls reflected the children in the research. I hosted three get-to-know sessions in the two nurseries. During these sessions, the dolls were placed in an area or areas in the nursery room where the children normally played; children came up to meet, learn about, and play with the dolls.

At first I started by giving some details about the dolls to the children, in order to make them seem more real-like. Then the dolls were left in the room and the children were free to play with them and to create their own stories. It was noticed that the play mainly entailed including the dolls in a puzzle game where the doll was put at the side to watch them play, or dancing with them, taking and showing them around the nursery and others. As soon as I felt that the children were used to the dolls, two story activities

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[13]   I underwent persona doll training during the end of the first year of my PhD, and had also a long day meeting with Babbette Brown (coordinator of Persona doll training in the UK) to discuss about the potential use of the persona dolls in my research. The meeting with Brown was very influential in relation to going through the doll scenarios. My supervisors were also influential about thinking about the characteristics of the dolls that would reflect the Scottish context.

were conducted, related to exclusion and inclusion respectively (see Appendix 1). The stories were created by real instances and conversations from the children's everyday lives and I used phrases that had been told to me by some children, or that I had observed being said in class. Both the inclusion and the exclusion story were open ended in the sense that no reason was provided as to why for example the specific doll was excluded or felt sad and no one wanted to play with them. The children were invited to choose a doll or dolls that they felt were included or excluded and were asked to elaborate or provide potential reasons. At the end children were thanked for their time and their ideas.

The interviews with the dolls were very informal and open in nature. All conversations were conducted in a playful and chatting kind of way. The children were free to come in and out of the discussions whenever they wanted to. Children could also choose if they wanted to play in a group or on their own. There were times when I would initiate the informal chat with the dolls by asking the child to come in if they wanted to participate. Other children would often follow, and I would have to explain the importance of speaking on a one-on-one basis, but at the end, the child that I was talking to, had the upper role as to what he/she wanted.

Questions may arise about whether links can be made between what children say through the dolls and real life. In general, children did know that the dolls were not real, and some would challenge me ("they're not real"; "they are just dolls"; "where are their mummies?"). However, other children would emphasise that the dolls are 'real' or 'real like', getting annoyed with the dolls because they were not speaking, and not liking it when I would remind them that we are pretending. The persona dolls were treated differently to other dolls for example, children would ask me to go and buy proper food for the dolls. Children's views that were expressed via the dolls were also observed and thus reflected children's everyday lives in the nursery, although not always explicitly discussed. But also children made links to reality. Children would talk about their own life experiences and similarities or differences with the dolls, and would make reference to real children in the class. Although I observed children's responses to individual dolls,

I was more interested in the stories and the reasoning behind them, rather than the specific attitudes towards the dolls per se.

3.10.9.3 Researcher role and participatory methods: Was power eliminated?

As already discussed, participatory methods are said to eliminate power. In this research, the issue of power in participatory methods varied and was negotiated, with various actors acting in more powerful roles than others, according to the context. No claims can be made that participatory methods automatically balanced the power dynamics between the children and me. For example, I was controlling the situation by bringing in dolls and deciding about activities, although these were influenced by children's everyday activities. The attributes that I chose for the dolls were also influenced by the children's everyday discussions and what were observed as salient in their lives; nevertheless, children did not really have a direct say in this while creating the dolls personalities.

I also exercised power when the children were pulling the dolls' hair, or acting aggressively towards them, by trying to explain that the dolls were hurting and that they were not very happy about this. I exercised power whenever I asked children to leave because they would interrupt and speak on behalf of another child, and that child wanted to be left alone. There were also times when I was guiding the conversation back to my interests, although I also tried to minimise this and to be open to children.

Also, although I was influenced by children's everyday chats and acts, and both activities reflected such themes, I was still the one that decided and organised the activities. However, children used their agency during these activities, as they were free to act as they wanted, come and go as they liked. If children were bored and were interested in something else then I would stop the activity and would follow the child's interest.

I also felt that in contrast to participant observation, children were directly aware of their involvement in the research and more active in giving consent. Although this also happened during observation with or without the use of the cards (which will be

discussed later on), it was still more evident during the semi-structured activities.

3.10.9.4 Strengths and limitations of participatory methods

The general strengths of the participatory methods were:

- that I spent individual time with children and developed rapport, more close relationships and trust, all of which helped during the participant observation phase as well.
- it was a chance to engage with children who I was not so close to during the participant observation, with some showing a preference to discussion through activities.
- children were actively aware of, and enjoyed the research process.
- that sensitive issues were more easily discussed with children through the doll activities, without imposing pressure of attention while asking questions, or making children feel sad.
- that some children felt more confident to talk about their real views and feelings on issues that they were not comfortable about.
- triangulation, or 'for more reflexive moments' but also they provided stimuli to engage children in more in-depth discussions about aspects observed in everyday life.

Regarding limitations:

- we should refrain from assuming that all children found the activities relevant or enjoyable.
- participatory methods could reinforce adult power and restrict child's active agency. For example, there was a lot of the researcher's input, as I designed and organised the activity.

- group interviews did not always work well. For example, when I was talking to the boys, they often talked about their own interests and other things, and were not as interested as they were when they were approached individually.
- dilemmas also occurred in relation to whether I was limiting children's responses, particularly through the doll activity; adult-directed. As dolls and their given characteristics were providing a context upon which children could draw on, I was worried about whether the children were restricted by what I was providing them with. However, children were not restricted to the 'given' characteristics and showed agency by making reference to others parts of identity and issues.

It is important to conduct participatory methods as an add-on activity that would extend participant observation. Assumptions cannot really be made by one-off conversations, and are in need of further context.

3.11 Interviews with educators and parents / caregivers

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine educators and twenty caregivers or family members from both nurseries. In-depth interviews allowed investigating people's personal perspectives, and gaining in-depth understanding and clarification (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003: 36-37). Interviews varied in time; with educators, they took from seventeen minutes to sixty minutes, and with caregivers from six to thirty five minutes. The interviews with educators took place either in the staff or parents' room in the multiethnic nursery, with the exception of one interview which was conducted in a quiet coffee shop. All interviews with parents/caregivers were conducted in the parents' room.

In the mainly white nursery, interviews with educators and parents/caregivers took place either in the staff/parent's room, or in another room which was used for various activities with the children. Two of the educators preferred to have a telephone interview (because of time restrictions) and one educator preferred a home interview.

Interviews with educators focused mainly on their views and experiences relating

to children's friendships and issues of social justice education (see Appendix 2). Educators' views and their interpretations of observations I had made about their everyday practice were also explored. In this sense the interview provided a space to clarify or provide additional information of everyday observations.

Informal interviews were conducted with parents/caregivers in order to learn about the children in a more holistic manner, and provided a useful insight of children's lives at home. Caregivers are considered to have an in-depth understanding of the details of their children's lives, particularly in the early years (Clark, 2005). The interview schedule was very general in nature and related to children's experiences (positive and negative) in the nursery, children's friendships, and children's experiences outside the nursery setting (see Appendix 3).

In all interviews, probes and prompts were used in order to gain depth of answer in terms of exploration and explanation, and follow- up questions helped me obtain a much deeper and more complete understanding of meanings. All interviews were very informal, and this was expressed also through body language; e.g. I sat at times on a children's chair which was lower than the interviewee's chair, and had a relaxed body posture and tone of voice.

During the interviews, my role was to explore, understand, learn and respect the various and different voices. Because of this I was not acting as the knowledgeable one, but as the one that was truly interested in exploring and understanding. Parents/caregivers and educators were the ones with the power of knowledge and I felt very grateful for the time that they were devoting to me. Power, however, was evident while interviewing parents/caregivers and staff and was negotiated in interactions. Thus, it was not one-sided, as power dynamics depended on the context. Educators felt unease at times when they did not know what to answer, and acted like they were being tested when they could not remember policies or legislation.

My power was also manifested in choosing the design, leading the discussion, and in the interpretation and final analysis. However, power could be mediated by being friendly, listening closely while not interrupting, following a flexible interview schedule

without neglecting the aim of the research, interpreting body language, making it clear that participation was voluntary and that opting out was an option. All interviews were digitally-recorded after relevant permission was granted.

3.12 Ethics

Ethics is a major issue in research (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Morrow and Richards, 1996), especially with children. This research was approved by the Moray House School of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh, and I followed Barnardo's (2002) statement of ethical research practice protocol. Permission was secured first of all from the local authority, then head teachers and staff, parents/caregivers and lastly the children. Leaflets (including translated leaflets into Polish and Urdu) about the details of the study were provided to all staff, parents/caregivers and children (see Appendix 4). Along with leaflets, consent forms (including translated forms in Polish and Urdu) about participating in this research and regarding the use of voice and video recorders and cameras, including the potential use of such material during any written publication or presentation about this research (see Appendix 5) were provided to parents/caregivers and staff, who had to sign and return them to me. Written consent was also secured by children.

The initial focus of the research, prior to getting into the field, was ethnicity, and this is reflected in the information leaflet of the study. The research interests, however, were expanded to other parts of children's identity, and to whatever children considered salient. Educators and parents were informed about research developments through informal discussions, whenever that was possible; however, I believe that written updates would have been more beneficial, and would have ensured that everybody was aware.

Three children were not permitted to take part in my research from the main sample, two from the mainly white nursery class and one from the multiethnic; therefore, no observations or comments were written about these children. The children

could take part in activities whenever they wanted, but nothing was recorded about them.

3.12.1 Children's informed consent

A separate children's leaflet was created in the form of a book that was read by myself (see Appendix 6) and individually to each child, and in three occasions educators accompanied my discussion with children that had additional support needs and one minority ethnic parent in order to translate. The information book was created with the help of the educators. Happy and sad faces, a stop card and a question mark were also created in order to support consent procedures (see Appendix 6). Informed and written consent, was secured by the children, who were asked to create their own approval mark or to use the stamp that was provided under the smiley or sad face (see Appendix 7). Permission was also secured by the children regarding the use of the video and voice recorders and photos. Consent, however, was an ongoing process with the children, as with the adults. I would constantly remind all participants, that participation in the research was voluntary and that they could stop or join whenever they wanted to. The cards were particularly helpful, especially in the beginning of the research, and were kept in a commonly agreed place in the story corner. The cards were created to ensure that everybody felt confident to express or show their emotions about the research process and to inform me about their desire of involvement in the research at any given time. As time passed most children would express their opinion without the use of the cards.

The use of the cards was a fun process, children seemed to understand what the research entailed and felt in control. In the beginning, we would role-play the use of cards, and children would on many occasions joke around with me pretending that they wanted to stop. All of these games were useful in developing rapport, and showing to children that I would respect their decision and that they had an active role in this process.

There were however limitations in relation to obtaining informed consent. For

example two of the younger children, could not understand the links between agreeing and signing the happy face. So clarifying, repeating and explaining to the children was essential. Also, one child with additional support needs did not like the pressure of going through the consent process with the educator. It was only on another occasion, where I talked to him on a more informal and relaxed time, without the presence of the educator that he was happy to listen and agree.

Generally, I was not restricted to the initial written informed consent, as it was essentially an ongoing process.

3.12.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Confidentiality and anonymity are important aspects while doing research (Farrell, 2005; Tisdall et al, 2009), and were set out in the original ethics application. Confidentiality was confirmed by informing educators, parents/caregivers and children that nothing would be discussed with anybody else, and used against them. The limits of confidentiality were explicitly mentioned, being related to child protection issues. Challenges occurred in relation to confidentiality; for example, each nursery wanted to know the other nursery, and I explained that due to confidentiality restrictions I was not able to discuss this. Conflicts of interest also occurred when caregivers and educators expected me to disclose information about the children's observations or discussions. I explained that I could not give specific information about specific children, but only general feedback. However, there were times when I discussed with, or asked educators views about my observations of children, when I was in need of a more holistic approach.

All participants in the research were assured that all names would be changed and that identifying details would not be revealed in any written or oral publication, so that no child could be identified. Whenever transcripts are used in quotes, false names replace the original names.

107

3.13 Validity and reliability

The concepts of reliability (whether the results of a study are repeatable) and validity ["a concern with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research" (Bryman, 2004 : 545)] have been questioned in qualitative research, as both concepts are mainly concerned with measurement. Some have expressed the need to replace the above with terms such as trustworthiness and authenticity, when used in qualitative research (see Bryman, 2004: 272-278). However, 'authenticity' has also been criticised (Connolly, 2008a).

Nevertheless, in terms of reliability, a clear and descriptive account of the research process is provided, so that the reader is able to rationalise every stage that was followed. In terms of validity an attempt has been made to be clear about the research process and explicit about my theoretical background and value system (my perceptions of what is 'worth' in the research). Also, 'triangulation', "the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked" (Bryman, 2004: 545), was conducted through a multi-method approach (Greene & Hill, 2005). However, this should not imply that there is "a reality to which one can come closer by combining multiple perspectives" (Greene & Hill, 2005:16). Triangulation has also received its share of criticism, as it implies that there is some kind of 'truth'. Some also argue that these techniques are not really a form of validating data, but means that allow for greater reflexive moments (Davis, 2000).

Connolly (2008a: 184) argues that there is:

"no unitary, authentic account of children's lives to be found, only a diverse range of accounts" and that children as competent social actors "will approach and respond to particular social settings in differing ways …(and) it is… meaningless to attempt to identify which of these represents that child's 'true' and 'authentic' voice. In a sense they are all equally authentic".

Being 'truthful' and providing different voices at the same time (Davis, 2000) is an important aspect of providing 'valid' representations, which I will further discuss in

the following section.

3.14 Analysis

Interpretative act is considered "a process of translation in a continuing dialogue between interpreter and interpreted, (which) depends on the *explicit* examination of one's bias and pre-understandings as a basic, positive step of analysis that moves forward in a dialectical way" (Marcus & Cushman, 1982: 38). Self-reflection is an integral part of the analysis process and there is a need for a 'critical perspective on ethnographic texts' (Marcus & Cushman, 1982). Davis (2000) argues that ethnographers listen to different voices, which may be conflicting, that there may be multiple competing versions of what is considered 'the real or the truth' and that dispersal of the ethnographer's authority could be approached by providing to the readers "different perspectives, sub-cultural values, or voices in the final text" (Davis, 2000: 196). Davis (2000: 197) continues that the voice of the author should not be ignored, and that "the author points to different competing voices which conflict with his/her own".

Davis (2000) has suggested the use of 'polyphonic ethnography' in order to represent both diverse and cultural and structural experiences.

Critical and 'uncomfortable' reflexivity is an important aspect of interpretation and analysis (Davis, 2000; Pillow, 2003). I chose to attend the nurseries for two days each, in order to have enough time to reflect and develop some distance from the data. Re-working and re-understanding observations and experiences were part of the reflexive process (Okely, 1994; Davis, 2000) and part of (re) interpreting data. Never really being settled about interpretation and not taking anything for granted made me want to explore further, although this process was admittedly tiring.

Davis (2000) has also suggested that 'the text' should be open to multiple interpretations and that researchers should provide opportunities to respondents/participants to question the researcher's analysis and to provide their own view. This happened throughout the research process, as I would ask participants to

explain the views and observations I was gathering. However, at the time I did not give participants any written text to comment on, something which can be seen as a limitation.

Analysis started from the moment I started collecting data and writing in my reflexive diary. These initial interpretations proved very valuable later on. During data collection, I would also go back and read field-notes. Summaries were written every 2 or 3 months of the process with basic themes that were coming from the field-notes, along with interpretations. When I finished my fieldwork, I collected all the summaries and wrote two different papers, one for each nursery, about how all of these themes answered my research questions. In this case, I was fiddling around with the themes of the summaries, making new themes or merging various themes; a very complex process. At the same time I was re-reading all the field notes using NVivo software. I then started to identify relevant literature which linked to my broad themes. I went back to my field notes and read my data in a new light once again. This time, I manually created themes on my printed field notes, using different colour highlighters for each theme. For example, for gender I used pink, ethnicity green, and so on. Having re-read the field notes so many times, I got very familiar with the content. I now had various themes and analysis from various stages that I could compare, both in initial stages of the research, before and after reading literature and others. I then wrote a first draft by looking at all these stages of analysis. While writing about each theme, like gender for example, I would continuously check for reliability within my field notes. Do I have evidence for what I am claiming? Is there anything else that I have not looked at? Is there any contrary, complimentary or multiple evidence? Making general comments about my data seemed frightening; how could I pin down something that is continuously changing, how could I make generalised assumptions?

Nevertheless, there were patterns that were identified, and emphasis was given to different contexts. Every statement that I have made has been thoroughly viewed and checked with my notes. When I wrote the chapters of analysis, I re-read my field notes again and I created a Word document where I separated the field notes under themes that

I had identified based on my research questions and dominant themes. This time, I separated the observation data, the drawing activity data, and the doll activity data. In this way, my mind was clear about the origins of the data as well. The chapters of analysis of my findings (5, 6, 7, 8 and 9) are not separated according to activities or methods as I found common themes that came up and the different methods and activities seemed to complement each other. However, the findings are mainly based on participant observation, interviews and informal chatting, which took up most of the research time and supplemented by other activities. Whatever is the source of the data it is explicitly mentioned.

In the analysis phase, I found it difficult to put a rather messy and contradictory reality into a neat and coherent picture. Therefore, although data were written in a way that shows some coherence, I aspired to show the complexity of everyday life through contradictory, multiple, contextual arguments and voices.

3.15 Dissemination

Dissemination is an important part of research (Tisdall, 2009) and should be seen as an ongoing process. Being in the nurseries on an everyday basis and particularly towards the end a lot of informal discussions were held with the staff in relation to early feedback. In these instances, the staff had the chance to comment on my initial findings and talk about their views. In the multiethnic nursery, a brief meeting was conducted with the head teacher, who wanted a more in-depth conversation of my initial findings. However, during the course of the research, I was very unsure and muddled about the data. Thus I did not feel confident to share them with educators or children and did not really provide a systematic dissemination of my findings.

Therefore, a limitation was that children did not have a chance to listen to the findings of the research. However, I have kept emails of some of the parents/caregivers to whom I will send a leaflet, including one for the children, about the findings. A tracking activity of the rest of the families and children will also be conducted with the

help of the staff, depending of course on the feasibility of such an initiative. I am currently discussing preferred ways of dissemination with staff in both nurseries. Initially, leaflets (summarising the research and findings) will be handed out to the nursery staff of the two nursery schools. Meetings will also be organised to discuss the research process and findings in more depth. This will also provide a further opportunity for staff to raise potential questions and initiate a dialogue. So far, I have also presented findings at various UK and international academic conferences, and an ESRC-funded seminar organised by the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR).

3.16 Conclusion

This chapter focused on outlining the methodological approach that was followed in this study. It is argued that post-structural and post-modern perspectives have influenced this research, which suggests that there is no one 'truth' rather multiple ways of understanding the world and give emphasis to context, fluidity and complexity. However, it is important to highlight that this thesis moves beyond post-structural and postmodern influences, as it emphasises both 'fixity' and fluidity.

Increased attention is given to children's rights discourses, which include issues of participation and 'listening' to children's views. Particular attention is given to 'active' participation and 'listening'. In an attempt to promote children's participation, current debates have emphasised on participatory methods. However, there have also been some more critical voices about participatory methods and thus, give emphasis to the importance of context and to applying a research design which is applicable to the children involved rather than to making assumptions about what methods are appropriate. This chapter also discusses the importance of ethnography, reflexivity and explains why a qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate. Details are provided about the specific research design. This chapter argues that a synthesis of ethnographic and participatory approaches and methods were followed and were considered important. In this research participant observation was used in order to obtain

an insight into how children and educators act in their natural settings, giving emphasis to body language and elements of behaviour that may be subconscious in their manifestation. Interviews and participatory methods were used to obtain a greater understanding, clarification and interpretation of behaviours and views observed.

Issues around power relations and my changing role as a researcher/helper/friend/'unusual adult' were also discussed. Details were also provided about the specific participatory methods (drawing and doll activities), followed by a discussion of the advantages and challenges of each approach. Also, I discuss about the interviews that were conducted. Lastly, I refer to ethics, paying special attention to children's informed consent.

Chapter 4

Setting the Scene: Description of the context, policies and settings

4.1 Introduction

There is currently much discussion around equity, social justice and the elimination of discrimination in intellectual, political and social spheres (Macpherson & Bond, 2009). The legislative landscape relating to 'equality', in particular, has recently undergone significant change with the emergence of recently enforced 'Equality Act 2010' in the UK, and the recently established Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2007. The latest Equalities Review (2007: 5) pointed out for the need for "more and different action…to address inequalities". Duties that were directed to public authorities to actively promote 'equality' highlighted the importance of social justice issues in a variety of social spheres including that of education.

This research was carried out during a period of wider changes which reflected on 1) the above equity and social justice issues in education, among other sectors, 2) 'The Early Years Framework' (Scottish Government, 2008a), which signalled the Scottish Government's (national government) and CoSLA's (Convention of Local Authorities- local government) joint commitment to early years as being crucial to a child's development, and to combating inequalities through prevention and early intervention, 3) key Scottish curriculum changes which were taking place with continuous developments of the CfE, which eventually replaced the Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5 Years old. Emphasis was also given to children's rights, particularly in relation to discrimination and expression of views, which link with the above initiatives. Of equal importance with all the high policy rhetoric, is the importance of accountability and monitoring which I will touch upon briefly with reference to relevant bodies, such as HMIE.

This chapter, therefore, seeks to explore the wider political and legislative

context of this research, linked to social justice, discrimination and equity, by highlighting key developments, and their links to education. In order to do so, I will move from the macro level- that of key legislative and policy developments deriving from government actors- to the meso level -that of the local authority, which relates to specific policies, guidelines, information and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for educators. Finally, I will move to the micro level; that of specific nurseries, which again links to specific policies. A brief overview of the Great Britain (GB) level will be provided, and then focus will move to the Scottish context, and education in particular. In turn, this chapter will carefully examine early childhood guidelines and links to equity issues, the importance of mainstreaming 'equalities' in education, an important strategy of the Scottish Government, and links with the CfE. It will also describe the context of the two specific nursery schools, the children and families that took part in the research, and the policies that they had in place in relation to issues of equity. The main findings of this chapter suggest that:

a) there is lack of recognition, and explicit guidance in relevant policy documents about 1) what the term diversity means, particularly in relation to whether there are aspects of diversity that are unacceptable, 2) the potential dilemmas, limitations, complexities and challenges that educators may face in their everyday practice relative to the 'contradicting facets of justice' that may occur and guidance on how these could be overcome.

b) there are limitations in the way the Scottish Government and local authorities are currently providing support and guidance for nursery staff. This is evident when seen in relation to the main findings of Chapter 9, and links to a wider debate on the challenges of putting policy rhetoric into practice, which will be discussed in Chapter 10.

4.2 A snapshot of the bigger picture

At the GB level, legislation is in place which intends to combat discrimination on various grounds within various institutions, including education; there is the Sex

Discrimination Act (1975), the Race Relations Act (1976) and the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000), the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (amended 2005), and the Human Rights Act 1998, which provides general protection against discrimination. The Discrimination Law Review (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2007) was used to review the various different equality laws and make recommendations on bringing them together in a Single Equality Act.

The Equality Act 2006 came into force in 2007, creating the Equality and Human Rights Commission by merging the existing Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), Equal Opportunities and Disability Rights. The Equality Act 2006 allowed for all the different equality acts to be merged, leading to the Single Equality Bill that was introduced at Westminster in 2009. Part two of the Equality Act made it unlawful to discriminate on grounds of religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief) when goods, facilities and services are provided, including schools and nurseries. The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations of 2007 made discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation unlawful in a number of areas, including, again, education in schools. The UK will also enforce the 'Equality Act 2010', which unites and harmonises all equality legislation.

4.3 Focusing on the Scottish context

The emergence of a devolved government in Scotland led to the creation of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive in 1999, the latter now known as the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government's main purpose is to "create a more successful country where all of Scotland can flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth" (Scottish Government, 2007b). Equity is high on the Scottish Governmental agenda, and is a key component of its five strategic objectives- to make Scotland wealthier and fairer, smarter, healthier, safer and stronger and greener (Scottish Government, 2007b). Fifteen national outcomes have been identified, which describe the focus of the actions, and 45 national indicators, which enable   progress to be tracked. The importance of early years and equity is clear in the national outcomes, which I will

refer to as part of an important early years policy document called 'The Early Years Framework'.

4.3.1 The vision for Scottish children and 'The Early Years Framework'

The Vision of Scotland's Ministers for all Scottish Children wants them to be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. To achieve this vision, all children and young people need to be safe, nurtured, active, healthy, achieving, included, respected and responsible (Scottish Government, 2009b).

The Scottish Government is also committed to implementing children's rights by looking to reflect its provisions wherever possible in the development of policy, practice and legislation (Scottish Government, 2009c). Important pieces of relevant legislation include, first of all, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989, a universally agreed set of standards and obligations designed to protect children's rights, to help meet their needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. In particular, and in relation to social justice, children have a right to express their views (Article 12) and not to be discriminated against (Article 2). State parties must take all appropriate measures to protect the children's right to education (Article 28) and respect regardless of culture, religion, and language [Article 29(c) and Article 30]. Scotland supports the convention (Scottish Government, 2009c). With the UNCRC General Comment No.7, Implementing child Rights in Early Childhood (OHCHR, 2005: 7), attention is given to the implementation of children's rights in early childhood, and to the importance of Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

The importance of early years is clearly highlighted in 'The Early Years Framework' (Scottish Government, 2008a), where they are considered crucial to a child's development. The Scottish Government acknowledges the existence of inequalities in education, among other sectors, which are passed from one generation to another (Scottish Government, 2009d). Therefore, the framework "signals local and national government's joint commitment to break this cycle through prevention and early intervention" (Scottish Government, 2009d). The 'Early Years Framework' will

contribute to all five strategic objectives and will support at least 11 of the aforementioned National Outcomes (see Appendix 8).

The framework adopts an early intervention and prevention approach "moving from dealing with the symptoms of inequality to addressing the causes" and "managing the risks early in life that perpetuate inequality" (Scottish Government, 2008c: iv). The vision of the Scottish Government for early years entails that children should be valued, have a right to a high quality life, be at the centre of service delivery, and be able to achieve positive outcomes irrespective of race, disability or social background (Scottish Government, 2008a : 4). Children's rights are at the heart of this framework. In the second part of the Early Years Framework, specific reference is made to families within which English is not a first language, and may need additional support in order for both parents and children to participate fully in community, education and working life (Scottish Government, 2008d: 7). Emphasis is given to ensuring that information for parents/caregivers is available in a variety of formats to meet diverse needs (Scottish Government, 2008d: 20). Individuals may have different or higher needs due to various reasons which include language, ethnicity, disability and social circumstances, and these should be acknowledged, respected and met, if inequalities are to be reduced (Scottish Government, 2008d: 20). Developing children's critical thinking is valued; children should be equipped with "the skills to manage risk and make positive choices based on assessing the situation facing them" (Scottish Government, 2008d: 29).

The delivery of the Early Years framework depends on how agencies, services and communities work to achieve Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) which is a national, child-centred approach, supporting and working with all children and young people in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2009e). GIRFEC places children's and young people's needs first, and stresses the importance of listening to children and understanding decisions which affect them, supporting more co-ordinated work across agencies.

4.3.2 Social justice issues in policy and legislation context and the links to education

In the Scottish context, according to the Scotland Act 1998, the promotion of 'equal opportunities' involves:

"…the prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between persons on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or of other personal attributes, including beliefs or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions."

Recently, specific duties were introduced to public bodies to promote equality proactively, which have codes of practice, which are specific to Scotland; the Race Equality Duty in 2001[14] (CRE, 2002a), the Disability Equality Duty (Disability Rights Commission (DRC), 2005) which came into effect in 2006, and the Gender Equality Duty [Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), 2006] which came into effect in 2007. All three of these duties requite public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities and good relations between different people, and publish schemes setting out what they will do in order to promote equality. Educational institutions should create policies that should be monitored and published, in order to make sure that bias is not taking place in any way and in any activity. Schools and local authorities are obliged to be proactive rather than reactive in relation to promoting equity and anti-discrimination education. The Equality Bill will replace the existing duties (race, gender and disability) with a single Equality Duty, extending to age, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity (Scottish Government, 2009f). The new single Equality Duty will contain a general duty, and more specific duties. Scottish Ministers are to determine the specific duties that are going to be imposed on Scottish public authorities.

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[14] CRE was assigned the responsibility of promoting guidance for institutions to comply with their duties under the RRAA 2000 (see 2002b; 2002c). These duties and responsibilities were taken over by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on 1 October 2007.

In the field of education, there is legislation in place which is linked to equal opportunities, social justice and discrimination in education. CERES (2009b) refers to the most salient ones, beginning from the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, which places a duty on local authorities to "have regard so far as practicable to the child's religious persuasion, racial origin and cultural and linguistic background". The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Scotland Act 2000 enforces every local authority to write an "annual statement of improvement objectives" which shall include "the ways in which they will, in providing school education, encourage equal opportunities and in particular the observance of the equal opportunity requirements" (CERES, 2009b). In order to comply with the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000, the Scottish Parliament approved the 'National Priorities in Education', in December 2000 (Scottish Executive, 2007a); these included Achievement and Attainment, Framework for Learning, Inclusion and Equality, Values and Citizenship and Learning for Life. In recent years, emphasis has "turned from an explicit focus on the five Priorities, towards a more streamlined and outcome-focused assessment of national and local activities" (Macpherson & Bond, 2009: 39). There is also the Additional Support for Learning Act 2004, under which educational authorities have the duty to "establish procedures for identifying and meeting the additional support needs of every child" under their responsibility (CERES, 2009b). These needs must be kept under review, and specified agencies have a duty to support education authorities meet their duties (CERES, 2009b).

Teachers need to have and display a commitment to social justice, and this is reflected in the 'The Standard for Full Registration' (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2006) which states through Standard 3.1 that "registered teachers show in their day to day practice a commitment to social justice, inclusion and caring for and protecting children". The 'Code of Professionalism and Conduct' (General Teaching Council for Scotland, 2008: 14) states that:

- "you must treat pupils equally, fairly and with respect, in line with the law and without discrimination"

- "as a teacher, your dealings with learners must not be prejudiced by views about their lifestyle, culture, disability, beliefs, colour, gender, language, sexuality or age".

The Scottish Government's (2010b) commitment to the promotion of social justice and equity can be illustrated by the campaign 'One Scotland, No Place For Racism', and by various educational resources and guidelines that have been created.

4.3.2.1 Scottish curriculum and the links to social justice

Within the learning, well-being and equity strategic priorities of the Government's Economic Strategy, a key action of the Early Years in relation to education is taking forward the CfE (Scottish Government, 2004). This current research was conducted during a transitional phase, as a major Scottish Educational reform, with continuous developments of the CfE, was taking place. In 2009, for example, the 'Experiences and Outcomes' of the CfE was published (Scottish Government, 2009g). Prior to this, the 'Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5' (CFC3-5) (Scottish Office, 1999) was the main guideline for pre-school education. The 'Curriculum for Excellence. Building the Curriculum 3. A Framework for Learning and Teaching' (Scottish Government, 2008e) replaced the existing guidance on the 3-5 curriculum, 5-14 curriculum and curriculum design in the secondary sector. However, during this research which was conducted in 2007-2008, the CFC3-5 was the main basis for staff's reference. Therefore, I will briefly expand on the latter in relation to equity, rather than go into detail with the CfE, as the CFC3-5 provides the wider policy context and guidelines that informed the practice of the educators who participated in my research. Nevertheless, I will provide the basic values and purposes of the CfE, and later on discuss how mainstreaming equality and discrimination links to the new Curriculum in order to provide a more up-to-date analysis.

In relation to equity, the CFC3-5 was based on:

"the fundamental principle of equality of opportunity. All education systems of quality

must recognise that no individual or group should be disadvantaged on the grounds of race, gender, culture, disability, class, belief, lifestyle or family circumstances. Effective learning and teaching can only take place in an atmosphere of mutual trust, respect and security. An inclusive approach is therefore essential to the provisions of high quality learning experiences for all children" (Scottish Office, 1999: iii).

The three general principles were that early education should be in "the best interests of children, the central importance of relationships, the need for all children to feel included, an understanding of the ways in which children learn" (Scottish Office, 1999: 2). Providing, therefore, a safe environment where children feel happy and secure, encouraging positive attitudes to self and others, and developing confidence and self-esteem, are all part of the more general principles. Within the CFC3-5, values and attitudes are seen to be communicated to children by what educators say and do, and from the quality of relationships among staff and between staff and children (Scottish Office, 1999: 3). Thus, in relation to equity, the policy states that it is important to consider, among others, the ways in which staff value the individual child, equal opportunities and social justice.

The 'CFC3-5 stresses the importance of raising awareness and valuing differences, and promoting positive social relationships (Scottish Office, 1999: 5). For example, it suggests "learning about cultural and religious festivals and events helps children to understand themselves, to build on their own experiences… and to become aware of the beliefs and traditions of their own family and the way of life of others in their community. It helps to promote positive attitudes towards others in our multicultural society"; gender, language, religion or culture are referred to as basic differences (Scottish Office, 1999: 8). The importance of developing children's expression of feelings and responses, through story-telling, role play, pictures and singing songs is promoted. These activities can develop sensitivity to the needs, feelings and interests of others, while raising awareness of different values and attitudes which can be encountered in a world of cultural diversity (Scottish Office, 1999: 9). Emphasis is given to a multicultural approach "to the curriculum in the early years setting", which

"can be particularly fostered by the attitudes and behaviours of the adults involved" (Scottish Office, 1999:54). While giving practical advice, reference is made to raising cultural awareness which could be incorporated into various areas of play like music, books, role play in the house, preparing food from different cultures and in celebrating religious and cultural festivals (Scottish Office, 1999: 54). Photos, paintings, prints and textiles which reflect different cultural traditions are also mentioned. In relation to gender, emphasis is given to promoting equal opportunities between boys and girls, through equal participation in all learning experiences and playing with a variety of tools and equipment. The document highlights that activities should not be associated with a specific gender. Furthermore, resources like books, pictures, puzzles and others should represent "positive images of people of different races and cultures, and show girls, boys, men and women in a range of roles" (Scottish Office, 1999: 54). Interestingly, although reference is made to discussing issues of diversity with children, this is hypothetical; emphasis is given to a reactive approach, rather than a proactive one. "Children may need to have their awareness of issues of equal treatment raised through discussion. Racist and sexist remarks and incidents, if they occur, should be dealt with positively and constructively" (Scottish Office, 1999: 54). Reference is also made to disability, and how children with disability should have equal access to the curriculum, the building, resources and equipment, and " an entitlement that their capabilities are fully developed" and recognised (Scottish Office, 1999: 54). Making each child and their family feeling included was stated as being at the heart of this policy. Recognition and respect towards home-languages (Scottish Office, 1999: 15) and enhancing the use of the language children feel most comfortable in, is promoted; so is exposing children to other languages and bilingual support, thus forming a language curriculum for all languages. Broadening children's knowledge of people and places in their community, and exploring their own rapid growth (body) and passing of time and the changes in relation to their capabilities but also growing and changing in shape and size, is also mentioned. The latter links nicely with age, physical appearance and capabilities (like running faster). Physical activities, like sharing, are also seen as important in developing

social skills, like fairness and respect for others. Providing and developing a sense of belonging is an important part of the curriculum. Lastly, emphasis is given to considering and respecting children's individualities, taking into account special educational needs, and fostering equal opportunities. In short, it highlights that children should be made aware of the many different ways of seeing and understanding the world, and that these differences may depend on a range of cultural, social and religious viewpoints. Respecting children's differences (cultural heritage, gender, beliefs and lifestyles of families) can impact positively on children's self-esteem.

The basic values of the CfE are wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity; "the curriculum must be inclusive, be a stimulus for personal achievement and, through the broadening of experience of the world, be an encouragement towards informed and responsible citizenship" (Scottish Government, 2004). The basic purposes of the CfE are encapsulated in these four capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Within the aforementioned purposes lie ideas of respect for others, understanding different beliefs and cultures and developing informed, ethical views of complex issues (Scottish Government, 2004).

Guidance and guidelines on equity and fairness, relevant but not restricted to early childhood, have been produced and include, among others:

- 'An Equal Start. Promoting Equal Opportunities in the Early Years'; a joint initiative by the Equality Commissions in Scotland (CRE, DRC & EOC, 2002)
- "Are Equalities an Issue? Finding out What Young Children Think" (Road, 2004)
- Learning in 2(+) Languages (LTS, 2005a).
- The LTS and CERES websites also provide guidance, research, resources and case studies or 'good examples' of equity and fairness, and how these can be translated into practice (see e.g. 'Inclusion and Equality', 'Education for Citizenship' and 'Early Years' sections on LTS website)

- 'A Race Equality Audit for Schools: A Self-Evaluation Resource' (Mitchell & Arshad, 2004),

- 'Sectarianism. Don't give it, don't take it' (Arshad et al. 2005b).

- 'Gender Equality: A Toolkit for Education Staff' (Scottish Executive, 2007b)

Within these guidelines and examples, explicit emphasis is given, among others, to raising awareness of diversities, promoting positive relations and anti-discrimination approaches in early years education. In relation to the latter for example, Persona Dolls are considered one of the approaches that early childhood staff could use with children to discuss equality, or more difficult issues like discrimination. There are, however, limitations and challenges, owing to the fact that: 1) the policies are not really explicit on the meaning of diversity, particularly in relation to what aspects of diversity for example are unacceptable, and 2) the lack of guidance in relation to what educators should do when there are "contradictions between different facets of justice" (see Gewirtz, 2006: 69). In short, there is lack of recognition and guidance regarding potential dilemmas, limitations, complexities and challenges that educators may face in their everyday practice, and how these should be overcome.

4.3.2.2 Mainstreaming 'equality' and anti-discrimination

'Equality' and anti-discrimination were key terms of all or most policy documents, initiatives, guidelines, toolkits and others. The Race Equality Advisory Forum (REAF) argues that there is a growing need to mainstream equality into "all aspects and processes of policy making, service design, service delivery, evaluation and reporting" (2001). By mainstreaming, the Scottish Government refers to:

"…the systematic integration of an equality perspective...[which] tackles structures, behaviours and attitudes that contribute to or sustain inequality and discrimination..." (CERES, 2009a: 1).

In order for mainstreaming to take place, there is a need for:

"an understanding that inequalities exist, an acknowledgement that discrimination is occuring, a willingness to take action to prevent and reduce the occurrence and to redress the consequences of discrimination" (City Council (unknown): 3).

Mainstreaming 'equality' means that 'equality' issues should not be considered and addressed "as an afterthought or catered for only by specific programmes or initiatives. It means that equality considerations should be taken into account from the outset" (CERES, 2009a: 1). CERES (2009a) provides a tool for planning and assessing pupils learning regarding equality and anti-discrimination, which shows the links between equality and the CfE. The mainstreaming of equality has 4 key aims linked to, and reflecting the four capacities of CfE and the Scottish Government's Mainstreaming Strategy:

- "to include, value and respect all learners (becoming **confident individuals**)
- to give learners an understanding of discrimination (becoming **successful learners)**
- to develop skills and capacity to challenge discrimination against themselves and others (becoming **responsible citizens**)
- to offer opportunities to take action against discrimination (becoming **effective contributors)"** (Scottish Executive, 2007b: 34; CERES, 2009a).

To be effective, these curriculum developments need to take place within a school ethos that mainstreams 'equality' and anti-discrimination in all aspects of its work (CERES, 2009a). Staff are advised to discuss issues of fairness and 'equality', to review and reflect on their practice. This indicates a move from a mere multicultural approach of celebrating diversity, to a more proactive and drastic approach.

High flown rhetoric is important in setting out policy intentions, but what is of equal importance is whether accountability and monitoring systems match the policy intentions. HMIe and the Care Commission have stressed their focus on inspecting

bullying and discrimination in order to promote equality. According to the HMIe, their work on equality and diversity links closely with inclusion (HMIe, 2009), and subscribes to the Scottish Government's schemes for Disability, Gender and Race Equality, which cover the 2008-2011 time period. The HMIe has a commitment to inspect equality and inclusion in education, and has published evaluation guidelines and reports on how schools could best promote equality and combat discrimination, on current good practice and steps for further improvement (HMIe 1999, 2002, 2004, 2005 & 2009). Since 2008, the revised edition How Good Is Our School: The Journey to Excellence, Part 3 (HMIe, 2007a) is used in relation to quality indicators.

Self-evaluation is a core tool that is used in early childhood education to evaluate the quality of education in the centre. The Child at the Centre: Self-Evaluation in the early years, 2nd edition (HMIe, 2007b), is the core document that early childhood establishments should use, as it provides quality indicators which should reflect the active learning that is taking place. Within the quality framework, indicators are associated with each of the dimensions of excellence in Part 2 of the Journey to Excellence (HMIe, 2006). Quality indicator 5.6 relates to Equality and Fairness involving approaches to inclusion, promoting and ensuring that equality, fairness and diversity are valued. This indicates the salience of such issues within early childhood education. Compliance with legislation, and the fulfillment of statutory duties (quality indicator 1.2) and requirements are clearly stated within the Child in the Center document 2007. Meeting the learning needs (quality indicator 5.3) of children, regardless of mother tongue, is also stated, as is the importance of children's experiences, listening to children's views and interests, and acting upon such (quality indicator 2.1). Self-evaluation is considered a key factor for improvement (quality indicator 5.9). Within the general vision, values and aims of leadership, the promotion of positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity are included as well (quality indicator 9.1). All of the above highlight the importance of the promotion of equality and fairness in early childhood, as these indicators are used to monitor and reflect on practice, and to guide further developments.

4.3.3 Local authority council's 'equality' policy and guidance

The Children and Families Department of the specific council in which this current research was conducted had an Education Equality Policy which aimed to create a single equality policy from the Department's existing Race Equality Education Policy, Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme (City Council, 2009). The council's Equality Policy was "designed to ensure that the Children and Families Department and all its schools and nurseries are more than compliant with equalities legislation" (City Council, 2009: 1) and referred to the six key strands of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and faith/belief. The Council's Equality Policy states that it "values and respects the diverse communities that it serves" and "promotes equality of opportunity, good race relations and positive attitudes, and seeks to eliminate unlawful discrimination and stereotyping" (2009:1). It goes on to state that "every school and nursery within the education authority will be made aware of this policy and will develop strategies to implement it" (City Council 2009:2). The policy makes reference to how the authority, school and nurseries should monitor and publish information relating to participation and attainment by ethnicity, language, disability and gender in order to determine trends and identify areas of potential inequality, which could then inform planning.

According to the Council's Equality Policy, "all schools and nurseries are provided with advice on developing strategies and guidance to include equalities actions in improvement plans" (2009: 2).

In relation to the Curriculum, the authority recognised that the "curriculum- formal, informal and hidden- is a powerful tool in countering prejudice and promoting equal opportunities" (City Council 2009: 3). The policy recognises that gender, age, race, disability, perceived or actual sexual orientation and faith are "all areas that are addressed directly or indirectly in age appropriate ways" and states that "it is the responsibility of staff in all nursery, primary, secondary, special schools and partner provider pre-five centres to educate children and young people on equality through and across the curriculum" (City Council, 2009:3). The education authority also examines all

policies and functions through equality impact assessments.

The local authority, among other types of support, provides guidelines to all establishments, including nurseries, in relation to positively challenging bullying, racism and discrimination (City Council, 2009) which they have to follow. It also offers CPD opportunities on anti-bullying, anti-discrimination and other behavioural issues. According to the local authority, the individual establishments, including nurseries, have to follow the guidelines on bullying, racism and other forms of discrimination and create a policy on anti-bullying, anti-racism and other forms of anti-discrimination. The staff need to deal "appropriately and effectively" with all incidents and "embed proactive work through the curriculum" (City Council, 2009: 3). They have to keep an up-to-date record of all instances of bullying, racism and discrimination, ensure that all staff are adequately trained, create an ethos whereby the whole community will feel involved in challenging inappropriate behaviour, harassment, discrimination and bullying and feel confident to report incidents. They also need to ensure that parents and carers are familiar with the policy and procedures.

The approach is moving from a mere celebration of diversity to a combination of positively engaging with discussions of diversity and openly challenging and discussing issues of discrimination, which can be described as a more critical multiculturalism coupled with anti-discrimination education. Being proactive is a key aspect of the guidelines. Interestingly, the guidelines refer to 'do' and 'don't' lists, among which explicit reference is made to 'don't ignore that bullying behavior is evident in the early years and can be checked at this early stage" (City Council, 2009: 16). Some of the 'don't' lists were evident in educators' practice; for example, the educators did say that there is no bullying or discrimination.

In the pack that teachers are given by the authority, inclusion is described, among others, as "anti-discrimination" and "celebrating diversity" [City Council (unknown): 7].

The Council provides guidelines, good practice examples and information with links to toolkits produced by LTS and the Scottish Government, along with further resources, in order to support educators' social justice practice. According to the City

Council's Equalities officer, optional CPD courses relevant to 'equalities' are provided to staff in early childhood establishments. CPD courses in relation to 'equalities' are not mandatory, due to cost implications for staff. This means that not all staff members have the opportunity to gain relevant equity training. The only mandatory CPD course is child protection. The CPD system is formally based on staff needs, as expressed by Professional Development and Review, and takes into account departmental priorities. There are many different approaches to CPD including shadowing[15], own reading, and attending conferences, courses and meetings. However, not all of the aforementioned are recorded centrally. According to the local authority's Equality Officer, CPD opportunities include an 'Equalities workshop' at the annual Early Years conference, and CPD courses provided by the English as an Additional Language (EAL) service for staff that work with bilingual learners which cover 'race' equality, inclusion and achievement. Equalities staff meet with nursery head teachers in order to raise awareness about equalities duties and available resources with respect to Early Years. Head teachers are asked about issues that have occurred, and whether they are in need of CPD requirements. A 'check list' has been circulated, called "How positive and inclusive is your nursery?". Additionally, a resource for developing nursery and primary school pupils' emotional and social competence is provided by the local authority council and has an 'Equalities' component in relation to emotional literacy and self esteem. This resource encourages children to value diversity, empathise with others and challenge discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, faith and gender. Staff may also access external opportunities (for example, Persona Doll training); however, such information is not available from the local authority. Nursery staff have access to the staff intranet and internet, where they can find examples of good practice and links to further organisations like CERES, LTS and Children in Scotland.

Although the local authority showed commitment and provided guidelines and support for staff in relation to equity and social justice, there were three challenges or

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[15]   Shadowing takes place when a member of staff follows another member in their work role for a period of time in order to increase knowledge, skills and understanding through first hand observation.

limitations relevant to the guidance provided: a) educators, as I will discuss in Chapter 9, showed lack of knowledge and confidence about specific educational approaches and practices to promote equity b) CPD courses linked to 'equalities' were optional; educators did not attend any, and were consequently not aware of relevant equity developments, with the exception of a CPD course, attended by both schools, in relation to supporting children who have English as an Additional Language c) even when educators were aware that relevant guidelines and support could be provided from the local authority, they showed lack of knowledge, and were ambiguous about what they should do in practice. There are limitations, therefore, in the way that the Scottish Government and local authorities are currently guiding policy aspirations, and putting policy into practice (see Chapter 10).

