



Maynooth University

National University
of Ireland Maynooth

Re-imagining primary school children's citizenship participation

A Thesis Submitted by Caitríona Maria Fitzgerald BSoc Sci (Hons)

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Social Science

Maynooth University

Date of Submission: February 20th, 2019

Head of Department: Professor Seán O' Riain

Research Co-Supervisors: Drs. Pauline Cullen and Rebecca King-O'Riain

Funded by Maynooth University Postgraduate Scholarship Programme

(John and Pat Hume Scholarship)

(2014)

I dedicate this thesis to my family

Table of Contents

Tables	ix
Figures	x
Abbreviations	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Prologue	xiii
Summary	xiv
Chapter One: From citizenship to children’s participatory rights	1
Overview	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1 Civic Republican Citizenship	3
1.1.2 Liberal Citizenship	4
1.1.3 Cosmopolitan Citizenship	5
1.1.4 ‘Critical’/Feminist Citizenship	6
1.2 Childhood development theories and children’s citizenship	7
1.3 Human rights – a basis for children’s citizenship participation	10
1.3.1 Age – a primary factor in the acquisition of participatory rights	12
1.3.2 The UN CRC – a framework for children’s participatory rights	12
1.4 A reformation of democracy for children’s political participation	15
1.5 A Feminist perspective – a ‘lived’ citizenship	17
1.5.1 Broadening the boundaries of children’s citizenship participation	18
1.6 Conclusions	20
1.7 Theoretical overview	22
1.8 Chapter-by-chapter synopsis	24
Chapter Two: Children’s participation at school	27
Overview	27
2. Introduction – Children’s participatory experiences at school	28
2.1 Tokenism and children’s participation – not such a bad thing?	31

2.1.2 Children’s wellbeing and <i>citizenship-esteem</i> at school	31
2.2 Childhood and citizenship in Irish education policy and practice	32
2.2.1 Ideological shifts and the provision of education	34
2.3 Irish citizenship education 1960 – 1990	36
2.3.1 Citizenship education in 1990s Ireland	37
2.3.2 The development of citizenship education at primary level.....	39
2.4 Expressions of citizenship and diversity in Irish educational policy	40
2.4.1 SPHE – a citizenship education <i>for</i> and <i>about</i> diversity?	41
2.4.2 SPHE – issues and challenges	42
2.5 Irish government policy responses to children’s citizenship education	43
2.5.1 Irish educational reform – where are the children’s voices?	45
2.6 Irish primary schools – democracy in action?	46
2.6.1 Locating children’s citizenship participatory rights in primary school ...	48
2.7 An EU or an Irish citizenship education?	49
2.8 Conclusions – moving children’s citizenship participation forward	51
Chapter Three: Methodological approaches conducting research with children	54
Overview	54
3. Introduction	54
3.1 Ways of knowing – Ontological and Epistemological approach	57
3.2 Feminist viewpoints – reflexivity and research methodologies	58
3.2.1 Operationalising elements of children’s citizenship participation	59
3.3 Reflections about research with younger children	62
3.4 Mediating power relations during research with children	62
3.5 The researcher’s role – a balancing act between two social worlds	64
3.6 Research sampling rationale, processes and limitations	67
3.7 Adult gatekeeper’s influences over gaining and maintaining access	70
3.8 Data collection methods – benefits, challenges and limitations	72

3.8.1 Mediating situation bias during research with children	73
3.8.2 ‘Child-friendly’ data collection methods	74
3.8.3 Limitations – validity and reliability of data from younger children	76
3.9 Ethical considerations during data collection with young children	78
3.10 Conclusions – facilitation participation during adult-led research	80
Chapter Four: Children’s self-conceptualisation of childhood and citizenship	81
Overview	81
4. Introduction – changing perceptions of Irish childhoods	81
4.1 Section One – physicality, mobility and surveillance during childhood	83
4.1.1 Mobility in childhood	85
4.1.2 Surveillance during childhood	87
4.2 Children’s concerns – diminishing ‘quality’ time with parents	91
4.2.1 Balancing school and home life	93
4.2.2 Adults’ concerns are children’s concerns	96
4.2.3 Children’s appropriation of adults’ issues	99
4.3 Section Two – theoretical and practicing citizens	102
Overview	102
4.4 Children’s understandings of belonging and citizenship identity	105
4.5 Citizen’s have passports	111
4.6 [Some] citizens can vote	114
4.7 Conclusions – children’s citizenship socialisation	118
Chapter Five: Children’s experiences of participation at school	121
Overview	121
5. Introduction Primary school children’ citizenship practice in Ireland	121
5.1 <i>Children’s Social Circles of Citizenship Participation</i>	123
5.2 Children’s right to voice and to participate at school	125
5.3 Democratic practice – ‘Pick a number between 1 and 10!’	129

5.4 Participation and children’s <i>citizenship-esteem</i>	135
5.4.1 Social context and children’s right to voice at school	140
5.5 Children’s appropriation of ideas <i>about</i> and <i>for</i> citizenship at school	145
5.6 Children’s awareness of citizens’ civic duties and rights	148
5.6.1 Nationalism and children’s understandings of citizens’ rights	153
5.6.2 The role of Nationalism in children’s citizenship identity formation ...	155
5.7 Conclusions – The disempowered Citizen-Child at school	157
Chapter Six: Social bonding – precursor to <i>citizenship solidarity</i> between children	159
Overview	159
6. Introduction	159
6.1 Competition – democracy in action?	160
6.2 Social bonding – building <i>citizenship solidarity</i> between <i>citizen-peers</i> ...	161
6.2.1 Social bonding – a prerequisite for <i>acts of citizenship solidarity</i>	164
6.2.2 Taking the blame – citizenship solidarity or clever social strategy?.....	166
6.2.3 Children’s peer cultural capital – a form of <i>social power tool</i>	168
6.3 <i>Collective Social Action(s)</i> – children’s ‘safe’ ways of protesting	171
6.3.1 To participate or not – children’s autonomy at school	174
6.4 The <i>Exclusion Zone</i> – a form of exclusionary <i>CSA</i>	178
6.5 Citizenship as a community -influences on inclusion and exclusion	183
6.5.1 The Citizen-Child – empathetic or exclusionary?	185
6.6 Conclusions	186
Chapter Seven: The gendered Citizen-Child at school	189
Overview	189
7. Introduction	190
7.1 Self-enforced gender segregation – ‘We are always making lines’	192
7.2 Girls and boys – rule keepers, makers and breakers	197
7.3 ‘Dominance Hierarchies’ – social strategies used by children at school ..	203

7.4 Competition – the strategic Citizen-Child	209
7.5 Autonomy and justice or lack of it – ‘We are bossed about!’	213
7.6 Social rules – appropriate and inappropriate gender behaviour	214
7.6.1 Gender division – ‘It gets invaded by girls!’	216
7.7 Conclusions – Implications of ‘learned’ gendered behaviours at school ..	220
Chapter Eight: <i>Citizenship Polis</i> – reimagining children’s citizenship practices ..	223
Overview	223
8. Introduction – A ‘lived’ citizenship can be a full citizenship	223
8.1 The importance of peer group relations for young school-citizens	224
8.1.2 Children’s <i>Citizenship Polis</i> at school	226
8.2 Social hierarchies and peer criterion – <i>1st</i> and <i>2nd</i> class citizen-peers	226
8.3 <i>Citizen-peers</i> – who is ‘Normal’?	229
8.4 Peer group dynamics – friend or foe?	230
8.5 The places and spaces where children ‘do’ citizenship at school	232
8.5.1 Children’s citizen roles enacted in the schoolyard	235
8.5.2 The schoolyard – a zone of social and political action	239
8.5.3 Turf warfare – ‘They keep coming into our area!’	242
8.5.4 Age related peer power play – ‘They’ll tell you to get out!’	243
8.6 Conclusions	245
Chapter Nine: Conclusions and recommendations	247
9. Theoretical contribution	247
9.1. Key Findings – Is citizenship created at school?	249
9.2 Recommendations	254
9.3 Conclusion	257
Appendices	260
Bibliography	285
End Notes	312

Tables

Table 1. School Information Index	55
---	----

Figures

Figure 1: Four key constructs that inform ideas about children’s citizenship	3
Figure 2: The relationship between the core elements of children’s citizenship	60
Figure 3: Word Cloud of children’s words to describe who/what a citizen is.....	103
Figure 4: <i>Children’s Social Circles of Citizenship Participation</i>	124
Figure 5: Interdependency between <i>democratic competencies</i> and children’s social development as <i>citizen-peers</i> and school-citizens	135
Figure 6: Photograph of a classroom league table	161
Figure 7: Photograph of a ‘Golden Time’ chart.....	165
Figure 8: Representation of children’s <i>Citizenship Polis</i>	190

Abbreviations

CIM	Children's Independent Mobility
CSPE	Civic Social and Personal Education
CSA	<i>Collective Social Action(s)</i>
CT	Circle Time
DC	<i>Democratic Competencies</i>
ET	Educate Together
EU	European Union
GUI	Growing up in Ireland
MD	Multidenominational
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NS	National School
PE	Physical Education
POD	Primary-Online-Database
SPHE	Social Personal and Health Education
RPC	Revised Primary School Curriculum
UN CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Acknowledgements

A tree has roots in the soil, yet it reaches to the sky. It tells us that in order to aspire we need to be grounded, and that no matter how high we go it is from our roots that we draw sustenance. It is a reminder to all of us who have had success that we cannot forget where we came from. ... our power and strength and our ability to reach our goals depend on the people, those whose work remains unseen, who are the soil out of which we grow, the shoulders on which we stand (Wangari Maathai 2007).

It has been a privilege to undertake this research. The process of producing this thesis has taught me some invaluable professional and personal lessons and it has opened new vistas which I look forward to walking towards. Many people have walked beside me on my journey and I now take this opportunity to let them know how much I appreciate their help and support.

First and foremost, I am sincerely grateful to all the children (and their respective schools) who participated in this research which would not have been possible without them. My research findings and themes are built upon children's ideas and subjective experiences and I aimed to keep their voices to the fore of this thesis.

I want to acknowledge and give my sincere thanks to my supervisors Drs. Pauline Cullen and Rebecca King-O'Riain who have provided me with exceptional academic support throughout this process. I felt secure in the knowledge that their expertise would help me bring this research project to fruition. Also, I am grateful to Trish Connerty and the Department of Sociology for providing me with a work space and a supportive learning environment throughout my PhD candidacy.

Linda, thanks so much for your encouragement and uplifting words and offers of help to keep me focused and on track. Seán, you've always believed I could do this, even when I thought I could not. Thank you so much for your kind listening ear and reading of drafts.

And of course, my 'parliament of owls', thank you for your words of encouragement, reading of drafts, hugs, cups of coffee (and the mandatory sugar hit), laughter, tissues, a kind listening ear and a solid foundation to keep me grounded and steady.