4.4 Description of the two nurseries
4.4.1 Description of the mainly white nursery School, children and policies
4.4.1.1 'Mainly white nursery school'

According to the head teacher, the school accommodated 100 children. The children attended on a part-time basis, with 50 children attending each session, morning and afternoon. The building comprised of two levels, with one classroom area upstairs and two classroom areas downstairs. One of the downstairs classrooms was used for various activities like music, dance, games and parent meetings. The children of this nursery school attended one of the two classrooms. There was also a parents' room, children's bathrooms, an office and an entrance hall. The school grounds had an outdoor play area with a safety surface, a sensory garden and a secret woodland. The staff consisted of the head teacher, two full-time teachers, two full-time nursery nurses, two job-share nursery nurses and one learning assistant. In the class that I observed, a teacher and two nursery nurses, along with a teaching assistant specifically used to support the child who had additional support needs, were present on an everyday basis. All staff were white British/Scottish. The nursery was situated in a residential area which comprised of relatively modern buildings. The nursery was located in DEPCAT (deprivation category

of neighbourhood) 4 postcode sectors, on a scale of 1-7 where 1 signifies the least deprived and 7 the most deprived areas (see Chapter 1). The catchment area contained owner-occupied and rented accommodation, containing a broad social mix of families (City Council, 2004). According to the head teacher, families whose children came to the nursery owned private houses, lived in housing estates and also came from council estates (a council housing estate existed within walking distance), where there was a mixture of private house owners and council house tenants. On the whole, the headteacher described the nursery population as mainly middle class[16]. Regarding parents' occupations, there were no details registered in the nursery; however, according to parents' and teachers' conversations, parents appeared to be working in a variety of jobs (office-based, teaching, academic, police, small businesses). Some mothers were unemployed.

4.4.1.1.1 Description of children

In the mainly white nursery, the class that I observed had 28 children, 26 of which participated in my study. The majority of the children, 20 in number, were white majority Scots. There were 6 (visible and non-visible) minority ethnic children (or children with multiple ethnic identities). The children's profiles are presented in Table 4.1 and include: name, age in years/months, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, homelanguage. Wherever needed, extra information [which is signalled with (*) symbols] is provided in footnote 18.

Information regarding children's social characteristics, which are presented in Table 4.1 (mainly white nursery) and Table 4.2 (multi-ethnic nursery) was provided by the nursery school secretaries and from the forms that parents/caregivers completed while registering their child. Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 thus reflect parents'/caregivers' views. The labels used are problematic and rather unclear. It is not clear, for example, on

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[16]   See Chapter 1 for discussion on social class.

Majority Scots					
Name	**Age in years/months[17]**	**Ethnic Origin**	**Nationality**	**Family Religion**	**Homelanguage**
Nathan	4,5	White-UK	British	None	English
Cameron	4,3	White-UK	Scottish	None	English
Paul	3,11	White-UK	Scottish	None	English
Simon	4	White	Scottish	-	English
Brian	3,10	White	Scottish	-	English
Harry	4,7	White-UK	Scottish	Christian	English
David	4,8	White-UK	Scottish	None	English
Sam	4,6	White-UK	Scottish	None	English
Steven	4,7	White-UK	Scottish	Christian	English
Kevin	4,2	White-UK	Scottish	Christian	English
Richard	3,1	White-UK	Scottish	Christian	English
Graham	3,6	White-UK	Scottish	Christian	English
Ben	4,5	White-UK	Scottish	None	English
Pamela	4,10	White-UK	Scottish	Christian	English
Jessica	3,8	White-UK	Scottish	None	English
Lesley	3,11	White-UK	Scottish	None	English
Mary	4,1	White-UK	Scottish	Christian	English
Abby	4	White-UK	Scottish	None	English
Sarah	3,9	White-UK	Scottish	Christian	English
Derick	3,6	White/UK	Scottish	None	English

Table 4.1: Children's profiles (mainly white nursery) (continued in next page)

what basis these categories have been allocated, and upon which criteria parents/caregivers base their decision regarding their child's nationality or ethnicity, or what being British, Scottish, Other etc. means. Additionally, no English category was presented, as either British or Scottish labels were used. Only one British child, Albert,

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[17] This depicts children's chronological age (in years and months) in October 2007 (when more systematic fieldwork started) according to their date of birth.

in the multi-ethnic nursery had an English background (see Table 4.2) and an English

Minority Ethnic Children or Children with Multiple Ethnic Identities					
Name	Age in years/months	Ethnic Origin	Nationality	Family Religion	Homelanguage
Hassan *	4,7	Asian-Pakistani	Scottish	Muslim	Urdu
Jack **	4,2	Asian-Chinese	British	None	English
Arun ***	3,9	Asian-Indian	Scottish	Hindu	English
Dong ****	3,11	Asian-Korean	Korean	-	Korean
Ahmed *****	4,2	Black-African	British	Muslim	English
JessicaC ******	4,4	Asian-Korean	American-Korean	Christian	Korean
Tara	4,1	White-UK	British	None	English

Table 4.1: Children's profiles (mainly white nursery) [18] (cont.)

accent.[19] Angus in the multi-ethnic nursery was described as British, but there is no information about him other than the fact that educators thought he was Scottish. I also do not have any information about Tara (see Table 4.1) and what her Britishness entails,

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18
    * Spoke English with a Scottish accent
    ** Both parents Chinese heritage, mother's family from Scotland and father from England
    *** Spoke English with an 'Indian accent', level of English basic , understand some words in Hindi
    **** Joined class after Christmas (new arrival),spoke basic English towards end of year
    ***** Ahmed was a child from the downstairs class, who was not part of the main sample; however I provide his details as I had many observations and discussions with him during outside time.
    ****** Spoke fluent English, recent in Scotland, going back to US after summer holidays

19
    It is interesting how there were hardly any English children in both nurseries, which contrasts with the 2001 Census which shows that white English comprise the biggest minority ethnic group in Scotland (see Chapter 1).

although she did have an English accent. From my fieldwork, it was clear that all Majority Scots were born and lived in Scotland, including Nathan who was described as having a British nationality. Chapter 7 reflects children's self- perceptions of nationality and ethnicity, and also illustrates the complexity of such concepts. As already mentioned, religion is based on self-identification, but as Chapter 7 will show, most children did not have a clear view of their religious identity. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 thus reflect parents'/caregivers' religious identifications.

4.4.1.1.2 Policies

The policies in this nursery were rather brief (around 2 pages, although the Equal Opportunity was only one page) and not really analytical or explanatory, especially in comparison to the multiethnic nursery. The nursery had a "Positive Behaviour Policy" (Nursery School, 2004: 1) which stated that "we believe that all nursery staff should be positive and fair at all times towards the children, towards each other and towards the nursery, thus creating a nurturing environment".

Within the aims of the specific policy "children feel happy, secure and supported within their nursery", "families feel welcome and comfortable in the nursery", "staff will respond to challenging behaviour in a caring and sensitive manner and in partnership with parents" (Nursery School, 2004: 1). Members of staff "provide a positive role model with regards to friendliness, care and courtesy" (Nursery School, 2004: 1).

This nursery had "5 Golden Rules" which the children helped write:

1) Be kind to everyone
2) Try to help each other
3) Look after things in the nursery
4) Listen carefully
5) Always tell the truth

The nursery also had a 'Race Equality Education Policy' (Nursery School, 2007: 1-

2):

- "each child will feel valued , safe and secure in the nursery
- each child will be given opportunities to explore issues of race equality and diversity in the curriculum
- each child will feel his or her own background is acknowledged and valued in the nursery
- each child is aware of the unacceptable nature of racial discrimination (name-calling etc)
- each child will be encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards others"

In relation to staff, emphasis was given to building an inclusive environment, promoting fairness and equality, and welcoming and supporting parents. According to the policy, "staff will deliver a curriculum which acknowledges and celebrates diversity", "staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery and content of anti-racist education and make improvements if necessary", and "staff will be proactive in teaching race equality awareness and invite open discussion" (Nursery School, 2007 :1). Interestingly, reference was made to antiracist education and to being proactive, something that was not referred to in the multiethnic nursery. In relation to planning, the policy stated that the head teacher should involve staff in preparing a race equality audit and ensure "race equality is embedded in learning and teaching within the curriculum" (Nursery School, 2007: 2).

The nursery had also developed an Equal Opportunities Policy (Nursery School, 1999: 1) which stated as its aim "to ensure equal opportunities are available to all children in the nursery" and "to recognise and value the diversity of every individual in the nursery community". It was stated that staff should "encourage children to develop a sense of equality and justice for all", a practice that should be reflected in planning and resources (Nursery School, 1999: 1).

In the 'Expressive and Aesthetic Development' policy (Nursery School, 2002: 1), reference was made to developing "an awareness of and appreciation for music, songs and dance from many cultures".

4.4.1.2 Description of the multiethnic nursery school, children and policies

4.4.1.2.1 Multiethnic nursery school

This nursery was situated in the heart of the city centre, in an area which contained both old tenements and relatively modern buildings. The nursery was situated near a University; therefore, there were "children on the roll and on the waiting list from all over the world" (Nursery School, 2001: 1). The nursery was located in DEPCAT 5[20] postcode sectors, an area slightly more deprived than the mainly white nursery area (DEPCAT 4). The building comprised of two levels, with one classroom upstairs and downstairs. The children of this nursery school attended one of the two classrooms. There was also a staff room, a kitchen, an office, a parents' room, children's bathrooms, a staff room and an entrance hall. The school had a large mature garden surrounded by a stone wall. The garden had facilities for horticulture and a range of fixed and flexible climbing equipment.

The nursery held places for 62 children. Most children came from the local area, and the school had a broad social and ethnic mix. This nursery had two job-share head teachers, two teachers, three nursery nurses and three learning assistants. One of the learning assistants was attending to support a boy with additional support needs. There was also one bilingual teacher that attended until Christmas (due to illness). Six of the staff were white British/Scottish, two white British/English, one white Irish, one white Australian and lastly one black Pakistani. In the specific classroom I observed, there were two part-time teachers, and two full-time nursery nurses and the bilingual teacher (who attended until Christmas).

The nursery did not keep any information of the details of the occupations of the parents. However from what parents and educators said, it was apparent that parents/caregivers came from a variety of different social backgrounds; some worked in the private or public sector (e.g. teachers, office jobs), some owned businesses, some were students, academics, and others were housewives and unemployed. In relation to

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[20]   See Chapter 1 for further discussion.

minority ethnic children, some of the children, like those of Pakistani heritage for example, came from families that were rather established in Scotland, with most parents being owners of local shops, one father being an Imam in the local mosque, one father being an academic, mothers mainly being housewives, and one mother being a university student. Some of the minority ethnic children were newcomers, with only a few years or months in the UK. The Pakistani children were the ones that Moira (headteacher) described as being a rather established community. During an interview, Moira described the nursery as a mixture. However, Moira tended to describe the families as middle class, although there were some working class families[21].

4.4.1.2.2 Description of children

In the multiethnic nursery, the class that I observed had 25 children in total, 22 of which participated in my study. Six children were majority Scots and 16 children were minority ethnic or children with multiple ethnic identities. Table 4.2 provides similar information with Table 4.1 on children's profiles. Wherever needed, extra information [which is signalled with (*) symbols] is provided in footnote 22.

Majority Scots					
Name	Age in years/months	Ethnic Origin	Nationality	Family Religion	Home-Language
Laura	4,1	White/UK	Scottish	None	English
Jason	4,11	White/UK	Scottish	None	English
Jake	3,6	White/UK	Scottish	None	English
Angus	3,11	White/UK	British	None	English
Bill	4,5	White/UK	Scottish	None	English
Adam	3,8	White/UK	Scottish	None	English

Table 4.2: Children's profiles (multi-ethnic nursery) (continued in next page)

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[21]   See Chapter 1.

Minority Ethnic Children or Children with Multiple Ethnic Identities					
Name	Age in years/months	Ethnic Origin	Nationality	Family Religion	Home-Language
Aleemah *	4,5	Asian/Pakistani	Scottish	Muslim	English/ Punjabi
Farah*	4,6	Asian/Pakistani	Other	Muslim	Punjabi/Urdu
Seema A*	4,1	Asian/Pakistani	British	Muslim	Urdu
Nahida*	4	Other (Pakistani)	Scottish	Muslim	English/Urdu
Hana*	3,10	Asian/Pakistani	Other	Muslim	Urdu
Asim*	4,6	Asian/Pakistani	Scottish	Muslim	Urdu
Saajid*	3,5	Asian/Pakistani	Other	Muslim	Urdu
Seema S **	3,3	Asian/Indian	British	Hindu	English
Sophie	4,3	White- Other	Other (American)	Christian	English
Viktor ***	4,8	White/Other	British	Christian	Bulgarian/ Russian
Christian ****	4,1	White/Other	Scottish	None	Finnish
Sebastian *****	3,9	Other	Other	Christian/Roman Catholic	Polish
Albert ******	3,3	White/UK	Scottish	None	English
Gan *******	4,4	Asian/Chinese	Other	None	Chinese (Modern Standard /Mandarin)
Patrick ********	3,6	White/UK	Scottish/Italian	None	English/Italian
Antoni	4,4	White/Other	Scottish/Other	Christian	English/Greek

Table 4.2: Children's profiles (multi-ethnic nursery)[22] (cont.)

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[22] ***** Most Pakistani children spoke fluent English with some exceptions; some spoke English with a Scottish, English or Pakistani accent and most Pakistani children were born in Scotland and came from families who were rather established in Scotland. Hana was the only new arrival.
** Spoke English with an English accent

4.4.1.2.3 Policies

In the multiethnic nursery, staff had recently developed a policy for "Additional Support for Learning Policy (Nursery School, 2008: 4) which was rather extensive (29 pages) and fully detailed; within the document, it was stated that the nursery was committed to equality and inclusion and "to developing a supporting ethos which values and respects the needs of each other".

Within the circle time, guidelines (Nursery School, unknown a: 1) again emphasise on valuing and including each person, providing equality of opportunity, and an aim "to promote a positive ethos throughout the school", "to foster a climate of respect for all", "to foster a climate of belonging". The nursery had a Race Equality Policy (2001: 1-2) which stated that:

"This nursery will promote race equality and oppose racism in all its forms and foster positive attitudes and commitment to an education for equality… Children in the nursery will be prepared for life in a multicultural society and will be assisted in appreciating the benefits of diversity… Staff will strive to build an inclusive environment, where every child can fulfil their potential".

The nursery followed 'Equal Opportunities Guidelines' which were part of the Appendix of the Race Equality Policy. The Equal Opportunities guidelines touched upon all aspects of identity, including gender, race, ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation and age of pupils, and aimed:

- "to identify, combat and eradicate incidents of negative behaviour with regard to gender, race, etc (as above list) which constitute bullying and racism with regard to children, families and staff

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*** Fluent in English
**** Spoke only a few words in English
***** Spoke limited English
 ****** English parents and had an English accent
 ******* Could not speak English
******** Spoke mainly English and only a few Italian words.

- to promote positive behaviour
- to help each child to grow in self esteem, to value themselves and each other" (Nursery School, 2001: 3).

The policy defined bullying with reference to all the above factors, added that it could happen for no apparent reason, explained what was meant by unacceptable behaviour and went on to elaborate on how unacceptable behaviour will be tackled.

Interestingly, strategies were general, specific and gave emphasis to how strategies that work for the individual child are also important. The strategies that the policy referred to were specifically linked to race/religion, language, sexism, disability. Within the policy, emphasis was given to the celebration of different religious and cultural festivals that represented the children and families, and the major world religions, thus recognizing the importance of the festivals in people's lives.

The policy also advocated "using a range of resources to reflect different races, religions and cultures, regularly within the normal nursery routine e.g. snack foods, dressing up clothes, jigsaws, books, home corner resources, gluing materials, pictures, songs etc." (Nursery School, 2001: 5). It suggested "reassuring parents that information given to the nursery with regard to diet, religion or other cultural practice will be honoured by the school" and encouraged "challenging racist comments including those that come from home" (Nursery School, 2001: 5).

Emphasis was given to a multicultural/antiracist approach, but this was restricted to a reactive, rather than a proactive approach.

In relation to language, the policy stressed the importance of supporting and developing children's use of English language, using other languages and encouraging children's first language in school. Emphasis was given to teaching children how to support bilingual children and "encouraging bilingual children to teach others some words if they feel confident" (Nursery School, 2001: 6). Parents as a language resource, and the correct pronunciation of food names were also stated.

The policy also referred to sexism, and pointed out the need of "ensuring that non

gender specific language is used", "swapping between He and She", "challenging assumptions about physical characteristics in the play context"; at this point, an example was given regarding physical ability. Specific reference was made to "being aware of the implications of responses to colours especially pink and blue" (Nursery School, 2001: 6).

Lastly, reference was made to challenging stereotypes and preconceptions through various resources, including inviting people from the community to break down the gender stereotype. The policy also elaborated on disability, and touched upon raising awareness of the range of disabilities and meeting needs. Interestingly, reference was made to providing activities where children "experience disability through sensory awareness of lack of sensory awareness" ("feely bags"), and raising awareness of the skills that disabled people have (Nursery School, 2001: 7). Targets were also set, regarding paying attention to the facilities to enable access, being aware of the health needs, and raising staff awareness and knowledge of specific issues.

Examples are provided in most of the above statements, to help understand the policy. The policies were directed to all staff, parents and people that worked in the nursery.

The nursery also had an "Ethos for Supporting Individual Children" policy which stated as Core Beliefs that:

- "Each child and adult has a right to be listened to and understood
- Each child and adult has a right to feel respected and valued
- Each child and adult has a right to express him/her self
- Each child and adult has a right to feel safe and secure within the classroom environment
- Each child and adult has a right to have his/her needs met with consideration for others" (Nursery School, 2006: 1)

This nursery based its approach on Non-Violent Communication, and therefore policies were in place to support and guide staff on how that should be enacted.

The nursery also had 'Guidelines for Learning and Teaching'(Nursery School,

unknown b: 1) according to which:

"staff value individual pupils and encourage them to develop self esteem", "interacting with children positively to develop good relationships-knowing children as individuals; being fair, friendly and open; encouraging mutual respect among children and between staff ad children, minimising conflict and blame; being positive about potential for achievement and development"

Children were encouraged to "work where appropriate together…cooperate, collaborate and respect each other" (Nursery School, unknown b: 2)

Staff were instructed to "take into account the different needs and interests of individual children", "recognising, valuing and acting upon individual differences" (Nursery School, unknown b: 2). In the Appendix, staff referred to what learning and teaching meant to them, and among others it was stated that "we all learn from and teach each other, children and staff" (Nursery School, unknown b: 3)which indicates the power dynamics between child and adult, and the interactive and respectful nature of that relationship.

4.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to highlight key policy and legislative developments of significance for equity and social justice issues, particularly in relation to education, and children's rights. This chapter also set the scene, and described the context in which the research was carried out, by providing details regarding the two areas of the two nurseries (one 'mainly white' and one multiethnic nursery), the specific schools, the children and families in each school, and the policies that were in place in relation to equity and social justice.

'Equality', Social Justice and the fight against discrimination and inequalities seem to be high in the policy and legislative agenda, from the macro-government level, to the meso-local authority, and further down to the micro-nursery level. Key developments and changes were identified in this chapter, in relation to:

- the 'equality' scene and the drive towards a 'Single Equality Act',

- the Scottish Government and its commitment to social justice,

- the early years with 'The Early Years Framework',

- Scottish education with the CfE

- and the commitment of the aforementioned towards social justice.

Of particular importance is the salience of being proactive, promoting both a multicultural and antiracist education, and lastly engaging children into critical discussions of discrimination and equity by considering these issues relevant to their lives, even at a very young age. Challenges were also identified in relation to: a) the lack of recognition, and explicit guidance in relevant policy documents of

- what the term diversity explicitly means, particularly in relation to whether there are aspects of diversity that are unacceptable, and

- the potential dilemmas, limitations, complexities and challenges that educators may face in their everyday practice relative to the 'contradicting facets of justice' that may occur and how these should be overcome,

b) limitations in the current way that Scottish Government and local authorities are providing support and guidance for nursery staff. This is especially evident if seen in relation to the main findings of Chapter 9, and a wider debate of potential challenges of putting rhetoric into practice which will be discussed in Chapter 10.

The central issue now, is whether all of these documents are used within establishments, and how all these policy and legislative developments are translated into practice. "A policy statement cannot be seen as an end in itself" (Siraj- Blatchford 1994: 26); the mere announcement and enforcement of a policy is not enough to produce results. The policy has to be checked regarding its practice, structure and procedures. The following chapters will also explore young children's constructions of identities and differences, and the extent to which discrimination is apparent in their lives, thus

exploring, in essence, the links between policy, research and practice.

Chapter 5

Children and age identity

5.1 Constructing age at the nursery level

Age seemed to be rather salient in children's accounts of their identity. Drawing on empirical data, this chapter discusses how the young children (3-5) (re)-constructed age in their everyday lives at the nursery. Age is a part of social identity that has been rather neglected in social sciences, particularly in relation to how people, including young children, construct and perceive age identity (see Chapter 2).

In this study, children's constructions of age seemed to be conceptualised in three ways. Firstly, as a statement of 'being'/'state of being' (part of an individual and a collective identity). Secondly, as a 'way of being' (according to what age one was); there was a particular link between age, physical appearance (height, size), strength (physical power) and lastly competence/ ability/ performance. All of the above related to the process of embodiment (see also Skattebol, 2006). Through embodiment the children in this study emphasised 'becoming' and belonging to a community (see also Skattebol, 2006) but also to a state of 'being'. There was this general acceptance, among children, that 'being older' was better, and it reflected on physical appearance, abilities and performance. Issues of superiority and inferiority that were linked with age came up. More sophisticated theorisations were evident which linked age, especially 'being' older, to independence, choice and freedom, and autonomy. Also, intersections occured between age, gender and ethnicity. Thirdly, children's constructions of age seemed to be conceptualised, to borrow James's (2005) term, as a chronological narrative of the children's own life course. Key themes were identified in both nurseries, therefore I will draw on these together rather than discuss each nursery separately.

5.2 Age as a mere 'state of being'

The children in this research used the categorical term of age (see also James, 1993;

Skattebol, 2006). Children would talk about their age in various occasions, saying for example 'I am 3', 'I am 4' (see also Brooker, 2008), and were occasionally very specific ("I am 4.5"). There was not always a specific reason for the children to express their age; it was just an important part of their individual identity, and very often they would state it to others. When I asked JessicaC what would be important for me to write in my notebook, she referred to age.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 22/01/08)

I am sitting with JessicaC. I have my notebook in front of me. I ask JC what is important for me to write in my notebook.
JC: You need to write 5.
Kristina (K): What does that mean?
JC: It is my age, I am five.
K: How old are you?
JC: Five.
Then somebody else asks her.
Luke: Are you five?
JC: Yes.

Many children talked about age, whenever I asked them the same question about what I could write in my notebook about them. However, it was through observations and informal conversations with, or between the children that I came to realise the salience of age.

Naturally, birthdays provided a reason for age-related discussions to take place, where children would often compare themselves with others. Birthdays were really important for children, and something that they really looked forward to.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 3/06/08)

JC was singing, dancing around and shouting loud all day on her birthday, she was repeatedly saying how she was five.
JC: I am five, I am five, I am five.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 9/12/08)

There is a discussion between Laura and Sophie regarding birthdays. Then Sophie says.
Sophie: My birthday is going to be ages, hundreds of years from now *(says with a disappointment).*

Children would often talk about how old they would be on their next birthday, with particular emphasis to the fact that that they would go to 'big school'. A desire to become older was more than evident (see also James, 1993; Skattebol, 2006).

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 13/12/07)

Patrick starts talking about his birthdays that are coming and says "on my next birthday I will be 4, next I'll be 5, next 6".

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 23/01/08)

Patrick, Asim, Viktor and Christian are talking about their age, their next birthday.
Patrick: I am going to be six on my next birthday.
Asim and Viktor are talking about birthday.
Christian: I am 4.
Viktor: Yeah, I am a hundred.
Saajid is trying to get involved, but doesn't. Children are making cake, saying "happy birthday to Viktor" and talking about different ages.
Asim: I am 14, I want to be 14 and hundred mixed.

During an activity with the children in the multiethnic nursery (see Chapter 9), where they were making passports, it was observed that when they were asked by the teacher to choose their age, most of the children would go for their own age; whenever they didn't, they preferred to be older (especially the younger children).

Children would also ask other children about how old they were, and in this way would establish their own identity through comparing themselves with other children (see also Brooker, 2008). Notions of collective identity between children of the same age

were also expressed (see also James, 1993). Such notions of collective senses of age identity emphasised boundaries, and created notions of 'us' and 'them' which at times had social implications for children's lives (see Chapter 8).

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 12/05/08)

All of a sudden, Richard says
Richard: I am 3.
Dong: I am 5.
JessicaC: I am 5.
Dong: No you are not 5 you are 4 *(referring to JessicaC)*
Kevin *(comes along and says)*: I am 4.5.
JessicaC : No Dong, we are the same, we are 5.
Steven: I am 4 and 3 quarters.

Children would compare with each other, drawing on how old they are, how old they will become on their next birthday and who would become older first, thus showing a preference for older age. Getting older than the other was considered important. Complex conversations that involved statements of present age, next age and day of birth were seen to took place.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 15/01/08)

Lesley: I am five now.
Pamela: I am going to be six next year, after you.
Lesley: I am before you Pamela, I was born before you Pamela, do you know who was born before you? (says with superiority and teasing way)
Pamela gets upset she thinks she was born first.
Lesley: We were all born the same time.
Then they talk about Sophie, Pamela's sister. Lesley is saying that Sophie was born first and Pamela is getting uptight and upset.
Pamela: No, my mum was the first baby and then it was me and then it was Sophie (says with an angry but also upset voice).
Lesley is challenging her, by saying that she is younger than Sophie, Pamela gets upset and tears are in her eyes.

From the above accounts, it is obvious that a "chronologized and numerical identity" (James, 2005) is extremely important for the children; it is a part of their private individualised identity, and part of a more collective identity (James, 1993). Children would often talk about their current age, and would compare it with other children. They would observe and state similarities and differences between them. In this sense, importance was given to children to their current age, or 'being'. Emphasis was also given to becoming older. However, children did not merely state age. Children's accounts depicted a more complex picture of their perspective of age that related to particular 'ways of being'.

5.3 Age as a 'way of being'

It was not only the statement of numerical age, that was considered important for children. Children's constructions of age linked to concepts of physical appearance (height, size), strength (physical power), competence, ability and performance. This can be seen alongside James's (1993) findings, where she concludes that five aspects of the body were seen as rather salient by children; height, shape, appearance, gender and performance. Age was not only linked to how the body was, but also to what the body could do. Children, therefore, expressed age not only through words, but also through embodiment.

5.3.1 Age and physical appearance

Children would often link numerical age to physical appearance and particularly height. While talking about their age and comparing with each other, they would often compare their heights to prove that they were a certain age, and particularly to show that they are older. There was a height-measuring stand as part of the nursery's resource which at times influenced children to compare heights; "I am bigger than you". Contrarily to James's (1993) findings, where younger children (4 & 5 year old) were not observed to make such links between age and height, I found that children of 3, 4 and 5 years of age did. This indicates how embodiment was used by the children, not only in relation to

'becoming' and belonging to a certain age, but also to justify their current state of 'being' a certain age. This was particularly evident when the children were older or taller. In children's conceptualisations, the older one was, the taller he/she would be. There was also a desire to be taller/ "bigger".

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 23/01/08)

Steven, Nathan and Simon, are talking about their age.
Steven: I am 4.
Nathan: I am 4 and a half.
Then they start measuring themselves, they are comparing to see who is "bigger".
Steven: Nathan, who is big?
Simon: MEEEEE (emphasises on wanting to be him that is "big").

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 15/01/08)

When the children come in from outside, Jessica and Lesley are comparing each other heights.
Lesley: I am bigger than you.
They are comparing themselves; Pamela comes along as well and joins into the comparison. As they are comparing they are jumping as well so that they can be higher than the other. Lesley is jumping so she can reach Pamela. They tip toe as well.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 25/06/08)

Aleemah: We are taller than you (saying to me), I am 5 now.
Farah: So am I.
K: I am 24.
Aleemah: I am 100.
Farah: We are older than you.

The importance of height was also evident in Hassan's account, comparing his age to mine and linking it to height. The changing of height, even in the same person (like for example, if kneeling or sitting) could have an impact on the age. Hassan also referred to the future, and how there would be a limit in getting taller. In his account, age and height were linked, as at a point of maturity you reach the optimum height.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 12/05/08)

Hassan: I am not older than you but when I stand up I am.
He sits down and then stands up saying that when he sits I am older than him but when he stands up he becomes older than me, if I am still sitting, he is teasing me and laughing.
Hassan: But when you stand up and I stand up you are older than me, my brother is older than me coz he is 10 and I am 5 but he is not older than you. My brother is right up there he is 8.5.
K: Oh wow.
Hassan: How old are you?
K: I am 24.
Hassan: You know when you were 50, you will be just big and you will be right up there and you will stop, when you are 50 you will be big and then you stop.

From Hassan's laughter and the fact that he was teasing me by sitting and standing, it was evident that he knew that a person cannot change their age according to whether they are sitting (being shorter) or standing. However, his account showed how age can be linked to certain ways of being. Age and height were two notions that are linked together. Children would make generalised comments about age and height, and would most likely share the belief that the older one is, the taller and the better he/ she is too.

Nevertheless. a comment that was made by Harry showed how this was not always the case. Harry and David were talking about their age, and comparing to see who is taller. Although David was taller, Harry gave emphasis to the fact that they were the same age, showing that height does not always link with age.

Mainly White Nursery
(26/05/08)

David and Harry are talking about their ages. Then David links it with height.
David: I am taller
Harry: But we're still the same age.

Children would very often use the term big, while referring to height. Being

'bigger' (taller) was seen in a positive manner, as it indicated older age. 'Big' was a word children would use in order to indicate that they were older, and was linked with physical size and strength.

5.3.2 Age and strength (physical power)

Children would occasionally talk about how they were strong, indicating that they were big/older. The older the children were, the stronger they thought they were; the younger children would also consider the older children strong. Again, being older was seen in a positive way, and was linked to strength.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 14/11/07)

Viktor and Jason are on the computer. Jake comes along, he is wearing something on his head. He is standing up to his fullest height, he has his fists tight and high up in a boxing position, to indicate strength. His whole posture is to show his muscles and his physical power.
Jake: I am the big strong guy.
But both Jason and Viktor don't really take notice.
Jake: I am the big strong boy.
Viktor looks at Jake and says:
Viktor: Jason, is my friend!
Viktor immediately looks back at Jason and puts his arm on Jason's back.

It was through phrases like "I am the big strong boy", and also through embodiment, bodily expressions that indicated strength that Jake attempted to prove that he 'belonged' to the 'strong guy' category. Children would pretend to be older, and justified it with embodiment. In this respect, children not only used embodiment to justify a 'state of being', but also, as Skattebol (2006) had already suggested, to justify 'becoming' and belonging. Friendship groupings based on age were apparent (see Chapter 8).

5.3.3 Age, competence / ability and performance

James (1993) talked about how the children in her study did not only give emphasis to what kind of body a child had, but also to "the actions and movements involved in the body's performance". This is something that I came upon in my study as well. Children would often link age to ability/competence and body performance. Once again, the older one was, the more abilities/competences or better performances he/she was expected to have. Interestingly, the children would often say that they were good at something, or that they were better than someone, and to justify that they would refer to their age. Abilities/competences varied from running fast, knowing how to write, drawing better, jumping high, dancing better, to doing more difficult moves, tying laces etc. Children would often compare with each other by going back in the past and saying how they could do a specific action (e.g. tying laces) at an even earlier age. They obviously considered it a great feat.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 23/05/08)

Harry and Nathan are talking, Harry is saying to Nathan.
Harry: I know how to do my laces.
Nathan: I can, that is easy.
Harry: I could even do it when I was two.
Hassan is listening to the conversation.
Hassan: I could do it when I was one…

Their discussion revealed a myth about the expected behaviour of two year olds, and indicated how the latter were different from what was expected. In order to indicate superiority, the children drew on a 'discourse' which they ended up deconstructing, as they themselves did not fit that norm.

Other times, having certain items or clothes could make them faster and therefore superior. Interestingly enough, even if they had those items, children considered being older as what was most important, and the factor to which nothing could compare.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 12/05/08)

Richard is saying to me that he is very fast, and he shows me how fast he runs.
Richard: I am very fast (showing me how fast he runs), I am faster than Ewan, look how fast I run.
Kevin comes along.
Kevin: I am faster than you.
Richard: I am even faster than a space car.
Kevin: I am fastest.
Steven: I am faster than you, I am faster than both of you, I have super fast trainers, so I am the fastest.
Richard: I am faster than Ewan.
Steven: Well I can catch you because I am bigger than you (he goes towards Richard to show that he is bigger).
Richard: Yes.
Kevin: I am bigger than you too (says Kevin to Richard).

Children would not only compare with other children, but they would also compare their current selves with past (younger) or future selves (older). For example, at the multiethnic nursery, Hana was saying to me "If I grow up I will be climbing on the trees and so high up."

5.3.4 Age and expectations of behaviour

Children would link age to certain behaviours, or would have certain expectations of ways of behaving/acting (see also James, 1993; Skattebol, 2006).

Mainly White nursery
(Field notes, 27/11/07)

The children come up from outside time and are coming to the table to eat lunch. Jessica, Jack, Harry, Brian, Lesley, Mary. Everybody finds a chair. Mary wanted to sit, but there is no seat for her. She gets upset, and she throws her plate with anger. The children are looking at her and are amazed with her reaction, they stare at her with confusion and their faces shows that they find her reaction weird and that they do not approve of it. The staff try to calm her down and find her a seat. She sits down. Lesley asks one of the staff.
Lesley: How old is Mary? (Making a facial expression indicating that she thinks Mary's

reaction is not expected for her age).
Jessica: She is 5, she is 5 (she repeats).
Staff: No, she is 4, not 5.
Lesley: Mmmm (facial expression shows that she did not expect her to be that age).

Although Lesley did not explicitly say that she did not find Mary's behaviour appropriate to her age, it was obvious from the context and the direct questioning of Mary's age, that Lesley was linking the behaviour to the age. Her facial expression indicated that the way Mary acted was unsuitable to her age.

Children would often laugh at children that did not behave in a certain expected way, or that acted younger than their age dictated. Behavioural aspects that were associated with babyhood were seen as inferior, an 'immature state of being'.

Mainly White Nursery

(Field notes, 26/05/08)

David is talking to me. Then he talks about his friend.

David: My friend is 3 *(starts laughing),* she still wears nappies *(talking in a derogative way and laughs making fun of her).*

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 30/11/07)

After a little while Albert comes along to the gluing table, he is with the rest of the boys (Viktor, Asim, Jason). Albert is doing his own thing.
K: What are you making?
Albert: I am making a space rocket.
Viktor has a look.
Viktor: Look you can make it like that *(showing his one, which he thinks is better).*
Albert looks but continues to make it his way. Viktor looks at Albert and what he is making.
Viktor: How old are you?
Albert: I am 3.
Viktor: I am 4 says Viktor.
Albert: I am 3.
Jason: I am 5.

Other discussions indicated how children had specific ideas linked with age.

Mainly White Nursery
(Fieldnotes, 10/06/08)

Hassan: I am the winner coz I am the faster, I wear big shoes for my age.

The fact that they were different to the 'norm', combined with what was expected of them, indicated how age was more of an experiential rather than a biological, chronological truth.

Children based their views about age on stereotypes and myths (e.g. myths regarding the abilities that accompany certain ages, see further below). James (1993) argued that stereotypes are used to categorise and to "highlight similarities within categories and differences between categories" (Taylor, 1981:84, cited in James,1993: 106). It is through these stereotypes that children develop a sense of belonging (Rapport, 1990, cited in James, 1993: 107). Friendships can be created and separated through stereotypes; different social identities can also be evaluated (James, 1993). Ideal types are created about the self, which according to Rapport (1990 cited in James, 1993: 108), may come from the adult world, but are critically viewed by the children.

It was obvious that children were making links between age, physical characteristics (height and size), strength, abilities/competence and performance. The older one was, the taller, the stronger, the more able he was believed to be. James (1993: 110) argued that such beliefs are linked with children's early socialisation experiences "when corporal growth is used by adults to signify children's growing sociability and potential personhood". Adults, she continued, would often make links between "physical size to future social identity… the bigger one is, the better one is and the more social…one becomes" (James, 1993:110). James (1993) also stated that through social practices in the school, children come to learn that being older is better.

More sophisticated theorisations linked age and especially being older to independence and autonomy. For example, James (1993: 113) suggests that being older

"enlarges access to social space", something that could be denied to younger children. This was also, evident in this research. Jessica talked to me about how she will go and see Cinderella when she is older, something that she is denied now due to her age. Cinderella is part of the 'girlie girls' identity, that I will discuss (see chapter 6) and intersects with the privilege of being older. Steven also talked about his autonomy and how when he works he will be able to go to the shops and buy chocolate, something that he really likes but cannot do now. Links were also made between age and ethnicity. For example, Steven talked about how his dad does not let him wear a kilt due to his age; "I want to wear them but I'm not allowed…cause my dad says you need to grow up". Age is used in this case to define when one can wear a kilt, something very important for Steven. Age is restricting Steven's right to choice and expression of part of his ethnic identity because he is young.

However, in line with James (1993), it was observed that being big was not always conceived as positive, especially when it came to weight. Children that were considered 'overweight' would be teased, and children would use the word 'fatty' or 'fat bum' in a negative tone.

Children would also base their beliefs on myths regarding the abilities that accompany certain ages. James (2005) talked about myths of childhood that reflect on adult understandings of childhood, which have an impact on adult practice. However, such myths were difficult to keep alive as the everyday life of the adult/child interaction proved them wrong. Chronological age was not always linked to a particular way of competence, as many factors could play an important role.

Such mythologies and stereotypical notions were frequent in children's accounts. However, children and everyday life challenged their validity, albeit occasionally.

5.3.5 Age and knowledge

Very often age was also linked to knowledge; generally speaking, the younger one was, the less he/she was considered to know.

One day, Hassan was drawing Scottish flags in my fieldbook. He talked to me

about the colours that the Scottish flag had. Derick was near, and while Hassan was drawing, I asked Derick if he knew what the drawing was. Derick said that it was a Scottish flag. I then asked Derick what that meant, and Derick did not know what to say. Hassan then interfered, saying "Derick doesn't know 'cause he is too little". Being younger equalled knowing less.

To sum up, age was linked to certain 'ways of being' which related to height, physical power, competence/ability/performance, expectations of behaviour and knowledge. Most of the above were linked to embodiment, which was in turn linked to the 'state of being', 'becoming' and belonging (particularly in relation to 'becoming' and 'belonging' to an older group). Generally speaking, 'being older' was the preferred state of being, justified by the children through the embodiment of a particular habitus they had acquired regarding what 'being older' entailed. However, children did not perceive age merely as a 'state' or 'way of being'. Children also constructed age by viewing it as a chronological narrative of their life course.

5.4 Age as a chronological narrative of the children's own life course

According to James (1993, 2005) children often talk about themselves and make links both to the past and the future. Through their 'narratives' of their 'own life course', children construct their own "world view or sense of place in the world" (James, 2005: 253).

My research bore similar fruit. Children in my study referred to the importance of chronological thinking about the passing of time and about ageing (growing up). The children would refer to their 'life histories' focusing on past experiences, and would also talk about the future. The children talked about the present as well, something that James (2005) does not really refer to.

5.4.1 Talking about the past

Children would talk about their past experiences and would in many cases, but not always, relate them to age. Children would either refer to their past by making more

general comments that reflected previous 'states of being', like for example "when I was a baby", "when I was tiny", or would refer to exact numbers of years (" I was two"). Talking about their date of birth was also important. Children at the multiethnic nursery had folders where they could go and look at their work. The folders contained pictures, photos of the children and their families, drawings and work that the children had done at school. The folders gave the opportunity to children to talk about themselves. Looking at pictures where they were younger, they would often say "this is when I was a baby". Incidents like that indicated that children had a life history, which was important for them.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 17/12/07)

Ben has made an airplane.
K: Have you been on an airplane?
Ben: Yes, when I went on holiday (pause) I was only tiny.
K: Really?
Ben: Yeah, I was only tiny; I was three when I went.

Children would most likely refer to important past events or past 'states of being' (Multiethnic Nursery, Albert: "When I was a baby I broke the light"), which indicated ways of behaviour viewed as immature. For other children, the past was vague; this shows how they differentiated themselves in terms of their past identities (being a baby), a past that they had forgotten.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 12/05/08)

Seema A: I can't remember when I was a baby.

Another interesting observation was made when Laura brought a photo of herself as a baby. Her narrative of her past history was interesting, and she was showing and telling all the children. Children, however, like Seema A above, disconnected with the

160

past, viewing it as a different phase of their life, a different identity; this is important, because their past is a part of their 'self', albeit different from who they are now (see also James, 2005).

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 11/06/08)

Laura has brought a photo of her as a baby in a plastic mobile; she is showing everybody and talking about her past self.
Laura: I was a little baby and I make a light and if you do it a lot of times it shows you.
I ask her about what she can tell me about her, pointing at the photo.
Laura: I don't know what happened coz I forgot, I am too big to remember (i.e. when I was a baby).
Laura is showing everyone a photo or when she was a baby. She shows Sophie who is in the house corner. Sophie looks at it, she puts a big smiley then she says.
Sophie: You look the same colour as me when I was a baby, you're like me when you were a baby says Sophie to Laura.

Note that Sophie found a commonality not only in being a baby, but also in being like Laura in terms of colour. At that point 'being a baby' and being a 'white skin baby' were intersecting.

James talks about the importance of memory which serves both as "a phenomenological ground of identity… and the means for explicit identity constructions" (Antze & Lambeck, 1996: xvi, cited in James, 2005: 260). However, James also talks about how memory is ambiguous as "unconscious processes of selectivity take place" (2005: 260).

Memory is a discourse of identity, which constructs and reconstructs age, which is not only used for the past but is also important for the future and the present" (James, 2005: 260).

Interestingly enough, in her accounts of the past regarding when she was born ('in my mummy's tummy'), Farah made links to ethnicity, talking about her country of origin and her first childhood years. There was also an interesting intersection between past ("when I was born"), present ("now I come here") and future ("I am going to

Pakistan then"), which I will discuss in the next section.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 17/01/08)

Farah came up to me while I was sitting and she asked me to write in her passport the story that she was going to tell me.
Farah: I am from Pakistan (pause). When I was born I was in Pakistan and I was in my mommies tummy and now I come here.
K: Oh really?
Farah: I came from an airplane to here. I was born in Pakistan.
K: Do you like it here?
Farah: No…I like Pakistan better, 'cause it has a lot of swings there.
K: Does your family like it here?
Farah: No they like Pakistan, after the holiday I am going to Pakistan then you won't see me.
She is asking me to write all of these things on her passport. She is upset and sad that she is here. She is talking about Pakistan with nostalgia. She talks about her life and when she was in Pakistan.
Farah: Pakistan is a very long time, I went there for a long time (meaning that she hasn't been there for a long time and that she was there a long time before), I have a lot of toys in Pakistan but they were when I was a baby they are old now. (Then Farah says that I need to write 3 and then says) I am 3 years old, [BEBB-unclear] and Russia is not my best country and I wanted to be in Pakistan and I didn't….I came from a long time ago from Pakistan here.

Farah talks about her past with nostalgia, emphasising on her ethnic identity, and the country where she was born in particular (see also Chapter 7).

5.4.2 Talking about the future

Children would often talk about the future, both in specific ('I am going to be six next year') and abstract terms ('when I go to big school'). The future was linked with specific orientations (e.g. going to school, going to watch Cinderella) and was viewed positively, as it signified the ability to do 'more'. This is not to say that the past was not seen positively, but that the past was very much linked with being 'immature' and being a baby; therefore, the future had more to look forward to.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 11/12/07)

Lesley: When you are 5 you are going to big school.
Jessica: When you are 5, I will see Cinderella.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 15/01/08)

Lesley: I am five now.
Pamela: I am going to be six next year, after you.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 22/01/08)

Cameron: I am going to the big school.
K: Are you?
Children talk to me about when they are going to 'go to big school' and about their age.

Going to school was considered very important, and was something that the children could not wait for.

Multiethnic Nursery

(Field notes, 22/05/08)

Sophie: It's a long time until primary school (face seems disappointed).
K: When are you going to primary school?
Sophie: When I am five.

The future was not only seen as positive because of the fact that the children would go to school; it was what was linked with going to school that was really important. Going to school not only meant that the children would have grown older, but also that they would develop and acquire skills like reading and writing; skills that the children viewed as significant.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 27/02/08)

We were sitting at the drawing table. Aleemah is copying a drawing she is looking at.
K: What are you doing?
Aleemah explains what she is doing.
K: Are you copying it?
Aleemah: Yes (pointing at the drawings), because I can't read the letters, I can't write and read yet, I will read when I go to school.

There were, however, some negative feelings about getting older; in one observation I had made, it was linked to death. More specifically, Aleemah was asking about death and about how she did not want to die.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 29/05/08)

Aleemah: When are we going to die? When we are old?
Helen (educator) was saying that it is when you are old.
Aleemah: I don't want to die, I don't want to die, I don't want to die.
Helen was saying to her that she is not to worry because that is not going to happen now, and it is going to be a lot of years yet.

Age "is a significant resource through which individual selves construct their biographical narratives across the life course, both in terms of the past, looking back from old age and the future, looking forward from childhood" (Hockey & James, 2003: 6). The young children in my study talked about the present as well, the state of 'being'; therefore, they were not only referring to the past or the future.

5.5 Conclusion

Age was an important part of children's identity in the nursery setting. Many similarities were observed with other limited research with children (James, 1993; James, 2005; Skattebol, 2006) regarding how age was perceived by them in a categorical sense, as a measure of the passing time, and as part of their multiple individual and social identity.

There are several key findings regarding children's age identity. Firstly, age was used as a categorical term, perceived by the children as a mere 'state of being', which acted as a process of defining the self and others, drawing on boundaries of 'us' and 'them'. Secondly, age was also expressed and viewed as 'ways of being' linked to physical appearance (e.g height and size), strength (physical power) and competence/ability/performance. Lastly, children perceived age as a chronological narrative of their own life course, linked to the past, present and the future. In this sense, children would often construct and make reference to their life histories, which could be seen as part of children's identity. Processes of embodiment of age identity are of importance and were used both while stating age, which could be considered as part of 'being', and also while expressing 'ways of being', very much linked to 'becoming' and belonging to a specific age group. This process of embodiment both found in 'state of being' and 'becoming and belonging', takes work by Skattebol (2006) forward, which relates embodiment more to the latter, rather than the former. There was a general desire for children to be older, which also linked to feelings of superiority and inferiority. Children also expressed rather sophisticated theorisations of age identity linked to independence, choice and freedom and autonomy. Although there was little evidence in this research, cases arose where age was also linked to gender and ethnicity, especially in relation to the content of children's desires of what they would do when they would be older.

Chapter 6

Children and gender identity

6.1 Introduction

Children's gender identity has been researched rather thoroughly (see Chapter 2) and a gap has been identified in relation to further exploring multiple constructions of 'femininities' and 'masculinities', particularly in early childhood (for older children, see Renold, 2005; for younger children Connolly, 2004; Blaise, 2005).

This chapter focuses on children's (re-)constructions of gender identity in their everyday lives at nursery. The general aim is to explore the meaning of gender identity for young children's lives (3-5) and its importance as a part of their multiple and intersecting social identities. Data has shown similarities in children's (re-)constructions of gender identity in the two nursery schools (multi-ethnic and mainly white). Therefore, the data presented in this chapter is organised under key themes. Whenever there are slight differences, these are mentioned on the spot; when there are important differences, these are discussed separately.

There are five general findings regarding young children's gender identity. First of all, gender seemed to be an important part of children's identity constructed a) by 'stating gender', a process in which children characterised themselves stating that they were, or were not, a boy or a girl and b) through 'ways of being' gender (e.g. preferences, ways of playing, appearance, clothes). Secondly, children showed a clear and at many times 'fixed' notion of what 'being' a boy or a girl is; 'fixed' ideas could relate to stereotypes. Thirdly, this highly 'fixed' notion of gender identity varied depending on the context, providing in this way multiple constructions of 'being' a boy or a girl. Fourthly, such multiple, and at times 'fixed', notions of 'ways of being' a specific gender lead to wider constructions and expressions of both dominant and non-dominant masculinities and femininities. I will draw on many expressions of dominant masculinities; however, to a great extent, hegemonic masculinities were linked to

'roughness' (both verbal and physical) and being 'bad'. Non-hegemonic masculinities were associated to 'being soft' and studious, or not 'being that rough', and were very much linked to what were considered by the children as 'dominant femininities'. There were also multiple dominant femininities, yet in most cases being a 'girlie girl' was predominantly linked e.g. to beauty, dancing, maturity and being studious. In most cases, non-dominant ways of being a girl were linked to anything that was considered masculine. Lastly, children's notions of masculinities and femininities were also linked to primary sexual identities and particularly (hetero-)sexual identities.

While exploring children's constructions of gender identity, this chapter will first examine the meaning of gender identity for young children; how children 'do' gender. It will explore both 'fixed' notions of what a boy or a girl meant, and notions that drew upon a plethora of meanings. This chapter will also discuss the importance of fluidity, multiplicity and contextuality while exploring children's notions of gender identity, drawing on constructions of 'masculinities' and 'femininities' that were evident. In relevant discussions between children, links were made to sexualities/sexual identity, and to ways of 'being' 'masculine' and 'feminine'. The chapter will then explore both 'hegemonic' and non-hegemonic masculinities, and dominant and 'other' femininities. Finally, it will examine children's constructions of (hetero-)sexual discourses that seemed to be a prominent part of their gender/sexual identity.

At this point, drawing on empirical data, I will discuss in detail how young children (3-5) (re-)constructed gender identity in their everyday lives at the nursery.

6.2 Children stating gender

Children were observed in various contexts to refer to their gender in a mere statement (e.g. 'I am a girl'). In many cases, reference to who one is, was explicitly defined by reference to who one is not (" you can't be a boy you are a girl").

Children would get really upset and annoyed if other children would call them members of the opposite gender. It was important for the children to be called the gender they were.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 31/10/07)

Laura is trying to cut the silo tape to use it for herself.
Viktor: Look what he is doing? You are ruining it (looking and speaking to Laura).
Laura gets all up tight.
Laura: You called me a boy!
Viktor: No I didn't.
Laura looks at me.
Laura: Viktor called me a boy (looks annoyed), I am not a boy! You called me a boy.
Viktor: No I didn't!
Laura: Yes you did.

Such discussions indicate the invariant nature of gender in children's conceptualisations, and how gender is an important part of children's identity which should not be mistaken.

6.3 Gender and ways of 'being'

Careful observations and discussions with the children suggested that children constructed gender as certain ways of 'being' a boy or a girl (see also Thorne, 1993; Skelton & Hall, 2001; Browne, 2004). The ways of 'being' that children referred to indicated links between gender and particular ways of appearance, colours, spaces in the nursery, resources, and roles; even names were linked to gender (both male and female).

Appearance was viewed by children as a way of constructing gender. Physical appearance (e.g. hair style) and clothing items (e.g. hats, scarves, bags etc.) were both extremely important. Although all children could identify girls from boys, and knew that gender/sex was invariant children would say that another child is the opposite gender if they wore items or clothes that were considered to 'be' of the opposite gender. Children would most likely make fun of that. Certain colours were often associated with gender (red or pink for girls and blue for boys) by both girls and boys.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 27/11/07)

Steven and Harry are at the glowing table. They are using the Scottish flags and they are painting. All of a sudden, Harry looked at Steven and said
Harry: You like pink, pink is for girls not for boys.
(…)

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 8/05/08)

Aleemah goes on top of the box outside. She is standing and looking down at the girls (Farah and Mei-li) It is rather high. She shouts lifting her hands up in the sky.
Aleemah: I am the queen of the pink castle!

Children would be negative towards, and at times 'bully', other children, drawing upon the colour of clothes and gender. For example, Nathan and Simon were making fun of Dong because he had a slight pinch of pink on his coat (see Chapter 8).

Both girls and boys were seen in various areas across the nursery, with a lot of movement and changing of spaces taking place. However, some boys, for example, would not really play in the house corner whereas most of the girls would, and specific areas, like the carpet area and the construction site, or the house corner in the mainly white nursery, were observed to be mainly used by boys and girls respectively. This was not that obvious in the multiethnic nursery. Interestingly, although these spaces were used by both genders (in both nurseries) the house corner was considered a girls' space. Girls in the mainly white nursery did feel it as their own place ("our house"), and they did not really want the boys in (this was not so evident at the multiethnic nursery). The boys (in both nurseries) would also refer to the house-corner as a girl's place.

Generally speaking, in the mainly white nursery, both boys and girls would refer to specific spaces that were at the time taken by boys or girls, saying that "this is the boys' area". There were also certain toys or resources that were seen by the children as characteristic of girls or boys. For example, the push chair was seen by some children as a girls' belonging, and was not used by some children because of that perception (see

also Browne, 2004). This rejection of resources that were seen as belonging to the opposite gender, showed how children could occasionally have very 'fixed' and stereotypical ideas about gender and how important it was for them not to be seen as 'other' than who they were. However, on other occasions, some boys would use the pushchair, sometimes with the dolls, and other times differently (e.g. using it to transport books from the story corner to the house corner). Interestingly, although girls and boys used the same resources, they would often use them differently. This was observed among children of the same gender as well, something that implies complexity and multiplicity.

The girls of both nurseries used tools in order to fix or build, and played with the cars or screw drivers; this challenged stereotypical notions of children playing certain games and avoiding playing others that are considered of the opposite gender (Browne & Ross, 1991; Browne, 2004). Although dolls were mainly used by the girls, they were occasionally used by boys as well.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 5/10/07)

Now the boys are in the house corner: Cameron, Brian, Ben are playing with the dolls. They are putting the babies asleep. Cameron is sitting in the kitchen table, he is making a pancake. He is taking the baby, the babies are awake. Each one is holding one baby. They are putting them back to sleep (…) Paul joins (…).The boys in the house are making cake, Cameron is crying pretending to be a baby. Paul approaches him. Paul is bringing him his milk. 'he is still crying" looking at Ben who is making a cake. 'I've got something for the baby' Ben giving him some food. Both Ben and Paul are giving Cameron/baby some milk and food (…)

However, as I will discuss later, not all of the boys would play with the dolls, or play such roles. Being rough to the dolls was common, and could be related to ways of proving masculinity. There were also boys in the mainly white nursery that tried to mess the house corner, and cut and hit the dolls to show that "this is not really for boys". This showed how there were multiple ways of 'being a boy' (or a girl), and could relate to

concepts of masculinity (also femininity), that I will discuss later.

To sum up, children would identify certain 'ways of being' a specific gender. Although children displayed 'fixed' views about the gender qualities of certain toys or colours, this was not always the case. There were both 'fixed' and varied notions of ways of 'being' a boy or a girl. Although there were notable trends (girls would most often play with dolls or would play certain roles, as I will discuss in the following section), these trends were challenged.

6.4 Children's (re)constructions of 'masculinities' and 'femininities'

From the first day of research, children from both nurseries would often take on certain roles according to their gender identity and also link roles to particular gender, showing rather 'fixed' and stereotypical notions of gender identity.

During playtime, boys in both nurseries were most likely to take on roles like the fireman, ambulance personnel, builder, policeman, hip hop dancer, worker, Superman, soldier, Power Ranger, robber (putting their hoods up and stealing the babies), adventurer, superhero, and baddy (see also Browne, 2004; Thorne, 1993). Some of the younger boys would very often play bus drivers, making a bus out of bricks and pretending they were driving it; other times, they would play airplanes, pretending to take off. Boys showed a particular interest in making spaceships, cars, and trains. However, there were boys that wanted to become nursery men. Girls usually played teachers, dentists, doctors, mummies and daddies (bathing babies, sweeping the floor and cleaning), sisters, ballet dancers, princesses, and queens (see also Connoly, 1998; Browne, 2004).

However, this was not absolute. It was not always the case that certain roles were played out by specific genders. Boys in both nurseries, for example, were seen to cook in the house corner, play daddies and babies or make tea and ask children to come for tea (in contrast to Browne, 2004). In the multi-ethnic nursery, it was mostly the younger boys (3 years old), Antoni and Sebastian that played frequently in the house corner, or played daddies and babies (Patrick and Albert). Although links could be made here to

age, this again was not always the case, as in the mainly white nursery boys that were older (4,5 years) were also observed to cook and play roles like the father or the big brother and the babies, whereas the few younger boys did not. On the other hand, girls were observed, albeit not often, to take up roles like the superhero, the pink or white Power Ranger and the builders.

Different roles were also taken, which were not attached to any particular gender. Different boys put on different roles, and so did girls. However, when children did ascribe certain roles to a particular gender, these roles were seen in a rather 'fixed' way; the 'mum', for example, was usually a housewife.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 23/05/08)

Patrick, Farah, Aleemah, Seema A, Hana are playing in the housecorner. Hana is the mum, Farah is the baby-sister, Aleemah is the big sister, Patrick is the brother and Seema A is the sister, it is not clear what kind of sister she is (older or younger). Farah doesn't want Patrick to come in. After a while Patrick rings the bell.
Farah : Come in Patrick.
Patrick comes in with a brush.
Farah: You don't need that, that is for the mum.

Another example was that the dad was the driver, who made all the decisions.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 2/10/07)

Girls are in the house corner, four girls (Jessica, JessicaC, Lesley and Pamela).
Lesley: We are going to go into the car
K: Are you?
Lesley: I am driving 'cause I am the dad.
Jessica: OK, I am the mum.
Jessica walks to go and sit in the front, Lesley intervenes.
Lesley: Mum you are not allowed to go in the front (of the car).
Lesley goes on afterwards saying how she should drive because she is the dad.

In this discussion, Lesley was trying to be in a powerful position, that of the

driver, and in order to do so she put on a role, that of the dad. The dad was seen as somebody who can drive, sit in the front and make a decision. Adult roles, and more specifically certain gendered adult roles, were used in order to exercise power.

6.5 'Hegemonic' and non-hegemonic masculinities': multiple ways of being a boy

The concept of hegemonic masculinity with its contingent and contextual nature has been discussed in Chapter 2. This study suggests that various forms of masculinity existed, expressed by both genders. I will draw on data to discuss the various masculinities that took place in the two nursery schools. There were many commonalities in the ways that boys expressed their masculinities in the two nursery schools and so I have chosen to present data under common themes. However, differences were apparent, especially in terms of the visibility of such discourses and the importance that children gave to them.

6.5.1 'Hegemonic' masculinities

There were generally two groups identified as masculinities; the 'hegemonic' masculinities and the 'non- hegemonic' masculinities, which of course varied not only between, but also within them. 'Hegemonic' masculinities ('bad/rough boys") were the groups of boys who drew on discourses of physical strength, football, conflict with girls, 'being loud', 'naughty' and others. 'Non-hegemonic' masculinities ('soft' boys), although drawing on 'hegemonic' masculinities discourse, did not really seem to 'fit in' the 'bad' boys group, or would not share the same will to be 'rough'. Some, for example, and contrary to the 'bad boys', would either be more 'soft', 'quiet', more interested in adult/ 'mature' company, have more close relationships with girls (and occasionally be best friends), be interested in other non-hegemonic ways of playing or would play similar games differently and not 'too loud' or 'too rough', give importance to being seen as humorous (in some cases linked with vulnerability), and show academic knowledge (for example, about countries and maps).

When grouping the boys in such a way, there was a danger of essentialising the sub-groups ('hegemonic' and 'non-hegemonic') and treating them as 'fixed'. This was definitely not the case. Boys in either group would show characteristics of the other 'way of being masculine' in various contexts. Variations existed within groups. For example, in the 'bad' group (hegemonic masculinity group), Nathan was viewed as the leader, who would most often draw on 'hegemonic' masculinity discourses. Being 'strong', 'bad', and 'hard' was therefore important. Nathan would usually be 'rough' to anything 'girlie' (for example, he would throw the baby and iron it). On the other hand, there was Paul, who was again within the 'bad' group, but would play with the babies as well; he always took up roles of power, however, like big brother or father, and showed tenderness and affection. Paul would be, in his words, the baddy/goody, that I will discuss later on. In the 'soft' group there was Ben, who could be described as a 'complicit' masculinity (Chapter 1), who was not really involved in 'rough' games and did not have the will to 'act hard'. Nevertheless, Ben would not really play with dolls or if he would, he would not take up roles like the baby, which were seen as inferior. There were also Dong and Hassan who drew on 'being rough', but did not really fit in the 'bad' boys' group, and could thus be described as expressions of 'marginalised masculinities' (Chapter 1).

Grouping boys into hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities enhances our understanding of how, in particular contexts, these groups existed as discourses of 'being masculine' and had social implications in children's lives (see Chapter 8). For example, such notions of the above two groupings between the children would create exclusionary practices or would act as ways of 'trying to be' a certain way in order to fit in. Generally speaking, 'masculinity' (either as 'hegemonic' or 'non-hegemonic') was expressed in various ways, which I will now discuss in more detail.

6.5.1.1 "We are the baddies": 'being rough', rude and loud

Boys were often considered the baddies and this is not something new (see Browne, 2004; Renold, 2005). This was evident both in relation to how boys conceptualised

themselves, and how they were conceptualised by the girls. However, some girls did not consider boys that were their close friends 'baddies'.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 19/11/07)

Pamela comes to me and says to Jessica "don't let the baddies in". Then she looks at me. She is putting the door sign that says closed. "No baddies in here" she claims. I ask her who the baddies are and she says "well, Paul and stuff".

Boys would often state 'we are the baddies' in relation to, and differentiation from the girls. The boys would group against the girls and, as baddies, would invade, destroy the girls' game, capture, chase the girls and others. Interestingly, their biggest 'enemy' was a single girl, whom they called 'the great girl'; Pamela, incidentally the oldest of the girls.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 02/10/07)

Boys have made a group and are going against the girls.
K: What are you playing?
Kevin: I have fire in my hands, we are the baddies (*pointing at the boys*).

However, the word 'baddies' was used differently in different contexts. Boys were not always the baddies, and not all of the boys considered themselves as 'baddies'. Boys used the term 'baddies' in order to show or exercise power. However, the word 'baddies' was also used as something negative. For example, Kevin used the word 'baddies' while defining himself in terms of "killing the girls" and being powerful. However, on another occasion, Kevin distanced himself from the term 'baddy' when talking with Hassan. In that case, Kevin took the role of the 'goody', talking about "how his car was so good that it could actually go in the air and then land on Hassan's train, who was the baddie". We can thus see that the word 'baddie' was used both in a negative and positive way, depending on the context.

There was also the notion of the baddy/goody that the children had created.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 10/06/08)

Paul: Hey baddies are goodies eh Brian... I am a baddie/goody shark and baddie/goody shark are goodies.
Brian: Me too.

A baddy/goody was actually a goody. An explanation could be that baddies with elements of a goody were something 'cool' and more acceptable, or would reflect the specific boys' reality. Brian and Paul, for example, belonged in the 'bad' boys group and showed tenderness, or liked playing with babies; this is not to say that the other ('bad') boys did not show tenderness, but rather that 'bad' boys did not want to be seen to show tenderness. This could relate to Renold's (2005: 78) findings, where being 'hard', but not acting 'too hard' was just one of the ways a number of young boys were doing 'masculinity'. There was a "fine line between being 'hard' and being a 'bully' and showing emotion without being called 'weak'" (Renold, 2005 : 78).

It is noteworthy that according to the notion of the baddy, girls were considered 'weak' and were chased by the baddies. However, this was not always the case. Girls would also take on roles of power, or challenge certain boys. Some boys were seen as weak from other boys as well.

Roles and power dynamics changed depending on the context, the persons, or the day. Both girls and boys were seen to be involved in various power relations in different contexts. Furthermore, boys who were considered 'soft' or did not really fit in the 'rough/bad' group, were usually, but not always, the ones that were friends with the girls.

Boys in the mainly white nursery had been observed to make a group of 7 and play Power Rangers or soldiers, wrestlers, tigers, or other rough games (see also Browne, 2004). In the multi-ethnic nursery, boys were also observed to play 'rougher', more adventurous and 'risky' games (e.g. like going to the jungle with the wild animals).

Girls were also observed to play games like rescuing the planet. However, some boys believed that adventurous or dangerous games were restricted to boys. For example, Asim (multiethnic nursery) had made a spaceship out of bricks, which he said was "only for boys not for girls", as it was dangerous; girls could only go on board if they were accompanied by boys.

Rough language, swearing, and 'rough' actions were also observed during role-play.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 3/06/08)

David: I want to eat a smelly nappy
Nathan is putting the baby and ironing it on the ironing table,
Nathan: there is your fried baby
Nathan is pressing the bell, and says
Nathan: Right what do you want?
David: A fried baby with blood.
Nathan: OK.
David: Do you want to go on my roller coaster? It has babies and nappies.
(…)
Paul: Do you want a roasted baby? You need to queue for a roasted baby.

This could be a sign of negativity towards babies, but it also showed roughness in language. Having babies with blood for lunch was an attempt to show how 'rough' the children were.

An interesting observation occurred when Nathan was role-playing as a wrestler; for that reason he was wearing chains round his waist, which were hanging down, and was making noises and taking aggressive poses to show how rough he was. Singing and shouting in a rough voice with the group of boys was another indication of 'rough' masculinity. Boys would also play shooting or fighting games, and play rough between them. Sometimes they would end up fighting, at which point an educator would interrupt. Boys usually played bad and good people, fighting and making the noise of the guns; they would also shout and scare other children, or play monsters. Being seen as

powerful and strong was important for some boys (e.g. "I am the big strong guy").

The opposite gender was also used in order to devalue masculinity. If two boys were fighting, one boy would often say that the other boy was a girl in order to devalue and make him inferior. Roughness in body posture was usually followed by verbal insult; being a girl was associated with being powerless and weak ("you are a girl", followed by an ironic, negative and devaluing tone). Nevertheless, boys would claim power back by saying that they had Superman power.

Roughness was not only indicated verbally, but was also shown through physical power. For example, boys would show me their strength and power by facial and bodily expressions, by lifting various things, and making noises to show how difficult lifting was.

Owning powerful weapons or sources of power was important as well. For example, guns that had a lot of fire were considered to give the children power. The boys would often compare between themselves, each claiming that they had more fire, and thus more power, than the other.

Being rough was in the same line with liking scary things, or playing in scary scenarios. Nathan, for example, drew himself next to a coffin and talked to me about how he liked scary things, and on another occasion Paul and Dong climbed up the ladder and Paul spoke about scary Power Rangers, and how some things that he saw were very scary. There were also a few instances, in the mainly white nursery, when the boys were playing soldiers, running and climbing up various obstacles and singing all together in a rough manner. Displays of power and the destruction of things were both seen as aspects of masculinity. For example, in the multiethnic nursery, Albert and Christian were hitting the computer hard, attempting to destroy it, and found it funny too. Part of being 'bad' was also about being rude, cheeky, giggly, and naughty. This was also mentioned by Mrs M. about the specific group and their attitudes on the forest school trip.

The interview I had with Nathan's mum is very insightful and seems to capture the basic elements of a 'bad boy'. For example, Nathan, according to his mum, was interested in 'older children's things', was 'mad about tatoos' and wanted an earring.

Nathan liked children "who like things that are inappropriate for them…very inappropriate" and "seeks out children who are a bit wild". Nathan was very much into music, drums, dancing, and anything to do with physical exercise; "from an early age" Nathan had "always shown an interest in girls", particularly older girls or teenagers. Nathan loved taking photos of the girls that he liked and would then print them off to look at them. Nathan would talk about how he had girlfriends, and how he was the one in charge; ("She (Lesley) used to be my girlfriend but I dumped her"). Nathan's mum also made reference to his heterosexual identity, and from his mum's discussion it was evident that Nathan was developing an image of girls as 'sexual objects'.

6.5.1.2 Sport and masculinity

Research has shown that an important aspect of boys' masculinity is playing sports (particularly football) (Connolly, 1998; Renold, 2005). Similarly sports were particularly salient in the mainly white nursery. Playing football or rugby was a way to show 'masculinity', 'roughnesses and power. There were also times when 'masculinity', 'roughness', sport and ethnicity intersected (particularly football and Scotland) (see Chapter 7). Boys would tell me that they liked playing football, or that they were members of a football team; this was not always linked to individual ethnic identity.

6.5.1.3 Clothes and masculinity

Very little empirical research has been conducted into children's clothing as an expression of identity, particularly in early years of schooling (Swain, 2002; Morrow, 2006). However, research that has been conducted with older children suggests that clothes are rather salient in children's accounts, as appearance and clothing are central to how the children define themselves, and "signify self worth" (Swain, 2002: 61). Swain (2002: 61) has observed that within peer groups, certain items "acquired specific, localised, symbolic value", and pointed, along with other items, to the particular importance that training shoes took. Renold (2005: 81) has also talked about how clothes and footwear signify a 'cool' and 'fashionable' masculinity (and femininity),

referring to hairstyle as well.

First of all, regarding the resources and clothes/costumes that were provided to the children, the boys would go for the male clothes and the girls for the female. Children would often talk about their clothes (particularly if they were new), about the clothes of other children, about the colour of their clothes, and whether they were suitable for boys or girls. However, clothes were not only important in terms of colour. Links could also be made to children's familiarity with them, their style and their identification with the children's own cultural or 'ethnic habitus'. In short, links were made to ethnicity.

Mainly White Nursery

(Field notes, 29/04/08)

Harry is playing with Jessica. They are putting clothes from the dressing up area. Harry first chooses a waist coat. After a while he wanted to change into something else, so he goes to the clothes area, there are not really any boys clothes left, and the only thing that is left is a man's salwar kammez. Harry was looking at it, it was blue, he took a while to take a close look at it. He is trying to figure out what it is. He then asks me.
Harry: Kristina what is this?
Because I wanted to see what the teacher would say, I told him that he could ask Mrs V
Mrs V was at the kitchen, he takes the hanger that had the salwar kammez on and took it over
Harry: Mrs V what is this?
Mrs V didn't reply immediately, she thought and then said:
Mrs V: It is Indian clothes.
Harry looked at her and then looked at the clothes and started laughing. He didn't really know how to respond; he got all shy and started to laugh (…)
He took it back and placed it on the hanger; he put on the waist coat again.

The boys would not only talk about their new clothes ("I have new trousers"), but also about the importance of clothes, which were supposedly improving their abilities as individuals (e.g faster running because of new trainers). Items were also used in order to 'play' cool (e.g. hats worn the other way, black sun glasses, chains hanging out their jeans) or exercise power. The 'coolest' was the one with the most power, or at

180

least someone who wanted to have a leading role.

Wearing certain clothes or items would make a child look 'cool' or masculine. Especially if children were excluded, 'being' cool and recognised was particularly important for their self esteem. Wearing 'cool' clothes could often be a factor upon which children were included in other children's games, or felt accepted.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 27/11/07)

Hassan is a Pakistani boy who has been excluded from the boys play (...)
Hassan is wearing skeleton gloves on (....) I go and sit on the bench, Hassan comes along and says all enthusiastically.
Hassan: David thinks my gloves are cool 'cause they have skeletons on.
K: Oh does he?
Hassan looks all happy he goes back with a smile.

However, it was not all about 'cool' clothes. For example, Hassan wore fashionable and 'cool' clothes, but was excluded by the children partly due to his ethnicity (see Chapter 8).

Morrow (2006: 98) has talked about how children "experience pressure from their peers to wear 'acceptable' clothes from an early age". Additionally, Swain's research has argued that clothes are used "as a powerful signifier of the pupils' worth as people, and were an essential ingredient of social acceptability (or rejection) within their specific peer group culture" (2002: 66). There are risks for somebody not conforming to the group norms, and the wearing of certain clothes in particular was treated as "a cultural imperative" (Swain, 2002: 61). For example, clothes with 'baby-like' characteristics like 'choo choo' trains were also viewed negatively by the children, as they were linked to being a baby, and were thus negatively viewed by children (see Chapter 5). Pink clothes could also lead to exclusionary practices- provided they were worn by boys (see Chapter 8).

6.5.1.4 Hip-hop / breakdancing versus ballet

Dancing styles were seen as characteristic of either boys or girls. For example, ballet was mainly performed by girls and break dancing by boys. It was interesting how that was accompanied by body movements, style and clothing. Girls wore ballet clothes and skirts and performed gently, whereas boys performed more roughly, wore their hats the other way and jumped around in a rough manner.

Children commented that ballet was a "girl's dance", and boys refused to show ballet movements whenever the educator asked them to demonstrate to others.

6.5.1.5 Being skilful in technical, practical jobs and hands-on activities

Boys valued being good at fixing, building, and painting the house; that is, more hands-on and practical jobs. This is interesting if compared to the girls, who valued jobs like the doctor, the teacher, and the librarian. Boys also valued the ability to make things like flags and constructions, as it was a way to show strength and superiority. Hassan, one of the boys that wanted to fit into the 'bad' boys' group, admired Nathan, one of the leaders of the 'bad boys' ' group, because of his ability to make a big flag. Hassan believed that Nathan must have been really strong to do such a thing. Being skilful in hands-on activities made children look strong in the eyes of others.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 12/06/08)

Nathan, Harry and Hassan are at the drawing table. Nathan is making a flag of Scotland.
Hassan: Oh my god, it is stronger.
He was admiring Nathan, saying it was very difficult.
Hassan: Oh god you are stronger than me, I can't make it.

All of the above could be described as part of 'hegemonic' masculinity. All boys would refer to it in various occasions and ways, even if they were not seen as belonging to the 'hegemonic masculinity' group. However, there were other ways of showing

masculinity that were not always considered 'hegemonic' which will be discussed.

6.5.2 Non-hegemonic ways of masculinity

Boys were not restricted to the aforementioned 'hegemonic masculinities'. Although in most cases boys would identify with the above, the extent to which this identification was expressed varied. For example, although some of the boys that were 'soft' identified with the above hegemonic masculinities, this was not expressed in the same way or extent; they were not viewed as belonging to the 'bad boys' group and were not that loud or 'rough'. However, even in the 'soft' boys group, they would refer to values of hegemonic masculinities, and what it meant to be a 'real' boy.

6.5.2.1 Being 'soft' and not liking noise

Some children of non-hegemonic masculinities could be described as 'soft' and more quiet, often commenting on, and showing disapproval of, the noise that was coming from the 'rough' group.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 8/01/08)

Jack is playing with some penguins at a display the teachers have made as you enter in the nursery. Simon, Sarah and David are approaching. They want to play with the penguins. They are surrounding him and getting some of the penguins. They are making a lot of noise, trying to snap his penguins. Jack is getting annoyed at he starts to shout to them.
Jack: You are all annoying me, you are all annoying me, you are all annoying me.
They continue to irritate him, shouting and providing a group dynamic that is surrounding him.
Jack: Go away, you are annoying me, go somewhere else to play, don't get my penguins.
The children continue to be loud and annoy him, they are grabbing his penguins and are very loud and noisy.
Jack: Don't do that. You are annoying me (Jack is getting angry), go away you are annoying me.
K: Why are they all annoying you?
Jack: 'Cause they are too noisy.

During an interview with Ben's mum, one of the 'soft boys', she talked about how Ben did not really like rough play: "(children) sort of mix in their own type… you know most of them are too 'rough' for him or a bit scary, you know are into rough play and maybe bit him...".

Ben's mum described Ben as "quite, quiet spoken" and mentioned that he had been pushed around from some of the 'rough' boys, something that he did not like. Ben was more interested in academic discussions, and finding out about things.

6.5.2.2 Protective roles, cooking and babies

Specific boys, particularly the younger boys in the multiethnic nursery and some boys in the mainly white nursery, including boys from the 'bad boys group', had been observed many times to be role-playing cooking, either in the house corner or the sand area. The above boys had also been observed playing with babies and putting them to sleep. However, there were other boys, mostly older or from the 'bad boys group', who would be rougher to dolls and teddy bears.

6.5.2.3 Intelligence and academic interest / knowledge

Being skilful in more academic ways (e.g. drawing, creating constructions), and reading books were a few of the other ways of 'being' boys. Showing academic knowledge was also important.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 05/02/08)

Mrs V decided to read them a book about pancakes .This book was a story based in Kenya where a family and especially a mum was making pancakes with her daughters. When she mentioned Kenya, she asked the children if they knew where Kenya is.
Mrs V: Does anybody know where Kenya is?
Kevin: I know that, that is in Africa, I have a big map.

The children that were considered to belong to non-hegemonic masculinities were often seen playing on the computer or sitting in the story corner and reading books.

6.5.2.4 'Being funny': Jokes linked to vulnerability

'Being funny' cannot be considered a common theme of non- hegemonic masculinities, neither can it be treated as a distinct characteristic. However, it was an important aspect of Steven's identity, who could be described as belonging to the 'soft' boys. Steven's jokes were different to the common jokes of the 'bad boys', and thus worth considering further. Steven considered himself 'funny' ("you are not funny you two, I am the only funny one!"), and often made jokes and made other children, including girls and adults, laugh. Jokes were mainly related to vulnerability and carelessness or 'stupidity', and their consequences. For example, Steven would place a mat on top of a double square seat, one side of which had a hole, and would pretend that he was not aware of the hole while sitting. As a consequence Steven would fall into the hole and make a joke out of his carelessness and vulnerability.

Being funny was also a characteristic of the 'hegemonic' masculinities, but was mainly attached to 'dirty and rough jokes', like eating 'bloody' babies, bogies, killing girls and babies, and also sexual hints; boys laughed and made fun of the girls if their 'bum' was showing as they were sitting on the floor. Jokes within 'hegemonic masculinities' were shared among the group of boys and did not really involve others, especially adults or girls. Most importantly, their jokes were not related to vulnerability, but to 'cheekiness' and 'naughtiness'. Of course, there were 'soft boys' who would also make reference to hegemonic jokes.

6.5.2.5 Valuing hegemonic masculinity values, but not 'fitting in'

Some of the values of the 'hegemonic' masculinities were found to be important to the boys that did not really fit in the 'rough' group. This was more obvious when they would refer to 'being the bad man' or being strong; however, they would use such terms mainly when playing between them (members of the 'soft' group), and away from the 'bad' boys.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 17/06/08)

We are in the carpet area with Nathan, Hassan, JessicaC and Dong. Dong was building the house with Nathan. Hassan has a crocodile puppet on his hands and he is pretending that he is eating us. He is mostly going to Dong. After a while when the game has stopped Dong says to me.
Dong: I am strong, not weak anymore, I am strong (He is showing me his muscles, lifting up his hands)
K: What made you strong?
Dong thinks.
K: Why were you weak?
Dong: My friends made me weak but I am strong, I can run fast.

When children of the 'soft group' tried to fit in the 'bad boys' group, the ability to be 'strong' and loud was devalued by the 'bad boys' group, so they would either give up, be scared and leave, or would become weaker, powerless, soft and quiet.

6.5.3 Differences in expressing 'masculinity' between schools

Similar ways of masculinity were evident in both nursery schools. Commonalities in relation to 'hegemonic' masculinities were apparent, yet not expressed in the same way or extent. In the multi-ethnic nursery there was a clear distinction between boys based on ability, competences, and age. The majority of the boys were younger (around 3), and of various competences (e.g. language, communication skills, English language level) and ethnicities (see Chapter 8). Existing differences inhibited the creation of a big common group like in the mainly white nursery. In both nurseries, 'being rough' or 'bad' or active and adventurous, and being stronger than the girls or other men was part of hegemonic masculinity and dominant way of 'being boys'. However, in the multi-ethnic nursery, some of the younger boys who were less competent or mature would rather show their masculinity by showing a preference towards playing air planes and cars, instead of being involved in 'rough' and violent discourses, as in the mainly white nursery. In the multi-ethnic nursery, gender identity was important but was not always expressed verbally (this of course can also be said about the mainly white nursery); therefore,

many observations were based on children's body language, play and interests. Hegemonic masculinities in the multi-ethnic nursery did not seem to have such a strong effect, partially because of group dynamics. Additionally, most boys in the multi-ethnic nursery could be described as the 'soft boys group' of the mainly white nursery, although, of course, elements of hegemonic masculinity were evident. Mixed friendships and close relationships with girls were more frequent than in the mainly white nursery, and difference in general was more positive in the multi-ethnic nursery (see also Chapter 7). In the mainly white nursery, boys shared more commonalities and formed a 'gang', did not have close links with the girls and were competitive against them, and generally 'sameness' was more salient than difference.

In the mainly white nursery, being 'masculine' and drawing on 'hegemonic' discourses of masculinity (e.g. being strong, powerful and 'rough') was extremely important and salient for some boys (see also Connolly, 2004). In the multi-ethnic nursery, hegemonic masculinities were apparent but less visible; they were important, but not that important.

Non-hegemonic masculinities in the mainly white nursery were not as explicit in children's speech, but were more obvious in their stance and play. Children who were considered part of the non-hegemonic masculinities would draw on hegemonic discourses but would not really 'fit in' with the 'bad boys' group'. In the multi-ethnic nursery, non-hegemonic masculinities were often linked to younger age and abilities, and although younger children would challenge the older children at times, they were disregarded.

To sum up, boys in groups that shared common beliefs of preferred ways of being masculine developed strong bonds between them, expressed them to a greater extent and had more of an impact.

6.6 'Femininities': Multiple ways of being a girl

Regarding the girls, there were more similarities between the two schools in terms of expressions of 'femininity', in comparison to the expressions of 'masculinities'. Clothes,

'imaginary' cosmetic culture, looking pretty, being mothers or sisters, professionals (doctors, teachers) and being involved in risky roles (e.g. superheroes, or saving the planet) were all expressions of dominant femininity.

Again, there can be a distinction between dominant ways of being a girl [for which I will use Renold's (2005) term 'girlie girls'] and non dominant ways. Due to the fact that there were more similarities than differences, I will present findings from both schools, rather than talk about each school separately. Wherever there are differences, I clearly state so.

6.6.1 Dominant Femininities: 'Girlie girls'

6.6.1.1 Clothes and femininity

Girls would often pay attention to clothes, especially if they were new, and particular items like shoes, dresses, belts, salwar kammez, holding bags, rings and necklaces, were all important aspects of their femininity. In comparison to the boys and their sporty shoes, girls gave emphasis to glittery shoes and shoes that related to dances like jazz. Shoes and dresses were used as symbols of exercising power over others that did not have them. Such items linked very well to a certain culture of femininity and dancing. Interestingly, it was not just any kind of dancing; it would be jazz, ballet or highland dancing. The latter showed existing intersections with ethnicity (see Chapter 7).

Clothes and items were used in order to obtain powerful adult roles. In the multiethnic nursery, wearing the sari, or a pink or sparkly and colourful salwar kammez was an important aspect of femininity for the Muslim children, linked to an 'ethnic habitus' (see Chapter 7). In this way links were made between ethnicity and gender. However, it is important to stress that not all Muslim girls had such preferences. Aleemah for example, preferred wearing skirts, and talked to me about her argument with her mum regarding that issue.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 20/02/08)

Aleemah is wearing a salwar kammez. I go over and say:
K: I like your clothes Aleemah.
Aleemah : I didn't want to wear that, I wanted to wear my skirt and my mum forced me
Her face shows the disappointment and her anger.
Farah: I have one like that but it's pink and I have a pink scarf to go with it as well.
Aleemah: I have a scarf, a blue one.

'Mendi' was also expressed by some of the Muslim girls as an important part of their feminine identity, which again links ethnicity to gender. According to Farah, "mendi is not for boys, boys don't wear mendi".

6.6.1.2 'Imaginary' cosmetic culture, appearance and 'looking pretty'

Looking pretty was an important aspect of femininity, as expressed by the girls. Looking pretty involved wearing "lovely dresses", "lovely shoes", pink tops, and having lovely hair, which was very important ("I like your hair like that").

In the multi-ethnic nursery, some of the girls would often talk about make-up, lipstick, perfume, nail varnish and lip gloss, all part of an 'imaginary' cosmetic culture that they were not able to embody yet, but which they related to as 'ways of being' a girl. In their discussions about make-up, they talked as if they were really using it; however, it was all part of an 'imaginary' cosmetic culture.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 10/06/08)

Seema A was talking to me about herself; at some point she talks about make up and lipstick as important to things about her.
Seema A: (…) I got make up and lipstick and lots of make up and I share with my mum my make up and I share with my mum her make up (…..)

6.6.1.3 Being 'soft' and quiet: roles of protection and care

A usually accepted expression of femininity was being 'soft', rather than 'rough'. This was obvious when observing the girls' body language, their rather gentle and calm tone of voice, the way they interacted with each other, and their role-play. The way that they talked or played with the dolls showed their tenderness and softness, as did roles of protection and care (mum or teacher). Vulnerability towards boys was another association with softness; it was the boys that would usually chase the girls, although the girls would occasionally ask to be chased by the boys.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 23/05/08)

Hana is the mummy, Laura is the baby and Seema A is the sister. Hana is very protective. Hana and Seema A are talking in a very gentle and soft tone.
Hana: You are not feeling well? Have you hurt your knees? (shows affection and goes right up to protect and help the baby) Can I see it?
Seema A: How did it happen baby?

In comparison to the 'rough' boys, girls valued and preferred quietness.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 10/06/08)

David, Lesley, Jessica and Pamela are playing school. They have put uniforms on from the clothes resources provided by the teachers. Lesley is the leader. She is the mum holding her baby. She is asking who wants to hold the baby and basis her decision on whoever is not shouting.
Lesley: Who would like to hold her?
Jessica is shouting as she wants to hold her.
Lesley: Nobody who shouts!! (she emphasises)

Softness was also expressed through body movements, like classical ballet dancing. Girls would be very gentle and soft in comparison to the boys, who were wearing chains and asking for rough music.

6.6.1.4 Being didactic and controlling

Another dominant expression of femininity, and in opposition to the expressions of softness and tenderness, was that of power and control, being didactic and controlling. Even roles like that of the mum, which was many times associated with softness and protection, could be associated to power and control. The mum was the most knowledgeable person, and the one that would tell the children what they should do. The same went for roles like that of the queen or the teacher, that the girls were observed to play. Being 'soft' and 'didactic', although partly contradictory, were both dominant and accepted roles of femininities amongst girls. In contrast, boys expressed both 'soft' and rough roles of masculinities. Nevertheless, being 'rough' was the most accepted expression of masculinity.

6.6.1.5 Maturity and being responsible

Being mature and responsible was considered an important aspect of femininities for some of the girls, and especially those who had the desire to be in positions of leadership. The phrase "stop being silly and just read the book" is indicative of this. These girls would often emphasise the importance of knowledge, and related it to power. The children would often show academic interests (reading, writing, and drawing) with a strong desire to go to school to learn them. Role-playing librarians, teachers and doctors were an indication of the value that children gave to knowledge (books and school) and responsibility. Girls were also observed to be critical about others in terms of abilities, and give their approval.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 31/04/08)

Lesley is with JessicaC, Lesley is reading her a book.
Lesley is asking questions and Jessica is responding. "Well done Jessica" says Lelsey**.**

6.6.1.6 Academic interests and being clever

Showing interest in gluing, painting, reading books, files, drawing, things that they would do in the nursery, writing, and trying to be 'good' at the more structured activities were important aspects of both girls and boys, and could all be seen as expressions of femininities and masculinities as well. However, there was a particular interest in most of the girls to 'perform' well, especially regarding their reading and writing skills. In comparison to the 'hegemonic masculinities', who emphasised physical abilities, dominant expressions of femininities were linked to mental abilities and cleverness.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 28/05/08)

Pamela and Lesley are in the storycorner. They are looking at the books. Pamela is the teacher and Lesley is sitting on the floor.
Lesley: Stop being silly and just read the book, don't bend the book (she is saying to Pamela) I know everything about books.

6.6.1.7 Being housewives

Being housewives was a common role-play theme for the girls, and was often related to being a mother with a real interest in cooking, laying the table, having babies and taking care of them, going to the shops, hoovering, cleaning and doing house chores in general. In some instances, the girls would talk about how they did such things with their mum at home. This revealed a part of their cultural habitus. Although boys had been observed to cook, what was interesting was that boys would very often cook ready-made meals like pizzas, burgers, hot dogs, chips, ketchup, pancakes and beans. The girls on the contrary talked about baking cake and biscuits, putting them in the oven and spreading on butter. For girls, cooking took place mainly in the house, whereas boys mentioned both the house and the restaurant, or the "Chinese place".

6.6.1.8 Professionals

Not all girls had an interest in 'being mums' and taking on roles that related to cleaning

the house, looking after the babies or laying the table; some of them preferred to take on roles of professionals like teachers and doctors, or showed an interest in the role of a 'big sister' that goes to school and reads. This did not mean that girls would either be mums or teachers; instead, it means that although some girls were not really interested in house chores, and would prefer more professional lives (that included going to work), other children liked both.

6.6.1.9 'Cinderella, fairies, princesses'

Many girls would talk about, and show a preference towards "going to see Cinderella", and liking and role-playing fairies and princesses. They would also talk about clothes that had images of princesses as if they were important aspects of their femininity. Of course, this was not the case for all girls.

6.6.1.10 Dancing and shows

Most girls were interested in dancing and would often talk about going to ballet, tap, jazz and highland dancing. It is important to clarify that this was not the case for all girls. Attending dancing classes was an importance aspect of some of the girls' out-of-nursery experiences. Girls were observed to role-play being on shows like a ballet show, highland dancing show and others within the nursery context.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 09/05/08)

JessicaC and Tara are organising a ballet show, they have put chairs so that the audience can sit. The audience is mainly boys (Nathan, Simon, David, Dong, Hassan) but girls as well like Lesley, Jessica.
Tara (asks me): Would you like to come to our ballet show?
David (asking Sarah): Are you doing the ballet show?
JessicaC starts her ballet.
Simon: I am a boy (he says as he is looking at the ballet).
David: That's real ballet.
Simon: It's making me tired, we want to breakdance (then David and Nathan say the same. Nathan is wearing his hat upside down).

Dong: Wow they're good ballerinas.
The boys are talking about how they are going to breakdance. They are indicating that they are strong and that their dance is more cool.

6.6.1.11 Being skilful in physical abilities

It was very often the case that the girls would attribute great importance to showing that they were capable in various physical activities, like doing splits, complicated dance moves, and generally anything related to performance and dance.

6.6.2 "Other femininities"

6.6.2.1 Girls that liked more 'masculine' games

Femininity, however, was not only expressed in a 'girlie girl' manner (see also Renold, 2005). There were girls that did or did not relate to the above, but also showed an interest to Spiderman, Mario games, football, and played Power Rangers with the boys (occasionally), thus showing aspects that were seen by the children as more "masculine". However, liking Mario games did not mean that such girls would dislike 'girlie girl' ways of being. For example, JessicaC liked Spiderman, Mario games, football, ballet and babies (see Chapter 9 for example).

Involvement in more active games was also apparent, including games that involved 'saving the planet'. Girls that were involved in more active games would quite often play along with boys.

6.6.2.2 Speaking and acting 'rough, loud' and rude

Some girls like Laura who had close friendships with some of the boys (see Chapter 8), would also engage, or act in rougher ways, being rude, swearing, being loud, acting hard (like slamming doors) hard, whenever boys were around. So generally, Laura would act on what was considered a more masculine way of being, in order to fit in. However, Laura was not limited to this. Laura's ways of being varied depending on the context, and could vary from being a girlfriend (soft and 'girlie') or being rough and swearing with boys, to being active and more dominant in relation to other girls.

6.7 (Hetero-)sexualities - 'Primarily' sexualised interactions?

There were some observations of children referring to (hetero-)sexual discourse, and being involved in (hetero-)sexual practices (see also Blaise, 2005; Renold, 2005; Connolly, 1998). For example, having boyfriends and girlfriends was important for some children (something mentioned by educators as well) and could relate to parts of children's primarily (hetero-)sexual identity. However, girls would refer to boyfriends more often than boys would to girlfriends.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 23/06/08)

Jessica: I have a boyfriend.
JessicaC: Who is your boyfriend?
Jessica: David.

However, this depended on the child and his/her ethnicity. For example, the Scottish Pakistani girls were not observed to make reference to boyfriends, and were the ones that expressed a lot of negativity about boys.

In the mainly white nursery, limited reference was made by boys to girlfriends, and any reference made was accompanied by teasing.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 25/04/08)

Harry is talking to me about his aunties.
Harry: My auntie's girlfriend eehhh (he accidentally says girlfriend although he means boyfriend , so he tries to correct his sentence) eehh boy.
Brian sticks to the phrase girlfriend, and is teasing Harry, asking him if he is married.
Brian: Are you married? (pause) have you got a girlfriend? (starts laughing and making fun)
Harry gets shy and a bit annoyed and tries to persuade him that he did not say that he has a girlfriend and that he meant his auntie's boyfriend.

Brian not only showed awareness of heterosexual relationships, but he also

teased Harry by asking him if he had a girlfriend. The girls were different in that aspect, as they were more comfortable about speaking about boyfriends. However, Nathan's mum told me about how Nathan loved girls 'too much' and how Nathan viewed girls as 'sexual objects'. Nathan would have girlfriends that he would dump. Interestingly, when the nursery asked the children to make a book from cutting out pictures from magazines and others, Nathan's mum talked to me about how he went to a catalogue book which had women's underwear and cut all the pictures of women in underwear to put on his book, as he liked them ("they are nice..I like them").

In the multiethnic nursery, boys' discussions about girlfriends came from two specific boys, Viktor and Christian. Viktor talked about how Laura and Sophie were his girlfriends. Viktor and Christian had also been observed to cuddle, kiss, and hold hands with the girls (Sophie and Laura).

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 11/10/07)

Christian is holding Sophie's hand and he is kissing her hand like "a right gentleman".

Christian and Viktor would also use the word 'my' to indicate possession over certain girls. An interesting (hetero-)sexual interaction occurred when both boys claimed possession over Laura. Laura intervened explicitly claiming who she prefers.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 31/10/07)

Viktor comes along. Viktor says to Christian:
Viktor: My Laura.
Christian: My Laura.
Viktor: No, my Laura.
Christian: No, my Laura.
Laura, listening to all this, comes close to the two boys and intervenes in the conversation and shouts by cuddling Viktor.
Laura: I am Viktor's, not yours, not yours Christian. I don't want you (looking at Christian)*,* go away (she says in a loud and strict way, she pushes Christian away.

Christian goes away).

The above discussion does not only indicate that children were involved in (hetero-)sexual practices, but also that Laura, who was the girl, had a powerful role of choice. She chose who she wanted to belong to. Issues of ability, age, and language could have played a role in her preference, as Viktor could speak fluent English and was the same age and ability with her.

However, the word 'my' was not only used in (hetero-)sexual discourse. It was also used by children to indicate belonging or preference in general, and was used by boys in the multiethnic nursery between friends (Viktor, talking about Jason, Sebastian and Antoni).

Discussions about relationships and (hetero-)sexual preferences and practices varied from talking about relationships (e.g. merely having a boyfriend), kissing, holding hands, cuddling and touching (see also Connolly, 1998; Renold, 2005), making traps, talking about getting married, liking boys blowing on their face, chasing, and showing affection and tenderness, to pulling trousers down and laughingly showing their genitalia to the opposite gender (albeit with a bit of shyness).

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 22/05/08)

I see Sophie stroking Viktor under the chin, and smile to him in a sweet way.