Last but by no means least, I am eternally grateful to my wonderful parents Kathleen and John and my siblings, Maria, Elaine and Desmond; my cheerleaders whose unfaltering support and belief in my abilities has given me strength throughout. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I truly have stood on the shoulders of giants to get to where I am now.

My love and peace to you all - d'fhéadfadh an t-éirí an bóthar leat agus an ghaoth go brách ag do chúl.

Prologue

The gate makes a loud screech and heralds my entrance into the schoolyard. Some children close-by turn their heads in my direction. Who are you? Is written across their furrowed brows. I smile back, eager to begin my journey with them with openness and honesty. They return to their chat. I am no longer of interest to them; just another adult visiting their school. I make my way over to the principal's office, side-stepping children as I go. They dart in and out of their play. I am invisible to most of them; they are consumed by the moment of their game. I manage to dodge a ball kicked loose from a soccer game. I smile, pick up the ball and throw it back towards the kicker. His face flickers a question; who are you? He turns back to his friends and they continue their game. I take a furtive glance at the hive of activities going on around me as I continue towards the other side of the schoolyard. Shouting, laughing, chatting, whispering; the rise and fall of children's voices; an orchestra playing out the music of children's social worlds. Some huddle in groups deep in whispered conversations, others chat as they stroll arm in arm around the schoolyard, some are playing ball. Others play chase and run with abandon across my path. I spot a boy reading by himself, hunkered down on his haunches, his book propped up on his knees; is he at Hogwarts? I arrive at the principal's office. Before I step into that familiar adult space, I look back at the schoolyard. It is a zone of social interaction full of intricacies, norms, values and rules of engagement I am not privy to anymore. It has become an unfamiliar world to me since I have grown to adulthood and shed off my childhood ways and knowing's. Now I am an outsider in this space; I am an unknown quantity, I am an adult imbued with authority and power. Yet, I am not the powerholder in this space, I am in the minority. I am out of my element and surrounded by a collective of individuals who are monitoring, surveying, and taking account of me in the subtlest of ways; am I a welcome or unwelcome visitor?

Summary

This thesis aims to create new forms of inquiry about younger children's social realities as citizens at primary school. I recognise children as agentic social actors and as such their lived experience constitutes the central aspect of analysis. The questions which guide this research are: 1. How do younger children 'do' citizenship within their peer groups at school? 2. How is children's citizenship evident in the intersection between their peer group citizenship participation and the structures and practices of the primary school?

My findings indicate children are not afforded regular opportunities to participate in decision-making processes at school which implies school structure and practices play a key role in facilitating children's participation. I also found that children's experiences of (non)participation is socialising them towards the notion that 'citizenship' is for adults only. This situation could affect children's *citizenship-esteem* as valued and recognised school-citizens and citizens of wider society.

Yet, children's self-conceptualisation of themselves as non-participating citizens belies that they are active *citizen-peers* of their peer groups which I conceptualise as a form of *Citizenship Polis*. My observations reveal that children 'do' citizenship which is defined, reproduced and created by their peer cultures. I found social bonding between children is a precursor to their *citizenship solidarity* and that children's rights as *citizen-peers* of their peer group(s) are largely dictated by peer social hierarchy. I suggest that children's citizenship practices represent forms of *Collective Social Action(s)* which are social strategies children use to negotiate the social protocols as *citizen-peers* and as school-citizens.

Therefore, I propose, children's *Citizenship Polis* is the most important form and locus of citizenship participation for children because it affords them more opportunities to 'do' citizenship on their terms. My findings provide new insights which could assist policymakers and educators to further develop children's citizenship participation at primary school.

Chapter One: From Citizenship to Children's Citizenship

Participatory Rights

Overview

I share the view that children's citizenship practices ought to be given due consideration by adults and recognised as differently equal (Moosa-Mitha 2005) to formal adult centric modes of citizenship participation (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Larkins 2014; Olsson 2017; Devine and Cockburn 2018). To gain more of an understanding about how children 'do' citizenship, this research explores 9 to 12-year-old primary school children's subjective understandings of citizenship and their participatory experiences at school. This research offers new insights into how children as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens negotiate the social protocol of two social worlds; theirs and adults. In doing so, I propose a reimagining of primary school children's citizenship practices which extends existing conceptualisations about Westernised 21st Century children's citizenship.

Children's citizenship and the provision of their participatory rights remains an issue for debate. 21st Century Westernised childhoods still largely represent children as vulnerable and in need of constant protection. Younger children are treated in ways which restrict their agency apart from (perhaps) their fuller role as familial bonders and mini-consumers. However, a fundamental part of democratic society is the provision of citizen's participatory rights. I ask, in reproducing restrictive ideas about younger children's abilities, are we (unintentionally) denying them of their chance to develop skills that could help them to flourish as citizens during childhood?

Policymakers and international frameworks - such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) (1989), have made concerted efforts to reconceptualise children's role from passive to active social actors and, to highlight their right to voice and participation. Yet, most adults still find it challenging to recognise young children as active citizens during childhood. One of the reasons for this is adults' concerns about children's capacity to process complex ideas and the risk of their over-exposure to challenging social issues. Another is adults' sense of duty to uphold children's 'best interests' and, to protect them from manipulation, coercion and undesirable influences. These valid concerns could make the idea of children participating in public discussions or community initiatives seem unrealistic.