Girls were also observed to make the dolls, boys and girls, kiss and cuddle. Putting together dolls of the same skin was common, and indicated intersections between gender and ethnicity. This was also evident while choosing boyfriends and girlfriends as well. Majority Scots or white skin girls would have a preference towards boys of the same colour. Age or competence were also important, as older girls would not prefer younger boys, but would rather go for similar age and abilities, or older, boys. Although girls were more likely to talk about their boyfriends, boys in the mainly white

nursery were the ones who would enact more sexual practices like kiss-chasing or trying to touch the girls in a more sexual way (touching their bare waist).

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 2/10/07)

It is story time and children are getting ready.
Jack is playing with Jessica, sitting together, while the teacher is talking to them about what they are going to be doing. The teacher is saying that they will be singing songs. Jack and Jessica are sitting towards the back. Jack is being quite cheeky, he is trying (without being seen) to put his hand on her bare waist that is showing under her blouse. He moves his hand really slowly. When he touches her the girl turns towards him and moves a bit (away from him). She does not like it. She has put on a facial expression showing dislike, she repeatedly says that to him, as Jack is repeating his move. Jack looks at me and when I look he stops. When I look at the teacher he again looks at her waist and tries secretly to touch her with his hand pretending that he is looking at the teacher. Girl tells him to stop and then Jack does.

The fact that Jack was hesitating, moving slowly and at times pretending that he was looking at the educator, made evident that he felt that he was doing something that was not approved. The girl did not like it, and by being persistent, she managed to stop him. Jack was one of the 'soft boys' and the above example shows how he was drawing on aspects of 'hegemonic masculinity'.

In terms of chasing, girls would also ask boys to chase them, and interestingly enough, would occasionally display a preference towards the boy they liked.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 29/11/07)

Outside time.
Sophie is running and is asking Jason to chase her. Viktor joins. Jake tries to catch Sophie. Sophie says "not you Jake, Jason".

A preference to same aged boys was expressed.

Boys would sometimes take the role of the protector towards the girls if they were treated badly from others; Viktor protected Sophie by hugging and putting his hand

around her as the other children were irritating her. This was also expressed by girls. For example, Jessica talked about how "I live in a castle, far and far away and my prince charming will come to save me".

There were also times when girl/boys relationships (like Pamela and Cameron) were quite fluid; Pamela wanted to be chased, but she did not want to be kissed by him. Although at times she was really friendly with him, other times she could not bear the fact that he was cuddling tight; he was obviously crossing the line. Of course, friendships between girls and boys were not restricted to primary (hetero-)sexual nature as there were also children who were 'just friends' (see also Renold, 2005).

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter explored the meaning of gender identity for young children's lives. Gender was an important part of children's identity, very much associated with a process of defining the self and others, and drawing on boundaries of 'us' and 'them'. Gender was part of an individual and group identity, and part of an overt and explicit identification, like in the case of age, and in contrast to a more complex process that took place in relation to ethnicity.

The main findings of this chapter were that constructions of gender identity were explicitly talked about by the children, with rather clear ideas about what constituted a boy or a girl. Gender was very much linked to 'ways of being' a boy or a girl, going beyond a categorical use of the term. Children expressed both 'fixed' and fluid ideas of gender identity, depending on the context. Multiple expressions of 'femininities' and 'masculinities' were apparent in both nurseries. There were also dominant and non–dominant ways of being masculine and feminine. Hegemonic masculinities were considered the dominant ways of being masculine, and were linked to 'being baddies'; that is being rough, loud, rude, swearing, strong, negative to girls and often devaluing their abilities and worth, among others. Non-hegemonic masculinities were boys that were not so loud, rude or rough and were linked to anything associated with parts of femininity (e.g. being quiet and enjoying reading).

Although 'soft boys' seemed to value hegemonic ways of being a boy, this was even more evident between them; however, they did not seem to fit into the bad boys group, as they were not quite as 'rough'. Dominant ways of being a girl were linked to 'girlie girls' (Renold, 2005), the characteristics of which included imaginary cosmetic culture (make-up), being beautiful and 'looking pretty', being soft and quiet, showing protection and care, being didactic and controlling, being mature and responsible, showing academic interests, being clever and dancing (e.g. ballet and highland dancing). Non- dominant ways of being a girl were mainly linked to anything that had to do with more 'masculine' expressions. like being 'rough', rude, loud, active and others. It is important not to essentialise groups as either dominant or non-dominant, as members of both groups could show characteristics of the other group. Masculinities and femininities were also occasionally linked to primary sexual identities, and particularly (hetero-) sexual identities, which were considered the norm. Of course, intersections occured between gender and ethnicity and led to differences within the content of what femininities and masculinities were. This will also be explored further in the following chapter.

Chapter 7

The dynamics of ethnicity in the two nurseries

7.1 Introduction

As Chapter 2 suggested, research interested in children and ethnicity has contributed significantly to our understanding in this field of enquiry. Connolly (2003) has criticised current research for emphasising physical rather than cultural markers of children's ethnic identities. Additionally, some current research with younger and older children (see Scourfield et al, 2006; Barron, 2007) seems to be grappling with whether ethnicity is linked to an explicit awareness of identity, and the extent to which ethnicity is expressed as a source of children's identity that is culturally filled. It is generally suggested by some researchers that recognition of boundaries in relation to differences is more apparent in relation to children and ethnic identity, rather than overt identification (Barron, 2007; Scourfield et al, 2006). Connolly (2003) also seems to suggest, in relation to the nature of children's (aged five and six) ethnic identities, that while "the general parameters of their identities and beliefs were being set in place there was still a fair amount of work required to fill these in and build them up" (Connolly, 2003: 176). Connolly (2003) continues by suggesting, however, that early years appear to represent a time where ethnic identities take "place at an increasingly intense rate" along with prejudices, with many children beginning to identify with a specific ethnic group and make negative comments between the ages of three and six.

In this chapter I will discuss how young children (3-5 age) (re-)constructed ethnic identity in their everyday lives at the nursery. The general aim of this chapter is to explore the meaning of ethnic identity for young children's lives, and to examine the importance of such as part of children's multiple social identities. Emphasis is particularly given to whether ethnicity is more that just recognition of boundaries and similarities between children, and the extent to which such is used as a source of identity. Complex intersections between ethnicity and other parts of identity (gender,

age) are made by the children, which will be discussed.

Generally speaking, there are three main findings regarding how children (re)-constructed ethnicity in their everyday lives at nursery. First of all the children provided multiple, complex and varied ways of constructing ethnicity. These were in relation to physical characteristics, language, religion, culture and nationality. Children also referred to specific categorical notions of ethnicity/nationality in their everyday lives. Although culture is not discussed separately, it is apparent throughout, especially in relation to nationality. In this sense, children's accounts of ethnicity were not fixed in relation to a specific aspect of ethnicity; children constructed multiple dimensions. In most cases, such constructions were used by the children to define the self and others; a process of identification which constituted at times explicit, and other times non-explicit, awareness of ethnic identity. Secondly, the children expressed both 'fixed' and 'open'/fluid ideas regarding ethnicity, particularly in relation to nationality and ethnicity.

Thirdly, one way to understand all these complex, fluid, varied but also 'fixed' ways of how children 'do' ethnicity in their everyday lives at nursery, is to think of such under the general understanding of an 'ethnic habitus' (see Connolly, 1998). It must be stressed that not all children had developed an 'ethnic habitus'[23]. From the children that had, some children could articulate it and some others could not; some could make explicit links with ethnic identity and some could not. At this point, I will discuss each dimension of children's multiple expressions of ethnic identity separately.

7.2 Nursery contexts and the aspect of ethnicity

The nursery context in relation to the curriculum, resources, planned activities (e.g. celebrating festivals, making portraits of the children, making passports), educators' pedagogies and the nursery schools' general 'ethos' provided the context within which issues of ethnicity arose. In most cases, the context encouraged the children to make

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[23] This should not imply that 'ethnic habitus' is something that children can merely choose to develop, as it is often taken-for-granted, largely internalised and often subconscious (see Chapter 2). What it highlights is that not all children showed links or understandings of ethnicity, even in its more subconscious forms, as part of an 'ethnic habitus'.

reference to ethnicity, and enacted discussions between educators' and children. Of course, it is important to clarify that children were influenced, but not restricted merely by the nursery context. Children were also bringing their experiences from home and from their life out of the nursery yards, into the nursery. Details of the approaches of the two nursery settings are discussed in detail in Chapter 9. While discussing children's constructions of ethnicity, it is important to bear in mind that the two nursery classes differed in relation to the ethnic composition of the children and families that were part of them. Similarities and differences were identified in both nurseries in relation to staffs' approaches, and their dealing with ethnicity-related issues (see Chapter 9).

7. 3 Multiple dimensions of ethnicity

In both nursery settings children were observed to refer to ethnicity in three ways :

- as a factor of defining the self/individual identity
- as a factor of defining others and,
- as a factor of group identity in relation to individual/personal feelings of group identity, and in relation to grouping others.

In both nurseries, ethnicity seemed to be part of an 'ethnic habitus' (see also Connolly, 1998; Connolly et al, 2009), which was at times linked to a clear sense of ethnic identity. In both nurseries, it was observed that there was fluidity in relation to the salience that ethnicity played in children's lives and in relation to whether it was an explicit part of children's ethnic identity.

Interestingly, children in both nurseries made reference to common dimensions of ethnicity. These dimensions were multiple and were not restricted to simplistic and singular meanings of ethnicity (e.g. skin colour). The main dimensions that children in both nurseries referred to were physical characteristics, language, religion, culture and nationality. There is fluidity in relation to the links between each dimension. For example, there are times where each dimension is expressed on its own, and times where

varied dimensions of ethnicity are expressed in relation to other parts, thus constituting a more complex and intersected idea of ethnic identity. Of course, differences are evident between the nurseries, regarding how ethnicity came to play and the ways that various dimensions were expressed. These will be discussed separately towards the end of this chapter. I will now explore each dimension of ethnicity that was referred to by children.

7.3.1 Ethnicity and physical characteristics

Physical characteristics were apparent as factors upon which children would define themselves and others. Children would draw on boundaries based on similarities and differences; part of the process of developing an identity (see Jenkins, 2008b). Three factors were particularly evident in relation to children's constructions of ethnicity related to physical characteristics; these were skin colour, hair colour and facial characteristics (see also Connolly, 1998; Van Audale & Feagin, 2001; Devine & Kelly, 2006). Children's definition of self and others in relation to physical characteristics is not always linked to an overt identification of an ethnic identity (see also Barron, 2007); for some children it was very much linked to recognising boundaries and similarities/differences. However, more explicit awareness of ethnic identity was also apparent. More explicit links were made between various parts like skin colour, hair colour, facial characteristics, nationality, religion, and 'cultural habits' like clothes and food. These were at times expressed as rather 'fixed' ideas. Both negative and positive feelings and preferences occurred in relation to physical characteristics and ethnicity.

7.3.1.1 Defining the 'self' and others: Exploring boundaries

Facial characteristics (eyes and nose), skin and hair colour were used by the children in order to describe themselves and others. In relation to facial characteristics, the shape of eyes was mentioned as an important characteristic of self by Mei-li[24] (Chinese girl) who, while talking to me informally about herself and what would be important to write in my

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[24]   Mei-li was a girl from the downstairs class and was not part of the main sample.

book, she pointed at her eyes saying 'my eyes are like that' (indicating the shape by pointing at her eyes). In relation to skin colour, observations of children suggest that children named the colour of skin of self or others using terms like 'white', 'dark pink', 'black' and 'brown'.

 Multiethnic Nursery

(Field notes,18/04/08)

Aleemah comes along to the table, where Verity (educator) is conducting a drawing activity. She immediately points at the brown dark skin paper and says.
Aleemah: This is me.
When Farah and Seema A come along, Aleemah immediately says to them pointing at the brown paper.
Aleemah: You are like me; you are this colour (*referring to both Farah and Seema A)*

There were one or two observations, however, when children would describe or draw themselves or others as a different colour. Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001: 60), who had similar findings, argue that it may be the case that children "do not limit themselves to realistic portrayals of their bodies", suggesting that children do not always connect skin colour to ethnic identity.

However, there was also a case where skin colour was used in order to 'be' somebody else; in that particular case, blonde and white skinned, although she had black skin and hair. Hana had shown a general preference towards 'whiteness', although she could very clearly identify and discuss how her dad is 'brown' (see also Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; MacNaughton, 2005). This is something that could relate to self esteem, and issues of power linked to 'whiteness' (see Chapter 8).

7.3.1.2 Physical characteristics, intersectionality and complexity: Processes of explicit and overt ethnic identification

In this study, children did not merely describe self and others in terms of skin colour. Skin colour was also linked to other physical characteristics like hair colour and clothes, and also to ethnic identity. The following observation indicates how skin colour was

related to a particular hair colour, and how through interaction, children create, expand and transfer knowledge between each other, justifying their belief by observing their reality, and other children in particular.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 28/05/08)

Steven made an alien with a brown face. He is sitting with Kevin at the drawing table.
Steven: My alien has a brown face (they laugh).
Kevin: Some people have brown skin.
Steven: Yeah, and they have black hair as well.
Kevin: No.
Steven: Yeah, and black hair.
Steven gets up from his seat and points at Arun (Indian, 4,4 years old)
Steven: Look (pointing at Arun).
Kevin looks at Arun, they both have got up from their seats.
Kevin: Like my dad, he has black hair!

Regarding colour of hair, children would point out at similarities and boundaries, which may not really be linked to an ethnic identity (see Barron, 2007). However, on other occasions, children would use phrases like "all my family has black hair" (something that was also observed for skin colour). Such phrases could be seen as a process of identification of a developing sense of an ethnic identity, although it still might not be overt. Clearer links between hair colour and ethnic identity were made, where hair colour was used as a factor upon which one is able to exercise certain religious practices. The following observation reflects many conversations that particularly two Pakistani girls made, and is an example of how hair colour is linked to religious practices.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 20/06/08)

Farah says to me:
Farah: I wish you have black hair.
K: Why?
Farah: Go to the hairdressers and make your hair black, you can go to the mosque only if you have black hair, just like me.

K: Why is it important? Why does that matter?
Farah: 'Cause then you can go to the mosque and things. You won't be able to go inside if you don't have black hair, you can't go inside, and you can only eat at the mosque.
K: So if I went to the hairdresser and make my hair black can I come then?
Farah: Yes, but if you don't, you can't.

There was a strong desire from Farah for me to 'be like her', indicated by the use of the words "I wish". Farah wanted me to be different, and more similar to her. It is the hair colour and the links that are made to 'who I am' that give me the opportunity to go to the mosque, something really important for Farah. Farah's perception of ethnicity is rather flexible, in the sense that I can change 'who I am' and what I can do if I just change my hair. Ethnicity is seen as something changeable. This could also link, however, to a less sophisticated understanding of ethnicity. For example, Farah did not acknowledge that being Muslim (going to the mosque) is not only about a certain hair colour. But it is 'fixed' in the sense that only black hair people are able to go to the mosque. Interesting links are made between physical characteristics (hair colour) and religion [see also Van Ausdale & Feagin (2001), regarding links between skin colour and celebrating certain festivals and Barron (2007), between cultural customs and skin colour]. Generally speaking, preferences occurred from children towards children and dolls that were the same as them and requests were made about taking 'other'/different dolls out of the nursery space.

Links were also made between eating certain food and having a specific colour of hair, as were links between physical characteristics (e.g. skin colour), clothes and ethnicity. For example, Seema S was talking to me about her trip to India, and how "there are different people from here (Scotland)". When I asked her what was different, Seema S said "in the face and the clothes that they wear from here".

7.3.1.3 'Overt' and explicit ethnic identification: Physical characteristics intersecting

In this study, in contrast to Barron (2007), more explicit awareness was also evident.

More explicit discussions took place regarding physical characteristics, and particularly skin colour, hair colour, eye shape and certain nationalities. Skin and hair colour were used while describing other children (particularly minority ethnic children or black children) as an indication that they were not from 'here' (not from Scotland), or were 'only here for a holiday'. White Scottish children made reference to their own colour of skin during discussions about 'Scottishness'. However, these discussions were made mainly in relation to the 'other' children that are not or 'can't be Scottish'. Particular normalised and 'fixed' notions of specific nationalities linked to skin colour were thus made; 'being white or pink' equalled being Scottish, and 'being brown or black' with black hair equalled being Pakistani, Korean or 'not from here'/ non Scottish (see also Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; Devine & Kelly, 2006). Physical characteristics (e.g. skin and hair colour, facial characteristics, eye shape) were also linked to nationality, and these were expressed in a negative manner many times (see Chapter 8).

7.4 Cultural resources / markers of children's ethnicity

7.4.1 Religion and cultural practices

Religion was not an aspect of most children's identity that was particularly prominent. However, for some children religion was important (Smith, 2005). In the few occasions that religion came up, it could be viewed as a 'preliminary religious identification'. Children that would most likely make reference to religion came from families with rather strong religious beliefs who were active in following religious practices, and were mainly Pakistani/Muslim heritage girls (see also Smith, 2005) and Christian heritage children from a variety of backgrounds (American, Scottish, American/Korean). Although children did not show a sophisticated or clear notion of religion, their preliminary religious identification was mainly expressed:

- by showing awareness and preference of, and identification with, certain religious symbols like buildings (e.g. mosque, church) and the Qu'ran,

- by relating and talking about certain religious or cultural practices of their family (e.g. what they would do in the mosque, praying, eating curry, fasting),

- identifying with festivals and celebrations when celebrated in the nursery ("I do that") or showing their knowledge of the events by shouting out to the educator about what would happen next,

- by role playing the act of praying when they saw a mosque figure or picture, by discussing about the act of praying,

- making a group and discussing amongst themselves about their home experiences enhancing a group belonging, referring to stories or figures like God and Allah.

Intersections of religion and gender occurred. For example, Pakistani/Muslim girls talked about men and women going into separate doors in the mosque, or how Allah is a man and how he wears a hat like Farah's dad. These specific examples were linked to educators' practices or questioning, but nevertheless show the children's awareness. Of course, awareness does not equal identification. However, it was not when children showed awareness that claims were made about 'preliminary' religious identity'. Instead, it was when children seemed to identify with or prefer something, and related to their own or family experience at home, thus going beyond a mere indication of awareness, and using phrases like "this is my mosque" and "our Allah". Identification was also about children differentiating other religious celebrations while identifying with their own ("we don't celebrate Chinese New Year we celebrate Eid"). It was observed that Christian children would not really make such explicit and obvious claims; their religious identification was mainly linked to talking about 'practices' like going to Sunday School and church, whereas some of the Muslim children went even further, making assumptions about who can go to the mosque and who can not. Children's explanations of various practices like the mosque were restricted to what they had heard during the nursery's celebrations like Eid, and also to personal experience ("a lot of

people go (to the mosque) and you have to take your shoes off").

On many occasions such identification, which can be viewed as internalising 'habits' or an 'ethnic habitus', was associated to 'how things should be done' (see Jenkins, 2008b), encouraging others to be the same ["we always say a few words before we eat... we always say (words in Urdu), that is what you should do before you eat]. 'Fixed' ideas were also expressed relating to physical characteristics, like hair colour and ability to exercise certain religious practises like going to the mosque.

On one occasion, a child showed a more sophisticated understanding of religion or else a 'preliminary religious theory' which related to stories about Christianity (e.g. Christmas, Mary waiting for her baby Jesus) but also linked to discussions about God and punishment for those who do not believe in him. Sophie, however, did not link this explicitly to Christianity, and was observed to force other people to believe in what she believes (see Jenkins, 2008b).

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 22/05/08)

Sophie is on the boat with assistant (student). Assistant comes up and says to me
Assistant: Did you hear what she said?
K: No.
Assistant: She (Sophie) said to me: "do you believe in god?" I said "Oh I don't know, I've not decided yet."
Sophie: Well you better 'cause he is our saviour and the ruler of everything

7.4.2 Language

Language was an important source of identity for the children (for older children as well, see Scourfield et al, 2006) ("Urdu is my language"). Language was viewed as something we have in common with our parents. Most commonly, language was linked to three forms: verbal, written and accent (see also Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Children would draw on similarities and differences, and would either refer to their own language or would notice or question other children about their 'different' language. Questions were sometimes linked between language and trying to understand where children were

from.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 10/09/07)

I was in the story corner talking with Aleemah, Hana and Asim; Christian comes along and says something to the children, Aleemah can't understand.
Aleemah: What is he saying? (confused) I can't understand.
K: I don't know, what do you think?
Aleemah: I don't know 'cause he speaks different (making a negative facial expression).
K: Oh… (pause) what language does he speak?
Aleemah: We don't know, we don't know what he speaks.

On other occasions, children would show confusion through their body language and facial expressions, and silences. Assumptions were also made about whether one can read a certain script linking it to individual and group identity.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 30/01/08)

Aleemah brings me a storybook it has a title in Urdu writing. She points at the Urdu writing and says
Aleemah: You can't read that though.
K: How do you know?
Aleemah: Because it is a different language.
K: What language is it?
Aleemah: It is Urdu.
K: Can you read it?
Aleemah: Yes, I know Urdu.
Then Farah comes along and says.
Aleemah: Farah speaks Urdu too (they laugh and repeat that they both can speak in Urdu).

Reactions to different verbal languages were both positive (e.g. listening happily to the different sound) and negative (e.g. putting on a negative facial expression and moving away). Children could name different languages and scripts, particularly if they identified with such, although confusions occurred. For example, some children named

their language based on localities (e.g. city that they lived). Due to the educators' practice, children were becoming familiar with naming languages other than their own (see Chapter 9), although again confusions occurred regarding the precise naming of a language and linking it to specific children. For example, there was not a clear understanding of who could speak what, and the children did associate different languages to different children.

Regarding accent, little research has been conducted in sociology regarding accent and national identity (McIntosh et al, 2004; Scourfield et al, 2006). Different accents were mentioned from the children in my study. Children would often role-play certain accents that they knew (e.g. American accent, English accent, Scottish accent, 'English/Chinese accent'); at times explicit links were made to nationality, although this was not always the case. Links were also made between accent and class (e.g. putting on a very 'posh' English accent). Children would distinguish between Scottish and English, and interestingly Scottish children would refer to speaking 'Scottish'/Scots and English children would refer to speaking English. Bilingual children would use mostly English to name their second language, although Scottish was used as well. English or Scottish were considered by some children as 'proper', something which could link to how English is considered the dominant language (see Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006).

Language, whenever mentioned by the children, was an important aspect of identity, both for Scottish and minority ethnic children (see also Scourfield et al, 2006). However, minority ethnic children would most often refer to language with explicit links with ethnic identity, in contrast to majority white Scottish children. Children, particularly minority ethnic children, would also link language to a family identity (e.g. something that grandparents or parents speak). Majority Scots would make reference to their language mainly in relation to bilingual children and difference. There were also a few occasions where Majority Scots children expressed language as an important source of identity. Of course, not all minority ethnic children referred to language in relation to identity, or felt confident about their home language. For some bilingual children, educators' support reinforced their desire to speak about their home language.

Scourfield et al (2006: 146) suggest that language and accent were used by children as "obvious markers of difference", but not as "overt identification". However, this study suggests that there were children that also used language as a source of identity, going beyond a mere recognition of boundaries. This was evident particularly in relation to nationality, which I will now discuss further.

7.4.3 Nationality

Nationality was an important part of children's identity (see Scourfield et al, 2006). Data from this study both confirms some and differs from other findings of current research in the field (see Chapter 2). First of all, generally speaking the children constructed multiple and complex perceptions of national identity which can be seen as a preliminary national identification, part of an 'ethnic habitus'. Secondly, some children were developing an 'ethnic habitus' showing awareness, and at times preference, for their own national identity, which however was not always followed by a clear or 'overt' national identification (see also, Connolly, 2003; Scourfield et al, 2006). Thirdly, in contrast to previous research (e.g. Scourfield et al, 2006) some children's national feelings constituted an overt identification. Fourthly, through these multiple ways of expressing nationality, the children expressed at times rather 'fixed' ideas about national differences and similarities, which also linked on many occasions to particular categorical notions of specific nationalities that children used in their everyday lives.

7.4.3.1 Multiple constructions of nationality

Children drew on multiple constructions of nationality linked to: place, language and accent, physical characteristics, specific national symbols, clothes, customs, sport, national celebrations and behaviours. This was very much linked to research conducted with older children (Carrington & Short, 1995; 1996; Scourfield et al, 2006; Devine & Kelly, 2006; Devine et al, 2008; MacGonigal & Arizpe, 2007). However, in previous research there are contrasting findings regarding the extent to which these aforementioned constructions can be viewed as part of an overt identification, or merely

a definition of national differences. All 'markers' are part of an 'ethnic habitus' with variations in children, in relation to the extent habitus was linked to 'overt' identification.

7.4.3.1.1 Symbols

The power of symbolic resources as part of developing a sense of national identity in individuals and in institutional practices has been suggested from various writers (see e.g Scourfield et al, 2006). This indicates that nations are not restricted to 'territorial entities" (Scourfield et al, 2006: 9). Children most commonly referred to: the flag, kilt, Scottish patterns, sari/scarf, mendhi, salwar kammez, chinese scripts on cutlery.

Most children showed an awareness, knowledge and preference for symbols that were part of their national identity. Symbols were part of an 'ethnic habitus' and were not always linked to a clear national identification. In many cases children made reference to the importance of the symbol linking it to family practices (as seen below). Drawing the symbols, children showed knowledge and shared it with others; when the educator commented that the children should not wash their hands after a mother drew mendhi on their hands, for example, Farah intervened adding that "it will become orange" if they do so, showing her experience and awareness. Children showed more interest and active participation in celebrations that they related to, and were less engaged with or interested in celebrations that they did not (see also Barron, 2007). However, this depended on the child, and on how various celebrations were introduced by educators; the more active and interesting the approaches were, like role playing or bringing in parents/caregivers, the more motivated the children would be, even though they would not always relate to said initiatives.

One of the most salient symbols was the flag. The flag was also an important aspect of educators' reference in practice. Children would either make flags with no real symbolisation, or with clear links to nationality. Most often children would draw flags of their country while stating that it was their country, making links to either country of residence, birth or origin. Localities were also important, and were linked to the symbol ("a flag of Edinburgh, 'cause that's where I live"). Most children could name the Scottish

flag, whereas others would get confused and would not really know. Merely naming and showing an awareness of the various flags does not indicate national or ethnic identification. But when awareness was linked to expressions like "my", "I am Bulgaria", "I come from Scotland", "this is my flag", "it's our country" and when these were associated to preferences, identification, and feelings of belonging, all these were part of an 'ethnic habitus' and national feelings. At times the above led to exclusionary practices. For example, Laura had developed a strong sense of 'Scottishness', and during a game used phrases like "only people with a Scottish flag can go on", showing identification but also excluding others who do not have a Scottish flag. However, Laura was not absolute, as she let her friend Viktor join her, even though he did not have a Scottish flag.

In this sense, clearer links between symbols and national identity were expressed.

7.4.3.1.2 Cultural practices

Children would refer to national food dishes like haggis, neeps and tatties or curry, rice and others. Scottish dancing was also mentioned; girls would usually attend highland dancing lessons (see also MacGonigal & Arizple, 2007). Children used symbols such as the sari as part of their cultural practice. For example, Pakistani girls were observed to put the sari across their shoulder or head, like their mothers would do. Children would show the importance of specific symbolic practices (e.g. wearing or making at home kilts, salwar kammez, mothers and sisters drawing mendhi) by linking it to home experiences and family practices; "my dad has a kilt, he wears it 100 times". In this way the children were showing identification, bond, internalisation and preference, which were not always part of overt or explicit identification. Intersections of gender were obvious in the case of mendhi and the kilt, emphasising on the gendered nature (e.g. its a boys' or a girls' thing) of the symbol, rather than the ethnic or national.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 23/05/08)

Steven is at the drawing table making an alien with a kilt.
Steven: I'm making an alien with a kilt.
We have a discussion with Steven about the kilt. Harry says that he wears a kilt
Steven: Everybody wears a kilt.
Harry: I wear a kilt as well.
K: Do you wear a kilt Steven?
Steven: Yeah.
K:Do you have a kilt?
Steven:No, my dad has a kilt, he wears it 100 times.
K:Do you wear a kilt Harry?
Steven: Yeah.
K: Do you always wear a kilt?
Harry: No. only on weddings.
K: Does everybody wear a kilt?
Steven: No, not girls.
Harry: Girls don't wear kilts they wear dresses, everybody else wears a kilt.

Although confusions occurred about the kilt and the gender (" 'cause they are boys they can't wear kilts (…) they are not allowed to anyone (of the boys), you should tell them"). However, on other occasions, direct links were made between the symbols and the nation; "the kilt is something you wear for dancing in Scotland".

All the above are part of the children's 'ethnic habitus', with no direct links to nationality. However, children would show preference to cultural practices they identified with ("I like Scottish food"). Other times, clear links were made to nationality, not as part of identity, but rather as description of national distinctiveness; such was the case of the ceilidh and the Scottish nationality ("a ceilidh is a Scottish dancing and has a lot of food and drinks"). In discussions about Scotland, children also referred to musical instruments like bagpipes.

7.4.3.1.3 Place and people

Place was considered an important aspect of children's lives, associated both to localities (see also Scourfield et al, 2006) (e.g. specific town, specific neighbourhood) and

countries (e.g. Scotland, Korea, Pakistan). Children would show a preference and interest to their own country. Confusions occurred regarding the clarity of knowledge of specific countries (e.g. confusing the exact geographical areas; Jake said that Turkey is in Scotland, although he was aware that they are two different countries, as Scotland has ASDA but Turkey has 'wee shops and magnets'), and the specific locality (e.g. confusing cities with nations).

Nationality was perceived in relation to country of residence, of birth and origin, both of self and family. Country of residence was associated both with the nation (e.g. "I live in Scotland") and the specific locality (e.g. "I live in Edinburgh"). Scourfield et al (2006) have suggested that children place more importance to their localities, as they are more vivid experiences to them than other places. Thus, children were observed to talk about localities e.g. shops and supermarkets (Tesco, Asda), which Jake defined as the 'Scottish World'. The physical environment (e.g. the park, sea, the Highlands) and the tourist element such as the castle (see also McGonigal & Arizpe, 2007) were also mentioned. However, no clear links were made to nationality. Scottish children, mainly in the mainly white nursery, believed that minority ethnic children were on holiday here and did not live here, with reference made to brown skin and 'different' language (see also Carrington & Short, 1995). Thus, country of residence was linked to 'Scottishness', and to 'fixed' ideas of whiteness and language. Country of residence, or 'being from' a country, was linked to national and ethnic identification. Merely making reference to where a child lives did not automatically imply a link with nationality.

Country of origin was particularly evident in the case of minority ethnic children, with often links made to their parents' or grandparents' origin (see also McGonigal & Arizpe, 2007). Nationality was thus linked to country of origin, and particularly country of origin of parents or grandparents. To show attachment to the country of origin, the children would often make strong links by talking about possessions their family had over there (houses and shops), or would talk about their networks (friends and family). Minority ethnic children also showed their attachment to country of origin by deliberately confusing the country of residence with the country of origin, a country that

they identified with or related to. For example, the Pakistani girls in the multiethnic nursery would often mention that they are Pakistani and that they live in Pakistan, rejecting in many cases that they were actually living in Scotland. In this way, emphasis was given to their origin even though most of them were born or had lived in Scotland for all or most of their lives (see also McGonigal & Arizpe, 2007). Territoriality is considered an important part of ethnic identity. Horboken (2004: 209) has argued that "extra-territorial, trans-national communities always emphasise their memory of and attachment to a particular place. It is this memory that reveals itself as an attachment to place". This became particularly evident in a discussion I had with Farah, who talked about her autobiography and her memory of Pakistan, showing strong identification with her country of origin (see Chapter 5); Pakistan was an important part of Farah's national identity, which was also evident by showing how other countries were not her favourite.[25] The home country was mainly viewed positively (see also McGonigal & Arizpe, 2007); however, there were also children that were not confident to talk about their difference (see Chapter 8).

Lastly, country of birth was also mentioned and was linked to where children were from. For example, when children were making their passports, Aleemah asked the educator where she was born in order to decide where she was from. However, country of origin, particularly for minority ethnic children, is at times stronger than the country of birth or residence. Aleemah disregarded the country of birth, Scotland, as she felt Pakistani and so chose according to the country of origin, where her parents came from. There was, however, flexibility regarding what determines where one was from; sometimes place of birth was important, whereas other times it was country of residence ["Sophie: when I was born I was in America so I am this flag but now I am this flag (UK flag)]".

Confusing where a child was from, whether it happened from other adults or children, would create feelings of anger and sadness; nationality was important to some

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[25]   Educators were conducting an activity with the children at the time, linked to children's passports (see Chapter 9).

children. In many cases, links were made between the national symbol (e.g. flag), the family and country of residence. For example, Harry was one of the Scottish children who had developed a strong Scottish identity. Harry made a drawing-present for his dad once, and the drawing was full of flags and lines like a map. Harry explained that " it is about Scotland" and made reference to the Scottish flag, his close family (mum, dad, 'nana') and where they live on his map. National identity was important for Harry, and linked to his country of residence, its national symbol and his people/networks.

7.4.3.1.4 Language / accent

Language was also expressed as part of nationality, both from majority Scottish children and minority ethnic children. However, in most cases, minority ethnic children would refer to their home language with links to the country they were from. Additionally, for minority ethnic children, language was not only part of an individual identity, but also part of a common group identity. For example, Pakistani girls (multiethnic nursery) and Korean children (mainly white nursery) would refer to their home language, making links and grouping themselves with each other. JessicaC(Korean) would also talk about the Korean school and learning Korean, and would describe the children there according to nationality ("the big Korean boy"). The Pakistani girls would also talk about being bilingual. Not all of the minority ethnic children were confident about acknowledging their 'different' home language, particularly if they did not form a common ethnic group. According to the children, speaking the same language was not automatically linked to nationality. For example, minority ethnic children that spoke Scottish were not considered Scottish.

During a discussion I had with Lesley, regarding whether everybody was from Scotland, both a general and more specific view were expressed.

K: Is everybody from Scotland?
Lesley: No, some people are from England... just came on holiday here.
K: How do I know if they are from England or they are from Scotland?
Lesley: That's 'cause from England and from Scotland, you spoke different language.

Then I ask her if she thinks that everybody from here (nursery) is from Scotland
Lesley: Hassan isn't.
K: Where is Hassan from?
Lesley: He just came on holiday here.
K: How do you know (pause)? (I ask her again, and ask her if he told her, or if she just knows)
Lesley: I just know.
K: So what is somebody from Scotland like?
Lesley: They say please and thank you, some people in different languages don't.
K: Oh so they don't say please or thank you.

7.4.3.1.5 Physical characteristics

Physical characteristics and the links with specific nationalities have already been mentioned (see section 7.3.1.3).

7.4.3.1.6 Sport

Football was mentioned as part of the Scottish nationality, associated to the Scottish flag and the meaning of Scotland, and was mainly expressed in the form of national sentiments by the boys. Children would often draw on resources and markers provided by the staff and the nursery context (see also Scourfield, et al, 2006). However, it is important to elaborate briefly on the element of football, as this was a resource/marker the children drew on and was brought into the nursery as part of their knowledge and experience from their out of nursery life. This showed that children were constructing complex and multiple meanings of nationality from various contexts. At times, Scottish football was expressed as mere awareness, with no links to personal identity, while other times links were made to national identity associated with patriotism (see also Scourfield et al, 2006).

7.4.3.2 Specific categorical meanings of nationalities

In contrast to research by Connolly (2003) with younger children, this study suggests that children used categorical terms of nationality (see for older children e.g Madge, 2001). Four categorical terms were mainly used: Scottish, Chinese, Korean and

'Pakistan' (instead of Pakistan<u>i</u>)[26]. Similar references, drawing on similar markers with previous studies with older children, were made by the children (see Chapter 2). Similarly with research by Scourfield et al (2006), while describing nationalities, children were drawing on 'resources' that were available to them from adults (e.g. by drawing on resources provided by educators and the nursery). However, children were also drawing on resources from each other. Most importantly, children were not restricted to the school context, as they also drew on experiences outside the nursery (e.g. football). Children constructed a complex, multiple and, in a sense, fluid concept of nationality. However, within their constructions and multiple references rather 'fixed' ideas were expressed regarding what each nationality entails.

7.4.3.2.1 Scottish identity

Scottish identity was linked to language/accent and Scottish/Scots, style of speaking, skin colour (particularly white/pink), country of residence (Scotland), country of origin, symbols like the Scottish flag, football, [both of which at times raised patriotic sentiments; "I am Scotland , SCOOOOTLAAAND (shouting in a patriotic way " Oh my Scotland flag (sings repeatedly in a loud, clear and rough voice)"], cultural practices (Scottish food, Ceilidh, highland dancing etc.), traditional clothes like kilts, certain ways of behaviour and 'doing things in a certain way' (e.g 'Scottish dance on a table"). Children were particularly absolute about black/brown skin not being the norm for Scottishness. Scottishness was also linked to a certain behaviour ('saying please') and being kind and polite, in supposed contrast to other nationalities; a behaviour that is acceptable and preferred, as the children would often comment about how they valued kindness and being polite.

Not all children were clear about the meaning behind nationalities (particularly

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[26]   Other categorical terms of nationality were used, like English, Italian etc. but there was no in-depth data about how children conceptualised these terms. It is interesting how even though Scottishness was often (although not exclusively) defined in opposition to Englishness (the largest minority ethnic group in Scotland, see Chapter 1) (see McIntosh et al, 2004), children did not really discuss this. This could be due to the fact that there were hardly any English children in the two nursery classes.

some younger children, aged 3); confusions thus occurred. Children referred to other nationalities to explain what Scottish means, giving emphasis to its general relation to a country ("It's (Scottish) like Pakistan and India"). Scottish identity, however, was not always expressed in a 'fixed' way; fluid, uncertain and open notions were also apparent. Steven referred to agency and choice, although this was not always clear ["you can just say you're Scottish, then you're Scottish (pause, thinks), well actually no, I don't know"]. Steven also talked about how country of residence was important; however, merely having a house in Scotland was not enough to be Scottish. Some negative attitudes towards Scottishness were expressed by one Pakistani girl ("Scottish means poopoo head") but this was mainly because "I go to Scottish and somebody said poopoo head to me".

7.4.3.2.2 Pakistani identity

Pakistani identity was linked with a country 'far away from here', very tall buildings which had people described as 'the Pakistan ones', who went out to the shops and parks, bought toffees and stickers, ate specific food like rotti (described by the children as a "dinner from Punjabi"), and doing things like drinking tea in a certain way. Pakistani identity was 'fixed' in the sense that people who possess it have black skin, black hair, mendhi, wear a sari and a salwar kammez, go to the mosque to pray, celebrate Eid, talk in Urdu or Punjabi and others. However, more fluid notions were also apparent. For example, the salwar kammez was worn by the girls as part of an 'ethnic habitus', very much linked to what their mother, grandmothers and sisters would wear, as they would wear only trousers, and make them at home. The salwar kammez was seen in a positive manner. The Pakistani girls would wear more modernized versions of the salwar kammez, wearing a pair of jeans underneath. However, Aleemah at times preferred to wear skirts (see also Devine & Kelly, 2006[27]) and would come to the nursery very upset and angry with her mother who had forced her to wear a salwar kammez. Aleemah had a

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[27]   In this example, a girl does not want to wear the scarf and prefers generally wearing dresses.

strong sense of a Pakistani identity which, however, was changing forms. Aleemah was using her agency and power to differentiate with her family customs, and her mum in particular (see also Devine & Kelly, 2006).

7.4.3.2.3 Chinese and Korean Identity

Chinese and Korean identities, and particularly the latter, were not referred to as often as the Scottish or Pakistani identity were, and this reflected the ethnic population of the children in the two nurseries. Interestingly, although there were no Chinese children in the mainly white nursery, the category 'Chinese' was used and mentioned rather often. This could be because of the Chinese celebrations that the nursery celebrated, but also because it was part of some of the majority Scottish children's family experience, who went out to eat at Chinese restaurants. The children would role-play working and eating in a Chinese restaurant or take away, and referred to the people as "people (that are) called China town". Both staff and children would confuse Korean children with Chinese. Chinese identity was again linked to a far away country, to a particular way of speaking English (Chinese/ English), to a particular eye shape ("it gets squares"), working in Chinese take-aways, restaurants, cooking and specific food like noodles and rice ("I am having the Chinese raoa", "here's my curry", roasty and smashed potatoes, pancake etc.), using chopsticks, certain scripts and cutlery, the Chinese New Year, cultural traits like putting pennies in envelopes for luck, decorations and others. Reference was also made to other nationalities like "Swedish and stuff" to describe the Chinese language. Generally speaking, children were positive towards Chinese Identity.

Lastly, Korean identity was referred to by the two Korean children in the mainly white nursery class as a far away country of origin or residence full of mountains and as the origin of certain resources like Korean Mario computer games, language, the Korean school, sushi and others.

7.5 Elaborating on the dynamics of ethnicity in two nurseries: General discussion of how ethnicity came to play in different groupings and contexts

In both nurseries, ethnicity was part of a definition of self and others and an individual, and at times group, identity. Irrespective of differences in the ethnic composition of the two nurseries, children made common references to the above multiple dimensions of ethnicity. In most cases, minority ethnic children that had a strong sense of ethnic identity and formed a group would refer to such on a frequent basis, in contrast to Majority Scots. In both nurseries, ethnicity influenced children's friendships and peer relations (see Chapter 8). In the following sections, I will briefly elaborate on how different children, individually or in groups constructed and 'used' ethnicity in the two nurseries. This will shed light on the differences that occurred both within and across the two nurseries.

7.5.1 The multiethnic nursery school

Ethnicity was explicitly referred to on a frequent basis in the multiethnic nursery, from both children and educators mainly in a positive way. This could link to the multi-ethnic composition of the children and families (see Chapter 8), to resources and educators' practice. Negativity was expressed mainly from the Pakistani Scottish girls, partly due to their strong feelings of positive self/group identity and their preference to sameness. Children also referred to ethnicity irrespective of the context, especially if they had a strong sense of ethnic identification. Children talked openly between them about their differences, especially towards the end of the research.

Most children showed an 'ethnic habitus' linked to an awareness and preference to their own ethnicity as part of an individual identity and/or family origin. Scottish majority children and minority ethnic children that did not form a group would not refer to ethnicity on an everyday basis or make explicit reference to ethnicity as a core part of individual/group identity. However, this changed during the course of the research and after educators' practice (e.g. some children referred to ethnicity as an important part of

individual identity, including three year olds). Laura was the only 'Majority Scot' who showed an explicit and strong national identification, mainly influenced by educators' practices/nursery context. Laura and Sophie (American) also grouped themselves according to 'white' colour of skin. Minority ethnic children (not part of a group) were becoming confident and positive about talking about themselves and their differences; towards the end of the research, children would spontaneously talk about their ethnic identity. Of course, there were also children that despite showing awareness of ethnicity, considered gender more important ("K: Are you Scottish? Albert: No, I live (pause and thinks), and I am a boy, I am just a boy").

Lastly, the Pakistani Scottish girls showed a strong sense of an 'ethnic habitus', from the beginning of the year, part of an individual, family and group identity; this was not apparent for the different age Pakistani boys, who came together towards the end of the research. In contrast to Majority Scots, Pakistani Scottish girls would emphasise their group identity, which was also accompanied by positive feelings of belonging. Their group identity was also encouraged by educators (see Chapter 9) and influenced by the nursery context, but was not restricted to this. Differences occurred within the Pakistani Scottish girls' group, as some showed more explicit links to ethnic identification, some considered it important, some showed more complex and others simpler links between various parts of ethnicity. Complex links also occurred between ethnicity and gender (e.g. religion- praying, wearing scarves or hats depending on the sex). Although the Pakistani Scottish girls were (along with Majority Scots) the majority in the class, they were still part of a minority ethnic group. They thus showed lack of confidence in some aspects that were different from the Scottish norm (e.g. language, or when using terms like 'salwar kammez' and 'mendhi'). Pakistani Scottish girls, with the exception of Hana, also made reference to their Scottish identity (e.g. living in Scotland, speaking Scottish) and being bilingual, grouping themselves with all the Scottish-speaking children.

7.5.2 The mainly white nursery school

Although ethnicity was not an 'everyday discussion' in the mainly white nursery (for both educators and children), a closer insight into children's interactions revealed its salience. In contrast to the multiethnic nursery, children mainly viewed difference (linked to ethnicity) as negative. Positivity occurred depending on the context, time, familiarity, and educators' practice (see Chapter 9). Similarly to the multiethnic nursery, most children showed an 'ethnic habitus' linked to an awareness and preference to their own ethnicity as part of an individual/group identity. 'Ethnic habitus' was also occasionally linked to overt identification.

In contrast to minority ethnic children that formed a group, 'Majority Scots' did not refer to their ethnic identity as often. Scourfield et al (2006) argue that 'white' majority children often take their nationality for granted and thus may not make explicit reference to it. Whenever Majority Scots made reference to ethnicity (as part of an individual identity) they were mainly influenced by the nursery context. However, they were not restricted to this, and reference was made to out of nursery experiences (e.g. football, Sunday school). Rather than merely describing self, Majority Scots would explicitly describe others who were different (mainly minority ethnic children) to them ("you're not like me"), showing confidence and using themselves or the 'norm' as a point of reference. In contrast to minority ethnic children that formed a group, Majority Scots did not really express a group identity (with exception of instances during the doll activity or football). However, group dynamics were apparent in a subtler way. Some Majority Scots would point out children that did not comply to their 'norm' of white Scottish. Emphasising difference and making assumptions and claims about whether one is or can be Scottish was rather salient, and implied a subtle grouping (minority ethnic children were considered to be on holiday in Scotland). Most Majority Scots were negative to difference; however, there were exceptions depending on context, time and intersections of ethnicity with gender and age/competence (for an example see Appendix 9). Majority Scots that showed a salient Scottish identity had a relatively clear and 'fixed' notion of Scottishness, although confusions occurred in relation to distinguishing

between locality (Edinburgh) and nation (Scotland).

Minority ethnic children that formed a group (e.g. JessicaC, Dong and Jack) would often explicitly talk about their individual/group identity without specific influence from the nursery context. However, variations in levels of confidence were apparent (e.g. Dong emphasised learning and speaking English whereas JessicaC focused on translating words between Korean and English). Interestingly, Jack's identification with the group was imagined, making assumptions that Dong is Chinese even though JessicaC persisted that he is Korean like her. Nevertheless, similarly to the Pakistani Scottish girls, a positive group belonging occurred between the three, even though JessicaC and Dong were closer.

The rest of the minority ethnic children did not really make reference to ethnicity. It was only during the drawing or the doll activity that minimal references were made as part of an individual identity, and for defining others. Minority ethnic children that did not form a group were generally not confident to talk about their difference. For example, although Hassan would speak in Urdu to his mum outside of the nursery context, he would not mention that he or his family speak Urdu, and whenever asked by educators, he would emphasise speaking English. Hassan would neglect his heritage with a strong desire to blend into the majority Scots (see also Appendix 10). Interestingly, Hassan would not include himself when discussions about who/what is Scottish occurred, while he would point out that e.g. Nathan is Scottish. Through the doll activity, Hassan felt confident to talk about trips to Pakistan with his family and that he is from Pakistan, although he mentioned that he would not like to go again.