This Introductory Chapter reviews literatures about the historical development of ideas about citizenship and the subsequent development of sociological theorisations of childhood. In addition, I discuss how ideas about children and childhood significantly impacts children's lives as citizens. I specifically refer to the UN CRC (1989) to bridge differing ideas relating to the development of children's citizenship and their participatory rights. I concentrate on two perspectives; those which place importance on children's political participation and, a Feminist perspective towards children's informal modes of citizenship participation.

The aim of this Chapter is fourfold. Firstly, it helps to conceptualise 21st Century children's general position as citizens in Western democracies. Secondly, it provides the context for the Feminist approach to citizenship which informs my examination of children's citizenship practices at school. Thirdly, it highlights the need to continue to develop more inclusive concepts about citizenship that afford children's participatory practices which are more congruent with their 'lived' realities as citizens during childhood. Fourthly, I introduce the theoretical framework for this thesis and provide a synopsis of each chapter.

1. Introduction - citizenship constructs and their relation to children's citizenship

Citizenship...is an elastic and inference rich concept that bundles together complex and social processes (Jamieson 2002:521).

Citizenship is the foundation from which democratic society is built upon. Democracy is an 'essentially fragile' state and it is ultimately dependent upon the consistent 'active engagement of citizens' (Osler and Starkey 2006: 434; Dewey 1963; Hoskins, D'hombres and Campbell 2008; Isin and Turner 2009; Kennelly and Llewellyn 2011). Due to the 'slippery' nature of 'citizenship', this poses challenges in the provision of citizen's participatory rights in democratic societies (Lister 2003: 14; McLaughlin 1992; Carr and Harnet 1996; Heater 2002).

My review of literatures about citizenship identified four key constructs; 1.1 Civic Republican, 1.1.2 Liberal, 1.1.3 Cosmopolitan and, 1.1.4 'Critical'/Feminist. These four constructs lay the building blocks of democratic governance and contemporary debates about citizenship in 21st Century pluralist Western democracies [See Appendix [17] for an outline of the key aspects for these four constructs]. The way 'democratic' societies define, and practice citizenship profoundly affects the realities of citizens from the youngest to the oldest (Mouffe 1992 in Lister 2003).

Therefore, these constructs about citizenship also inform our ideas about children’s citizenship and, how they can affect children’s lived realities as citizens.

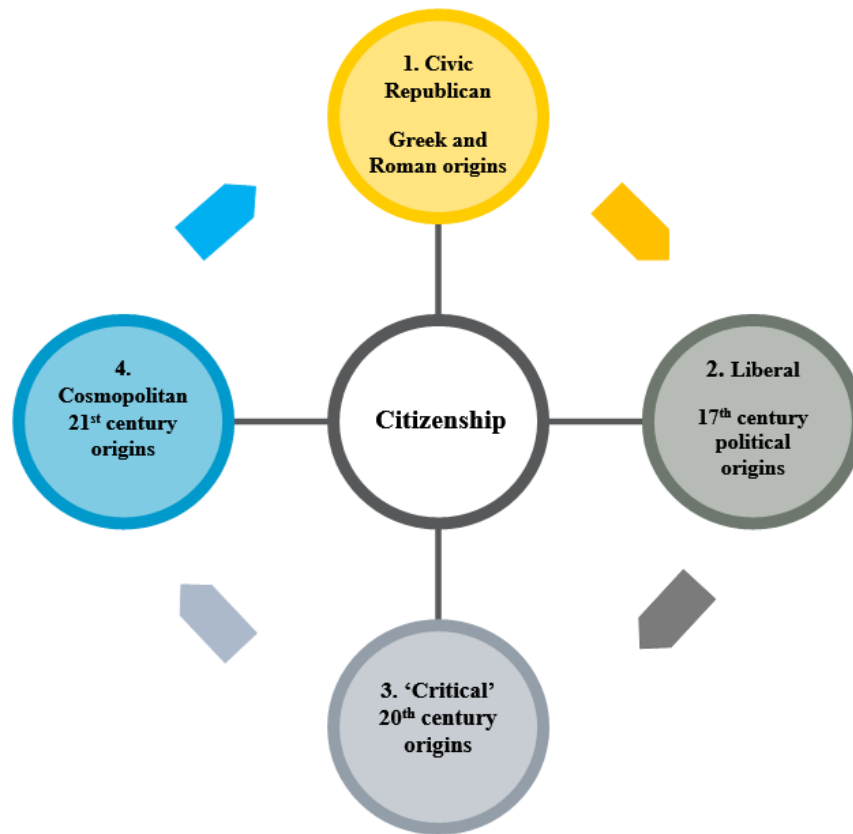


Fig. 1. Four theoretical constructs that inform ideas about children’s citizenship

1.1 Civic Republican Citizenship

The most ancient construct of citizenship is the Civic Republican approach. This holds notions of the ‘common good’ and ‘solidarity’ in high regard (Hoskins 2012). Civic Republican discourses prioritise citizen’s participation in society. Duties and responsibilities are frequently set against an individual’s ‘negative’ freedoms, whereby, individual rights and ‘positive’ freedoms are dependent upon social rights (Lister 2003, 2010; Osler and Starkey 2006; Abowitz and Harnish 2006). A citizen’s civic duty – in antiquity – equated to their political participation which represented the very ‘essence of citizenship’ (Lister 2003: 13). This approach recognises citizen’s agency as a stimulus for social change through their active

engagement in social affairs and political debate (Hoskins 2012). This is a contractual agreement between the State and the citizen. The latter fulfils their civic duties, whilst the former ensures it upholds and provides citizen's civic, political and social rights. The notion of 'civic competencies' (Janmaat 2012) are emphasised within this perspective such as a broad political and social knowledge, and common values (Hoskins 2012).