7.6 Children's 'fixed' and 'fluid' notions of ethnicity: Exploring dynamics and complexity

A particular oxymoron occurred, due to the existence of both 'fixed' and fluid ideas of ethnicity. Multiple parts of ethnicity were expressed by the children, and so in this sense there was no 'fixed' idea of ethnicity linked e.g. to physical characteristics. Fluidity

occurred in relation to whether children linked these dimensions between them, or referred to each part on their own. Fluidity also occurred in relation to whether children expressed ethnicity as part of an 'ethnic habitus' with explicit links to ethnic identity or not. Furthermore, fluidity was evident when some mixed ethnicity children like Antoni would focus on one or both of their nationalities, or choose parts of a nationality (identifying with the Greek flag, but emphasising speaking English). Throughout the analysis of this chapter, it became evident that 'fixed' ideas occurred while making reference to ethnicity (e.g. nationality). However, there was fluidity in relation to whether children had 'fixed' ideas of ethnicity or not, depending on individual cases, context, and also due to confusions. Some children provided a fluid account of ethnicity, linked to being able to change one's nationality according to place of residence.

Children's accounts were rather complex. Laura had a strong Scottish identification and a 'fixed' idea of Scottishness linked to white skin[28]; however, she also recognised that visible minority ethnic children could be Scottish in relation to language or residence, with emphasis on the grouping of all children as Scottish[29]. At points, she linked the Pakistani girls with being Scottish 'like us all', and other times emphasised positively on their difference. Generally, this could be seen as an open account, as one part does not seem to downplay the other (see multiethnic educators' practice- Chapter 9). Laura showed a positive attitude towards minority ethnic children, even though she had a strong Scottish identification. Fluidity occurred, linked to whether children were open or not to others who are different.

Although, fixed ideas were often (but not exclusively) linked to negative attitudes towards children that were considered the 'other', these attitudes were not static and could change towards more positive ones according to context, time and educators' practice (see Chapters 8 & 9). Lastly, open accounts (e.g. everybody is from Scotland),

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[28]   Not all of the children (particularly children that did not show a strong ethnic identification) linked Scottishness with white skin colour.

[29]   See also Jessica's account "No Jack, Jessica and Hassan are not in Scotland, 'cause he has black skin, but he can speak Scottish".

were not always followed by an openness towards 'different' children.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter explored the meaning of ethnicity for young children's lives, which along with other parts, was an important part of children's identity. My findings confirm previous research which suggests that some children do not really show explicit ethnic awareness and identity (see Barron, 2007), and also research that suggests how other children develop a strong ethnic identification. Of course, again, the extent of a clear 'cultural filled' notion of identity is under question, as confusions may occur. Connolly's 'ethnic habitus' is a thoughtful way of understanding children's ethnic identities. 'Ethnic habitus' was a source of individual and group identity that had been thoughtfully considered by some children.

Generally speaking, ethnicity was perceived by children in multiple ways, including both cultural and physical markers of difference, something that was seen as a general gap in previous research (Connolly, 2003). Similarly to the findings of Connolly (2003) most children, although not all, seemed to express an 'ethnic habitus'. This 'ethnic habitus' was at times explicitly linked to a clear ethnic or national identification, that was an important part of the children's sense of individual, and at times group, identity. This contradicts findings from Barron (2007), Scourfield et al (2006) and at points Connolly (2003). At other times, however, an 'ethnic habitus' was expressed by the children, without any explicit links to ethnic identity. Nevertheless, it could still be seen as part of a developing identity, to 'be re-filled' as years pass (see also Connolly, 2003).

Both minority ethnic children and majority 'Scots' made reference to ethnicity. However, minority ethnic children that formed an ethnic group held this as an important part of their individual/group identity, and would mention it on a daily basis. Friendship patterns, preferences, negativity and exclusion, due to this strong ethnic identification, along with other factors, were apparent (see Chapter 8). Majority 'Scots', despite making reference to ethnic identity (with at times rather patriotic sentiments expressed)

did not discuss their commonality or consider it a core point of everyday discussion. However, ethnic identity became an issue whenever minority ethnic children approached and wanted to be included. It was then that reference to differences and similarities related to ethnicity and identity was apparent. Friendship groups also occurred (e.g. "all white" Scottish boys or girls groups) based on ethnicity.

The fact that minority ethnic children seemed to refer to ethnic identity more often could relate to an argument by Carrington & Short that "children of any marginalised group may also be more conscious of their collective identity as a result of political influence, both direct and vicarious" (1996: 222). However, an important finding was that not all of the minority ethnic children were explicit or discussed their ethnic identity. This was evident especially a) if children did not really identify or feel part of a common ethnic group in the class, b) if they were trying to blend into the majority, and were therefore not confident with their difference, c) would identify more with being Scottish rather than with their own heritage. Interestingly, not all children showed a strong ethnic/national identity or 'ethnic habitus'. Lastly, both fixed and fluid ideas of ethnicity were apparent. Fixed ideas were very much linked to stereotypical thinking and 'normalities', which have social implications in children's peer relations.

Chapter 8

Children's social identities and social implications: Exploring intersectionality

8.1 Introduction

Children's perceptions and constructions of social identities, as discussed in previous chapters, are particularly salient in their everyday lives and can be seen as ongoing processes of defining the self and others, very much depending on context. A commonality between the three parts of children's identities (gender, age and ethnicity) that were explored in this work was that they were negotiated, perceived and experienced not in isolation, but by reference to others (see Connolly, 2008b). Interpersonal relationships between children acted as ongoing negotiated processes of both individual and collective identification, where children often made reference to similarities and differences between people, or, in the case of this research, between children within their peer culture (James, 1993; Connolly, 2008b). The similarities and differences the children identified with acted, as we will see, as the basis on which friendship groups occurred.

This chapter, therefore, explores children's friendship groups, and the extent to which they are based on aspects of social identity. What is of particular interest is the concept of 'insiders'/'outsiders' that seems to occur during friendship groupings, and the extent to which aspects of social identity play a role in these inclusionary/ exclusionary processes. As suggested in Chapter 2, most studies in early childhood seek to explore social identities and inclusionary/exclusionary practices in peer relations, mainly in relation to one aspect of social identity. There has been a growing need, stressed by various authors (see MacNaughton, 2000;Thorne, 2004; Phinney, 2008), for research to explore multiple social identities in interaction, rather than focus on various individual parts of identity on their own, and to pay attention to context, complexity and intersectionality (Morrow & Connolly, 2006). There is, however, a growing body of research that attempts to explore such intersections in peer relations (see Connolly 1998,

2000, 2004).

The sphere of children's friendship groupings and inclusionary/exclusionary practices is an interesting domain, where multiple identities come to play, and where various parts of social identity may intersect at times, while children choose their friends. In order to explore the above, first of all emphasis will be given to children's multiple social identities and how they seemed to impact on children's friendship groupings in complex, contradictory but also intersecting ways during free play[30]. Children drew on discourses of 'sameness', 'normalities' and difference which are linked to constructions of social identity (see Devine & Kelly, 2006 for older children), while forming friendship groups. Difference in most of these cases, and 'being out of the norm' or the 'other', was considered the basis for exclusion.

Therefore, this chapter will continue by discussing about processes of exclusion that define 'insiders' and 'outsiders'; terms which are context-specific and under constant negotiation, even inside strong friendship groups. Emphasis will be given to the complex nature of children's peer relations, where groups and sub groups occur, and where children's inclusionary and exclusionary practices are seen as dynamic processes. In many cases, a strong individual or group identification, part of the 'norm' or dominant group which varied depending on the context, would act as the basis for exclusion. Explicit/ 'overt' and implicit/ 'subtle' forms of exclusion and discrimination seemed to play an important role in children's lives. Gender and age were rather explicit in both children's and educators' discussions and observations regarding reasons of exclusion, whereas ethnicity was not. Ethnicity was considered in many exclusionary cases, both from children and educators, as a 'taboo' subject of reference or discussion.

8.2 Children's understandings of friendships

Children in both nurseries would talk about their friends, along with family, as they were considered one of the most important parts of their social life in the nursery. Phrases like

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[30] Free play is a term used widely in early childhood literature "to describe child-initiated and child-directed play in which adult intervention is minimal. Children are 'free' to be who they want and to do what they want in their play, as long as it is safe for themselves and for others" (MacNaughton, 2000: 39).

"he/she is my friend", "we are best-best friends forever", "I am not your friend", or questions like "are you still my friend?", which were used on an everyday basis, indicate the importance of the concept of friendship in young children's lives.

While paying attention to the words that children used when they spoke about friendship, observing their everyday interactions, and exploring boundaries of affection and feelings of belonging, it was important to acquire an understanding of the social meaning that children gave to all of the aforementioned. Generally speaking, there were differences in the relationships between children, and levels of friendship and closeness. In many cases intimacy, closeness and bond between children were not expressed through words, but through body language (see James, 1993). A happy and big smile, a hug, holding hands, a kiss, a caring look, working or playing together, a harsh or a cruel look, a push, a look of distress, a grumpy, sad or angry face etc. helped explore children's friendships, and along with children's explanations, to try to interpret them.

Generally speaking from children's accounts, it was clear that a friend is expected to be kind, to share, to be caring and to share the same interests, to make them feel happy, to want to play with them, to not be grumpy or nasty with them, and to neither hit nor shout. A friend was expected to protect his/her friend in trouble. Friendship in children's accounts was linked to choice; choosing or being chosen as a friend.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 16/01/08)

K: Oh, why are these your best friends?
Farah: 'Cause I chose them… they will be my best friends ever and ever.

Phrases like "nobody wants to be my friend" were further proof of that. Young children, particularly girls, mentioned that best friends, were friends that will last in time and will always be remembered.

Parents played an important role in children's friendships (see also James, 1993). Especially if children were new arrivals, parents would often come into class and reinforce friendships with particular children. Children were also influenced in some

cases by their parents in relation to their friendship choices. For example, Seema A was telling me that she did not like the boys, and that her father had said "you can't play with the boys, only with girls". David also mentioned not liking Pakistanis " 'cause my mum said she doesn't like them".

In most cases, however, children were active and showed agency in relation to their friendship choices. There were children that, although their parents were friends, did not share a similar bond. Parents would come closer with the parents of the child that their son or daughter had developed a close relationship with. Parents would often reinforce the children's bonds by inviting the other children to play at home, or going out with their parents (see also James, 1993: 209).

8.3 Friendship patterns in the two nurseries

A significant amount of the children's time was devoted to free play both inside and outside the nursery classroom. Educators' interviews clearly suggest that children were generally free to play and form friendship groups by themselves in the nursery. Friendship groups could be influenced by a plethora of factors; however, gender, ethnicity and age/ competence seemed to play a key role. I will now elaborate upon sociograms of children's friendship patterns for each nursery, which are provided below separately (see Figure 8.1 and 8.2). Information regarding children's social characteristics is provided in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 in Chapter 4.

8.3.1 Mainly white nursery
8.3.1.1 "Boys play with boys and girls play with girls"
In the mainly white nursery, children would be rather explicit about how "boys play with boys and girls play with girls", a phrase that came from both boys and girls on many occasions.

Friendships were pretty much divided into girl and boy groups (see also Browne, 2004). The boys, as it was discussed in Chapter 5, would often come together and play team games (football, rugby, power rangers, soldiers, robbers, or 'baddies') and take over the whole playground. The dynamic nature of boys' groupings, who were taking

over nursery space, was not so much observed in girls' large groupings (see also James & James, 2008). Boys would often go against the girls, emphasising their group identity ("we are the baddies") and pretending to ruin the girls' house with fire. Trapping and 'killing' the girls was another common theme.
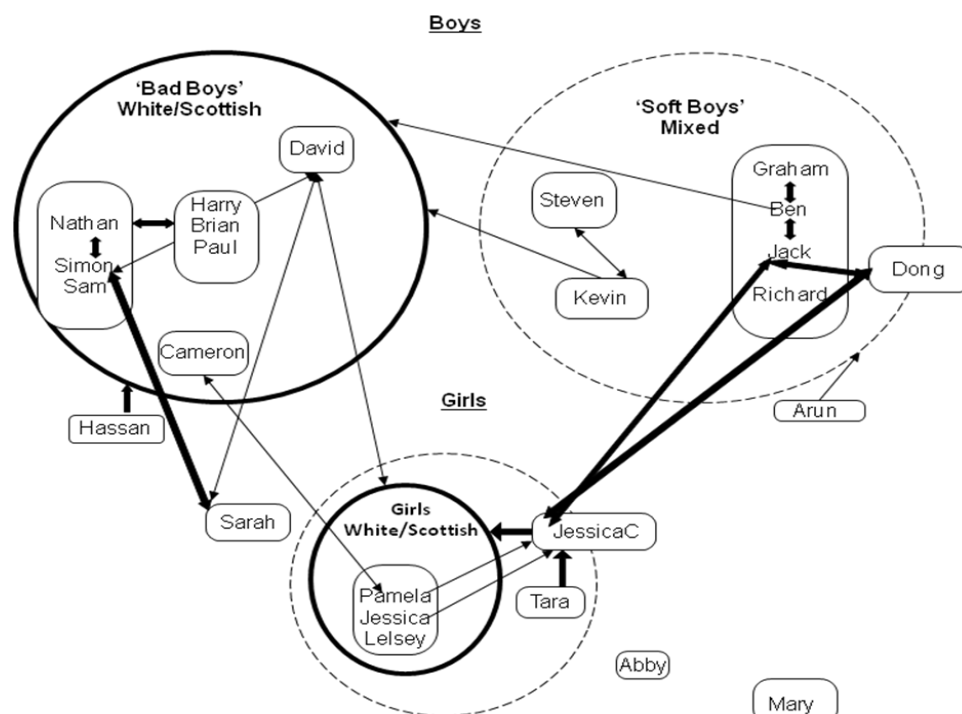
Figure 8.1 A sociogram of children's friendship groupings in the 'mainly white' nursery
Circles represent the subgroupings and arrows indicate interactions. Bold circles and arrows indicate strong relationships, non-bold arrows indicate less strong relationships and intermittent circles indicate weak relationships. Children that are both in and out of circles (JessicaC and Dong) are thus depicted to indicate their unstable positioning as both insiders and outsiders of groups depending on context.

The groups of boys would come together in order to plan how to trap the girls, and the older girl in particular, who they called "the great girl". The girls would then go against the boys, run away or devise tactics like putting a 'closed' sign up the entry of the house-corner, and would shout to one another "not let the baddies in", something that again indicates the gender distance. In the multiethnic nursery, despite observations of boys chasing girls and wanting to 'kill' them, this was not as common.

It must be also noted that these two wider groups were further divided into subgroups.

8.3.1.2 'Bad boys' and 'soft boys': Gender and masculinity

Regarding the boys, there were more or less two subgroups; two wider circles of friends that seemed to be distinct from one another (see Figure 1). Sub-groups indicated how gender is not the only factor for friendships to occur. These groups were mainly divided according to personality and ways of 'being boys'. There were the 'bad boys', who were linked to more 'hegemonic' masculinities, and the 'soft' boys, which were linked to more 'non-hegemonic masculinities' (see Chapter 5).

The 'bad boys' formed a strong and large group, as they were all white Scottish (although one was registered as British but had a Scottish accent), had the same age/competence and shared similar expressions of 'hegemonic masculinity'. The 'soft' boys were not as bonded as the 'bad boys' group, and were not all white Scottish. Although the 'soft boys' would occasionally show elements of 'hegemonic masculinity', they were not as 'rough' as the 'bad boys'. Kevin, for example, did not like Paul "because he bosses me around". Within these subgroups, preferences and 'best friends' between two, three or more boys were apparent. This contradicted findings which suggested that boys play mainly in big groups with no really close friendships (see Hill & Tisdall, 1997; Frosh, Phoenix & Pattman, 2002). The two groups would rarely interact between them, and would play separately. On a few occasions Kevin and Ben would attempt to be part of the 'bad groups', but would mainly play at the outskirts.

8.3.1.3 Minority ethnic boys as 'outsiders'

Observing the majority Scottish children's friendship patterns in the mainly white nursery (see Figure 8.1), both girls and boys preferred to play with same gender and ethnicity children, although they did not refer explicitly to their ethnic commonality as a factor of friendship. Scourfield (2006) has argued that children of the majority could be taking their ethnic identity for granted. However, ethnicity did seem to play an important role (see also Connolly, 1998; Barron, 2007) in same gender groupings. Majority

Scottish boys, and particularly the 'bad boys', had a preference towards same ethnicity and gender children. Therefore Hassan and Arun, both children from minority ethnic backgrounds, were usually excluded from the boys' groups (see Figure 1). They were also mainly observed to play on their own or at the edge of children's play, and were occasionally accepted in play by some of the children, particularly towards the end of the year. Hassan had the desire to be part of the 'bad boys' group, and Arun of the 'soft' group.

Dong was mainly excluded from the boys' group, but had developed a strong friendship with JessicaC, who was also Korean, and interacted at times with Jack, who was British/Chinese. He also played at the outskirts of the 'soft boys' group occasionally. On a few occasions Dong came closer to Paul (of the 'bad boys' group). However, this relationship, which developed because of Paul's interest in 'Chinese' people, restaurants and food, did not last long (see Chapter 7).

8.3.1.4 The girls' dominant friendship group and 'outsiders'

The only girls' group was a three all-white Scottish girls' group which was particularly closed (see Figure 1). Lesley and Pamela would have a rather 'rocky' relationship, as they would argue on many occasions due to personality 'clashes'. Despite this, their relationship was special. Jessica was more of a 'follower', and therefore had a more stable relationship with the two girls.

As in the case of the boys, minority ethnic children were also excluded by the dominant white Scottish girls. JessicaC would always try to be part of the Scottish girls group, but was usually excluded. Only on an individual basis, and when Lesley was not around, would Pamela and Jessica be more open towards JessicaC. Tara was mainly at the edge of the girls play, would very strongly try to be JessicaC's friend, and was scarcely seen to play with the girls' group along with JessicaC. Tara did not share the same desire to be part of the majority girls groups; when she did, she was mainly accepted. Mary was usually alone, and excluded by both girls and boys. Mary had been described from the staff as potentially autistic and as having additional needs.

8.3.1.5 Mixed gender friendships, ethnicity and intersectionality

Friendships across genders were also apparent (see also Thorne, 1993). Such cases occurred between children with kinship relations, like Simon and Sarah (see Figure 1) who were cousins. Sarah had a strong desire to play with her cousin Simon, and did not have any particular interest in being part of the girls' group. Sarah would always be by the side of Simon, and always at the edge of the 'bad boys' group, although not really included. David was the only boy who developed a closer relationship with Sarah, as part of the friendship between himself and Simon.

JessicaC had a strong relationship with Dong and Jack on the basis of an ethnic identification. So ethnicity intersected with gender in this case, and was explicitly expressed as a categorical term, as a group identity and factor of friendship by minority ethnic children that formed a group of two or more children. All three children were excluded from the dominant Scottish girls and boys, something which could have also reinforced the friendship between them.

Dong came to the nursery during Christmas time, speaking no English. When his mum brought him in for the first time, she immediately took him to JessicaC and Jack, the only ones that were excited with his arrival, being very positive and inclusive in their play. Both children were focusing on his nationality particularly in relation to language and country of origin. The children were both identifying with a common ethnic identity, which in the case of Jack was imagined, as Dong was considered Chinese. The friendship between JessicaC and Dong was reinforced by the fact that their mothers had become really close, and would meet outside the nursery. Jack's relationship with Dong seemed to weaken, especially as Dong could not speak fluent English. Jack developed a friendship with Ben, yet Jessica was considered one of his best friends. Jack called JessicaC as "my (his) Jessica", "'cause she is my (his) friend" in order to differentiate from the Scottish Jessica. The fact is that Jack showed a general explicit bond to Dong, due to an 'imagined' Chinese identity, and it is very likely that the sentence 'my Jessica' was used to show he considered JessicaC, like him, Chinese. Dong, Jack and JessicaC shared common physical characteristics (e.g. eye shape) which could have also helped them coalesce. JessicaC would interact and play very often with Ben and/or Graham, as

they were best friends with Jack.

It was observed that mixed gender interactions, preferences and at times closer friendships occurred between majority Scots, although not that often. For example, Scottish girls, while referring to their boyfriends, would refer to Scottish boys. Pamela was also observed to have a special relationship with Cameron.

8.3.1.6 'Swingers' and 'loners': Beyond grouping

Not all of the children formed specific groups (see Figure 8.1). There were children, for example, who liked to play on their own out of choice. Abby played games on her own; even when some girls would approach her, she preferred to play on her own, did not seem to approach any groups or individual children, and did not express any sad feelings about being on her own.

Some of these children would be 'swingers', like David, Cameron and Kevin, which means that they did not form a specific group; some would at times like to play on their own, and were also seen to play with different children or different groups of children (see Figure 8.1). For example, David and Cameron were generally observed to play within the 'bad boys' groups, but did not really form a specific sub-group with any of the boys. In comparison to the rest of the boys they would more frequently interact or play with the majority Scottish girls. Boy 'swingers' could also be seen as the children that could not really 'fit' in any of the two groups, 'bad boys' and 'soft boys'. This would be either because David and Cameron were not as 'rough' as the 'bad boys', and Kevin was not 'soft' enough to be in the 'soft boys' groups. For that reason Kevin would very often attempt to play in the 'bad boys' group.

Swingers would also adopt less powerful roles when in the 'bad boys' groups, and occasionally in their play with the girls. For example, David was observed to play with the majority Scottish girls group playing in the house with the dolls, and would do what Lesley would tell him to do.

8.3.2 Multiethnic nursery

8.3.2.1 Gender distinctions

Children's friendships in the multiethnic nursery were divided into boys and girls groups, but in contrast to the mainly white nursery, despite scarce observations of boys chasing girls and wanting to 'kill' them, this was not common (see Figure 2). Although separations between the two genders existed, they were not as clear or rigid as they seemed to be in the mainly white nursery. This could be because the boys did not really form a big group(s) that would share a lot of similarities, and the sub groups were not as bonded as a whole. Strong bonds also occurred between girls and boys, reflecting a more general and positive ethos of this specific nursery. The Pakistani girls were the ones that expressed stronger, more explicit and negative statements against boys.
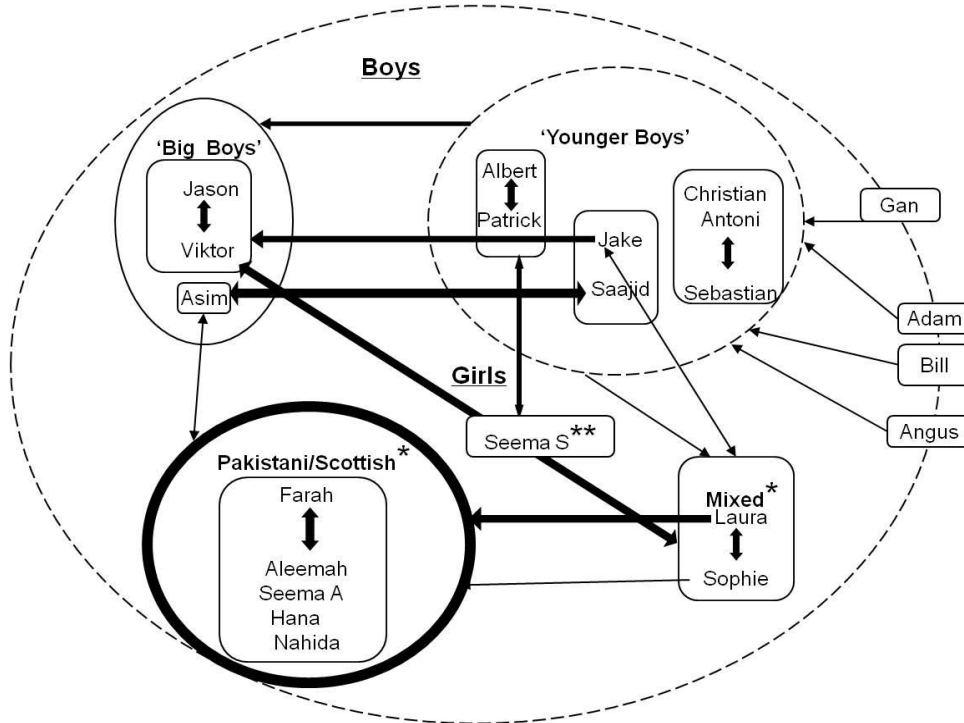
Figure 8.2 A sociogram of children's friendship groupings in the 'multi-ethnic' nursery.
Circles represent the subgroupings and arrows indicate interactions. Bold circles and arrows indicate strong relationships, non-bold circles and arrows indicate less strong relationships and intermittent circles indicate weak relationships.
NOTE: *Older girls
          **Younger girls

8.3.2.2 'Big boys' and 'younger boys'

In this nursery, subgroups occurred between children of the same gender in relation to age and/or competence. Age was explicitly used as a factor for friendship groups, both in a categorical sense but also in relation to competence and ability. In the multiethnic nursery there was a clear distinction between the 'older' and 'younger' boys as they had made separate groups (see Figure 8.2). This was not the case in the mainly white nursery, merely due to the fact that the majority of the children were four years old or were of similar competence. However, there was still this general idea that "small (young) boys play with small and big boys play with big". In the multiethnic nursery, the older children did not want to play with the younger ones, and the younger had this desire to be part of both the older boys and girls group. However, younger children would also show negativity towards older children, as they did not like it when the older children would take over space. Further subgroups occurred in same gender and age children, due to different levels of competence in relation to language, physical ability, 'maturity', social competence and ways of communication and others (see Figure 8.2).

Albert, Patrick, Christian, Antoni, Sebastian, were part of the 'younger group'; however, Albert and Patrick would not really play with Sebastian, Christian or Antoni, and vice versa. The latter shared similarities in not speaking English competently, as two of them were recent arrivals in Scotland and could only use certain sentences or words. Antoni, half Greek/half Scottish, although -according to his mum- speaking in both languages at home, did not really speak in the nursery context, and would merely mention words and small sentences. Additionally, in terms of abilities in movement and activities, Patrick and Albert shared similar levels of competence, were involved in more complex conversations, and were interested in activities where quicker movements and a need for being able to control the movement of the body were needed, in contrast to Sebastian and Antoni who enjoyed more repetitive and less complicated activities.

Friendships between children of different ages were observed, although not as often, and were not particularly stable. Jake, for example, was one of the younger boys that would be very persistent, and showed a preference for the 'big boys' or older children groups, but was usually excluded. Children of different age came together due

to common ethnicity, like in the case of Asim and Saajid, who had developed a strong friendship towards the end of the research. Although Asim was particularly open towards different children, both younger and older and of different ethnicity, he did seem to have a special bond with Saajid, the only Pakistani boy. Ethnicity could therefore intersect with age/competence.

8.3.2.3 Boy 'outsiders' and 'swingers'

In the multiethnic nursery, the children that were outsiders or did not really form a particular group, were children that had additional needs, were mainly disruptive, violent with lack of social or verbal skills, and overweight (see Figure 8.2). In contrast to the mainly white nursery, ethnicity did not seem to feature as an important factor of friendship or exclusion in the boys' groups, with the exception of language. These 'outsiders' (Angus, Bill, Adam) did not have a specific friend, and would either play on their own, be at the outskirts of children's play, or join various children on different contexts. Gan was a boy that did not really come to the nursery often, and whenever he came he was mainly on his own. Gan could not speak English as he had recently arrived from China, and was occasionally disruptive and violent.

8.3.2.4 Scottish / Pakistani girls' group: The dominant group

The dominant girls' group was a very strong friendship group of Scottish/Pakistani girls, which would not really include other children that were not Muslim/Pakistani. These children referred mainly to their cultural, religious, national, language and physical commonalities, all of which could be seen as part of their common 'ethnic habitus' and individual and group identity. The Scottish/Pakistani girls would generally exclude girls that were not like them (see Figure 8.2) like Laura, Sophie and Seema S. Ethnicity therefore intersected with gender. Friendships and preferences also occurred between children of different gender, but same ethnicity. The Pakistani girls, although negative towards boys, would play on occasions with Asim (see Figure 8.2), the only Pakistani boy of their age. No friendship occurred with Saajid who was younger and less competent than them. In this case, therefore, ethnicity could be intersecting with age, but

for this, only assumptions can be made.

Interestingly, being younger and less competent could also bring at times different ethnicity children together, in a general manner of protecting and looking after the young. Farah and Aleemah, who had shown a preference to play exclusively with Pakistani girls, were observed to positively interact on one occasion with Mei-li who was Chinese and younger in age/competence. They were treating her like a baby, teaching her how to jump, protecting and taking care of her.

8.3.2.5 Girl 'outsiders' and mixed friendships

The 'outsiders' of the Scottish/Pakistani girls' group were Sophie and Laura, who formed a group between them and would try to be part of the Scottish/Pakistani girls' group, but were excluded. Laura and Sophie were seen as part of, and had formed close friendships with, the 'big boys group', who were similar in age and competence, and particularly with Viktor and Jason. In most cases, mixed gender relations between children involved same age or competence. For example, Sophie or Laura and Viktor, all four years old, were close friends and would go against Jake or Albert who were younger, making links to their age.

Mixed gender friendships also occurred between children that shared outside relationships, like Laura and EG who were neighbours. Similar interests or personality, like in the case of Seema S, Patrick and Albert were important factors (see Figure 8.2) of mixed gender friendships. Seema S was again considered an outsider of the Scottish/Pakistani girls.

Furthermore, mixed gender friendships occurred between children that would show similar 'ways of being', that were in most cases 'non-dominant' ways of 'being' their own gender. For example, 'non-dominant' ways of being girls were linked to attitudes and behaviours that were considered more 'masculine', like swearing, being 'rough' and loud. Laura would on many occasions, while playing with the boys, put on her more 'rough' side linked to more 'masculine' ways of being like swearing, making jokes, being loud, and acting 'rough' by hitting the door hard. This side of Laura would not really come out when she would play princesses and sisters with Sophie. In the

mainly white nursery, boys like David would play more 'dominant feminine' games, like dolls, or would be more tender and 'soft' while with the Scottish girls.

However, some children of the opposite gender would form friendships between them without having to adjust or promote a side of them that was more acceptable to the different gender group. Friendships between boys and girls took varied forms, from friendly to more '(hetero)sexual' like "kiss-chase", romantic intercourse and others. This is similar to the mainly white nursery. In comparison to the Scottish white girls in both nurseries, the Pakistani girls made no reference to 'hetero-sexual' relationships, like for example talking about boyfriends or liking boys. Mixed gender friendships occurred in the case of the Scottish/Pakistani girls and Asim, the only same age and same ethnicity boy, as we already suggested, which indicates how ethnicity intersects with gender.

Generally speaking, ethnicity was not highly important in relation to friendship groups in the multiethnic nursery, with the exception of the Scottish/Pakistani girls. This could be because there were not that many children of the same ethnicity, and because children that shared the same ethnicity were different in many other ways (ability/competence, social skills and age).

8.4 'Insiders' and 'outsiders'

Children were drawing on similarities and differences between themselves and others, a process through which they were developing a sense of self, and finding a place within the social group; "a positive aspect of selfhood" as it "confirms for children that they belong" (James, 1993: 141). There was a tendency for children to identify with other children that were similar to them. Children that were part of the group(s) felt confident and strong, and in most cases positive about their self and group identity. However, this emphasis on sameness, according to what is considered the 'norm' each time, lead to a strong desire to want others to be the 'same' with them, and negativity and exclusion towards 'others' who were different.

What was considered as the 'norm', would change according to context. For example, the girls from Pakistan would show a lack of confidence regarding talking about parts of their ethnic identity that were different to the dominant culture, or the

'norm'. This was evident on a plethora of occasions throughout the year, with the Scottish/Pakistani girls using the phrase "I will tell you but don't laugh… promise you won't laugh" towards educators, or anyone who asked them about their home language, or using words in Urdu to describe cultural traits like mehndi or the salwar kammez. However, due to the fact that the Scottish/Pakistani girls had made this strong friendship group, they would generally feel positive about their self, showing a great tendency towards sameness and also wanting others to be like them. This emphasis on self and group identity from the children was also promoted and supported by the staff. This will be discussed further in chapter 9.

This strong sense of self and group identity was often accompanied by negativity and exclusion towards others who were different, particularly when other girls -non Pakistani- wanted to be part of their group. The key point to make is that this was the strong desire from the Pakistani/Muslim girls to be friends between them, rather than negativity to difference per se. However, this strong desire led to negativity and exclusion, which we need to discuss in more detail.

The process of identification, grouping and belonging, creates situations where some children are considered 'insiders', feeling that they belong, but also at times 'outsiders', who do not belong. The 'feeling that one belongs' is rather tangible and subject to change. Children's friendships are rather uncertain, in the sense that they are easily perceived from children as 'under threat'. There is a continuous 'struggle of belonging' that is taking place, even among rather established friendships. For example, the Scottish/Pakistani girls that formed a strong friendship group did not want to play with Farah when she cut her hair, because she looked like a boy. 'Normalities' of 'ways of being' a girl, linked to not having short hair, were the basis for exclusion.

During the sad doll activity, the children mentioned a plethora of different accounts regarding why somebody may be excluded. Their reasons reflected mainly manners and behaviours like "not talking nicely", "not saying please or thank you", "not sharing", "not being good or lovely, hitting, being nasty, pushing, and being naughty. Familiarity, and the lack of it, was mentioned. Wanting to play on their own or with somebody else or their own friend was also considered important. Not playing with

others as a response to children not playing with them or because they may be busy playing or doing something else, or because of practical reasons like an absence of children, available games, or play space, was also mentioned. A general dislike towards others, or not liking their clothes or colour of clothes, was also an issue. Particular salient aspects of children's accounts regarding exclusion were issues of being a different gender, age or ethnicity. These latter reasons of exclusion were of particular interest, as differences were identified, relating to implicit and explicit forms of expression.

8.5 Explicit forms of exclusion and discrimination

Children would explicitly use gender, age, physical appearance (skin colour and being overweight) and additional needs (disruptive, violent behaviour, immaturity) as factors of exclusion and discrimination.

8.5.1 The case of gender

Gender was a factor that the children would explicitly use for exclusion. Both girls and boys expressed negativity towards each other, excluding each other from their play (see also Browne, 2004). The phrase "you can't come to my party, you are a girl/boy" was often used. The children showed discrimination not only to the opposite gender, but also to whatever was associated to 'femininity' or 'masculinity' irrespectively.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 16/01/08)

Seema A and myself are in the carpet area. Seema A is looking at a birthday chart that the nursery staff had made and have put on the wall. It contains, photos of the children's faces along with their birthday date. Seema A asks me to find her photo on the chart, but she covers it so it is not as easy for me to find. I pretend that I don't understand who she is.
K: Is this you? (I point at different photos of children)
Seema A: No (Seema A is giggling and laughing, she is enjoying our game)
My eyes go to another Seema S.
K: This is you, it says Seema

Seema A laughs at first.
Seema A: Yes.
K: You look like this Seema S it must be you (making fun and teasing her)
Then Seema A gets uptight.
Seema A: She doesn't look like me. That's not me! (she gets annoyed)
K: Oh OK. I think this is you under here (pointing under her hand).
She starts laughing. In this photo she has her hair different, so I ask.
K: Oh, is this you?
Seema A: Yes, I've got short hair there, I look like a boy.
K: No you don't. Why do you look like a boy?
Seema A: 'Cause I got short hair, I hate it, I hate it (she tries to tear the photo, her movements are very quick and full of anger).

Both girls and boys expressed stereotypical accounts about the opposite gender. Boys, and particularly the 'bad boys' in the mainly white nursery, for example, would devalue girls and their abilities, particularly ones that were perceived as 'masculine' attributes like strength, playing action games like superheroes or fixing.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 23/06/08)

Nathan, Simon, David and Sarah are playing at the water tray. Nathan suggests playing superheroes.
Nathan: Shall we play superheroes?
They all decide to play and start thinking about who they are going to be. Nathan immediately says
Nathan: Sarah is not playing coz I am playing, she is so crap.
Sarah is not included in the game.

Girls were often seen as 'weak' and 'inferior' by the boys. On many occasions, the word 'girl' was used by boys in order to insult another boy, but this was also the case for girls while using the word 'boy'. Girls would stereotypically talk about how boys are "messy", "loud", "naughty" and "silly".

8.5.2 The case of age

Age was in most cases explicitly mentioned as a factor of exclusion and discrimination (see also Skattebol, 2006) by the children. Children would very often talk to me about how they were excluded or even bullied by older children. This would either relate to

their current or past 'being' and relationship with other children in class, or their older brothers and sisters and experiences at home. Being refused certain things, being hit by older children, and being treated unequally were all part of children's accounts of 'being younger'. In this sense, age discrimination was apparent. Older children would devalue younger children in relation to their age and competence and on many occasions older children, either individually or in groups, would act negatively towards younger children.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 16/05/08)

Sophie and Viktor are climbing outside, Jake tries to do it but Sophie says
Sophie: You can't do it (being rather negative).
Jake: I can (he gets all angry).
Sophie: No you can't, you're too little.
Jake: I am not little, I can do it
Sophie: Prove it.
Viktor: You're only 3.
Jake: I am not 3, I am 4 now.

On many occasions, the older children would comment on the fact that some younger children acted like babies, and being a baby, as we saw in Chapter 5, had a rather negative connotation. When older children were doing various things together, and a younger child would come along, an immediate facial and bodily expression of disapproval was apparent, they moved away, and told the teacher that they did not want the younger child near. Older children would group and bully younger children by pinching them and hitting them while gaining support and approval to continue by each other. Nevertheless, I had observed that some groups of younger children did not want the older children, as they would ruin their game or take over.

8.5.3 'Additional needs'

Children with additional needs (autistic, disruptive and violent, limited verbal communication skills, sudden shouting, immaturity and others) would be explicitly excluded by other children's play. In most cases, children would make reference to the

fact that such children would hit or punch them, emphasizing their disruptive or violent behaviour or their 'baby-like' immaturity, as some would suddenly make loud sounds and shout.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 25/02/08)

Steven is talking with Kevin about who he is going to invite to his party.
Steven: Kevin can come and David can come, but not Mary (pause) not Mary, 'cause she just punches us, hey Kevin?
Kevin: Yeah.

Mary (see Figure 8.1), who was the child that was excluded by all boys and girls and had no friends, would often be referred to as the "bad girl" in order to ridicule and exclude her. Songs were made on one occasion by the girls in order to make fun of Mary, where there was singing and dancing to the phrase "Mary is the bad girl" (see Chapter 9 for further discussion).

8.5.4 The case of being 'fat'

There have been a few, but worth mentioning occasions, where children explicitly made reference to 'overweight' children either from the nursery context ("Hey fat Angus you ruined it"), or from outside, and made fun of them showing a discriminatory attitude because of their weight.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 23/01/08)

Sarah is with Simon at the drawing table. They are talking about Becca- a child that they know from outside the nursery setting.
Sarah: Becca is a big FAT girl (says making fun and speaking quite ironically). She is stupid, she is a fat bum.
Simon agrees. Then they make fun of the FAT bum word. They repeat it a few times.
Sarah (says to Simon): FAT bum (making fun of him).
Simon: Hey, don't tell me a fat bum.
Sarah: Fat bum.

Sarah makes reference to Becca's weight and links being 'fat' to being stupid. To

emphasise the negative aspect of being 'fat', they link it to the word 'bum' (a word that educators considered inappropriate within the nursery context).

8.5.5 The case of ethnicity

Ethnicity, in contrast to the aforementioned aspects, and specifically to gender and age, was mainly used implicitly as a factor for exclusion and discrimination. This will be discussed more analytically in the following section; however, it is worth mentioning that explicit instances were also apparent, and that the context within which these occurred may suggest that children are not comfortable to freely discuss their deeper thoughts on ethnicity inside the nursery context. Children, therefore, are coming to understand that some issues like ethnicity are not acceptable to talk about (MacNaughton, 2005) in specific contexts. Similarly, although educators would explicitly and rather comfortably identify and talk about how there was a 'gender issue' or an 'age or competence issue' they would disregard, feel uncomfortable to discuss or even refer to the possibility of an 'ethnic issue'. Educators' pedagogies will be discussed in detail in chapter 9.

Due to the fact that ethnicity was merely subtly and implicitly mentioned, I will draw on a variety of different data, ranging from children's free play, parent's views about their children outside the nursery and the doll activity.

Children's explicit discriminatory attitudes and exclusionary practices linked to ethnicity and related to nationality, i.e. coming from a different/ 'far away' country, and physical characteristics like eye shape and black skin colour. Such views were expressed during outside time, when the children were feeling angry or uptight, but also during inside time. In most cases the inside nursery instances were expressed by minority ethnic children either towards other minority children, people of different ethnicities or towards Scottish people.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Field notes, 10/06/08)

I am talking to Seema A about the photos of the Ceilidh the nursery had organised. I ask Seema A what a Ceilidh is and she refers to how it is Scottish. I ask her to elaborate on

what Scottish means and amongst others she says:
Seema A: (…) Scottish means pooh pooh heads, because I go to Scottish and somebody said poo poo head to me.

Discriminatory views were reproduced between children, evident in the case of Ahmed and Hassan. Hassan was a child that was particularly open and positive to other children, including Dong, and would play with them as well occasionally. Dong had recently come from Korea, and could speak very little English. Ahmed was listening to him, and started talking negatively about him.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 4/03/08)

Ahmed: He can't speak English, he is just speaking like a Chinese boy (saying it in a negative tone) (…) "I don't like the Chinese boy".

A few months later, Ahmed expressed negativity again; "I don't like the Chinese boy". He now referred to shape of Dong's eyes. Ahmed's views about Dong included that he had to go away, that he would not speak to him, that he couldn't live here and that he never had to know him if he was Chinese. Hassan listened to it again later, and also seemed to have been influenced by Ahmed's views which he had accepted uncritically.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 14/04/08)

As we go upstairs it is tidy up and story time. Dong is sitting on the carpet waiting for story time. Hassan is close. Dong is shouting at me so I can go near him. When I go he says something to me I can't totally understand. Hassan looks and smiles ironically.
Hassan: He don't know how to speak.
K: Yes, he does.
Hassan: No he doesn't. I don't talk to him 'cause he has Chinese eyes.
Dong (covers his eyes): I am not Chinese eyes.
Hassan: I don't like Dong, because he is Chinese, if he is Chinese I don't play with him, I only play with children that are not Chinese.

Hassan's negative view about Dong persisted throughout the academic year. In

instances where Hassan would get annoyed or feel angry with Dong discriminatory comments were most likely to come up (see also Troyna & Hatcher, 1992; Connolly, 1998). As a result, Hassan was observed to generalise "I don't like Chinese people" and perpetuate and transfer his knowledge to other children.

Parents/caregivers in the mainly white nursery also talked to me about their concern regarding their children's discriminatory views that were expressed outside the nursery context. In all these stories, a common theme was that the children were expressing discriminatory views, saying that they did not like and would not play with children that had black skin, 'spoke funny', did not look like, and were not the same as them. In both cases, the caregivers mentioned to me that they made reference to people from their circle or neighbourhood that were black, and whom their children seemed to like. The children's response would be "yeah, but that is different, he is not like the others". Both caregivers were amazed by the children's views, and could not understand where such views were coming from, as they were something the children were definitely not getting from home (see also Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001).

The parents' views were important not only because they provided me with information of the children's lives outside the nursery, but also because they enhanced a more holistic understanding of children's behaviour at the nursery. For example, although negativity was observed by Tara towards Hassan, no explanation had been provided in the nursery context. Links were made between Tara's negative attitudes and ethnicity when: a) during the doll activity Tara talked about how a child may not play with another if they are not from the same place and b) when her grandmother was concerned about Tara's discriminatory views about Hassan due to his colour of skin. Interestingly, Tara was not negative towards JessicaC, who was considered 'different' by children; on the contrary, she seemed to like her. This showed how gender may play an important role here, and also how 'different' differences (e.g. skin colour) are considered more salient than others, and therefore can serve as basis for exclusion.

8.6 Subtle forms of exclusion and discrimination

Subtle and implicit forms of negativity and discrimination were taking place especially in front of the educators' gaze. In comparison to most aspects of children's identity, ethnicity was considered the most implicit and subtle form of exclusion. In the mainly white nursery, the majority of the white 'Scots' had shown negativity towards children that were different to the 'norm', which related to being white, speaking 'Scottish' and living in Scotland. Minority ethnic children were excluded and would always talk to me about how nobody played with them, how they hit and swear at them, how they felt lonely and how they did not like playing on their own. In most cases they would use plural and generalise by saying "no one plays with me", especially in the outside area.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 20/11/07)

Hassan: Nobody plays with me, no one is my friend.
K: Oh.
Hassan: Why nobody wants to play with me? Why nobody wants to be my friend?
K: Oh what happened?
Hassan: They push me, they hit me.
K: Why what happened?
Hassan: They don't want to play with me
K: Why? …Why do you think?
Hassan: I don't know, they hit me, they push me.

During the doll activity, minority ethnic children made links to how children may be excluded in the nursery due to the fact that they were different and spoke a different language; issues that reflected their own personal story.

Subtle ways of discrimination included not letting others play with the excuse "it is only for three people", using the copying excuse (how they did not like people that copy), accusing them for something even though they were not to blame, speaking angrily and abruptly, mumbling negatively while staring and frowning at them, coming over and destroying their game, devaluing their ability, and staring negatively, angrily and jokingly. These were all common ways of expressing negativity to minority ethnic children without really saying anything overtly discriminatory. Some children, however,

would verbally express their dislike without explanations, using phrases like "I don't like you", "you can't play with us".

Even towards the end of the research, when more positive interactions occurred between minority ethnic children and majority Scots, possibly -in part- due to teacher's approaches, minority ethnic children never seemed to be a part of the Scots group in the mainly white nursery.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 12/06/08)

Hassan is talking to me about Nathan saying that he is his friend but that he plays soldiers with him only outside and not inside because they are not allowed to play soldiers inside. Hassan is more confident and therefore is approaching the boys asking them to play with him and to be his friend.
Hassan: Who is going to be my friend?
Harry: Somebody is going to be your friend.
Nobody is playing or including Hassan in their game. Hassan asks again.
Hassan: Who can be my friend?
Nathan: I might play with you outside.
Hassan is talking, Nathan shows that he is listening but then doesn't take any notice. He is mainly interacting and playing with Harry and Cameron.
Nathan: what is Cameron doing?
(…)
Hassan is speaking to Harry asking about whether they are going to play soldiers. Harry looks at him quickly and says in a negative and annoyed manner
Harry: We're not playing soldiers! We are playing tigers!
He says in a way to make Hassan feel left out, he speaks quickly like he just wants to inform him quickly so he is not unkind but he doesn't seem to really want Hassan and acts like he is not too bothered.
Hassan is trying to fit in but nobody is really taking any notice and is always going away or avoiding him. After a while Nathan asks Hassan about where he is from.
Nathan: Are you in Scotland? (Looks at Hassan's face). You're at France or at Scotland? (Asks in a confused way)
Hassan : I am France and Nathan is Scotland.
We have a discussion about what Scotland is.
Hassan: Do you want to go outside? (asks Nathan)
Nathan: No.
Nathan is interacting and laughing with Harry and Sam. Hassan is left out.

Hassan was excluded, and although explicit reference was not made to ethnicity, emphasis was given to Hassan's difference; in the above extract, Nathan is asking

Hassan to clarify his ethnic origin. On another occasion, Nathan explicitly mentioned to me, by staring at his face, that he did not consider Hassan Scottish.

Ethnicity was considered in many exclusionary cases, both from children and educators as a 'taboo' subject of reference or discussion. On a number of occasions, the children would use commonly accepted notions like gender and age, while excluding 'different' ethnicity children. It is difficult to provide an exact reason for their negativity; however, the general fact that these children were negative towards minority ethnic children, had shown a preference to play with same ethnicity and gender children, had developed a strong Scottish identity linked to whiteness, focused on other children's difference if they were not considered from Scotland and lastly used ethnicity as a factor for exclusion, could enhance the argument.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 14/04/08)

Dong and Hassan start talking about their age. Steven comes over, Kevin and David are there too).
Steven: I am five.
Hassan: I am five too.
Steven: Only me, David and Kevin are 5 (says in a negative and superior way, showing the grouping between them and leaving Hassan out of the group).
Hassan: I am five as well.
Kevin: I am 4,5 not 5 yet.
Dong: I am 4.
Steven: I am bigger than you (says Steven to Hassan).

Steven grouped himself with other 'Majority Scots' on the basis of age in order to exclude Hassan, even though in reality Kevin was not five and Hassan was, for which reason Steven then focused on height. Nathan and Simon were also grouping against Dong with negative verbal and bodily expressions, devaluing and making fun of him, and challenging his masculinity because of a hardly obvious tiny pink line he had in the inside of his coat, that even Simon could not see. Nevertheless, they both started making fun of Dong saying "he has pink, he is a girl", "you are sooo much of a girl".

Negative attitudes, however, did seem to change towards more positive,

respectful and 'inclusive' attitudes, as the time passed and the children got to know each other, and as the excluded children tried to blend into the dominant groups by trying to be one of them. Wearing 'cool' clothes or accessories could also help a child being accepted. Additionally, depending on the context, children would draw on different similarities. For example, although David excluded Hassan and had also expressed negativity towards Pakistani people, he did group with him against Tara on the basis of gender and masculinity. Educators' approaches enhanced positive relations even further, which will be discussed in chapter nine.

Generally speaking, children that showed a strong personal identification, which was also part of a wider dominant group, were particularly negative to difference, thus using it as a basis for exclusion. This was evident in the case of the Pakistani girls who shared both a strong gender and ethnic identity. Even though they were not part of the wider 'norm' of the Scottish nursery's culture, they were part of the dominant group in that particular context. Therefore their group 'normality' was being Pakistani, black, speaking Scottish and Urdu or Punjabi, and being Muslim. The 'majority Scots' in the mainly white nursery also showed a strong gender and ethnic Scottish identity. This Scottish identity was part of the wider 'norm' of the Scottish nursery's culture, but they were also part of the dominant group. Therefore, their group normality was being white Scottish and speaking 'Scots'. Of course, children were observed to play with other children on an individual basis; it was mainly the dynamic of the group that would create more hostile attitudes (see also Connolly, 1998). It has to be stressed, however, that there were cases of children who showed a strong ethnic identification, but were also positive to difference.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter explored children's friendship groups and the extent to which aspects of social identity (particularly gender, age and ethnicity) influence children's friendship choices. Exploring children's friendship patterns is a rather complex process, as various factors may play an important role depending on context.

Gender was considered one of the most important aspects of children's

friendship patterns. However, gender seems to intersect with age/competence, ethnicity, personality, and also with the 'normalities' of being a girl or a boy. Subgroups therefore emerge on the basis of the above similarities and differences. Mixed gender friendships would also occur on the above basis, along with factors of kinship or out of nursery relations. Ethnicity was also rather salient especially between same gender children. Ethnicity in most cases intersected with gender and age, either by bringing children of different gender and age but same ethnicity together, or by separating same gender children whose ethnic origin was different. Friendships between different ethnicity children also occurred, when children did not form a specific ethnic and gender group and did not show a strong ethnic identity. Instances of children who showed a strong ethnic identity, but were open to difference, were also apparent. This was mainly evident in minority ethnic children, and was also noticed with Majority Scots.

Age/competence would play an important role, but in most cases would come as of secondary importance or as a basis for subgroups to occur, and would intersect with competence, gender and ethnicity. Same age children would create subgroups with children of similar competence in relation to language, social skills, physical ability, maturity and others. Different gender but same age/competence children would come together, as would same ethnicity but different age children. Friendships between different age children were not really evident, and when they did occur, they were not that stable.

It is important to stress, however, that although gender, age/competence and ethnicity seemed to play an important role, other factors like personality, popularity, common interests, the need for a companion, and context and current availability, appeared to exert influence over relationship forming; friendships, therefore, could also develop due to chance or need of companion (see also Smith, 2005).

In all cases, children were drawing on similarities, 'normalities' and differences in their inclusionary/exclusionary practices. In most cases sameness and 'normality' was a particular strong criterion for children's friendships to occur. Difference, being the 'other' or out of the 'norm', would mainly lead children to exclusionary practices. What difference the children will draw on each time, was context specific and complex. This

raised implications for educators' practice. In most cases, promoting and enhancing personal and group identity could lead to strong in-group preference and negativity to out-group.

Exclusionary practices were evident both in overt/explicit and subtle/implicit forms. Both children and educators would explicitly talk about gender and age as factors of exclusion, whereas ethnicity was in most cases implicit and considered a 'taboo' issue. Gender and age, which were considered more acceptable as concepts, were used, in some occasions, in order to exclude on the basis of ethnicity. Due to the fact that ethnicity remains a 'taboo' issue in relation to exclusion and discrimination, and is not considered as apparent in young children's lives, children are left to uncritically reproduce their beliefs, which remain unchallenged. Interestingly, even though educators would refer to gender or age 'issues', these largely remained unchallenged. Uncritical and unchallenged views could develop into, and perpetuate discriminatory views. In most cases, minority ethnic children or children that were considered different/ 'other' were subject to exclusion and discriminatory attitudes that impacted on their well being and self confidence.

Chapter 9

Educators'[31] social justice and equity pedagogies

9.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on educators' practices, their interventions in children's play and friendships, and their social justice and equity approaches. Chapter 4 argued that equity, social justice and the fight against discrimination and inequalities seem to be high in the educational policy and legislative agenda. Chapter 8 suggested that children's friendships and interactions were influenced by 'truths' and stereotypes linked to what was considered 'normal', same and different. 'Otherness' was used in a complex, at times intersecting and context-specific way, which often lead to overt/explicit and subtle/implicit exclusionary and discriminatory practices. The above raise important implications for early childhood educators' practices and social justice and equity pedagogies. This chapter thus seeks to link children's perspectives to educators' practice.

Early childhood approaches and pedagogies cannot be clearly defined; educational practice is rather complex, and depending on context, a synthesis of approaches may be used (Stephen, 2006). However, traditional and dominant educational approaches (e.g. DAP) have been criticised for dealing inadequately with equity issues (see Chapter 2). A recent critique has also emerged regarding the limitations of current socially justice educational approaches influenced by children's rights-based approaches (e.g. 'Reggio Emilia approaches'), particularly in relation to gender (see Browne, 2004; MacNaughton & Smith, 2009). Additionally, multicultural education and 'safe approaches'[32] seem to dominate early childhood more than (pro-)active and challenging approaches, like mainstreaming antidiscrimination education,

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[31]   This includes head-teachers, educators, nursery nurses, learning and/or educators' assistants, and any kind of staff that worked with the children.

[32]   'Safe' approaches are mainly influenced by developmentally appropriate theories. I define 'safe' approaches as approaches that do not intervene in children's peer worlds in order to (pro-)actively challenge dominant discourses/practices that reproduce discriminatory or in-just practices (see Chapter 2 for further discussion).

which are currently strongly promoted (Connolly, 2006; Scottish Government, 2000).

There are five main findings linked to educators' pedagogies. Firstly, educators in both nurseries espoused a strong commitment to issues of fairness and equity. Secondly, educators showed:

- a lack of knowledge regarding the promotion of equity in terms of policy and legislation at all levels from national to specific nursery school and
- a lack of knowledge and confidence about specific socially justice and equitable educational approaches and practices, particularly linked to antidiscrimination.

Thirdly, conceptual and practical ambiguities and confusions were identified:

- in meanings of equity and equitable educational approaches like those of multiculturalism, antiracism and antidiscrimination and,
- in dealing with difficult/intractable issues that occurred

Fourthly, educators in both nurseries drew both on traditionally developmentally appropriate discourses, and more current debates on children's rights discourses. The commitment to the latter depended on the particular nursery, individual staff, and context.

Fifthly, differences between nurseries occurred in relation to educators' dominant ideologies of childhood, equity approaches and practices. The multiethnic nursery, influenced by children's-rights based approaches (particularly Reggio Emilia) showed commitment to children's rights, agency and participation, which was strongly reflected in educators' practice. The multiethnic nursery was also more active in relation to multicultural education, and emphasised 'difference'. In contrast, the mainly white nursery discussed the salience of children's rights, agency and participation in theory, and, to some extent this was depicted in their practice, although there were limitations in the way that theory was translated into practice. Educators in the mainly white nursery who were mainly guided by traditional and developmentally appropriate discourses

showed a less active stance to multicultural education and emphasised 'sameness'. Nevertheless, regardless of the theoretical background and the commitment of educators' practice to children's rights, and the different approaches that were used, limitations were identified in both nurseries in dealing with equity and social justice issues. Therefore, 'too young to notice', and 'no problem here' debates (see also Arshad et al, 2005a) seemed to feature prominently in both nurseries, followed by more 'safe' and 'problematic' reactive approaches to dealing with diversity and discrimination.

This chapter begins by exploring educators' perceptions of childhood and the links with their educational practice. It then explores children's friendships in educators' initiated activities, and the extent to which educators intervened in children's play and friendships to promote equity. The rest of the chapter focuses more closely on issues around educators' pedagogies, social justice and equity. Despite differences, common themes, issues and approaches occurred between the two nurseries. I will thus present the findings according to theme, and refer to differences as they arise. This chapter draws on empirical data gathered by participant observation and semi-structured interviews with educators (see Chapter 3).

9.2 Perceptions of childhood and educational practice

Perceptions of childhood tend to influence educational practice (see Chapter 2). In the mainly white nursery, although children's rights discourses seemed to feature at least in theory, and to some extent in practice, traditional and developmental discourses, especially in relation to adult-children relations, were dominant. In contrast to the multiethnic nursery, children had to call educators by their title (Mrs V). Adults were seen as having the 'power' in most cases, and this was clearly or implicitly stated to the children. Adults were there as protectors, as carers, as 'educators', as 'authority'.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 17/12/07)

Mrs B comes along to Ben 'cause he is touching the recorder/ music.
Mrs B (says to Ben): Remember only grown-ups touch that.

Although children's interests and views were sought and seen as imperative to take into consideration, there was a limitation in how this was translated into practice.

On the other hand, multiethnic nursery staff were influenced by current discourses of childhood and children's rights, and their approach resembled very much a 'Reggio Emilia approach' (see Chapter 2). Because of this, children called the educators by their first name and the latter were seen as adult friends who were there to protect them, to have fun and learn together with them. Adult-child power relations were carefully balanced. Of course, due to their role, educators were also seen as 'authority', albeit in a different sense to the mainly white nursery.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Interview)

Alexis: ...and also to take an interest in them (children) during the day talk to them and find out you know listening to what they are saying (pause and thinks) also important rather than talking to them or at them.

In this nursery, educators were seen as partners and guides (Edwards, 1998: 179). Staff believed strongly in children's rights and values, promoting a more equitable relationship where power dynamics were negotiable and interactive, rather than top-down, with staff being more powerful than children. This general approach was also transferred to all kinds of relationships between staff and other people, including leadership.

9.3 Children's friendships in educators' initiated activities

By educators' initiated activities, I am referring to a) the straightforward and planned activities where educators are setting the scene (e.g. circle time, story time, singing time), in relation to resources and theme areas that are provided and b) educators' intervention in children's friendship groups and play activities. Although educators' interventions in children's friendships were mainly about 'being nice', such issues linked to equity issues. It is difficult to disentangle sociability from equity issues. Therefore, it is worth briefly discussing the aforementioned, before focusing on specific equity

dimensions.

Resources and theme areas in the nursery context that were provided by the staff could act as initial contact points between groups of children that shared common interests. However, children gave increasing importance to being with their preferred friends, in combination with decisions of what to play and interest in specific resources, imaginative play, role-play and others.

Educators' initiated and more structured activities promoted and enhanced positive interactions between children and provided opportunities for different children to interact and work together. Children would come together and mix according to gender, ethnicity, age/competence, personality and other factors. During educators' activities, children were free to choose their friend(s), and this 'free play' allowed for observation of patterns of friendships or behaviour. The more similarities the children had, the more likely they were to play and bond.

Educators would intervene in children's friendships or would structure interactions in order to:

- promote good relations,
- enhance further mixing and openness to other children,
- expand friendship groups,
- make children more sociable,
- bring together children that were not close to conduct activities such as puzzles in order to enjoy, and gain from, the common experience,
- separate children that were dependent to one another and encourage self-reliance (see also James, 1993)
- solve quarrels/fights by means of discussion, whenever exclusion or negative attitudes were identified.

However, educators highlighted the importance of merely guiding children and respecting children's agency and choice of friends or children's desire to play on their own, as long as they did not feel isolated.

Ms E: I don't think any of us would try either to insist that a child makes friends with someone else or a special other person, I think that's their own choice.

Generally, there were many opportunities for children to mix and play altogether and staff particularly emphasised supporting younger children, new arrivals and children that did not speak English to create friendships.

Even though educators would sometimes try to expand close friendship groups children would find ways of keeping the group intact, or remaining in their desired, more established and close friendship groups as already discussed (see Chapter 8). Interestingly, however, if we compare the two sociograms of children's friendships (see Figure 8.1 and Figure 8.2) in the two different nurseries, we could argue that, along with children's agency in forming their identities and friendships (as Chapters 5,6,7 and 8 have argued), nurseries may also play a role in influencing children's social networks. At this point, it is important to reflect briefly upon the potential influences of the two respective nurseries on the corresponding networks of children's relationships.

Children in the mainly white nursery (Figure 8.1), in contrast to the multiethnic nursery (Figure 8.2), were not as open to 'different' children and tended to create rather strong friendship sub-groupings based on 'sameness' (although of course, there were exceptions like the 'Soft Boys-Mixed group'). The mainly white nursery sociogram (Figure 8.1) depicts the patterns of friendships that were observed in the mainly white nursery, and suggests that children's friendship groups were rather distinct and isolated (e.g. there was a strong 'Bad Boys, White Scottish group" and a "Girls White Scottish" group). Also, there is no wider intermittent circle that encompasses all the different friendship groupings which would suggest a more inclusive and positive atmosphere. Even when children from different sub-groups would come together or interact, there was an underlying separation between sub-groups or children that were considered different, in contrast to the multiethnic nursery. This is not to suggest that there were no positive relationships between children from different subgroups, or that subgroups were

'fixed', as this was not the case (see Chapter 8). It is rather to highlight a difference in the general ethos and warmness of children's relationships, in contrast to more welcoming and positive relationships between different children in the multiethnic nursery. Children in the mainly white nursery generally valued and preferred sameness, something that reflects the nursery's general ethos.

Interestingly, and in contrast to the mainly white nursery, the sociogram of children's friendships in the multiethnic nursery (Figure 8.2) shows how all or most children were placed within the wider intermittent circle which includes all children; thus, generally speaking, more inclusive relationships were evident. This suggests that despite the fact that sub-groupings and friendship preferences existed, most children were open to different children. All children had played and interacted positively with most of their peers at some point (including the children that were placed 'in and out' of the intermittent wider circle like Gan, Angus etc) and sub-groupings were not always isolated, or as rigid and distinct (although this was mostly evident with the Pakistani/Scottish girls group', a friendship which again was reinforced by educators while emphasising the girls' sameness, which will be discussed later on) as in the mainly white nursery. This could reflect the multiethnic nursery's general ethos of openness towards difference, the more active stance towards respecting and promoting sameness and difference, avoiding stereotypes etc.- all of which will be discussed later on in this chapter. In contrast, the mainly white nursery emphasised 'sameness' and provided a less active stance towards social justice and respecting diversity, and was observed to reproduce stereotypes. Generally speaking, the multiethnic nursery attempted to promote less hierarchical relationships (e.g. was concerned with issues like eliminating powerful relationship among children and adults, between adults, between children), in contrast to the mainly white nursery, and was more active towards social justice and discussing difference/ sameness.

The above suggest that wider social structures, contexts and external influences - like the nursery's ethos- could also play an important role in children's friendships, along with children's own agency and choices. External influences on children's friendships could play an important role and could be linked to, but not restricted by:

- the nursery context and ethnicity (e.g. see Chapter 7, also staff emphasis on Pakistani/Scottish girls sameness linked to ethnicity), gender (e.g. resources reinforcing stereotypical clothes for girls, like pink and princess dresses, and boys (like police officers costumes) and age (e.g. staff reinforcing myths around capabilities and maturity linked to certain ages, devaluing 'babyish' behaviour, or hierarchical relationships like 'don't touch that, it is for adults'),
- outside of nursery friendships (e.g. neighbours)
- parental influences (e.g. Seema A saying that her father says that she should not play with boys only with girls) and others,

Of course, children's agency and choice were of equal importance (e.g. Seema A, mentioned above, was negative towards boys, but was close and played with Asim on some occasions).

More detailed accounts of the educational pedagogies, practices and the ethos of the two nurseries will be discussed more analytically in the following section.

9.4 Exploring Issues: Educators' pedagogies, social justice and equity
9.4.1 Educators' commitment to social justice and equity

All educators espoused a strong commitment to social justice and equity. However, in practice, educators showed a lack of confidence and knowledge in dealing with equity matters, especially in relation to ethnicity, which in most cases was seen as a ' too young to notice' or 'no problem here' issue. Gender issues were considered salient in children's lives, especially in contrast to ethnicity, but again, as in all equity matters, including age, discrimination was approached more 'safely', and not in an interventionist, challenging and proactive approach.

9.4.2 Lack of knowledge in equity issues

Educators showed a lack of knowledge of relevant legislation and policies on national government, local authority, and school-nursery levels. To an extent this is understandable; how much should one expect e.g. nursery nurses (or classroom assistants) to know about this? However, to a great extent, legislation and policy guidelines should constructively and reflexively inform and shape educators' practice and thus having clarity and knowledge of the former could be the first step towards an effective implementation of policy rhetoric.

The head teachers in both nurseries, and particularly one teacher in the mainly white nursery, had more knowledge on the subject in comparison to others. Some educators could make a general reference to one act or policy title like "Race Relations", "Equality Act", "equal opportunities" or "Additional Support for learning". Educators talked in general about how equality-related policy and legislation *must* exist, how there were national guidelines or how the council had its own policy, but could not elaborate or be more specific. Common replies about legislation and policies included "(they are) probably somewhere written down" or "they are all in the office". Most educators had not read relevant guidelines or policies since the beginning of the year, or since their last update. While educators admitted that they could not remember specifics about policies and legislation, they claimed that they could imagine their content and believed that they were implementing it in practice.

Educators showed a lack of knowledge of terminologies and definitions of educational equity practices, including their own, especially in relation to anti-discrimination. Most staff got particularly worried, unsure, unclear and hesitant in discussing or defining approaches like multicultural or antiracist education, and anti-discrimination. Educators' whole body language and way of responding to such questions (e.g. most commonly saying "oh, I don't know", getting quiet, whispering, and making facial expressions of uncertainty) indicated a lack of awareness, confidence, and unease about not knowing, indirectly acknowledging that they should. Staff who tried to offer explanations simply described the meaning of the term; antiracism, in that sense, was about not being racist.

All staff, except for the head teacher in the mainly white nursery (Mrs E), described their approach as a multicultural one. Mrs E considered their approach and policy to be antiracist, emphasising how they would react to negative incidents that occurred in the nursery community. However, the description of Mrs E's school's approach linked mostly to a multicultural and inclusive approach ("it's a kind of an all inclusive kind of setting").

Regarding equity practices, some educators did not have any knowledge at all, and others had limited knowledge, seeing, for example, antiracist education as merely a reactive approach, or restricting it to proactively promoting multicultural education. Whatever their extent of knowledge, educators' approaches and views were very similar and emphasised promoting multicultural and 'safe' approaches.

There was a general understanding of multicultural education as more positive than antiracist or anti-discrimination education (see also Arshad et al, 2005a). Multicultural education was considered to be about involving all cultures.

Mainly White Nursery
(Interview)

Mrs V: Everybody in peace… but everybody the same as everybody, but it is not just the same as you are all just celebrating and promoting their culture.

Antiracist education was seen as a more negative approach than multicultural education (see also Arshad et al, 2005a), and was therefore not really preferred. The latter was seen as more inclusive. Antiracist education was considered by some as "very often putting ideas into people's heads' and although considered part of inclusion it is not necessarily". Mrs B felt more negative about antiracist education ("it sounds like don't do this don't do that"), although in theory she knew that was not happening. Most educators did not know the word antidiscrimination and were confused by it; they also claimed that they did not really use it, as they did not discriminate, or notice discrimination taking place in the nursery (see Arshad et al, 2005a).

Few were clear about differences in the approaches; Mrs M (mainly white) in particular was aware of the different terms and the importance of encouraging children's

critical thinking and asking them questions, but emphasised a reactive, rather than proactive, approach.

9.4.3 Conceptual and practical ambiguities

Educators who attempted to define concepts of antiracism, multicultural and antidiscrimination education could identify some differences between the concepts, especially between multicultural and antiracist education. However, educators' general lack of knowledge and confidence on educationally equitable approaches put a question mark on the extent to which these concepts were understood and featured in their practices.

Conceptual and practical ambiguities were evident (see also Arshad & Mitchell, 2007). There was a tendency to collapse references of major concepts like racism, sexism and discrimination to more palatable terms like 'inclusion' and 'equal opportunities'. Confusion occurred when educators described their definitions with their practical approaches. Some educators discussed following an anti-discriminatory approach, and including a multicultural approach. However, when it came to describing anti-discrimination in practice, it was considered the same as a multicultural approach, as emphasis was given to respecting and celebrating diversity.

One member of staff described antiracist education as "very much proactive"; however, when she talked about her approach, she mentioned that she would mainly adopt a multicultural approach, and that she would be antiracist too, as she did not "feel frightened about approaching issues with children" whenever they occurred. Emphasis was thus given on antiracism as being reactive rather than proactive.

A dilution of issues from antiracism/antidiscrimination to inclusion and equality seemed to arise constantly. For example, despite her uncertainty, Moira felt that antidiscrimination was all about "the practices of equal opportunities". Antidiscrimination was considered to be about valuing everyone's difference; a system which adjusted and catered to each child's needs, instead of making individuals adjust to it, where everyone was equal. Theoretical fudging, seeing multicultural practice as the same as anti-racist or anti-discriminatory practice and vice versa, was also apparent.

Because of this, antidiscrimination or antiracism were seen as something negative that should not be encouraged.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Interview)

Alexis: Antiracist is a negative aspect which we don't encourage (pause) but it rarely occurs, fortunately in nurseries, more in (upper) schools, ehm, we aim to sort of promote positive, and we would encourage and work with children who were showing antiracist attitudes at nursery and their parents.

Conceptual and practical ambiguities also occurred while educators discussed dealing with or avoiding difficult issues such as discriminatory attitudes. As already mentioned, educators, in most cases, followed a narrow concept of dealing with difficulties, as they would 'shy away' from them rather than engage in critical discussion with the children and exercise more (pro) active approaches. Limited negative attitudes that were mentioned (e.g. related to dolls or a one-off event of white children not wanting to hold black children's hands) would not be ignored according to educators. Common reactions to the above would be:

- dealing with negativity through stories and encouraging positive relations
- removing or adding resources (e.g. white or black dolls),
- talking to parents (rarely) only if a negative pattern emerged

In some cases educators were explicit about their lack of confidence and knowledge, but in the majority of occasions provided unclear explanations. Confusions occurred as to whether they should intervene in such rare discriminatory occasions or not, and ambiguities emerged regarding what constitutes 'best' practice, and explanations of their avoidance of intractable issues. Relevant examples are provided in following sections.

9.4.4 Schools' ethos of respect and promoting positive relations

In general both nurseries promoted an ethos of respect and fairness. All educators tried their best to promote positive relations, which were considered a whole school approach. In the mainly white nursery emphasis was placed on the 'five golden rules' (see Chapter 4). The head teacher talked about how the children should understand the purpose of the five golden rules and the whole philosophy of school ethos. Emphasis was given to how everybody was 'equal' and how positive relations were promoted through 'equality'. In educators' interviews similarities, rather than differences, were highlighted; "we would encourage them to (…) see all children as the same". Emphasis was given to sameness, valuing individuality and working together. Difference came up whenever children would refer to it or during celebrations, but the main focus was sameness; "I think our way of doing it is… to highlight similarities…and how… everyone is the same in so many ways… but address things if children do notice 'cause they will do…". Mrs B also stressed:

B: Each child is treated exactly the same.
K: Mm exactly…
B: We don't make anyone feel any different.
K: Mm…
B: Unless it's because they can't speak the language.

In the multiethnic nursery, due to the variety of visible and non-visible diversities, difference was always in the front-line of discussions and was acknowledged and respected. In contrast to the mainly white nursery, where 'sameness' was the key discourse, difference in the multiethnic nursery featured prominently. Of course, 'sameness' came in as well, in relation to 'equality' and 'equal' opportunities. Accepting and respecting differences, individuality and a culture of belonging and rights were notions that were highly acknowledged.

No written rules of ways of behaviour of a strict and judgemental nature were apparent. Behaviour was guided by core values that were discussed with children on an everyday basis. Instead of rules, as was the case in the mainly white nursery, Non Violent Communication (NVC) was used (see Appendix 11), which involved working

with children and modelling behaviour in order to support, negotiate and resolve conflict situations by themselves. The general aim was to teach children to express their feelings, to listen, acknowledge and respect other children's feelings and to negotiate and discuss with each other when problems occurred. Nothing was seen as good or bad; focus was given to whether children liked something or not, and on feelings. Importance was also given to creating a place where one could say anything without being laughed at. NVC was very important; however, it did not go further to challenge beliefs and deal with discourses of power, which are at the core of social justice and equitable approaches (see also MacNaughton, 2000; Browne, 2004; Lane, 2008).

Social gatherings were also organised in both nurseries for the whole nursery community to come together. In the mainly white nursery, a fair was organised at the end of the year and in the multiethnic nursery a garden party (where a variety of recipes and food from around the world were brought together) and a ceilidh.

9.4.5 'We're all friends in nursery': Beyond the slogan?

Both nurseries encouraged children to be friends with each other and used resources (e.g. books, photos), circle times with puppets or dolls, and dedicated particular weeks to friendships and discussions of feelings of happiness, sadness and others. In the mainly white nursery, educators often used the phrase 'we are all friends in nursery', especially when quarrels or any kind of negativity took place.

Mainly White Nursery
(Interview)

Mrs W: Ehm, Hassan said something that was round the table last week, I don't like Dong , I don't like the Chinese boy.
K: Aha.
Mrs W: Meaning Dong.
K: I've noticed that mm.
Mrs W: That's what he said and I, I mean I've never heard (her) say anything but I've heard her (Tara) say that she doesn't like Hassan and I've wondered myself (paused).
K: What?
Mrs W: If it's because you know, ehm, ehm (gets very quiet and starts mumbling, starts whispering about Hassan having a different kind of skin, different colour but not at all confident about this).

K: Mm…

Mrs W: I've asked her why and she couldn't answer me, I said at nursery we are all friends together… we are all friends in nursery.

However, children in the mainly white nursery did not feel that everyone was their friend, and tended to have specific preferences. Therefore, 'we are all friends in nursery' was taken up more as a slogan rather than an actual consideration by the children. Although used by the children when adults would intervene in their quarrels, or between them in order to superficially avoid the child that they did not want to play with, in fact it had little impact on their real feelings, ideas or attitudes. For example, Lesley showed negativity towards JessicaC, but said 'we are all friends in nursery' whenever asked about friends or playing preferences. Furthermore, when quarrels and exclusionary or discriminatory attitudes occurred, the issues were much deeper and needed further exploration, with a need to go beyond a 'we are all friends in nursery' approach. The latter was a temporary solution to the problem which did not change attitudes and ideas that were perpetuated and repeated as soon as the adult left.

In the multiethnic nursery, staff did not really use the slogan 'we are all friends in nursery'. Friendship was promoted with emphasis placed on feelings, values of respect and understanding of others' emotions, thus encouraging feelings of happiness, togetherness and belonging. Staff would mainly intervene if children felt excluded, but generally speaking Moira -the head teacher- did not believe that everyone had to be friends with everybody, but that they should treat each other respectfully and fairly.

According to the head-teacher of the multiethnic nursery, positive relations would be promoted through modelling[33] behaviour, modelling welcoming and modelling relationships. In the multiethnic nursery, a more active approach was followed that included sorting out problems together, spending time with all the children, joining children's spaces, creating relationships and bringing children together. When quarrels occurred, educators tried to find out what exactly the problem was, asked the excluded child how it felt, and then explained to the children how their action was creating a feeling of sadness which was not nice (see Appendix 11). This approach seemed to work

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[33]   This reflects DAP (see Chapter 2).

as a whole, and in contrast to the mainly white nursery, children seemed much more accepting and respectful. However, as in the mainly white nursery, although initially children seemed to accept educators' intervention, exclusionary tactics continued as soon as the adult gaze left the children. Despite emphasising feelings this was not accompanied by a discussion or challenge of the deeper issues that lead children to exclude (e.g. 'taboo' or implicit issues), particularly in relation to equity issues.

9.4.6 Engaging with diversities and 'safe approaches'

In both nurseries, educators would talk to children about similarities and differences but argued that this would happen only when these topics occurred 'naturally' in children's conversations. Educators followed a reactive approach ("if it comes up we would plan for it at the time (…) and we would discuss as a group, you know, that's not something that we, we go out to, set out as a plan"). There was a general fear and disapproval of adult imposition on children's relations and views, which led educators to avoid as much as possible any intervention or direction in children's worlds. According to educators, if children initiated such discussions then such incidents were followed by relevant resources (e.g. books about differences) and activities.

Despite the above, in the mainly white nursery practice diversity featured most prominently during festivals and celebrations, and, less often, during stories, everyday conversations and through play. Whenever something different came up (" if one of the mums comes in wearing traditional gear... like for a wedding"), that was treated as exotic and special and was discussed. Story time was occasionally used by staff to discuss various issues, including diversity with children. For example, reading stories about different countries lead to discussions about similarities and differences and to comparing countries with Scotland ("our country"). Such discussions reinforced the usage of words like 'we', 'our', 'they', and the construction of notions of 'us' and 'them' which indicated feelings of 'belonging' and 'otherness'. Discussions, and teaching children different languages, occurred a few times, and were enacted mainly by Mrs V. Children were therefore put into similar situations, so that they could understand how it might feel to learn a different language, and acknowledge the difficulty.

Reference was also made to minority ethnic children, by asking them about how they would say 'hello' in their home language. In this way, educators felt that the home language of bilingual children was acknowledged and supported. Minority ethnic children in most cases felt uncomfortable to speak about their difference, which I will discuss in more detail later. Children discussed how they would say hello in French, Italian, and other languages that they had been practising. The 'hello around the world song' was also mentioned to enhance children's awareness and confidence.

Educators in the mainly white nursery emphasised children's accepting nature and ignorance of diversity issues; nevertheless, they recognised a specific period when children were particularly unkind, and issues regarding children's friendships came up.

Mainly White Nursery
(Interview)

It's amazing how accepting children are to each other, and don't notice things that maybe an adult would maybe notice about people looking different of whatever, ehm, but again I think because we are always promoting the respect for each other there aren't many incidents that we've observed of children raising that as an issue.

In the multiethnic nursery, the head teacher stressed that diversity was in everything that they did and taught. Due to the diversity of the children's population, differences and similarities were not something that were discussed merely as part of celebrations, but were situated within the core of the nursery's everyday life discussions. Educators, therefore, would discuss the issues raised and would expand children's knowledge and awareness. In the multiethnic nursery, in contrast to the mainly white nursery, more activities and discussions were enacted by staff about identity and diversity, which also promoted positive relations. For example (see also passport activity, Appendix 12), some children had shown an interest in drawing their family, so Verity decided to create a relevant poster based on a drawing activity. Different skin and hair colour shades were provided, children's awareness of their self and others was encouraged and discussions were enacted about different physical characteristics.

During this activity, Verity found out that Hana was the only Pakistani child who was not confident with her appearance and instead wanted to be blonde and white. As this could be the child's perception of herself, it raised issues in relation to educators' interventions. Hana had shown on various occasions her lack of self-esteem, which was often accompanied by discourses of 'white is nicer' and speaking English. Hana's self esteem was indeed improved after a trip to Pakistan, and educators' practice that encouraged and supported the bilingual children, particularly the Urdu speaking ones. The head teacher suggested reading a relevant storybook, but no attempt to challenge or further explore Hana's beliefs were enacted.

Interestingly, in the multiethnic nursery, children's numeric ethnic representation played an important role as to the extent of different events or discussions about difference and sameness. For example, as Muslim/Pakistani children were numerous, most of the discussions were about, and with, them ("a lot of the work we've done this year is because we have a lot of children coming from Muslim background"). This was observed in relation to some of the resources as well. For example, most of the babies in the house-corner were brown. As part of the informal curriculum, visits to the local mosque, along other activities, were also planned, as one of the children's dads was an Imam there.

9.4.6.1 Multicultural approach and the salience of children's numeric representation

Despite individual school differences, both nurseries followed a multicultural approach. Diversity featured in educators' discussions with the children, mainly in the light of different cultural celebrations as part of the formal curriculum. During celebrations, children were introduced to different cultures, food, clothes, stories about cultural practices and special events. Common aspects of the nurseries' multicultural approaches included creating displays, putting out resources (e.g. books, clothes), making 'special' food and listening to 'special' music, all of which represented the specific 'special' culture. Photos, materials, kilts, salwar kammez, flags, figures (e.g. mosques) etc. were other common resources. The aforementioned reflected references to children's ethnic

identity or 'ethnic habitus'. In the multiethnic nursery a more active stance included the above, along with role-playing aspects of a specific culture (e.g. the act of praying in a mosque, dragon dance for Chinese New Year), using video/documentaries of other children's experiences of the specific and dominant celebrations of the nursery and learning from parents and children's understandings, and knowledge and experiences which were incorporated into nursery practice. This made cultures 'livelier', rather than based stereotypically on resources (e.g. books).

Parents'/caregivers' involvement in celebrations, getting to know the families and developing close relations were considered salient aspects that were highlighted in both nurseries. Parents/caregivers and the local community were more actively involved in celebrations in the multiethnic nursery (e.g. drawing mendhi on children's hands, reading books in home language, a piper playing music on Burns day). In the mainly white nursery, educators talked about how parents had been involved in the past; however, during this research this was scarce. The importance of bringing in parents/caregivers in occasions other than celebrations was highlighted in the interviews, but in practice, parental involvement was restricted, with few exceptions, to 'special events'.

In both nurseries, the extent of focus and interest in a specific celebration depended on children's numeric representation. When they did not have any children that celebrated a particular festival, staff would not do anything significant.

Mainly White Nursery
(Interview)

Ms V: …and it's mainly the children that are in the nursery which we have (pause) those festivals you would say that, eh…
K: Mm…
Ms V: …will have a larger scale of what you'd do…
K: Mm…
Ms V: 'Cause you maybe like, we don't have, hem, any children which are Jewish…
K: Mm…
Ms V: So then we won't (celebrate)…

Celebrations that reflected the dominant cultures of the nursery's settings or the

majority of the children, like Scottish celebrations (e.g. St. Andrews or Burns Day) and Eid were given special attention. Displays, relevant discussions, preparation and information were provided nearly a week before the actual day, and maintained for a week or two afterwards. Other national celebrations were very brief, restricted to the specific day of celebration. Chinese New Year was also celebrated and given special attention in both nursery classes, even though the Chinese was not a dominant culture. In the multiethnic nursery, videos/documentaries were shown only in classes that had children that represented the specific culture. Although educators tried to celebrate the cultures of all the children in class, the extent was restricted to the numeric representation of the children in the class.

The multicultural approaches of the two nurseries often lead to stereotypical portrayals of 'cultures', clear group distinctions and essentialising or 'fixing' of what a specific culture or nationality is (see also Brown, 1998). However, there were variations depending on staff and nurseries. For example, on Burns day, in the mainly white nursery, Mrs B presented 'Scottishness' in a rather 'special' and 'fixed' way. Mrs B's statements reflected a certain way of 'being Scottish', and included sentences like "this is for the Scottish people to wear", "this is VERY SCOTTISH", and "so this week we have shown you Scottish things, we have read Scottish stories, Scottish music…". Majority Scots would relate to elements like Scottish food ("I like Scottish food"). This raised issues for minority ethnic children, who conceived themselves as and/or were Scottish, but did not fit in such norms.

Of course, when one talks about celebrations and festivals, there is a tendency to generalise and portray cultures as rather 'fixed'. Moira from the multiethnic nursery, however, provided an alternative, sensitive and much more 'open' account of Scottishness. Moira emphasised how Scottish celebrations relate to all people that live in Scotland ("we celebrate being in Scotland and living in Scotland"). In this sense all children could relate to and share the common experience of living in Scotland. Moira also brought the globe and the Scottish flag, and talked about the world and the different countries before speaking about Scotland. Majority Scots shouted with enthusiasm about the countries they knew, and minority ethnic children felt confident about their

difference, shouting about their own as well.

'Other' cultures that were not dominant were portrayed in a rather 'fixed', exotic and special way (see Brown, 1998) in both nurseries. In the multiethnic nursery, I observed how the downstairs class celebrated Chinese New Year. A red tablecloth was placed on tables, 'special food from China' was cooked, chopsticks were introduced and focus was given to the two Chinese girls of the class, their special traditional clothes and how they were using their chopsticks, talking with excitement about how Inn could use them so competently despite her age. Loads of photos of the girls were taken. Although difference was positively acknowledged, Chinese culture was seen as exotic and 'fixed'.

Some educators like Mrs B also discussed 'good books', which, however, portrayed cultures stereotypically, like a book about Chinese children, whose capabilities were restricted to using chopsticks. Another book about 'shade' monkeys described them as "naughty black monkeys" which should "keep away", viewing black as negative. Nevertheless, a variety of books, pictures and other resources were used which reflected diversity, many of which were non-stereotypical (e.g. women as firemen). In the multiethnic nursery, resources even portrayed different types and numbers of families, like homosexual couples with children, a rather 'taboo' subject, especially in early childhood (see Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006).

Going beyond a multicultural approach was mentioned by two educators from the two nurseries, however this was more in theory rather than reality. For example, Moira, on a more critical and reflexive level, emphasised being respectful, reflexive and not generalising or making assumptions based on normalities about the different cultures. This could link to critical multiculturalism (see May, 1999). However, this was not always observed in practice, especially during festivals and celebrations.

279

9.4.6.2 'I will tell you but don't laugh promise you won't laugh': Bilingual children and educators' approaches

Educators in both nurseries encouraged and respected the use of home languages. In the mainly white nursery, educators often raised awareness of the different children and languages in the class linking it to the general activity of learning new languages. However, educators were not fully aware of the children's origin or home language. In various observations of similar activities, bilingual children were not confident to share their mother tongue in their classroom and would just look down or emphasise speaking English to show their similarity with the rest of the children.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 23/05/08)

Mrs V made pasta, and at story time enacts a discussion about where pasta is from. This leads to a discussion about Italy, then countries and languages.
(...)
Mrs V: How do you say hello in Cantonese Dong? How would you say hello to your mum?
Dong is from Korea though so he doesn't reply.
Mrs V: How do you say hello in Chinese JessicaC?
JessicaC doesn't respond. JessicaC is not from China either.
Mrs B: She is not from China, I don't think.
Mrs V: No I think she is, how do you say it in Chinese?
Dong: (looks at JessicaC and says with a smile and confusion, but also making a little bit fun) Chinese??
JessicaC looks back and then looks down. She seems very uncomfortable. There is a discussion again in front of everyone between Mrs B and Mrs V in terms of whether she is Chinese or not but they are not sure.
Mrs V: I think you say (and says hello in Chinese).
Mrs V (asks Dong and then says): Oh I don't have Cantonese written, we need to check it and write it down.
She then asks Hassan, and he says I don't know. Then she asks Arun.
Arun: We say hello.
Mrs V: Do you not say asalam alekum?
Arun: No.

In the multiethnic nursery, a different kind of approach was followed. On a whole, educators encouraged and respected the use of first languages, but importance to children's numbers was evident. Bilingual support was provided twice a week by the

EAL service towards children who had Urdu or Punjabi as their first language. Due to illness, however, the bilingual teacher came until before Christmas. Additionally, during story time, she would gather all the Pakistani/Muslim children in a separate group from the other children, in order to read stories in the home-language. Although this was a very positive way of reinforcing the home language, it also reinforced a strong sense of 'us' and 'them' between the children (see Chapters 7 & 8).

Helen (Scottish with a French background, educator) was extremely interested in the promotion of the use of the first language and anything relevant to languages that arose from the children. Helen focused, however, mainly on the Pakistani/Muslim girls, who were the majority of the bilingual children. Helen mentioned that the girls were not confident, especially in the beginning, about referring to, or speaking in their first language (see Chapter 8). The girls often said "I will tell you but don't laugh, promise you won't laugh", showing a lack of confidence. Through Helen's support and reassurance that she was not going to laugh, the girls gradually felt more confident. Helen also encouraged the girls to tell the rest of their classmates words in their home language. I had asked Helen about her observations regarding the rest of the bilingual children, but she had not given them the necessary attention. Importance was given to whether children initiated discussions, in order to inform practice.

It was only after World's Book day (see Appendix 13), and after mentioning it to Helen, that the rest of the bilingual children that did not form a group started to feel more confident to refer to their home language, and that Helen would support them as well. After that day, some children were repeatedly asking me to read the books in different languages, particularly the Greek bilingual book that I could read. The children instructed me that I should read in Greek and not translate in English, as they could understand by looking at the pictures. This was a very positive step in relation to respecting and learning different languages, and it shows how children are open to such when provided with the opportunity. Therefore, the bilingual story-group activity with the Pakistani group children could have been conducted in a more open and participatory way where all the children would enjoy the experience. The specific children could have been valued more, and support other children understand the basics of their language.

Lastly, in the multiethnic nursery, before each child left to go to another school or area or country, part of the 'goodbye procedure' was to gather the children on the carpet area, looking at the child's folder and to sing the goodbye song, where the child could choose in what language he/she would like to sing the word goodbye. Both head teachers reflexively discussed that they could be doing more on enhancing and supporting the use of the home language. The bilingual children were also, and mostly, supported to enhance their English something that some parents seemed to consider as a first priority. In the mainly white nursery, one educator also raised concerns about how by speaking two languages in the classroom, the children could get confused.

Various resources were mentioned and used by educators including dual books, posters, signs in various languages, sign language, books with pictures and a few words, visual prompts, picture boards, learning a few words of children's home-language from parents and using parents as interpreters.

9.4.6.3 'Safe' Approaches towards tackling exclusion and discrimination

9.4.6.3.1 Gender, age and additional needs: Recognising exclusion but not discrimination

In the case of gender, age and additional needs[34] although educators were aware of exclusionary practices, these were not explicitly linked to discrimination or were not taken seriously by the staff. For example, some staff talked about how "older ones (children) kind of boss the smaller, younger ones" or how " you get gender ones quite a lot, (like) I am having a birthday party and it's only the girls that are coming…there's gonna be no boys coming".

In the case of gender, reducing the reinforcement of traditional gender roles (e.g. men ballet dancers, inviting a dad nurse to talk about his job) and paying attention to gender language (e.g. using 'he'/'she' in relation to various traditional and stereotypical sex roles/occupations, like policemen and women), increasing non-stereotypical and non-sexist resources (e.g. books portrayed a variety of masculinities and femininities and in the multiethnic nursery resources also represented issues around

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[34]   For the purposes of this thesis, focus is given mainly to gender, ethnicity and age.

heterosexuality/homosexuality), encouraging non-sexist behaviour through resources, materials and activities and modelling behaviour, and challenging children's stereotypical views about males and females by providing alternatives were key strategies observed and mentioned by the staff (see also MacNaughton, 2000; Browne, 2004).

Staff argued that they did not have girls' or boys' toys or areas, and that children would be challenged if they said e.g. ' this is what boys do' or 'this is a girls' colour'. In practice though, such views were rarely questioned or challenged, as was most of the children's stereotypical thinking. In the mainly white nursery, although staff talked about not having girls' or boys' toys, they did have, for example, pink princesses' dresses and policeman hats, and other toys stereotypically used by girls and boys. In contrast, the multiethnic nursery had unisex and neutral colour clothes.

Some staff, in both nurseries, were more reactive and seemed to challenge children's ideas mainly by expanding children's accounts (see Appendix 14). Mrs M.[35] (mainly white nursery), for example, had developed a real interest in gender equity and had conducted a small research project about staff's approaches and views. This had made other staff pay particular attention.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 8/01/08)

I am sitting outside with the children under the slide area. Ben is pretending that he is at an ice-cream factory and he is giving out ice-cream. Then JessicaC talks about Spiderman and that she has Spiderman DVDs and that she likes the stories and that she watches the DVD... Cameron agrees.
Mrs M: Yeah he has good stories hasn't he?
Girl (downstairs class): I don't have Spiderman DVDs
Mrs M: Oh that's ok, do you have other ones?
Girl: Yeah, I don't like Spiderman.
Mrs M: Don't you?
Girl: It is for boys not for girls.
Mrs M: Well.
As the teacher is talking the rest of the children start talking.

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[35]   Mrs M was not in the research class, but was interested in my study, and so we had developed a close relationship. I observed Mrs M during outside time, and also interviewed her.

Mrs M: Well (tries to come into their conversation).
Girl: Girls like princesses.
JessicaC: I am a princess who is lying on the bench.
Mrs M: Are you? Well girls do like princesses but they like Spiderman as well, Spiderman is not only for boys, girls like Spiderman, I have Spiderman and I like it.

Mrs M tried to expand and challenge children's ideas by suggesting that girls liked princesses and Spiderman as well. However, all girls were seen as a group. Mrs M did not challenge the fact that girls might not like princesses, and did not really enact a dialogue with the children to ask why they had such beliefs, to propose alternatives and to challenge and deconstruct their stereotypical and fixed ideas through a dialogue about 'masculine' and 'feminine' (see MacNaughton, 2000). Mrs M did not go any further to explore power dynamics in such beliefs. As previous research has shown, princesses are usually portrayed as weak and beautiful, whereas Spiderman as powerful, strong and superior (Skelton & Hall, 2001).

Staff also mentioned stereotypical thinking about boys and girls, presenting them as a separate and clearly identifiable group (e.g. "boys don't notice a thing" in relation to appearance and if they do it is strange "especially for a boy" or about reading a "very girly story today" about princesses). This flags up the need for educators to work on self-reflection and to challenge personal stereotypes, as well as children's views.

Discrimination was not really considered relevant in so young children (see also MacNaughton, 2000). However, although it was recognised as a problem, it was not challenged adequately, with emphasis mainly given to enhancing mixing. In the case of age and additional needs (see Appendix 15) discriminatory attitudes were dealt in the same way as gender and ethnicity (see below).

9.4.6.3.2 Ethnicity and discrimination: A 'taboo' issue

In contrast to gender and age, educators believed that ethnicity was not apparent in children's lives and if it came up by children, it was mainly regarding feeling confident about their identity rather than linked to negative attitudes. Children were considered "very accepting". Educators spoke in the interviews about negative occasions restricted to children not wanting 'different' coloured dolls and a one off occasion of a 'white'

child not wanting to hold the hand of a 'black' child. Educators were invited to reflect on their approach.