However, 'identities of class, ethnicity, religion or culture' are encouraged (by the State) to remain in the private sphere (Osler and Starkey 2005: 18). According the Osler and Starkey (2005) this shows a 'significant weakness of this view [because] the distinction between public and private cannot be sustained in practice' (ibid). Civic Republicanism has also been critiqued for its tendency to foster nationalistic overtones and values associated with notions about the 'common good' (Hoskins 2012). Critiques argue that the 'common good' does not necessarily have to be applied in a 'nationalistic manner' (ibid: 30; Osler and Starkey 2005; Lister 2003; Lister et al 2003). Abowitz and Harnish (2006) acknowledge that '[a]ll discourses of citizenship must define boundaries'. However, they assert that 'the civic republican discourse draws the sharpest lines of inclusion and exclusion in the its expressions of political membership' (p.659). These boundaries are sharply defined when they are drawn against the development of children's participatory rights, whereby children are frequently segregated from participating/contributing towards activities in the 'public' sphere.

1.1.2 Liberal Citizenship

The Liberal approach foregrounds citizen's individual rights. Liberal democracy is historically linked to 17th Century Liberal political ideologies. The subsequent 19th Century Industrial Revolution marked the emergence of new ideas about citizen's as individuals in their own right. The individual citizen was set free to enjoy 'all that negative freedom' could offer; citizens where free to pursue their private needs and interests with little or no state interference (Carr and Hartnet 1996). The 19th Century citizen represented... 'nothing more than the aggregation of isolated individuals' (Carr and Hartnet 1996: 57; Osler and Starkey 2005). Thinner conceptions of liberal citizenship reflect the belief that there is ... 'less relative social agreement on values, chosen identities, and forms of democratic participation than is assumed by civic republican discourse' (Abowitz and Harnish 2006:662; Hoskins 2012; McLaughlin 1992). Therefore, the liberal approach to citizenship is generally seen to be 'the least demanding' in terms of citizen's involvement (Hoskins 2012:26; Abowitz and Harnish 2006; McLaughlin 1992). Under this construct, citizenship is emphasised as a possibility where

citizens are ‘potentially free to choose their own identities and loyalties’ (Osler and Starkey 2005:17). Nevertheless, it is suggested that Liberalism fosters the over promotion of ‘self-interest...[which] can be considered to be harmful’ to the development of societal attitudes that foster collective action and solidarity (Hoskins 2012:30; Osler and Starkey 2005).

T. H. Marshall’s (1950) ideas about citizenship are also formed from the liberal construct. Marshall’s (1950) categorisation of citizenship rights into political, civic and social entitlements are intrinsically tied to the membership of a collective community. Marshall (1950) sees, citizenship is the force that promotes ‘a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession’ (in Lister 2003: 14; Jamieson 2002). However, when this ‘common possession’ is examined within a postmodern context, it fails to recognise the myriad of differences between citizens’ lived realities (Lister 2003). Feminist critiques of Marshall’s (1950) ideas also highlight its limited representation of children as citizens-in-the-making as opposed to current citizens in their own right (Roche 1999; Lister et al 2003; Kulynych 2001; Devine and Cockburn 2018ⁱ).

1.1.3 Cosmopolitan Citizenship

The term Cosmopolitan is not a new concept. Lister (2003) for instance, notes the idea of a ... ‘world community, of the “cosmopolis” or city of the universe...can be traced back to Greece in the 4th and 5th BC and to earlier Eastern civilisations’ (p.57). Similarly, Abowitz and Harnish (2006) assert that the roots of cosmopolitan and transnational discourse can be traced back to the ancient Stoic tradition which idealised the values of ‘equality, compassion, democracy, universalism and humanism’ (p.676). This notion forms the basis for contemporary discourses about cosmopolitan citizenship. Osler and Starkey (2005), for example, state that ... ‘cosmopolitan citizens are not born, they become cosmopolitan citizens through formal and informal education’ (p.25). Furthermore, they argue that definitions of citizenship bounded to ideas of the nation-state and nationality are ‘increasingly at odds’ with the realities of the effects of globalisation which have created ‘transnational communities and culturally diverse societies’ (ibid:21).

A Cosmopolitan citizenship throws up issues due to the very nature of its construct, in terms of it being a ‘multi-layered...system of authority marked by multi-layered...citizenship’ (Held in Peterson 2011:423). Peterson (2011) draws attention to the tensions between proponents of ‘Cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Civic republicanism’. He notes the core issue is in terms of ‘the extent to which the nation-state remains the main location for the practice of citizenship’ (Peterson

2011:423). Cosmopolitan theorists reject the primacy of the nation-state, whereas republicans stay committed to the notion of the nation-state as the core determinate in locating and practising citizenship (ibid). In addition, Abowitz and Harnish (2006) point out that, '[a] sense of our global ties to other peoples and nations, have further intensified and complicated the interest in citizenship and the role of schools in shaping democratic citizens' (p.654). This is relevant in terms of children's citizenship because schools play a key role in educating children *about* and *for* citizenship.

1.1.4 'Critical'/Feminist citizenship – A reaction to Civic and Liberal citizenships

The mid-20th Century was characterised by civil unrest across the globe and citizens challenged social inequalities. This period had 'destablizing effects for democracy' (Janmaat 2012:52). Yet, 20th Century social movements paved the way for alternative modes of political participation and collective social action. The seeds of these new modes of participation were nurtured by 'critical' theoretical discourse about social inequalities and neo-liberal political systems. Neo-Marxist and radical Feminist critiques of social structures and institutions informed critical theoretical approaches to citizenship; a subsequent 'catch-all' title for a range of different theories and insights (Hoskins 2012).