Multiethnic Nursery
(Interview)

Helen: I mean there was a lot going on, so I probably didn't handle it as well, but then, I think you know I don't want to make a big thing.
K: Mm…
Helen: Because if I go down that whole line, you know that everybody's different you know, it, but it's maybe too much so I kind of at that point I said that, I chose to ignore it.
K: Mm…
Helen: I mean, if that happens again with the same child I'll maybe make notes.
(…)
Helen: Ehm, I mean that child obviously that said you know I don't want to hold the hand because it is brown, you know if an older person heard that, you know if an adult said that to an adult that would obviously be portrayed as racist comment.
K: Yeah, yeah.
Helen: but children they can't you know, you know we can't say oh that is racist
K: Mm.
Helen: Well even though, it is to some degree.

The approach obviously included not making a big deal out of it and ignoring it due to children's presumed innocence and educators' lack of confidence. Educators felt uncomfortable to deal with issues of ethnicity, and had to detect a pattern in order to intervene. Educators felt that the main point at this age was to raise awareness.

In the mainly white nursery, educators had noticed an unkind period were minority ethnic children and one Scottish girl were mentioned as excluded. However, focus was given to the Scottish girl, changing the conversation and feeling uncomfortable about the minority ethnic children. However, throughout the year, educators would repeatedly talk about how Hassan was not 'blending in with others' and was often on his own without friends, despite the fact that "he was a lovely boy". Mrs B thought that it would be good to bring his mother in to do something, as this could change Hassan's attitude. In most of these discussions, Hassan was seen as the problem;

it was his fault, and not the others'. This could be described as a deficit model, where individuals are seen as the problem, solely responsible about the circumstances they are in. In the interview, Mrs B talked about how she hoped that Hassan's would make friends when he would go to primary school, where he would find many Asian children. Assumptions were made about links between ethnicity and friendships and implicit reasons of exclusion (e.g. there were no other Asian-Pakistani children at nursery to be friends with Hassan).

Staff arranged for Hassan to attend 'forest schools'[36] and deliberately put him in a group with the 'bad boys' that he unsuccessfully wanted to be part of throughout the year (see Chapter 8). The children that attended forest schools worked together as a team in order to conduct various activities. According to Mrs V, "Hassan was a bit of a loner", but after forest school he developed better relationships with the group. This was true; Hassan was much more respected after forest school. However, he never managed to become part of that group (see Chapter 8). Promotion of good relations, simply by encouraging working together, did not really deconstruct and challenge deeper views linked to equity issues.

Discriminatory attitudes were evident (see Chapter 8); however, educators would either not notice or disregard them, would show lack of confidence to deal with them or react through 'safe' approaches. For example, when I talked to Mrs B about the discriminatory views expressed towards Dong by Ahmed and then by Hassan, who despite his initial positive attitude towards Dong was influenced by Ahmed's views, accepting them uncritically, Mrs B's response was "but I have seen Hassan play with Dong". As Mrs B had observed the children interact, she detached herself from the 'problem'. Because of the fact that Ahmed was a downstairs class boy, Mrs B considered it a downstairs class issue. I was advised, therefore, to discuss this with the downstairs staff in order to do something about it and put it into their planning. A few weeks later, however, the same discriminatory attitudes were expressed, and a 'safe approach' was

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[36] According to Mrs M forest schools use the woodlands to enhance children working together as a group. Adult input is high. The target is the promotion of self-esteem and confidence, and learning new skills. The programme included one week in the nursery and 4 or 5 weeks in the woods, along with bonfire at the end. Children who liked, or were believed to benefit from, this programme, were selected.

thus conducted. All children were placed in a circle, with Hassan placed next to Dong. One child would put on a smile and pass it on to the person that was sitting besides them. Emphasis was placed on feeling happy and then a story was read.

Even when educators noticed, observed or suspected discriminatory attitudes or particular ethnic preferences, these remained unchallenged. Educators would not explore children's views further, and at times disregarded the importance of related incidents, focusing on children's potential developmental problems (lack of socialisation skills) and treating them as one-off events not really meant by the children in a discriminatory way. If discriminatory attitudes were observed at home by parents (see Chapter 8) and staff had not noticed them in the nursery, then they were considered 'home issues'. Some staff essentially viewed 'home' and 'school' as two distinct and exclusive worlds, not really related to their practice. Most importantly, children's innocence was the dominant discourse that guided educators' practice

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 15/04/08)

Mrs W: You can't really call it racist as that is a very heavy word for a little girl. But I have definitely noticed it.

Educators often belittled the importance of the negative incidents and disregarded any links with discrimination, a) saying that it was probably just "a sort of falling out" of an exceptional nature ("sometimes you find that it's like a one-off…and it's never mentioned again, it's just their mood they've come in and, you know just, I'm not your friend today"), b) not seeing it as a big deal "as it is quite often that children at this stage are trying to put things into categories and they often stereotype" and that despite their firm ideas, they know that they are not true, and c) considering that there was probably a deeper issue behind the incident, disregarding the reference to the skin colour as the basic problem; most likely, it would be that the child did not know or had never played with the other child before. Some educators felt reluctant to ask children directly. Educators emphasised the importance of reacting to an incident that occurs naturally ("maybe talk it through with them (children), as that happens, you can only do

it as that happens"). In general, educators rejected intervening ("you know, but you can't talk too much, 'cause you don't want to make the situation you know, worse").

To sum up, staff as a whole were mainly reactive rather than proactive, with one-off events dealt on the spot without further discussion in order to explore deeper beliefs, deconstruct ideas and challenge views. Most commonly, educators' approaches towards exclusion and discrimination were restricted to talking about friendships and feelings in more general, through circle time, doll or puppet circle time discussions, circle games, stories and songs and modelling behaviour as then "children will... pick up on that". 'We have to be kind' and 'we are friends at nursery" approaches were important and promoted abstractly positive relations; however, they did not recognise or deal directly with discriminatory issues.

9.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the links between children's friendship groups and discriminatory practices, with educators' social justice and equity pedagogies. Particular attention was given to the extent to, and the context against which educators intervened in children's peer relations, and educators' approaches to equity issues. The two nurseries seemed to share a lot of similarities in relation to their equity approaches, linked to conceptual ambiguity on equity issues and lack of confidence and knowledge in dealing with discriminatory issues, which in turn caused them to be reactive (with limitations) rather than proactive, and prefer 'safe', rather than more active and challenging approaches. Although rhetoric concerning the importance of social justice and equity was embedded in the general school ethos and policy agenda, and in educators' views, there were limitations in relation to how this was translated into practice, with a need for further development. Differences occurred between the two nurseries in relation to the general ethos and the extent to which this was translated into practice, the different ways that childhood was perceived, and the different approaches that were used in relation to their commitment and effort to promote social justice and equity. The multiethnic nursery was generally more active in relation to bringing diversity and similarity to the forefront, not restricting it to an 'adds-on activity'. This was enhanced by the number of visible and

non-visible diversities that were apparent in the class. Their active stance was also evident in dealing with negativity and conflict, and taking children's rights seriously. However, again, there were limitations in relation to approaching and dealing with equity issues.

In the mainly white nursery, emphasis was given to 'sameness'. Diversity came up mainly through celebrations, although there were occasions where emphasis was given to acknowledging the different children in the class, with various activities focused mainly on different languages. Staff followed a 'we are all friends in the nursery' approach, without really dealing with conflicts and negativity. There was a lack of confidence regarding dealing with equity issues which were considered a 'downstairs class' or 'home' issue.

Traditional and developmental discourses featured prominently in both nurseries in relation to educators' practice and views about children at various points. However, more current debates, derived from the sociology of childhood and children's rights, would occasionally take over in other aspects. For example, in the multiethnic nursery, which was considered to be following a children's rights-based practice and would emphasize children as agents and listen to their views, they did not really deal with or consider equity issues that seemed to arise as relevant to the age of the children. A NVC approach was followed, which was child rights-based, and which also had many traditional and developmental influences, emphasising therefore modelling and non-stereotypical resources (see also MacNaughton, 2000) rather than actively engaging with challenging and deconstructing children's stereotypical implicit and/or explicit discriminatory attitudes.

The aforementioned discourses seemed to limit educators' ability to deal with equity issues. On the one hand, the fear of making it 'too much of an issue' discouraged them from intervening, as they were influenced by developmental psychology traditions of the 'innocent' child. On the other hand, there also was an emphasis on the importance of responding to 'naturally occurring' issues in children's lives, which was influenced both by developmental discourses and children's rights approaches which highlighted children's agency, and limited adults to responding, rather than directing or intervening

in any way. The latter raised challenges in relation to a more proactive approach, which is recommended both by policy and legislation and by relevant antidiscrimination literature (MacNaughton, 2005; Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006; Lane, 2008). Current sociological childhood debates which seemed to influence educators' practice were again restricted to more traditional discourses in relation to equity issues. Although educators emphasised listening to children's views, there was a particular limitation in relation to actively and 'carefully' listening in relation to equity issues. Discriminatory attitudes and views were thus either left unchallenged and at times perpetuated and reproduced, or were not really observed due to their subtle and implicit nature, which was not really explored further or explained by children. In an effort to promote positive self and collective identities, diverse and/or more universal identities were often neglected, supporting and enhancing in this way implicit discriminatory attitudes towards others who were different.

All of the above highlighted the importance of listening to children's views about social identity and exclusion, and the impact these could have on educators' social justice practice. Challenges arose during this process of actively and carefully listening to children's views and developing practice, which I will discuss more analytically in the final chapter.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored children's constructions of social identities, and particularly gender, age/competence and ethnicity. These themes emerged during one year of fieldwork, which included close observations, participation in children's and educators' lives at the nursery, 'chatting' and interviewing, semi-structured activities (drawing and story telling with dolls) and, most importantly, through developing close relationships and understandings with the young children, educators and parents/caregivers, who participated in this research. This thesis also explored the social implications that the above constructions had in young children's everyday lives and educators' pedagogies and approaches regarding children's identities, diversity, social justice and fairness. The previous five chapters presented the main findings of this research. The aim of this final chapter is to draw these five chapters together, to explore the links between them and to examine the implications of the theories and findings presented for early childhood education.

There are three overriding arguments that I wish to make in this chapter. A common theme that emerged while exploring children's social identities and their implications was that children constructed both fluid and experientially 'fixed' identities at various times and contexts. Children were also observed to be both agents, mature and competent individuals, and also highly interdependent (dependent on each other), 'belonging to a complex web of interdependencies" (Prout, 2005: 67), incompetent and immature. One of the basic arguments of this thesis is the need to move away from dualistic and oppositional dichotomies, both in relation to theorising children's social identities and theorisations of childhood (see also Prout, 2005).

The second argument, links children's experiences and views with educators' approaches. There is a need to further support children's rights discourses within early childhood education, and for educators to be alert, sensitive and proactive in relation to issues that occur in children's lives. This latter is particularly important in relation to

discriminatory attitudes and inequalities that are/may be present, no matter how implicit or explicit these may be. Within the children's rights-based approaches, challenges occur regarding balancing between respecting and acknowledging children's agency and rights, and educators' interventions in children's social relationships in the name of promoting and enhancing positive relations. It will thus be argued that it is important to start from children's rights-based approaches, and at the same time this thesis will consider whether we should be moving towards a more explicit human rights-based approach (see also MacNaughton & Smith, 2009).

The third argument is that there is a general challenge both in policy and practice regarding balancing between universalism and specificity, and between collective and diverse identities (see also Riddell, 2009; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008).

Before exploring the above arguments in more detail, I will first critically reflect on the research process and provide a brief summary of some of the basic findings of this research. This chapter will then draw on some thoughts about the implications that all of the above have for early years practice and some ideas for further research directions.

10.2 A Critical reflection of the research process
10.2.1 The futile hunt for the 'whole picture'

The findings chapters are based on my observations, participation and discussions with children and educators, and what the participants mentioned to me as important. I attended each of the two nurseries for two days a week; thus there are incidents, events and views that I have not recorded due to practical reasons of my absence. But one cannot ever feel confident that they can capture the 'whole picture', as there will always be moments that are missed. Most importantly, there is never really a 'whole picture', as we are constantly evolving and engaged into complex networks and experiences. The attempt to grasp the 'whole picture' reminds us of arguments about the lack of 'authenticity', and that there is not a 'real' or authentic view about the world (see Connolly, 2008a; James, 2007b). However, asking educators, children and parents/caregivers about the days that I missed or about children's lives at home or being

open to issues they would like to raise, was a way to be constantly informed, as much as possible, and allowed for more in-depth understandings. Although I do not believe that there is an 'authentic' view of a situation or a person, I do believe that there are patterns and experientially 'real' moments and thus I felt reassured for example when general feelings, descriptions and patterns that I had identified (e.g. describing Ben as a 'soft boy') were mentioned as core parts of children's lives or personalities by parents through their interviews or when I identified implicit discriminatory attitudes and these were later on confirmed more explicitly by children in other activities or moments.

10.2.2 Exploring too many aspects?

A genuine attempt was made to explore multiple parts of children's social identities but to also explore educators' practice. Questions, however, may arise about the extent to which I was able to examine all of the above in depth, and about whether I attempted to examine 'too' many aspects. There is a danger, while exploring many aspects, of being superficial or emphasising one aspect more than another. In terms of social identities, I was open to explore whatever was considered salient to the children. I critically reflected, however, during my observations and afterwards, about the extent to which I emphasised ethnicity, which was my initial interest. However, I was truly guided and interested in children's views and experiences and that was guiding my observations, always linked to the research questions. Critically reflecting on my data as I was collecting it, and discussing with my supervisors, made me think about whether I had more observations of a specific part than others, or whether I needed to explore different issues.

Although my main focus was the children, it was difficult to view them as separate from educators and their practice, and without engaging with parents/caregivers. Children belong to complex networks, and thus to understand their issues there is a need to explore the complexities of their networks as well. Researchers have speculated on whether current discourses of children's participation and 'voices' have gone too far by seeing children "as *the* most important perspective" (Schiller & Einarsdottir, 2009: 127, emphasis in original). Mannion (2007) emphasises the

importance of reframing the field of children's participation by focusing on child –adult relations. Schiller & Einarsdottir (2009: 127) argue that "listening to children's voices in research and practice is a useful starting point, but at the same time we need to understand how children's lives are co-constructed by the actions of key adults".

Thus, educators and parents/caregivers enhanced a more holistic understanding of children's lives. Additionally, it was difficult to distinguish children's views and experiences from their relationships with educators' practices as these are linked. My emphasis was guided by the research questions, and I would record whatever occurred at the time and was linked to answering them. If I had a specific focus on educators, it could be that more in-depth observations and analysis could be captured about their approaches. However, I feel that I captured patterns which, coupled with discussions with educators and interviews, reveal a more in-depth exploration.

10.2.3 Influencing children's responses?

The ethnographer is part of the research (Hammersely & Atkinson, 2007) and thus influences the setting and the data (Connolly, 2008a). I have discussed my potential influence during this research in Chapter 3. Later on in this section, I will reflect more specifically on my identity and roles, and how this may have influenced the different relationships that were developed with the children and the data that were generated. However at this point I would like to briefly state that I was also concerned about whether I was influencing children's responses or whether I was directing the children to think about specific issues, during more structured activities like the doll activity. It would be unrealistic to believe that I have not influenced the setting and discussions in any way. However, I would argue, like others (see Connolly, 2008a; James, 2007b) that there is no 'true' and authentic view, and that all data are important and provide further and different understandings. The more structured activities were conducted after a long time of observations and discussions, and were used to explore further issues that I had already identified as salient to the children. In this way, I was not introducing new themes, but asking for children's further thoughts about issues that they had implicitly or explicitly pointed out to me. The dolls encouraged discussions about 'taboo',

uncomfortable and hurtful issues which some children felt more comfortable to discuss about, as they were indirect. Children's agency was evident, as they mentioned other issues without being restricted to those highlighted.

Another important aspect that needs to be discussed at this point in more detail is my role and positioning in the presentation of emerging themes and findings. In particular, there is a need to reflect on my relationships with the children, and the potential impact these might have had on the data generated. In general terms, different parts of my identity seemed to influence different children at different contexts in a different way. For example, my gender influenced the relationships I developed with the children; however, this depended on the child and the context. Generally speaking, in both nurseries I found it easier to be accepted by the girls, and became part of the various girl groupings, feeling more like an 'insider'. Talking about 'dominant femininities', like 'make up' and clothes with the girls, or how at times they 'hated the boys', could have been influenced by the fact that I was a 'girl' as well. Most girls felt comfortable with my presence, although this depended -again- on the context and the individual, like in the case of Sarah (mainly white nursery), who did not form a particular grouping with the girls and was observed to play mainly with her cousin (Simon) and his friend David. Although Sarah would chat to me, she was not as close to me as e.g. the white Scottish group of girls. I would thus occasionally make attempts to approach her when she was with her cousin, and felt more comfortable. Sarah also asked me to play with her during a more structured activity like making a puzzle, so following her desire and 'chatting' while she was in places that made her feel comfortable, was an attempt to 'listen' to her views as well.

Interestingly, I developed very close relationships with the Scottish Pakistani girls (multiethnic nursery), who considered me a 'friend' ("you are my friend"). At times, I felt that I was more of an 'insider' in this latter group, rather than in the white Scottish girls group (mainly white nursery), as they would always want to play with me, chat with me and generally 'be with me'. Although this also happened with the white Scottish girls, it was more evident with the Scottish Pakistani girls. This could be due to the differences that were observed in the two nurseries' ethos, especially in relation to

the role of the adult and power dynamics (see Chapter 9). Interestingly, my ethnicity did not seem to play a restricting role in the Scottish/Pakistani girls' group, despite their preference to 'sameness' and indirect negativity towards 'other' children (see Chapter 8). However, phrases like "I wish you have black hair", that were used by some of the Scottish/Pakistani girls, raised questions about the different relationships that could have developed and the different views that could have been expressed, had I been of the 'same' ethnicity. There is a danger, however, to make assumptions that one is 'closer' and can understand someone 'better' if one shares parts of a 'same' identity and is an 'insider', thus treating identity as producing knowledge which:

"leads to the belief that each person is best placed to know him- or herself…An epistemology of this kind assumes that people are transparently knowable to themselves, and privileges their 'voices' as the most authentic source of knowledge about themselves and their lives" (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008: 502).

In this sense children, rather than adults, and generally people that share common identities, may be considered to 'know' better about other children or people of the same identity. However, this belief, as Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) suggest, ignores the diversity of individuals (in this case children), even when they share common social identities, and the changing and unstable nature of identity.

In relation to my relationships with the boys, again, they depended on the child; however, in contrast to girls' groups, it was more difficult to be part of the boys' groups (particularly the 'bad boys' or 'older' aged boys) at various times (especially in the beginning of the research) in both nurseries. Boys were generally a bit more distant, although there were exceptions, and relationships changed according to time. Some of the 'soft boys', like Steven, developed close friendly relationships with me, and on many occasions would prefer spending time with me rather than with other children. At times, educators would ask Steven to play with his friends and leave me alone, so that I could 'do my work'. My friendly and informal stance and friendships with children would thus be disrupted by educators who considered it important for children to spend time with the children of the same age, rather than with an adult. This could be seen as a

limitation, as it restricted my relationships with the children; on the other hand, however, it was understood and respected.

It is important to stress that not all of the 'soft boys' were close to me (e.g. Ben), and that there were also boys who were part of the 'hegemonic' group whom I developed very friendly relationships with, including boys like Nathan [leader of the 'bad' boys groups (mainly white nursery)]. Generally speaking, context was important. For example, when boys who were considered part of the 'hegemonic' group ('bad boys') were on their own or in smaller (e.g. twos), rather than larger groups, or depending on the activity (for example when they were drawing rather than playing rough games like superheroes and baddies), I was included more. This could be due to the fact that 'roughness' was considered a more dominant masculine attribute. I also felt unease with some of the boys at times, particularly in the beginning. For example, on one occasion, Sam, Simon and David were playing police-officers; however, while trying to be part of their game they did not want me to and I felt very unease. The boys also got quite shy. In contrast, most girls would include me both in their smaller and larger group play.

Additionally, I occasionally felt that there were restrictions in relation to the extent to which I was part of the 'bad boys'' group. For example, I was not included in discussions linked to jokes between them about girls. Also, the boys would sometimes silence in my presence while making fun of something that was considered a 'taboo', like talking about 'naughty things'. This raised questions about the extent to which I was really part of their group, or was aware of all their ideas about e.g. girls, marginalised boys etc. Nevertheless, the 'bad boys' were generally and at various times quite loud and more explicit about their ideas. For example, 'bad boys' would very often and in various contexts take over and had a rather powerful presence, often explicitly 'voicing' their ideas about themselves, girls and/or marginalised boys, among others. Therefore, being careful that less dominant boys (e.g. quite, shy etc) were not ignored due to the 'bad boys', was very important.

Ethnicity and age intersected with gender in the boys' groups. For example, minority ethnic boys that were on their own without friends (e.g. Hassan, Dong) would

develop very friendly relationships with me, and even when they would find friends, our special relationship was sustained (e.g. discussing about their friends etc). However, not all minority ethnic children were close to me (e.g. Arun). Sometimes, younger or less competent boys were more open to my presence - even when they were playing in larger groups- although, again, this depended on the child and context. For example, Christian ('younger boys') did not always want me.

All of the above cases potentially impacted on the generated data. Close relationships and discussions with children, both individually and in groups, were important, as they enabled a deeper understanding of children's views, behaviours etc.; they were ways to become an 'insider'. However, as the above cases of different relationships with the children illustrate, I was not always considered an 'insider'. My general stance of 'waiting' to be approached, and also approaching children that were shy, approaching children at different times and contexts, asking them to reflect about different times and/or raising questions about issues that occurred, was important. The concept of 'polyphonic ethnography' (see Chapter 3) that I practiced, enhanced the openness to 'listen' to 'different voices' at different contexts.

Of course, there are limits to the extent to which one can 'know'; however, reflecting on my own and with others (e.g. supervisors, friends), and raising questions about emerging issues and relationships, was an important technique that was practiced throughout the research. For example, examining my own data in relation to what and whom I had observed, and when I had observed them, raised issues about my next steps to include places, times, contexts and people I had not yet observed, and for which I needed further information. Also, being an 'outsider' could at times also be of importance, because it provided the opportunity to take a step back, observe the friendship patterns that occured and listen and try to understand the beliefs that were expressed. Being an 'outsider' could also provide the space to discuss with 'insiders' about their attitudes and perceptions about other 'insiders', something that might not always be comfortable to share with other 'insiders'.

10.3 Brief summary of the main findings: Answering the research questions

A gap had been identified in relevant research and literature regarding young children's multiple, complex and intersecting social identities, along with the complexities that these may have in children's friendships and inclusionary/ exclusionary and discriminatory practices. Drawing from the data, children construct multiple and complex social identities which are both fluid and experientially 'fixed' (see section 10.4.1). Three parts of identity were rather salient; age/competence, gender and ethnicity. Therefore, chapters 5, 6 and 7 explored the above constructions of young children's social identities, and in this way answered my first research question (see Chapter 3). All parts of identity had a rather unique element that allowed them to stand alone as separate chapters. However, as parts of social identities, the above also intersected in various and complex ways, something which was also explored.

All identities were part of ongoing processes of defining the self and others; part of an individual and collective/group identity. All identities were used in a categorical sense, as 'statements of being' (for example, "I'm a girl", "I am 3" or "I am Scottish"), and 'ways of being', which relate to the multiple ways of 'doing' age, gender and ethnicity. Age and gender were very much part of an overt and explicit identification (including implicit identification). In contrast, a much more complex process was involved in ethnicity. Variations occurred in relation to the extent to which children developed a strong, explicit and overt ethnic identification. However, in most cases ethnicity is part of an 'ethnic habitus', with variations to the extent to which this is linked to an explicit ethnic identification. Detailed and analytical summaries of the findings of each chapter, are provided in the final section of each chapter.

Age was linked to the passage of time, to physical appearance, strength, competence and was expressed as a "chronological narrative of the children's own life course". Children showed a preference for being older, which raises feelings of superiority and inferiority. Sophisticated theorizations also occurred, particularly linking 'being older' to independence, choice and freedom, and autonomy (see Chapter 5). Gender was not restricted to a certain 'way of being'; instead, multiple ways of being a

girl or a boy were expressed (see Chapter 6). However, dominant and non-dominant 'femininities' and 'masculinities' were evident. Dominant, or else 'hegemonic masculinities' were linked to 'bad boys' and 'roughness', whereas 'non-dominant masculinities' were linked to 'soft boys' and to anything associated with 'femininity'. Dominant 'femininities' were linked to 'girlie girls' and non-dominant 'femininities' were linked to anything associated with 'masculinity'. However, there is a danger of essentialising groups and a need to acknowledge that there are variations in groups and that no single characteristic can be treated as ultimately 'feminine' or 'masculine'. Primary (hetero-)sexual identities were also an important part of children's gender identity. Ethnicity was also expressed in a multitude of ways, linked both to cultural and physical characteristics (see Chapter 7). Minority ethnic children that formed a group showed explicit ethnic identification, a rather salient part of individual and group identity. Minority ethnic children that a) did not form a group, b) were trying to blend into the majority, c) were not confident to speak about their difference or d) would identify more with being Scottish rather than their family heritage did not seem to talk explicitly about ethnicity, although there was an implicit importance. Majority Scots would make reference to ethnic identity, at times with patriotic sentiments; however, it was not a core point of everyday discussion of individual and group identity. However, the dynamics of a group identity were apparent in a subtler way (e.g. pointing out the 'other', different to their 'norm' and making assumptions and claims about who can or can not be Scottish like them).

One of the unique elements of this piece of work was the exploration of issues around intersectionality in very young children's social identities, and particularly within their social relationships. Intersectionality was discussed or mentioned in all of the above chapters, but was explored further and more analytically in relation to children's friendships and inclusionary and exclusionary practices. Chapter 8 thus suggests that multiple social identities came to play in complex, often intersecting and contradictory ways and enables viewing different characteristics (e.g. age, gender and ethnicity) being seen as inter-related, rather than separate. Chapter 8 answers my second and third research question (see Chapter 3) and suggests that discourses of 'sameness',

'normalities' and difference linked to constructions of social identity were salient in children's lives and formed the basis of friendship groups and discriminatory practices. Gender, age and ethnicity were considered important factors of children's friendships patterns and subgroups occurred on the basis of similarities and differences, as the aforementioned intersected in various ways. However, it is important not to treat social identities in an essentialist manner while exploring friendship groupings, as factors like personality, family, out-of-school relationships, popularity, common interests, the need of companion, context and current availability also played a role.

In most cases social identities promoted positive feelings of belonging between children of common gender, ethnic, age/competence, ability and group membership, and reinforced positive group and self identities. Strong and positive feelings of self and group identity and difference, or else 'the other', although not exclusively, were very much considered the basis for exclusion and discrimination. However, complexities arose when the concept of the 'other' changed, depending on the context. Difference was seen more positively by children when it constituted part of what was considered 'norm' or dominant.

In short, children's peer relations are complex in nature as groups and subgroups are formed constantly, and inclusionary and exclusionary practices are dynamic processes. Thus, insiders and outsiders are terms that are context specific and under constant negotiation. Explicit and implicit/subtle forms of exclusion and discrimination were salient in children's lives. Age and gender were to a great extent openly and explicitly discussed by both children and educators, in contrast to a much more complex process that is involved in ethnicity. Although explicit reference is made to discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, in most cases this is implicitly discussed as it is considered a 'taboo' subject of reference.

Chapter 9 suggests that both DAP and children's rights-based approaches seem to influence educators' practice. However, and in answer to my fourth research question (see Chapter 3), Chapter 9 suggested that neither explicit nor implicit/subtle discriminatory attitudes were dealt with by educators, something which raises concerns. What is also of concern is that irrespectively of the educational approach that educators

followed (traditional developmental approaches and/or children's rights approaches), educators did not deal adequately with social justice and equity issues. I will now turn to the main arguments I would like to make.

10.4 Moving away from dualistic and oppositional dichotomies

A common theme that emerged throughout this research, and one of my key arguments, is the need to move away from dualistic and oppositional dichotomies that have dominated both theory and research in various spheres. In Chapter 2, I explored theories of identity and childhood. I then explored research and theories which linked these two broader themes together by focusing on constructions of children's social identities and issues around discrimination and exclusion (Chapters 2, 5, 6, 7 and 8).

10.4.1 Experientially 'fixed' and fluid identities: Snapshots of continuous changing 'fixity'

Under the light of post-structural and post-modern theories, current theories of identity have emphasised 'fluid' notions, moving away from 'fixed' and static ones. Atkinson (2003: 36) for example, includes as an important component of postmodernism the "rejection of fixed notions of reality". According to Prout (2005: 69) postmodernism "eschews notions of stability seeing only fluidity and constant change". The findings of this research (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) support the argument that children's identities are socially constructed, complex, fluid and intersect. The aspect of intersectionality is evident, particularly in relation to links between social identities and children's peer relations, friendships and discriminatory attitudes (Chapter 8). However, at the same time, the findings support that children's social identities were also experienced as 'fixed', or were constructed through processes of 'fixing' (regarding ethnicity, see also Barron, 2007; regarding masculinity, Connolly, 2004).

I found it difficult to conceptualise this emerging evidence of both fluidity and 'fixity' while understanding children's social identities from current theorisations of identity, which place emphasis on moving away from oppositional binaries and emphasise fluidity rather than 'fixity' (see Davis & Watson, 2002). Dilemmas occurred

while thinking of how to interpret what I was observing, and what children were explaining to me. How could both 'fixed' and fluid identities be evident at the same time? Was this not contradictory? And if it was indeed contradictory, how were they occurring simultaneously? As much as postmodern theories of identity try to move away from oppositional binaries, in this attempt dualistic and oppositional thinking is still perpetuated; identities are not 'fixed', but fluid. Oppositional debates are still used in this way of thinking. After realising the emerging findings, and the lack of current theorisation that could explain what was going on, I came across Prout's (2005) theorisations of childhood, which I felt could be applied to theories of children's identities as well.

Prout (2005) argued that there is a need to "move away from either/or logic of mutual exclusion" while describing childhood and its common oppositional part, adulthood. Prout (2005: 67-69) also suggested the development and exploration of new ideas linked to "strategies towards an included middle", which would "include the excluded middle of dichotomies that have been made to be oppositional". Prout (2005) did not advocate "some indeterminate 'middle way'". However, drawing on Bobbio, he defined the "included middle" as a group that "attempts to find its own space between two opposites and, although it inserts itself between them, it does not eliminate them" (Bobbio, 1996: 7 cited in Prout, 2005: 69).

Prout also argued that:

"structures of childhood, may within certain limits, be relatively stable over time but they are never static. They are always in motion and, under certain conditions, can shift from one phase state to another-or even become extremely unpredictable" (2005: 75).

In this way, Prout (2005) engaged both with stable and 'in motion'/fluid states of childhood, yet rejected the state of 'static', which I will suggest is also important to recognise. Through this research, I found that both experientially or perceived/ 'fixed' and fluid identities were developed, and that it is important to explore these processes as dynamic, complex and interrelated. The findings support that children's social identities were not only stable at times, but were also experienced as 'static' and/or fluid beliefs.

Complex inter-relationships thus occurred between both 'fixed'/static and fluid identities, according to the context.

The notion of experientially 'fixed' identities has not been utterly, explicitly rejected; only implicitly. For example, while there has been acknowledgement of fluid identities on agency and reflexivity (see e.g. Giddens, 1991), there has also been acknowledgement of structural forces on identity which may lead to inequalities (see Connolly, 1998; Davis, 2000; Thomson, 2007; Adams, 2006; Giddens, 1991). Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', which is used in relation to children and ethnicity by Connolly (2009: 3), relates to " 'taken-for-granted ways of thinking and behaving" which are internalised over time. In this way, 'habitus' can be associated with 'fixity'. Additionally, in this sense, notions of 'fixity' are apparent within structural influences. Social theories related to identity formation have moved from "structural determinism (social identity) VS (versus) reflexivity (individual identities) and hybrid identities are being developed… that recognise the influence of both identities" (Thomson, 2007: 214). Although there is no space here to explore hybrid theories of identity (see e.g. Adams, 2006), it would be important for future work to explore how hybrid theories could be applied to theorising children's social identities. Jamieson (2002: 517) has also drawn on Hall who, while acknowledging identification as a "construction, a process never completed-always 'in process'", also recognises that identities tend to feel fixed, and that this process of fixity may also lead to the reproduction of social inequality.

However, current research and theory related to children's social identities tends to avoid the use of the word 'fixed' or 'static' and/or to emphasise on fluidity and multiplicity, and this is completely understandable. For example, Morrow & Connolly (2006: 87) write:

"in placing an emphasis on the active role of the children themselves and the particular contexts within which they are located, the articles in this special issue aim to show how gender and ethnicity are not fixed and static phenomena but are complex and contradictory"

I would also agree with the above and argue that 'fixed' identities have the

underlying notion that they are forever 'static' and, as my findings indicate, this is not the case. However, by neglecting and avoiding the notion of fixity altogether in our theorisations of identity, we risk misinterpreting or disregarding what is also an important aspect of children's constructions of social identities. In this research, children's social identities contained elements of fixity, often linked to stereotypical notions of identity. Disregarding its existence in the name of fluidity would be problematic, even though these 'fixed' notions were fluid and subject to change, depending on the context. Connolly has suggested, in relation to children's constructions of masculinity, that "while it (masculinity) is not something innate nor biologically-fixed, the boys' masculinity is therefore something that is deeply-rooted and *experienced as if it is innate and fixed"* (2004: 219). Therefore, I would argue that in current conceptualisations of identity, there is a need not to disregard in our definitions the fluid and momentous snapshots of fixity in various contexts; the snapshots of continuous changing fixity. 'Fixed' identities can be seen within a process of 'fixing', which is, however, subject to change. This moves away from dualistic thinking, which is also evident in debates around childhood studies (see e.g. Prout, 2005; Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008).

Acknowledging children's experientially 'fixed' and fluid identities raises implications for educators taking forward social justice in childhood practice. Educators need to be critically aware of children's experientially 'fixed' and stereotypical notions of specific social identities related to age, gender, ethnicity and others (see Chapter 5, 6 and 7). 'Fixed' notions of identity may also, although not always, lead to negativity, lack of openness towards difference and discrimination (see Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8) and thus educators need to challenge and deconstruct these in order to promote social justice in early childhood. However, children's experientially 'fixed' identities may also change according to context and take other forms (including other 'fixed' forms). This makes the process rather complicated, as educators need to be constantly aware both of the experientially 'fixed' identities and how these may change (fluid). This is not a straightforward and simple process, and educators need to be continuously aware, reflexive and open to the dynamic and complex process of children's social identities in

order to understand, intervene and challenge children.

10.4.2 Children, agency and interdependency

Another argument that I would like to make is again linked to moving away from oppositional and dualistic binaries, this time focusing on concepts of childhood, and agency in particular. While there has been wide acknowledgement of the importance of the 'new sociology of childhood' paradigm (see Kehily, 2009; Qvortrup, Corsaro & Honing, 2009; Christensen & James, 2008), various authors including Prout (2005), one of the important contributors of the 'new paradigm', have started to critically reconsider some of its assumptions and positions. One of the recent critiques is the need to move away from dualistic and oppositional dichotomies like structure/ agency, being/ becoming, immature/mature and others (see Lee, 2001; Prout, 2005; Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Uprichard, 2008). At this point, I would like to focus on a concept that James (2009: 34) characterizes as "one of the most important theoretical developments in the recent history of childhood studies" - the shift to seeing children as independent social actors, which links to the concept of 'agency'. The notion of 'agency' has been recently viewed as highly problematic, particularly in relation to the emphasis on children as independent social actors (see also Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008), a debate to which a recent seminar organized by the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (CRFR) sought to contribute, with the title '*Exploring Children's Relationships Across Minority and Majority Worlds*'(2010).

Prout (2005) argues that the 'new' paradigm of sociology of childhood emphasises the notion of children as 'beings' in their own right, and risks "endorsing the myth of the autonomous and independent person, as if it were possible to be human without belonging to a complex web of interdependencies" (Prout, 2005: 67). The sphere of peer relations, and particularly children's friendships and social identities, is an important domain where both children's agency and 'interdependencies' can be explored. In relation to 'agency' and children, two different ways have been identified as to how children's agency might be conceptualised in research (see James & James, 2008; Vandenbroek & Bouverne-de Bie, 2006):

- children's agency is seen as a function of their role as social actors (James & James, 2008: 11), and agency is identified "by positioning children in their own contexts and look at the micro level of peer interactions" (Vanderbroek & Bouverne-de Bie, 2006: 128). This has become an important "point of departure for many contemporary studies of children's everyday lives" (James, 2009: 41).

- Other researchers "explore agency in the context of structure's constraining influence, which shapes children's collective position as a minority group in society" (James & James, 2008: 11).

It is important, however, to link agency to interdependency as a way of moving beyond dualistic dichotomies (see also Prout, 2005; CRFR, 2010). Interestingly, although relevant research, in many cases, acknowledges the importance of relationships in children's everyday worlds emphasis has been focused mainly on the first aspect of 'agency' (see e.g Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). An important way forward, however, is to conceptualise this work, along with my own, as work that will document children not only as 'active', competent and independent agents who can express their views about their lives, but also as interdependent, belonging to a "complex web of interdependencies" (Prout, 2005). Moving away from dualistic thinking, I would argue (see also Prout, 2005) that we should avoid treating all children as either 'competent or incompetent' or 'mature or immature', and merely as agents. Children should be seen as both competent/incompetent, mature/immature and showing agency and interdependency at the same time.

Acknowledging children's interdependencies, along with children's agency, raises implications for early childhood practices. Children's interdependencies within peer relations constitute a really important part of their life (see also Kernan & Singer, 2011), their identity and sense of belonging. Children are not merely competent, individual and autonomous individuals; making, being, choosing and being chosen as a

friend is an important part of feeling included, valued and respected. Educators need to be aware of, and support children's interdependencies (along with their agency). Particular implications, however, are raised when, during the process of children's re-formations of their 'complex interdependencies', different choices are made according to powerful discourses and 'normalities' about 'who is a friend'. The "experience of positive social relations and the development of positive identities are core dimensions of children's well-being and sense of belonging" (Kernan & Singer, 2011: 1). However, children's need for positive interdependent peer relations is not always met when e.g. they are excluded, isolated and discriminated against. Educators need to be aware of children's complex interdependencies and the implications that these may have so that they can support children, foster positive relationships between all the children, challenge powerful discourses and intervene in order to help promote social justice in children's lives in early childhood.

10.5 Children's agency, rights and educators' pedagogical interventions: Starting from a children's-rights based approach and moving towards a children's human rights approach?

As discussed in chapter 2, although Piaget's theories of development were highly criticised, educationalists continue to rely on such to "justify child-centred approaches" (Wood, 2007: 123). Traditional child-centered approaches, particularly DAP face challenges in understanding "how educators can combine responsive and proactive curriculum and pedagogical approaches" (Wood, 2007: 130). Chapter 9 supports the aforementioned, in relation to educators' social justice and equity approaches, especially regarding being proactive or dealing with discrimination. However, in Chapter 9, I also discussed how educators (especially in the multiethnic nursery) also followed a children's rights-based approach, although this depended on individual staff and context in both nurseries. Nevertheless, regardless of the theoretical background and commitment to children's rights in educators' practice, limitations were identified in dealing with equity and social justice issues. 'Too young to notice' and 'no problem

here' debates featured in both nurseries.

Children's rights-based approaches emphasise children's agency and competency; based on empirical data, importance is thus given to responding to children's interests and to what may occur naturally, so that it is not adult-directed. However, staff did not really take seriously, the underlying discriminatory messages that were both explicit and implicit in children's storylines and attitudes, even when children's rights based ideas were prominent. Children's rights-based approaches were thus interpreted by practitioners too selectively and narrowly, emphasizing on children's agency and participation (particularly 'listening' to their views- at least in theory).

Nevertheless, current policy and theory emphasise both respecting children's agency and promoting a proactive social justice education (see Chapter 2 and 3). What constitutes an appropriate curriculum raises fundamental epistemological issues about curriculum goals and content; whose knowledge is prioritized, what knowledge is selected, and how that is represented by young children, for young children (Wood, 2007). Prevention and intervention while combating inequalities are high on the policy agenda, as are proactive approaches and mainstreaming antidiscrimination in schools, including nurseries. However, one may wonder where is the balance while also respecting children's agency, particularly when children are choosing and forming friendships? For example, the Scottish/Pakistani girls had a strong friendship group and would often group themselves [e.g based on gender, language (written and verbal) and being bilingual, physical characteristics (skin colour, hair colour), religious and cultural practices, and nationality] (see Chapter 8). Sameness was important to them, and so they showed a strong desire and preference to sameness within their friendship groups. However, the strong sense of self and group identity, and the desire of the Pakistani Scottish girls to be friends between them lead to negativity and exclusion towards others who were different, particularly other girls -non Pakistani- who wanted to be part of their group. So it was 'sameness' rather than difference *per se* that lead to negativity (see also Connolly, 2008b; Connolly et al., 2002*).* What is challenging, thus, is the balance between respecting children's agency and choice while forming friendship groups, and educators' interventions in order to enhance positive relations.

MacNaugthon & Smith (2009) talk about a 'human rights-spirited early childhood curriculum' (see Chapter 1 for definition). A human rights-spirited early childhood curriculum is based on, and moves beyond, a children's rights-based curriculum (which in practice emphasises children's participation), takes "the preamble of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child- especially Article 29 –as core educational content, and it has Article 12[37] of the Convention as a core pedagogy through which to deliver this content" (MacNaughton & Smith , 2009: 163). In the UNCRC (1989), attention is given to children being brought up "in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity" (MacNaughton & Smith, 2009: 163). Although, critiques have been raised about problematising the notion of 'equality' (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000) and an anti-discriminatory approach is an approach that moves beyond tolerance to emphasise respect. Nevertheless, MacNaughton & Smith (2009) raise important issues which could also apply to the debate of balancing between agency and educators' interventions. According to Article 2 of the UNCRC, the right for children to be heard has to be "negotiated alongside the right to an education in which the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity thrives" (MacNauthon & Smith, 2009: 174).

Therefore, in the case of the Pakistani heritage girls, they had a right to form their own friendships and discuss their views, but at the same time during this process other children were excluded and discriminated against because they were not the same as them. This could raise issues in relation to providing a safe and welcoming environment where everyone is respected and feels part of the group. According to relevant law and policies, educators are obliged to intervene whenever discriminatory attitudes occur, even if these are implicit or indirect, and to prevent discrimination (see Chapter 4). It is educators' responsibility to enhance respect and openness to difference, while also promoting positive individual and collective identities.

Freeman (2009) highlights the importance of recognising 'children's rights as human rights'. Further work and discussion is needed about whether we should continue to use a 'children's rights-based' terminology in early childhood educational practice as,

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[37] Children have a right to express their views (Article 12).

due to the selective and narrow use of children's rights discourses in early childhood practice, social justice and antidiscrimination are not effectively promoted, or move towards a more explicit 'human rights framework', using terminologies like 'children's human rights' to acknowledge children both as a social group and as humans. Perhaps this could enhance the importance of valuing and promoting *all* children's rights as humans, and *not just* their agency. It may be that more explicit emphasis and attention should be given to all children's rights, rather than just prioritise some; we may even need to rethink 'children's rights-based approaches'. Whether terminologies matter and make a difference, and which one of these terminologies would serve to develop anti-discriminatory and rights practice for children in their early childhood, are both matters for future debate.

10.6 Challenges balancing between universalism and diversity

There are challenges in recognising and respecting difference, and at the same time promoting universal/collective identities. This tension is depicted both in childhood studies (see e.g. Woodhead, 2009) and in relation to identity (see Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008; Riddell, 2009). Riddell (2009: 2) refers to tensions that exist between principles of universalism and diversity, which are evident in current Scottish educational policy debates.

The example of the Pakistani heritage girls in the multiethnic nursery that I mentioned above and the tensions that were reflected in educators' practice, capture the inherent challenges in promoting universalism and diversity, in developing and enhancing positive identities and at the same time enhancing and supporting openness to difference (see also Connolly et al, 2009). This emphasis on self and group identity from the Pakistani girls was also promoted and supported by the staff (see Appendix 16). In this way the staff enhanced the girls' confidence and promoted a positive feeling of themselves and group identity, which also lead to strong in-group friendship preferences and negativity to out group children. Moira, the head teacher had observed the closed friendship between the Pakistani Scottish girls and for that reason, depending on the context, she would not only try to promote their identity, but also to expand and enhance

openness in relation to difference and other children, although minimal observations were documented of this. However, Helen would mainly focus on promoting their self and group identity, rather than expanding their openness to others. Both Helen and Moira, however, did not really disentangle the potential barriers of this strong sense of identity in relation to being open and inclusive to others in their discussions. Although Moira would occasionally try to open up their friendships, this was done superficially, without any in-depth conversations behind their attitudes and without challenging potential beliefs.

Issues are raised in relation to how children can be encouraged to feel positive about their own identity, while discouraging negative attitudes and beliefs about others who are different (Brooker & Woodhead: 2008). Interestingly, the findings of this research suggest that positive self-identity did not always mean negativity to difference (see Chapter 7). This is particularly positive, and shows how a balance can be established.

Another important challenge is the need for strategies to ensure that individual children have the resilience to retain a positive sense of themselves despite the many challenges they may face (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). The latter was evident in the case of Hassan (Pakistani Scottish) in the mainly white nursery, who avoided speaking about his 'difference' and at times would totally neglect its existence, focusing on the fact that he was Scottish and trying to 'blend' in with the other Majority Scots boys (see Chapters 7 and 8). It could also be, however, that Hassan was not confident to talk about his difference because of the implicit discriminatory and exclusionary practices he was facing. However, Hassan's denial of talking about his difference, could also be seen as a struggle for Hassan to prove to the staff and children that he is Scottish, and that he did not really relate to his Pakistani heritage. This was especially evident in an interview with his sister (see Appendix 10).

Recognition and respect for people's cultures, different values, ways of lives and others is considered to be "essential for their dignity, sense of worth and self esteem" (Gewirtz, 2006: 74; see also Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). In this research, exclusion and discrimination made children feel lonely, sad and unsafe, and children developed low

self-esteem in relation to their identity (see Chapter 8). It is important to consider the following quote here:

"Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the *mis*recognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (Taylor, 1992 cited in Gewirtz, 2006: 74).

Recognition of people's identities is thus considered very important (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008) and is part of treating everyone respectfully. However, dilemmas might occur, for example when aspects of identity "may not be equally deserving of respect". Also "an important goal of education is to encourage people to continually question the beliefs, values and commitments that make up their identities" (Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008: 45). According to Gewirtz & Cribb (2008: 45) there are two reasons for challenging aspects of individual identities:

- because they may be considered harmful to individuals (they may be self-limiting or harmful to others)
- "certain identities can be harmful at a wider level because they reinforce structures of oppression".

It is also important to acknowledge that there may be tensions within the 'recognising difference approach', as this may lead to children wishing to play with others who they perceive as being similar to them, rather than those they perceive as being different. There could be a place for educators to emphasise universal characteristics (i.e. children's similarities), which forms the philosophical underpinning of human rights legislation, along with differences.

10.7 Discussion and future directions
10.7.1 Implications for early years practice
I would suggest that there are five important implications that need to be considered, and

which link to each other. First of all, there is a need for educators to observe and 'listen' closely, question further and discuss children's views and lived experiences, and to take children's actions seriously (see also Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006). Educators' were not always aware of what exactly was going on in children's everyday lives in relation to identity, diversity, inequalities and discrimination (see also Arshad et al, 2005a). Thus, educators could work more closely with children, parents/caregivers and local communities (in relation to ethnicity, see Connolly, 2003). Although this was evident to an extent in this research, there were aspects of children's lives that educators were not aware of, and that parents did not feel comfortable enough to discuss with them.