Specifically, Feminist analysis of 'traditional' notions about citizenship questions the influences of patriarchal social institutions and they draw our attention to marginalised groups in society such as women and children. For example, Abowitz and Harnish (2006) highlight critical Feminist approaches to citizenship ... 'urge us to rethink the whole civic project' (p.680). Lister (2007) asserts a Feminist lens illuminates the ... 'particularities of children's relationship to citizenship' when they are measured against adult norms (p.701). Likewise, Cohen (2005) points out that children ... 'are not equal to the demands of citizenship' which is not dissimilar to;

'how women were treated under the coverture system of ownership and rights [when] it was almost inconceivable that women had the ability or rational to vote and be autonomous thinkers' (p.236).

A similar infantilising approach is often used when considering the notion of children as political actors; the default, thus far, has been to segregate them from political and social participation. Moosa-Mitha's (2005) 'difference-centered' approach to children's citizenship also highlights the imperative of recognising children's 'presence as citizens' in society. She

asserts when an individual's presence is not acknowledged this leaves them powerless and as such it represents a form of oppression. Therefore, Feminist approaches are integral when examining children's social position as citizens.

I adhere to the Feminist perspective of citizenship throughout this thesis because it foregrounds the idea of a 'lived' citizenship. Advocates of this approach recognise that social and cultural aspects – and not just political - affect citizen's lives. This view opens-up the places and spaces wherein children can *also* participate as citizens in varying social contexts such as at school and in their wider community (Moosa-Mitha 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006, 2011; Lister 2008, 2007; Kjørholt 2008; James 2011; Larkins 2014; Olsson 2017; Devine and Cockburn 2018). Moreover, feminist-led ideas about citizenship focus on an assessment of ideas about children's 'acts of citizenship' (Larkins 2014) between each other. The notion of children as active citizens informs my development of theoretical and conceptual contributions which shed new light on children's modes of peer-citizenship practices and participation at primary school.

1.2 Childhood development theories and children's citizenship

Children may not be responsible for the way the world is, and they may not have the psychological wherewithal to make "rational choices" but they certainly respond, mitigate, resist, have views about and interact with the social conditions in which they find themselves (Moosa-Mitha 2005: 380).

In conjunction with critiques of citizenship, ideas about childhood and children also inform contemporary debates about children's citizenship. Therefore, it is necessary to link how notions of childhood(s) have attributed to adults' ideas and subsequent treatment of the Citizen-Child (Doek 2008).

The construction of childhood varies dramatically over time and between physical spaces and cultures (Ariès 1962; Qvortrup 1994; James and Prout 1997; Corsaro 1992, 2006; Woodhead and Montgomery 2003). For instance, early concepts of childhood such as those espoused by Locke (17th Century) and Rousseau (18th Century) reveal a dichotomous portrayal of children who were simultaneously identified as innocents in need of protection and, as immoral beings in need of control. This perspective largely formed the foundations for 20th and early 21st Century discourses about children (Ariès 1962; Woodhead and Montgomery 2003). Cohen (2005) summarises these historical changes in terms of children's roles in society. The 19th

Century, for instance, placed children in the role of worker when society needed this for its 'economic survival', yet, by the 20th century, children were mainly regarded as a means of 'familial bonding' (Cohen 2005: 232). Concurrently, children have also been placed in the role as fighter and victim during periods of conflict (ibid). 21st Century children's social roles are still interchangeable between that of Carers, Familial bonders, Combatants, Victims, Consumers and Employees (paid and unpaid).

Post World War II, cultural, political and social changes in Western democratic societies generated new ideas of children as burgeoning social actors. Late 20th and 21st Century sociological and psychological theories generated new perspectives about children's cognitive development and about how interactions between children and adults' social worlds influence wider society (Pollard 1985; Corsaro 1987,1992, 2000, 2006; Jones 1995; Alder and Alder 1998; James, Jenkins and Prout 1998; Qvortrup, Corsaro and Honig 2009; Leonard 2016ⁱⁱ). For instance, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems theory provides a developmental framework which shows the individual child as 'a growing, dynamic entity that progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which it resides' (in Jones 1995: 199). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory asserts 'the interaction between person and environment is ... characterized by reciprocity', which suggests that children's interactions within different social contexts and social worlds are fundamental to their social, emotional and cognitive development (ibid). Likewise, psychological insights from Piaget's (1932) Theory of Cognitive Development and Kohlberg's (1968) Theory of Moral Development have created more knowledge about children's potential for rational and moral reasoning.

Feminist Psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) broadens Kohlberg's theory of moral development and provides a new emphasis on female moral development. Gilligan (1982) asserts there are distinct differences between female and male moral development that originate from early parent-child relationships. In light of this, Gilligan and Wiggans (1987) focus on the origins of morality in early childhood relationships and they assert that the lessons children learn about justice and care in early childhood create ... 'expectations which are confirmed or modified in later childhood and adolescence' (p.281). As such, tensions between children's attempts to gain equality and their need for attachment (to form and sustain relationships) may heighten their experiences of moral dilemma and the potential for moral development during the developmental period between childhood and adolescence (p. 296). Drawing on Piaget's

work, Gilligan and Wiggans (1987) suggest that ‘the sovereign eleven-year-old, whose insights into the spirit of justice and care...constitute the core of moral wisdom’... is upset when children transition from childhood to adulthood, a process which ‘radically’ upsets children’s assumptions about care and justice (p.297). Gilligan and Wiggan’s (1987) gender-based theoretical contributions provide a useful perspective to explore the manifestation of younger children’s forms of peer-citizenship practices and participation which involve moral reasoning about ‘good’/moral or ‘bad’/immoral decisions and peer social processes that govern children’s citizenship practices within their social world (peer groups).

‘Interpretivism’ (Vygotsky 1978) and ‘Social Constructionism’ (Youniss 1980) further contribute towards our understandings about about children’s meaning-making of social worlds and their agency and contribution during childhood (Corsaro and Eder 1990; Woodhead and Montgomery 2003). As such, it is widely acknowledged that childhood is a socially constructed phenomenon and children are social actors who both influence and are influenced by social structures, albeit with varying degrees of competency and ability (Pollard 1985; Corsaro 1987,1992, 2000, 2006; Qvortrup et al 2009; Leonard 2016; Devine and Cockburn 2018 ⁱⁱⁱ).

Childhood Sociologists such as Corsaro (1987, 1992, 2006, 2006) (and others) have highlighted the importance of peer culture in theories of child development and socialisation (Corsaro and Eder 1990; Pollard 1985; Jones 1995; Alder and Alder 1998; Devine 2009; Nelson 2014). For instance, Corsaro and Eder (1990) define children’s peer culture as ‘a stable set of activities or routines, artefacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers’ (p.197). They assert that children’s socialisation and development ... ‘is not only a matter of adaptation and internalisation, but also a process of appropriation, reinvention, and reproduction’ (ibid: 217). Children’s peer cultures have also been examined in relation to development of their self-identities and gender. For example, Corsaro and Ayt (2003) (and others) note, ‘[b]y examining the ways that children shape their own culture, we can begin to understand gender as the children themselves construct it.’ (p.1307; Thorne 1993). Although children’s ideas about ‘sex appropriate play are certainly influenced by the adult culture’, Corsaro and Ayt (2003) assert that, children ‘creatively interpret adult information to form their own peer cultures, which are different from what adults might expect’ (p.1311).

In conjunction with 20th Century sociological and psychological theoretical developments about children and childhoods, formal education was increasingly recognised as a vehicle for inculcating democratic values in children in the hope that they *become* active, informed, and responsible citizens (Dewey 1963; Putnam 1995; Crick 1998). This notion generated new ways of theorising childhood development in relation to ideas about children's social, civic and political citizenship participation (Devine and Cockburn 2018; Kaukko and Wernesjö 2017; Olsson 2017; Moskal 2016; Kustatscher 2016; Mason and Bolzan et al 2010; Larkins 2014^{iv}). Calls have been made for a 'child-sensitive theorization and practice of citizenship' (Lister 2008: 9; Hill and Tisdall 1997). Numerous concepts to describe and define children's citizenship have been proposed such as: 'childist' citizenship (Wall 2011), 'demi-citizenship' (Lister 2007), 'semi-citizens' (Cohen 2005), 'citizens-in-waiting' (Maitles and Gilchrist 2004), 'child-sized citizenship' (Jans 2004), 'apprentice citizens' (Wyness et al 2004) and 'human becomings' (Ennew 2000 in Golombeck 2006; Qvorturp 1994). All of which highlight how children's citizenship is conceived as different to adults. Furthermore, Mason and Bolzan et al (2010), assert the need to take account of children's status as citizens which corresponds with the amount of agency they are given to participate as social actors and thus, how concepts of citizenship produce varying ways in which 'participation is interpreted and enacted' (p.130; Kaukko and Wernesjö 2017). The way childhood is constructed has major implications for how children are positioned within society as citizens in their own right. I now discuss the development of children's citizenship participatory rights as a matter of human rights.

1.3 Human rights - a basis for children's citizenship participation

... any discussion of the significance of citizenship is a discussion of human rights (Ben-Arieh 2005:35).

The extent people can claim and enact their citizenship rights is largely dependent upon the amount of agency, autonomy, power and control they are afforded to do so by the state and by other powerholders (i.e. adults) in society. Where does this social dynamic put children in terms of their level of agency and power to enact their social, civic and political rights as members of wider society, and not just as members of their own peer groups?

Citizenship is also seen as a human rights issue (Ben-Arieh 2005; Lister 2007; Isin and Turner 2009). It is argued that children's human rights are essentially denied/curtailed when their

citizenship participation is not adequately considered or facilitated (Wyness, Harrison, Buchanan 2004; Cohen 2005; Such and Walker 2005)^v. Lister (2007), for instance, asserts that '[c]itizenship as a practice represents an expression of human agency; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents' (ibid: 694). Nevertheless, Isin and Turner (2009) point out that human rights 'are regarded as innate and inalienable, the rights of citizens are created by states' (p.12). They assert that human rights and citizenship rights are not mutually exclusive rather they are symbiotically dependent upon each other to ensure they are both upheld. On this basis, Isin and Turner (2009) argue that citizenship 'should be regarded as a foundation of human rights and not as a competitor' (p.13).

Citizenship is seen to hold 'great significance' for children (Ben-Arieh 2005: 35; Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Jamieson 2002; Lister 2008). According to Ben-Arieh (2005) this is ... 'evident both on a practical level...and on a psychological level, invoking a sense of belonging and identity formation' (p.35). Equally, Devine and Cockburn (2018) and others, recommend we focus on ... 'everyday practices [which] suggests the capacities and competencies of children in "acting" may challenge assumptions around the relative incompetence of children and their contribution to social citizenship processes' (p.146; Larkins 2014; Olsson 2017). Indeed, citizens are not just born, they also need to learn the role of citizens in terms of their ... 'duties, rights, attitudes and skills' (Heater 2002:457; Janmaat 2012; Hoskins 2012). Therefore, what are the 'everyday practices' which are most applicable to children's citizenship learning?