For example, ethnicity/'race' was generally considered a 'taboo' issue to discuss amongst children when it came to issues of discrimination. However, observing children's everyday lives, their storylines, silences (see also MacNaughton, 2001) and body language, asking questions, talking to parents/caregivers, and through the use of various methods and particularly the use of persona dolls, this 'taboo' issue was discussed more openly. It might be that educators need to use other methods, depending on the child, in order to discuss sensitive issues like discrimination with children. Parents/caregivers were not always confident to discuss discriminatory attitudes with staff either. There is a need to reinforce openness and dialogue in relation to discussing about 'difficult issues'. In one case, when the parent came to discuss with the educator her concern about her children's racist beliefs (see Chapter 9), the educator did not treat it as something serious, and it was not really dealt with. Not seeing it as a problem, considering it a 'downstairs' class issue'', disassociating with the problem, not feeling confident or not being aware of how to react were all noticeable reactions (see Chapter 9).

Secondly, there is a need to pay special attention to proactive approaches towards social justice and equity and actively mainstreaming antidiscrimination approaches in early childhood practice (see Chapter 2) as well as developing children's critical reflexivity (see also MacNaughton, 2000; Connolly, 2003; Gewirtz & Cribb, 2008). Critical reflexivity is very important, as staff could work with children in order to "challenge existing stereotypes and prejudices and also develop a more grounded

appreciation of their own identities and also those of others" (Connolly, 2003: 180).
Connolly (2003: 180), in relation to ethnicity, argues that:

"the challenge is more than simply fostering a learning environment that is non-discriminatory, free form stereotypes and which is multicultural…it is also about conceiving of appropriate means of engaging young children more critically in the ways they are encouraged to think about and experience identity, difference and diversity".

Connolly (2003) suggests that early years practitioners will be able to achieve this if they also engage with critical reflexivity themselves. Also, proactive approaches are recently being advocated by many authors both in policy and legislation. Proactive approaches with children are about promoting positive resilient self identities, raising awareness and respect to difference, recognising exclusion and discrimination, explaining discriminatory attitudes, challenging negative and discriminatory behaviour, encouraging children to understand the consequences of discriminatory behaviours for others, and promoting respect and openness to similarity and difference. As many proactive and antidiscriminatory advocates have argued, staff can encourage children to think about, discuss and reflect upon their behaviour (see Connolly, 2003). During this research, children did develop more positive attitudes (see Chapter 8) towards children that were considered different. However, unchallenged beliefs and implicit discriminatory attitudes were still evident. For example, towards the end of the research, when more positive interactions occurred between minority ethnic children and majority Scots, possibly -in part- because of:

- educators' approaches (e.g. forest schools, encouragement of team work) (for older children, see Devine & Kelly, 2006),
- time and contact,
- strong attempts from minority children to adopt dominant norms,
- and common interests, among others (see Chapter 9),

Minority ethnic children never seemed to be part of the Scots group in the mainly white nursery. Complexities, however, occured (see Chapter 8).

Thirdly, the approaches detailed above, along with working with children around

critical reflexivity and mainstreaming more interventionist and pro-active approaches to antidiscrimination, could be a step forward. As already mentioned, attitudes and beliefs do and can change, as they are based to a great extent on social construction. There have been initiatives like UNA (2010) that seek to explore, among others, the various approaches that have been promoted and their effectiveness. Basing their initiative on three values (children's rights-based, outcomes-focused and evidence-informed) they seek to explore and share knowledge, among others, about effective early childhood programmes linked to social inclusion and elimination of divisions (see UNA, 2010 for further information). Whether proactive and interventionist approaches along with antidiscrimination approaches can actually promote social change in early childhood is open to debate and evidence, although there has been some emerging research (see Connolly & Hosken, 2006) that suggests that it can. The effectiveness of social justice and equity approaches in early childhood is thus something that needs to be explored further.

In Chapter 2, I drew on Gewirtz (2006) to argue for the 'multi-dimensional nature of justice', or else the existence of plural conceptions of social justice. Authors argue that there are tensions between these 'different facets of social justice' (see Gewirtz, 2006; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003; Riddell, 2009). In this research, findings suggest that friendship groups, insiders, outsiders and discriminatory attitudes are dynamic and complex processes, and an attempt is made to explore potential intersections between different aspects of social identities. As already mentioned, gender and age were used in some cases in order to exclude on the basis of ethnicity, which was considered a more 'taboo' issue (see Chapter 8).

Through this research, there is evidence of the complexity and intersectionality in relation to peer relations, friendships and discriminatory attitudes that occurred in early childhood. Research findings also suggest the existence of potential multiple inequalities that may occur in early childhood, however further research needs to explore this. Research by Devine & Kelly (2006) has made such an attempt with older children, and there is a need to do this with younger children as well. The findings of this thesis suggest that children's social worlds are complex, challenging "any benign interpretation

of children's interaction that draws on overly paternalistic and individualistic assumptions about their behaviour" (Devine & Kelly, 2006: 137). Policy and practice must take into account the above complexity, and the multiple layers of identity that may influence at differing times children's relationships and their positioning with one another. Devine & Kelly (2006) emphasise on children's competency and how this should be acknowledged by policy, but I would argue that we should also acknowledge their incompetence; this raises further challenges, which I have already briefly mentioned above. This also reflects relevant policy and educators' pedagogy and practice.

Fourthly, Cribb & Gewirtz (2003) thus suggest that there is a lack of engaging adequately with the conflicts or tensions that may arise between different facets of social justice, and the lack of considering the practical difficulties that educators may face while trying to implement socially just practices, and how such may be resolved and accommodated (see also Chapter 2 and 4). Cribb & Gewirtz (2005: 327) suggest that in order to understand the nature of social justice and make it reality, there is a need to "move outside abstract conceptualisations and pay attention to concrete, real world practices". Cribb & Gewirtz (2005: 327) argue that there are limitations which are inherent in "abstract thinking and in particular to doing 'sociology from above'". Cribb & Gerwitz (2005: 328) thus attempt to provide an "empirical contribution to a more grounded model of thinking about justice, which involves exploring what practitioners who are trying to enact just practices actually do". There have been great attempts in Scotland in relation to Early Years, like work provided by LTS and CERES and there is a need to move towards more complex practical social justice theorisations. It is important that now, with the new Equality and Human Rights Commission, the new Scotland Commissioner and the recently enforced 'Equality Act 2010', we engage critically and explore in more depth the separate strands of social identity, how these interact and how there are multiple, intersected and complex inequalities that may be apparent (see Equalities Review, 2007)

Fifthly, there is a need for training that will raise educators' awareness of up-to-date information and provide them with the knowledge and skills to address the above

issues with young children. There is a need to support and initiate dialogue with educators not only about current approaches, but also to engage with them about more complex and multiple inequalities, about 'multi-dimensional nature of justice'. Opening up the space, and supporting children to critically reflect and be challenged about their own attitudes and identities is also necessary and salient (Connolly, 2003). Working in partnership with parents/carers and local communities is also essential in developing approaches, and more effective than merely imposing them (Connolly, 2003). Whole school planning (Devine & Kelly, 2006) for equity, diversity and social justice that is relevant to the specific context, and working closely with national guidance and best practice in the area are also important factors (see Devine & Kelly,2006).

10.7.2 Future research directions

Drawing on the above, on literature and current research, future research directions have been identified. First of all, there is a need to further explore a) issues regarding intersectionality and multiple identities in young children's everyday lives (see also MacNaughton, 2000; Thorne, 2008), b) children's and parents' views on "how to deal with …differences" or "on what equal opportunities may mean" (Vandenbroeck, 2009: 167-169) and c) multifaceted inequalities in practice. The latter could be illuminative for policy, which could then provide further guidance in relation to practice (Cribb & Gewirtz, 2003). An important aspect, which is missing from this research, is the concept of class as part of children's social identities, and particularly children's constructions of class. Moreover, most of the empirical work on children's peer cultures and relations has taken place in the 'Minority World'[38] (see Corsaro, 2009); there is thus a need for further research to explore diverse contexts both within and across 'Minority' and 'Majority' Worlds.

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[38]   The word 'Minority' world defines the 'Developed World' and acknowledges "that the 'majority' of the world's population, poverty, land mass and lifestyles" are in the 'Majority World' which is the 'Developing World' or 'Global South'; this shifts the balance "of our world views that frequently privilege 'western' and 'northern' populations and issues" (CRFR, 2010; see also Panelli, Punch & Robson, 2007). The use of the words 'majority' and 'minority' world are problematic, as they sought to homogenize both world regions (Punch, 2003). However, the use of the above terms "at least invites reflection on the unequal relations between them" Punch (2003: 278).

Promoting children's 'voices' has been a central theme in childhood studies research (Tisdall, 2009); however, there is a major gap in research with three year-olds and under-threes, and with issues of social identities. A form of age discrimination is apparent in relation to younger children, in both research and policy (MacNaughton et al, 2009). Tisdall (2009: 214; see also James, 2007b) 'troubles' the notion of 'voice' (e.g. marginalisation of children as adult researchers are usually the ones that select the quotes and frame and analyse the research findings, and as verbal communication prioritised over other forms) and although she does not devalue the role of research in raising children's views to a broader audience, she does highlight the need for more research to be "chosen, carried out and disseminated by children themselves". Connolly (2009: 49) suggests that there is a need to move beyond "simply focusing on and incorporating young children's experiences and perspectives, and towards finding meaningful ways to encourage their active participation in the design, delivery and evaluation of early childhood programmes". Exploring and listening carefully to children's networks is also important (e.g. caregivers, educators).

10.8 A closing note

This thesis seeks to unfold the complex stories of participants and the two nurseries and suggests that 'reality' is complex and fluid but at the same time full of 'experientially fixed' moments. This contradictory picture was described as 'snapshots of continuous changing fixity'. The key point that this thesis makes is that children construct complex social identities, engage in dynamic social relationships and express complex and multiple implicit/explicit discriminatory attitudes, which educators are unaware of or choose to disregard. In relation to existing research linked to children's social identities in early childhood, this thesis further supports the existence of issues of discrimination (see Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001; Browne, 2004; Connolly et al, 2009). It explored not only the importance of explicit/direct discriminatory attitudes (as most previous research has done) that occurred but also highlighted the complex processes that are involved in implicit/indirect discriminatory attitudes in young children's lives [see for older children Connolly, 1998].

What differentiates this research, nevertheless, to previous research, is that it attempted to explore children's social identities in interaction, without focusing merely on one (researcher predefined) part of social identity. The intersectional approach that this thesis attempted to adopt with very young children's social identities, is one of the unique elements of this piece of work. Although, there is emerging research interested in multiple parts of identity, yet there is a tendency of focusing on a specific part of identity or exploring different and intersected parts in a wider attempt to understand one specific aspect of identity (e.g see for gender, Arnot & Mac an Ghail, 2006). On the contrary, this research was open to the multiple parts of children's identities that were salient to them, including age identity. Issues around intersectionality and complexity are explored in meanings of social identities but especially in relation to children's friendship groups. In contrast to previous research in early childhood, this research explores multiple friendship patterns and issues of intersectionality and complexity that occurs in relation to who is considered a friend, the 'other' or 'same' and how that changes according to the context (see for older children Devine & Kelly, 2006). In contrast to previous research, children also discussed their views about reasons of exclusion/inclusion, which opened up to the various reasons upon which discriminatory attitudes occur in early childhood (see Nutbrown & Clough, 2009). Lastly, this research wishes to contribute to a further understanding of contemporary early childhood pedagogies in relation to social justice and equity. This thesis suggests that educators are committed to social justice and equity and there is a lot of 'good practice' taking place that we could learn from. However, limitations are evident. There have been critiques of DAP and their limitations in dealing adequately with social justice issues; this is not something new. What is of concern, however, is that this thesis suggests that even child-rights based practices show limitations linked to social justice and equity pedagogies.

This thesis invites reflection of whether we should be moving towards a children's human rights-based approach, which promotes children's rights and goes beyond children's participatory rights, engaging more actively with issues around fairness, unfairness and respect. This thesis, argues for proactive, anti-discriminatory, reflexive and interventionist, social justice and equity approaches in early childhood,

which could enhance children's critical thinking, their openness to difference, and their commitment to recognising exclusion and discrimination and promoting fairness. Educators however, cannot work alone and are in need of support, funding, training and guidance. There is a need for further collaboration and partnership between policy, parents/caregivers, educators and children and for ongoing evaluation of policy proposals in practice. Opening up towards a multilevel dialogue based on respect, shared responsibility and knowledge exchange from policy makers to young children is essential. I would like to end this discussion with two quotes which I find inspiring for challenging discrimination and for promoting social justice and equity, starting from the earliest level of children's education.

"I'd like to say to us as educators: Poor are those among us who lose their capacity to dream" Freire (1970:15 cited in MacNaughton &Smith, 2009)

"*We can't change the past, but each of us, by challenging prejudice and intolerance, can help to change the future*" Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, 2005 cited in CERES (2010)

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Legislation

Additional Support for Learning Act 2004
Children (Scotland) Act 1995
Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (amended 2005)
Equality Act 2006
Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007
Equality Act 2010
Human Rights Act 1998

Race Relations Act (1976)
Race Relations (Amendment) Act (RRAA) (2000)
Scotland Act 1998
Sex Discrimination Act (1975)
Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000

Appendix 1:
Doll story activity

Exclusion Story

Today I came in the nursery and one of my friends (referring to the dolls) said to me that there is a problem and that he /she would like to talk to you about it.

My friend (doll) told me: ''Today I went to the nursery and I am feeling really sad and I want you to tell the children , maybe they can help me''.

Can you think what might have made our friend sad today at the nursery?

Here the children are left to tell me what might make a child feel sad at the nursery.

What can make a child feel sad at the nursery?

(paused to leave the child respond)

Well do you know what, when I asked my friend why she/he was feeling sad she/he said to me :

I am feeling sad because when I go to the nursery nobody wants to play with me.

Who do you think was feeling sad because the other children didn't want to play with him/her?

I then asked them to choose a doll, which we place on our laps and then the story becomes more personal as we have a character (a doll that has been chosen from the child).

Well she/he was saying to me that she/he was feeling very bored playing on his/her own so she/he went to find someone to play with but nobody wanted to play with him/her, so she /he decided to join in the other children's game but the other children didn't take any notice or would move away, they didn't want her/him to play with them. One child said to the other child: we don't play with her/him do we? No, said the other child.
This is not the first time this has happened, many times she/he would want to make friends and play with the children but they don't really seem to want to play with her/him, sometimes they might say : go away we don't want to play with you''. She/he is feeling very sad and can't understand why and wants your help, why do you think

nobody wants to play with her/him? Why might children not play with other children sometimes?

Depending on the child and if they were bored or not, I went round asking about other dolls and potential reasons of exclusion. Then I asked the children:
By pretending that the doll is whispering in my ears:

(Name of doll…..) wants to know:
What do you think she/he should do if that happens again?If some children are not playing with her/him what can she/he do? What would you do?
What do you think the teacher can do if that happens?
What do you think we can do to make her/him feel happy?
What can the teacher do to make her/him feel happy?
My friend wants to thank you so much for listening to her/him and she/he says that sh/he will do what you said. She/he is already feeling much more happier now.

Depending on the child and context, more personalised or questions linked to nursery were asked like "has that ever happened to you? .

Inclusion Story

You know the other day that she/he was feeling very sad because she/he didn't have any friends and nobody wanted to play with her/him, well today she/he has a very happy story. Can you think what might have happened? Why do you think she/he is feeling so happy? What might make a child happy at nursery?

Well, she/he went to the nursery she/he did what you told her /him to do and she has made new friends and at outside time all the children were playing together, they were playing catch and they were having so much fun .She/He is very happy, she/he is not on her/his own any more, and she/he wants to thank you for your help and your ideas.

Pretending that the doll is whispering in my ear :

She/he wants to know what is very important for somebody to be your friend? Who can be your friend? How can somebody be your friend and play with you?

Appendix 2:
Interview schedule with educators

I am really interested in listening to your views and experiences regarding children's friendships and how you promote inclusion in the nursery, so this is what this interview is all about. There are many different ways of doing this and I am interested in your experiences and ideas. Before we start could I just check with you if it is ok to use a tape-recorder to record our conversation, I would like to ensure that whatever we say will remain confidential and anonymous…
First of all …

Description of the setting (only to head teacher)
- Could you briefly describe the setting (e.g. the area the nursery is in, the children and their families etc)

Children's Friendships
- Observations regarding friendship groups and how children choose their friends. What do you think are the most important influences on choosing friends? Can you give some examples? Do friendship groups change in different activities etc?
- How much can teachers intervene in children's friendships
- Why might children not play with other children? Any examples?

Inclusion and equality practice
- What is your approach to promoting good relations between children?
- You have children from a wide range of backgrounds in the nursery. How would you introduce/discuss issues of diversity (similarities ,differences) with children
- Would children mention or ask any questions regarding differences and similarities between themselves and others on an everyday basis (e.g would children have any notions of 'us', 'them').Any examples?
- How do you address the needs of different family cultures, faiths, languages? Can you give me an example or two? (probe for formal curriculum, informal curriculum and hidden curriculum examples.
- Would you engage parents with issues of equality and diversity? Could you say a little bit more? Can you give me a recent example of how you've done this? What in your experiences are the good things about this … and the barriers?
- Can you tell me how you go about curriculum planning regarding inclusion and equality?
- Do you see any difference in the two concepts of multicultural education and anti-racist education?
- What do you understand by the term anti-discrimination

Resources
What kind of resources would you use in order to promote inclusion and equality?

Bilingual children
Would you say that your nursery encourages the use of home language within the classroom?

How would you say that your school supports bilingual children?
Do you use any particular resources for bilingual children?

Policy

Are you aware of policies/strategies relevant to the early years that deal with issues of diversity and equality in Scotland?

Are you aware of any equality legislation that might impact on your work?

Do you have a specific policy in your school to promote equality and inclusion?

In your opinion how can nurseries effectively promote equality in play and learning?

Appendix 3:
Interview schedule with parents / caregivers

First of all thank you for agreeing to spend some time with me. As you know I am doing some research on young children's experiences of diversity with an emphasis on equality issues and I am very interested in listening to your views about your child's experiences inside and outside the nursery
Before we start could I just check with you if it is ok to use a tape-recorder to record our conversation, I would like to ensure that whatever we say will remain confidential and anonymous…
First of all …

<u>Children's experiences in the nursery</u>
Good experiences
- Can you tell me how your child is getting on at nursery?
- Is he/she enjoying his/her time at nursery?
- What does he/she really enjoy?

Bad experiences-Difficulties
- Has your child faced any difficulties ?
- Is there anything that she doesn't enjoy?
- Has there been anything that has worried him/her at nursery?
- If yes ,could you tell me a little bit more about that, did you mention it to the teachers? Did you speak to other parents?

About the nursery schedule-celebrations
- Do you know what goes on at the nursery? (What the teachers do each day …)
- Do you know any celebrations that the nursery celebrates?
- Are their any celebrations that are important to you?

<u>Children's friendship groups</u>

Friends
- Who does your child like playing with?Any particular reasons for that.
- Does your child spend time outside the nursery with his /her friends?Could you tell me a little bit more about that (where, what would they do).
- Would you spend time with others parents outside the nursery?

Children doesn't play with
- Is there anybody your child doesn't like to play with?Has he/she said why?

<u>Children's experiences at home and generally outside the nursery setting</u>
- What does he /she like doing outside the nursery?(for example does he/she go to any playgroups etc?
- Does he/she mix with other children outside nursery? Could you tell me a little bit more.

<u>Neighbourhood</u>
- Have you lived in your neighbourhood for long? Can you tell me about the neighbourhood? do you see any changes?

- Is it a safe place to live in, to walk around?

Children and holidays

- What do you do with the children in the holidays?

Appendix 4:
Information leaflets about the study

Can you help me?

For any information about the study please do not hesitate to contact me:

Kristina Konstantoni
Room 2.15
The Graduate School
Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh
Holyrood Road
EDINBURGH   EH8 8AQ

Telephone: 07783119356
Email: kristina.konstantoni@education.ed.ac.uk

356

Listening to children and promoting equality in the nursery.

Who am I?
My name is Kristina Konstantoni and I am a Ph.D. student at Edinburgh University. I am interested in how we can best promote racial equality in nurseries.

What would I like to do?
I would like to listen to children's and staff's views about racial equality.

What are the aims of the research?
- To find out what children have to say about diversity and equality.
- To explore staff's perceptions of how race equality education can be promoted in practice.
- To consider the implications of children's and staff's views on racial diversity and equality for the curriculum.

How am I going to do it?
- I am going to observe children and staff in the nursery and participate in children's play and staff's activities.
- I will be talking to children and staff.
- I will lead group discussions with children and maybe parents/caregivers.

How will I listen to children's views?
I will use multicultural resources (dolls, pictures, stories, drawings) and a digital camera for children.

How can this research benefit staff, children, parents/caregivers and policy makers?
- By listening to children's views, staff can develop their race equality teaching practice in ways that reflect children's worlds.
- Staff and parents/caregivers will be made aware of children's thoughts about racial difference and fairness, something that could positively influence their practice.

- This research could potentially help develop race equality policy by listening to staff's and children's views.

Privacy
No names of children, staff or parents/caregivers will be used in any written publication, report, paper or presentation about this study. All names and identifying characteristics will be changed so that no person or nursery that took part in the project can be recognized.

Participation in the study is voluntary.
No one should participate in the study if they don't want to.
It is ok to say no!!
The child has the right to refuse to participate even if the parent/caregiver has agreed for his/her participation in the project.

What happens if I change my mind?
If you change your mind, just let me know.
- If you want to stop your child from participating then that is ok, just let me know as soon as possible and your child will stop being included in the study.
- If you want to start later on it is ok, just come and let me know.

Why am I doing this project?
First of all, I am really passionate about equality education and giving a chance to children to have a say in issues that relate to their lives. Secondly, this project will hopefully help me to complete my doctoral thesis and finish my Ph.D. course. I have been lucky enough to be funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council who find my research important for the promotion of equality in education.

Thank you very much for reading this leaflet!

If you would like to contact me please look at the back of the leaflet for my contact details ------>

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* Only in the unlikely event that a child protection issue emerges during the course of the research will an appropriate professional be alerted.

Pomożesz mi?

Jeśli masz jakieś pytania lub wątpliwości, nie wahaj się ze mną skontaktować!

Kristina Konstantoni
Adres
Room 2.12
The Graduate School
Moray House School of Education
University of Edinburgh
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Adres e-mail: kristina.konstantoni@education.ed.ac.uk

Słuchanie dzieci i promowanie równości w przedszkolu.

Kim jestem?
Nazywam się Kristina Konstantoni. Jestem studentką Uniwersytetu Edynburskiego. Aktualnie, przeprowadzam badania potrzebne do mojej pracy doktoranckiej na temat *Jak najlepiej promować równość rasową w przedszkolach*.

Co chciałabym zrobić?
Chciałabym poznać opinię dzieci i nauczycieli na temat różnic rasowych i równouprawnienia.

Jaki jest cel tego projektu?
- Zbadanie, co dzieci mają do powiedzenia na temat różnic rasowych i równouprawnienia
- Poznanie, jak nauczyciele postrzegają promowanie równości rasowej w praktyce
- Zastanowienie się, jaki wpływ mogą mieć opinie dzieci i nauczycieli na tematy związane z różnicami rasowymi i równouprawnieniem na program zajęć

Jak zamierzam to zrobić?
- Będę obserwować dzieci i nauczycieli w przedszkolu oraz sama będę uczestniczyć w grach i zabawach.
- Będę rozmawiać z dziećmi i nauczycielami.
- Będę prowadzić dyskusje grupowe z dziećmi oraz prawdopodobnie, w miarę możliwości, z rodzicami/opiekunami.

W jaki sposób zamierzam poznać opinię dzieci?
Mam zamiar użyć różnych rekwizytów, takich jak: lalek, obrazków, opowiadań, rysunków. Co więcej, chciałabym użyć sprzętu cyfrowego.

Jak na tym projekcie skorzystają nauczyciele, dzieci, rodzice i opiekunowie, oraz politycy odpowiedzialni na tworzenie prawa?
- Poprzez poznanie poglądów i opinii dzieci, nauczyciele mogą stworzyć swoją własną praktykę „równego" nauczania, która by odzwierciedlała postrzeganie rzeczywistości z punktu widzenia dzieci
- Rodzice i nauczyciele będą bardziej świadomi, tego co dzieci myślą na temat równości rasowej i sprawiedliwości - coś co może ze przydać się w praktyce!

- Projekt ten może mieć wpływ na rozwój Polityki Równych Szans

Prywatność
Żadne imiona, ani nazwiska dzieci, rodziców i nauczycieli nie pojawią się w żadnej publikacji, raporcie albo prezentacji na temat tego projektu. Wszystkie imiona i nazwiska oraz wszystkie nazwy własne zostaną zmienione, tak aby żadna osoba, ani przedszkole biorące udział w projekcie nie mogły zostać rozpoznane.

Udział w projekcie nie jest obowiązkowy
Nikt nie musi uczestniczyć w projekcie wbrew swojej woli.
Nic nie szkodzi, jeśli się nie zgodzisz!
Dziecko ma prawo odmówić brania udziału w projekcie, nawet jeśli rodzic/opiekun wyraził wcześniej zgodę.

Co, jeśli zmienię zdanie?
Jeśli zmienisz zdanie, po prostu daj mi znać!
- Jeśli chcesz, aby Twoje dziecko przestało brać udział w projekcie - proszę daj mi znać jak najszybciej. Twoje dziecko zostanie z niego wykluczone.
- Jeśli chcesz, aby Twoje dziecko zaczęło w innym terminie. Nie ma sprawy - po prostu daj mi znać!

Dlaczego robię ten projekt?
Po pierwsze, jestem zafascynowana zagadnieniem równości w dziedzinie edukacji oraz tym, co mają do powiedzenia dzieci na tematy bezpośrednio związane z ich życiem. Po drugie, mam nadzieję, że projekt ten przyczyni się do ukończenia i znajdzie odzwierciedlenie w mojej pracy doktoranckiej. Co więcej, warto podkreślić, że projekt ten jest finansowany przez UK Economic and Social Research Council, który uznał, że projekt może w dużej mierze przyczynic się do promowania równości w dziedzinie edukacji.

Dziękuję bardzo za przeczytanie tej ulotki!!

Jeśli chciałabyś/chciałbyś się ze mną skontaktować, odwróć ulotkę na drugą stronę, znajdziesz tam mój adres i telefon ------>

Tylko w sytuacji, kiedy w czasie prowadzenia zajęć bezpieczeństwo dziecka będzie zagrożone zostana powiadomione odpowiednie służby.

Urdu Version of Information Leaflet

Kristine Karstentoni
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kristina.karstentoni@education.ed.ac.uk

Appendix 5:
Consent forms

Practitioners' consent form
<u>Please see leaflet for details of the research. If a copy of the leaflet is required, please let me know.</u>

Observations
I am interested in practitioners' approach towards promoting inclusion and equality in the nursery setting, and how children are introduced to issues of diversity. I would like to observe practitioners' everyday practices and interactions between children and adults in the nursery setting.

Interviews (informal)
I would like to conduct <u>two</u>[39] interviews with practitioners' throughout the year, regarding views on children's identity formation and attitudes towards differences. I would also like to listen to practitioners' views on how to develop an effective race equality approach in nursery settings.
Each interview will last approximately 30-40 minutes.

Focus group[40]
I would like to conduct <u>one</u> focus group with practitioners on the topic of children's identity formation and race equality approaches. The focus group will take approximately 30-40 minutes.

Anonymity and confidentiality
No real names will be used so no one can be identified. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

Please complete and sign this form where appropriate:

I _____ (name of staff) **<u>agree</u>** to participate in this research.

Please tick if you agree to take part in some or all of the below:

Observation ☐   **Interviews** ☐   **Focus group** ☐   **All** ☐

I _____ (name of staff) **<u>do not agree</u>** to participate in this research
Date ————————————
Staff full name   Signature
_____   _____

---

[39]   Only one interview was eventually conducted.

[40]   No focus group was conducted.

Parent/Caregiver's Consent Form

This research is being carried out by Kristina Konstantoni, a student at the Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh for her Ph.D. This research may also be used in written publications and presentations for educational or research purposes.

Anonymity and confidentiality
No real names of the children or the nursery will be used, as they will all be changed so no child can be identified. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

Please see the leaflet for details of the research methods I hope to use.

Please complete and sign this form if you are happy for your child to participate in this research.

I _____ (name of parent/caregiver) agree for my

child_____ (name of child) to participate in the research.

Please tick the box if you are happy for me to use any or all of the below during the research:

Photos ☐   **All** ☐

Voice-recordings ☐

Video-recordings ☐

Please tick the box if you are happy for me to use the photos, voice-recordings or video-recordings in any written publication or presentation about this research.

Date ☐

_____

Parent/caregiver's full name   Signature

_____   _____

Parent/Caregiver's Interview Consent Form

Please see leaflet for details of the research. If a copy of the leaflet is required please let me know.

I would like to conduct **one** informal interview with parents/caregivers. An interpreter will be used if needed.

Why?
Parents/caregivers can provide very important information about their children especially about their children's lives outside the nursery context.

What is it about?
I would like to get to know more about your child's background (age, ethnicity, language etc), your child's experiences in the nursery and how they make sense of peer differences. I would also like to know your views about inclusion and equality in the nursery setting.

How long will it take?
This interview will take no more than 40 minutes. The time depends on you!!

Where will it be conducted?
The interview will be conducted in the nursery setting, in your home or by telephone.

Anonymity and confidentiality
No real names will be used when the research is written up so that no one can be identified. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality.

Please complete and sign this form where appropriate:

I _____ (name of parent/caregiver) **agree** to participate in the research. I would like the interview to be conducted at/by (please tick where appropriate):

Nursery setting ☐   **Home** ☐   **Telephone** ☐

I _____ (name of parent/caregiver) **don't agree** to participate in the research.

Date _____

Parent/caregiver's full name   Signature

_____   _____

Polish Version of parent / caregiver's consent form

Zgoda Rodzica/Opiekuna

Badanie to jest przeprowadzane przez Kristine Konstantoni, doktorantkę na Uniwersytecie Edynburskim i Moray House School of Education. Wyniki tych badań moga byc uzyte w publikacjach lub prezentacjach wylacznie w celach edukacyjnych i do prowadzenia dalszych badań.

Anonimowość/ Poufność

Wszystkie imiona i nazwiska dzieci oraz nazwa przedszkola zostaną zmienione, tak aby żadna osoba, ani przedszkole biorące udzial w projekcie nie mogły zostać rozpoznane.

Zobacz szczegoly projektu i metod na zalaczonej ulotce.

Proszę wypelnij i podpisz formularz, jesli zgadzasz sie aby Twoje dziecko zabralo udzial w projekcie.

Ja _____ (imię i nazwisko rodzica/opiekuna) zgadzam sie aby moje

dziecko_____ (imię i nazwisko dziecka) uczestniczylo w projekcie.

Proszę zaznacz, jesli zgadzasz sie aby nizej wymienione sposoby zostaly uzycze podczas przeprowadzania projektu.

Zdjęcia	☐	**Wszystkie powyzsze**	☐

Nagrywanie glosu ☐

Video-nagrywanie ☐

Proszę zaznacz, jesli zgadzasz sie, aby zdjęcia, nagrane glosy i filmy zostaly uzyte w publikacji lub prezentacji podsumowujacej ten projekt ☐

Data

_____

Imię i nazwisko rodzica/opiekuna   Podpis

_____   _____

Urdu version of parent / caregiver's consent form

<div dir="rtl">

والدین/نگہداشت کنندگان کا رضامندی فارم

یہ تحقیق مورے ہاؤس اسکول آف ایجوکیشن، یونیورسٹی آف ایڈنبرہ کی ایک طالبہ کرسٹینا کانسٹینٹونی اپنی پی ایچ ڈی کیلئے کررہی ہے۔ اس تحقیق سے متعلقہ معلومات کا استعمال تحریری اشاعات اور تعلیمی یا تحقیقی مقاصد کے طور پر پیش کرنے کیلئے بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔

عدم شناخت اور رازداری

کسی بچے یا نرسری کا اصل نام استعمال نہیں کیا جائیگا، کیونکہ سب کو تبدیل کر دیا جائیگا لہذا کسی بچے کی پہچان نہیں ہوسکے گی۔ رازداری کو یقینی بنانے کی بھرپور کوشش کی جائیگی۔

برائے مہربانی تحقیق کے طریقوں کی تفصیلات کیلئے پرچہ دیکھیں جن کو میں استعمال کرنے کی توقع کرتی ہوں۔

اگر آپ اس بات سےاتفاق کرتے ہیں کہ آپ کا بچہ اس تحقیق میں شرکت کرےتو برائے مہربانی اس فارم کو مکمل کریں اور دستخط کریں۔

میں _____ (والدین/نگہداشت کنندہ کانام) اپنے بچے _____(بچے کا نام) کی اس تحقیق میں شرکت سے اتفاق کرتا ہوں/کرتی ہوں۔

اگر آپ اس بات سے اتفاق کرتے ہیں کہ میں مندرجہ ذیل میں سے کسی ایک کو یا تمام کو استعمال کرلوں تو برائے مہربانی متعلقہ خانے میں ٹک کا نشان لگائیں:

فوٹو   تمام ☐   ☐

آواز کو ریکارڈ کرنا   ☐

ویڈیو ریکارڈنگ (فلم بنانا)   ☐

اگر آپ اس بات سے اتفاق کرتے ہیں کہ میں فوٹو، آواز کی ریکارڈنگ یا ویڈیو ریکارڈنگ کو اس تحقیق سے متعلقہ کسی تحریری اشاعت میں یا اظہار خیال کرتے وقت استعمال کرلوں تو برائے مہربانی اس خانے میں ٹک کا نشان لگائیں۔

تاریخ   ☐
_____

والدین/نگہداشت کنندگان کا پورانام   دستخط

_____   _____

</div>

Urdu version of parent / caregiver's interview consent form

والدین والدہ و سرپرست کے لیے انٹرویو کے لیے رضامندی کا فارم

اس ریسرچ (تحقیقی پروگرام) کی تفصیلات کے لیے برائے مہربانی انفارمیشن لیٹ (معلوماتی اشتہار) ملاحظہ کریں۔ اگر لیٹ کی اپنی ہے تو برائے مہربانی پوچھ لیا کریں۔

میں والدین و سرپرستوں کا ایک غیر رسمی انٹرویو لینا چاہوں گی۔ اگر ضرورت ہوگی تو ترجمان (انٹرپریٹر) کی خدمات استعمال کی جائیں گی۔

کیوں؟

والدین و سرپرست اپنے بچوں کے بارے میں بہت اہم معلومات فراہم کر سکتے ہیں خاص طور پر ان کی نرسری سے جڑنا اور نئی کے بارے میں۔

یہ کس بارے میں ہے؟

میں آپ کے بچوں کے نرسری کے تجربہ ت اور نرسری اور نرسری کے بارے ان کی تبدیلیوں کے بارے میں معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتی ہیں۔ نرسری میں شمولیت (لکھنا ان) اور ردوبدل کے بارے میں کی آپ کے خیالات جاننا چاہوں گی۔

اس پر کتنا وقت لگے گا؟

انٹرویو پر 30 یا 40 منٹ سے زیادہ وقت نہیں لگے گا۔ وقت کا انحصار آپ پر ہے۔

یہ انٹرویو کہاں ہوگا؟

یہ انٹرویو یا نرسری میں آپ کے گھر پر یا مناسب جگہ پر ہوگا۔ کہاں سے یہ فیصلہ آپ کریں گے۔

گمنامی اور رازداری

جو کچھ نرسری میں آئے گا اسے لکھ کر لیا جائے گا تاکہ اس میں کوئی کی چیز حقیقی ہم اسٹیشن نظر لیا جائے گا تاکہ کسی کی شخص کی نشاندہی نہ ہو سکے۔ رازدی کی کوشش کی جائے گی۔

براہ مہربانی اس فارم میں مناسب جگہیں پُر کریں اور ان پر دستخط کریں۔

میں _____ (والدہ والدہ و سرپرست کا نام) ان کی نرسری میں اس حصہ لینے پر رضامند ہوں۔

میں پاس کارڈ کا انٹرویو دیا دیا جائے جو لیا جائے۔ برائے مہربانی جو مناسب ہو ان پر نشان لگا دیں۔

نرسری ☐ گھر ☐ بلیفون ☐

اگر آپ نے آپ پر ٹیلیفون پر نشان لگایا ہے تو برائے نرسری نمبر لکھیں۔

پتہ: _____   ٹیلیفون نمبر: _____

میں _____ (والدہ و سرپرست کا نام) ان کی نرسری میں اس لیے رضامند نہیں ہوں۔

تاریخ: _____

والدین والدہ و سرپرست کا پورا نام   دستخط

_____   _____

Appendix 6:
Children's version of information Leaflet

I am Kristina and I am a researcher.
I would like to :

learn about children in the nursery

listen to you

write things in my book and talk to you.

1

2

You could

take photos

You could

draw pictures

3

4

You could

talk about stories

5

You could

talk to special dolls

6

I will write a book about your thoughts, ideas and wishes. I will share these with your teachers, parents/carers and people from my school to make them think about how they could best work with children in the nursery.

I won't tell anyone who you are. Only if I get worried, or if you are not safe, will I have to tell the teacher about what you have told me.

Would you like to take part?

YES   NO

It is ok to say no!!

7   **8**

If you :

(feel sad about what we are doing)

(have questions)

(want me to stop writing)

Tell KRISTINA or the teachers. Thank you.

9

Cards to facilitate ongoing informed consent

Appendix 7:
Children's initial informed consent

Would you like to take part ?

Child's name	☺ YES	☹ NO

Appendix 8:
National outcomes

Some of the National Outcomes include:

> "Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
>
> Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
>
> We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
>
> We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
>
> We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity"

(Scottish Government, 2010. Available from: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/ scotPerforms/outcomes [Accessed 26th August 2010].

Appendix 9:
Negative to difference: Complexity and intersectionality

Pamela would point out at various occasions how Arun and JessicaC were not from Scotland and were not like her, with reference to the 'different' black skin or language and accent. The aforementioned were accompanied by negative feelings and attitudes. However, Pamela was most likely to be more positive to Jessica, who was the same gender, than Arun, who was a younger aged boy. This could imply intersections of gender, age and competence.

Appendix 10:
Neglecting heritage: Extract from Hassan's sister's interview

Multiethnic Nursery
(Interview)
Hassan's sister is talking about going on holiday to Pakistan and how Hassan does not like going there.

He doesn't really like going there (Pakistan)… because he finds it really different… it's really different (explains that Hassan thinks it is different in terms of manners, and that people there don't look the same, also different transport)

By living here (UK) most, he doesn't, he's like a proper like UK, kind of resident, he doesn't really want to go there, to Pakistan… he's like, my uncle like calls (and asks Hassan) when are you going to come (to Pakistan)? And he was like I don't want to come there.

Appendix 11:
Non-violent communication approach

"The giraffe book": Non-violent communication pedagogy and limitations towards equity practices

In this nursery, the head teacher had developed an approach known as the non-violent communication (NVC) approach. Within this approach, educators were working with children in order to support, negotiate and resolve conflict situations by themselves. The general aim was to teach children to express their feelings, to listen, acknowledge and respect other children's feelings and to negotiate and discuss with each other when problems occurred. The children would work together in order to find solutions to their problems that would make everyone happy.

Moira had acquired training in NVC and was conducting a small research, in order to explore the NVC in her school. Moira had developed a booklet called the "*Giraffe Language. Ask for what we Need. Find Solutions together to problems*" (see picture of visual book below).

Picture of Visual Book
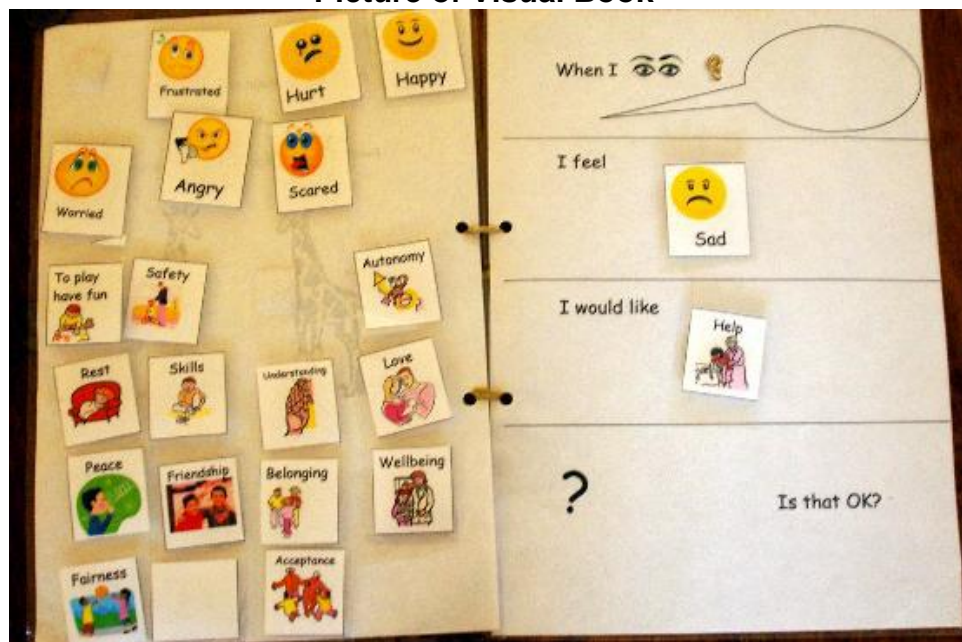
Puppets were used in conjunction with the book. Conflict stories were told to the children through the puppets, and then the book was used in order to find solutions to the puppets' stories. In order to return to these stories at other times in the classroom, photo books were made from the puppet stories. Moira first brought photos of the puppets and discussed about them, and after a few sessions she introduced the puppets to the children (where they lived, their name, what they liked etc.). The puppets then visited regularly, and stories were told in relation to conflicts that had happened. The puppets were asking the children about their views and ideas regarding the puppets' problems, and this was enacted through the booklet. There were a few sessions where there was no problem and a happy story. The book was then used in real life scenarios whenever conflicts occurred between children, and the general idea was to model a behaviour which children could then use and transfer in their everyday conflicts without having to use book *per se*. After a few sessions of the Giraffe book, and towards the end of my research observations of its potential implication in children's lives were made. For example, during a quarrel, children would ask for the Giraffe book in order to find a solution. Some of the children were also putting into practice the general idea of the Giraffe book without even using the book. I observed a child not only expressing what he/she wanted, but also talking in a nice way to the other child by expressing what he/she would like the other person to say or do; "I don't want him to say hate, I would like him to say I don't want to be the baby today but maybe I will be a baby next week".

What I found was that although children were expressing themselves and even listening to other children, the solution was tricky. The presence of an adult was a necessity in order to facilitate the children's discussion and help them find a solution. It was, however, a step forward, as children began to negotiate their conflicts themselves.

This kind of approach could be seen as promoting an ethos of respect, listening, understanding and minimising conflict, which could all be seen as part of social justice and equity practice, an approach that reinforced positive and fair relations between children. Emphasis was given to supporting children to deal with conflicts, which was an important step, but did not go further to challenge beliefs and deal with discourses of

power, which are at the core of social justice and equitable approaches (see also MacNaughton, 2000; Browne, 2004; Lane, 2008).

Appendix 12:
Passport activity: Multiethnic nursery

Based on children's interests about airplanes, educators came up with the idea of creating passports, with which the children could role-play being at the airport. Moira developed the activity with the support of a computer programme, where the children would click on the picture and words that better represented them. The children had to choose their names (in written form) and then a picture of them would come up, along with their written name. They then had to choose their country from a list with names and flags, and their age (a choice between 3, 4 and 5). By choosing all the above, a paper was printed which had all the details they had chosen, and was made into a passport. Moira made the space look like an airport check-in area and role-played how children could look at people's passports and ask general details of the passport. This activity provided an opportunity for children to talk about identity and to acknowledge different identities, promoting positive relations.

Appendix 13:
World Book Day activity: Multiethnic nursery

On World's Book day, staff talked with children about different languages. This was an event that created an opportunity for other languages to be acknowledged. Educators asked the children to bring their favourite book. Although one child said ''I don't have any books in English'', recognising that English was the dominant language, children were encouraged to bring books in their home language as well. Parents were also invited to come in the nursery to read storybooks in their home language, translating it at the same time in English so that all the children could understand. Children really enjoyed this activity and were extremely interested in the different languages. In this way, children were introduced to different languages; children that were different were acknowledged, and the child whose story was read in their home language felt positive about their difference as it was respected.

Appendix 14:
Examples of intervening and expanding children's gender accounts: Multiethnic nursery

Multiethnic Nursery

(Field notes, 9/06/08)

Antoni [is saying to Verity(educator)]: I want to be a queen.

Laura (says to Verity): A boy cannot be a queen

Verity: Antoni can decide that for himself.

Verity suggested to Laura that people can choose roles and identify with whatever they want. However, Laura's belief was not really challenged; a dialogue that would expand her views of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' was not initiated (see MacNaughton, 2000).

A more active stance was observed on another occasions by Kay (educator) who had heard a boy using the word 'girl' in a rather derogatory way, and although he had not said anything in particular, she did not like the tone and the meaning behind the word that he seemed to use. Therefore, Kay said "I don't like the way you are using the word girl" and tried to find out more about what the boy meant. Kay was open enough to challenge the child's belief by initiating a discussion about the powerful discourses behind the use of the word 'girl'.

Appendix 15:
Educators' approaches and additional needs

Chapter 8 suggested that Mary was an excluded, and at times disruptive, girl, who was often accompanied by an adult, or played on her own. Staff would often single Mary out and make her sit on her own if she was disruptive, in order to protect the activity/play of the others. During her isolation, nobody was really left to speak to her. Staff would not really talk to Mary; they would mainly monitor her. Supporting Mary to play with others, although rare, was a big challenge. So was protecting children from her sudden reactions. When other children, however, would exclude her, this was not really noticed, or dealt with by the staff. It was considered part of the game.

Mainly White Nursery
(Field notes, 31/04/08)

Tara was dancing; Lesley joins. Mary comes up too, Tara starts shouting with a singing voice and jumping and laughing making fun of Mary. Tara starts shouting.
Tara: Mary is the bad girl, (Tara is dancing) Mary is the bad girl, you are the bad girl (says Tara to Mary).
Mary gets really upset. Tara is dancing and singing. Then Lesley starts singing that as well. They make a group with Tara by going up to Mary making her feel sad.
Mary: (runs to the arms of the teaching assistant) everyone thinks I am bad (says with a really sad voice), everyone thinks I am bad (she repeats).
Teacher Assistant (TA): Oh, you are not bad.
Mrs V who is in the kitchen was probably overhearing and shouts to the teacher.
Mrs V: I think that they are playing a game, and she is bad in the game.
TA: Oh, are you playing a game?
Mary seems upset and does not really respond.
TA: If you don't like it just say it to them.
Lesley: Mary is such a bad girl (Lesley and Tara continues).

Mary's problem was not recognised, her view was not asked, and no response was given to the girls. This was an incident left unchallenged.

Appendix 16:
Example of promoting children's group identity

The Pakistani girls and educators' approaches

One member of staff in particular, Helen, would take opportunities when raised by the Pakistani heritage girls or the context to boost their confidence, particularly in relation to their home language. Helen was observed to emphasise on the girls' shared group identity in relation to language or religious and cultural practices, and nationality. The Pakistani girls' group identity was also reinforced by sessions that they had with the bilingual teacher, during which the former would go into a separate group from the other children.