Outside of the home, children spend a considerable amount of time at school which disseminates ideas about wider social norms, values and social constructs and practices such as citizenship and democracy. Within the broader learning context(s) of the school, children equally spend (if not more time) learning about norms and values from their peers who through their peer culture, appropriate, re-appropriate and exchange information (Corsaro 1992, 2006; Corsaro and Eder 1990; Corsaro and Ayt 2003). I recognise that children's participation as *citizen-peers* within their peer groups is a vital (and perhaps the most accessible) aspect of children's learning about citizenship practice(s) during childhood. Due to adult-centric age restrictions placed on children's agency to participate in wider society, children's peer group is perhaps *the* social context which offers them the most opportunity to actively participate as *citizen-peers* on their terms during childhood.

1.3.1 Age – a primary factor in the acquisition of participatory rights

Debates about children's participatory rights center on notions about chronological age. Landsdown (2001) asserts, even though this age-based framework ... 'does not reflect children's actual and differing capacities' ... it continues to be a ... 'key determinant in the acquisition of formal rights in many societies' (in Lister 2007: 699). This partly explains why the level of citizenship rights afforded to children varies from country to country. For instance, the UN CRC (1989) states;

... given that few States as yet have reduced the voting age below 18, there is all the more reason to ensure respect for the views of unenfranchised children in Government and parliament (in Lister 2007: 698).

Children under the age of 18 are still denied the right to vote, which according to Lister (2007) 'raises the biggest question over the status of children's citizenship' (p.699). This situation leads to broader debates which highlight the ongoing tensions and conflict of interests between developing children's citizenship rights whilst upholding their 'best interests'. Authors such as Lister (2007) and McLoughlin (2004) respectively clarify what *is* and *is not* being argued for in terms of children's citizenship participatory rights. McLoughlin (2004), for instance, clarifies '[w]hat is being argued is that children are active, social beings and citizens in their own right not that they have exactly the same citizenship as adults' (p.129). Similarly, Lister asserts that the call for the redefinition of children's rights is not premised on the notion that 'children should be entitled to social security in their own right' (p.702). Rather, children's claims for citizenship should not be devalued because of 'their necessary economic dependence on adult protectors'(ibid). I suggest children can be both dependent and agentic social actors; these social positions do not need to be mutually exclusive social states. Children experience vulnerability, but they can also be agents of social change within their own social worlds and adults'.

1.3.2 The UN CRC – a framework for children's participatory rights

I now refer to the UN CRC (1989) to consider debates about developing children's participatory rights. The Convention has been identified as a legislative landmark which gives children's human rights a solid foothold on international policy agendas (John 2003; Ben-Arieh 2005; Olser and Starkey 2005; Hughes and Smith 2007; Lundy 2007,2018). Moreover, John

(2003) argues the UN CRC and the subsequent UN Special Session (2002) are not just mere symbols of children's international rights but rather catalysts for reform (p.200). Osler and Starkey (2005) contend that the mere existence of the Convention ... 'has enhanced the position of children's rights internationally and heightened public awareness of these rights' (p.43). The Convention also helps scaffold debates about the development of children's participatory rights which have subsequently provided major contributions towards the recognition of children's rights in policy and practice. For instance, Articles: 3. 12. 13. and 15. have been frequently referred to as 'a charter for children' in terms of upholding children's best interests when considering their participation in society (Wyness et al 2004; Lundy 2007, 2018; Kjørholt 2008; Leonard 2016^{vi}).

Notwithstanding, the UN CRC has been the subject of criticism as part of wider debates about negotiating children's rights whilst upholding their interests. Kjørholt (2008), argues that in Article 3. there is an absence of standards in defining the 'best interests of the child' (p.31). She argues this makes it possible to legitimise a practice in one culture that would be seen to be harmful in another (ibid). Equally, Leonard (2016) asserts that 'child's best interests maybe far from clear cut' under the Convention's guidelines (p.91). In addition, John (2003) draws attention to the inherent imbalance of power between child-adult relations which largely informs adults' ideas about what is in children's best interests within different social contexts. She notes the Convention marks a ... 'a subtle change in the relationships between the adult "provider" and the child' and she highlights the Conventions 'benchmark statement' regarding the need to change the terms of adult-child relationships (ibid: 201). However, she asserts ... 'it is not the child who needs to change but the relationship' approach towards children (ibid: 202). This notion forms the basis of many deliberations about children's participatory rights.

The UN CRC has also been criticised for over emphasising the rights of the individual child over those of the collective interests of all children. For example, Wyness et al (2004) are critical of its ambiguous placement of children ... 'as welfare dependents and potential stakeholder' (p.95) which is problematic due to the emphasis on rights. In addition, Wyness et al (2004) point out that the Convention adheres to 'a quintessentially western notion', which they refer to as being 'the apprenticeship model of the individual child' (p.90).

There is also a difference of opinion in terms of how children's participatory rights are represented in the UN CRC. Ben-Arieh (2005) and others recognise children's participation as

being ... 'one of the major principles underlying the CRC' (p. 47; John 2003; Olser and Starkey 2005). Ben-Arieh (2005) also sees that notions about children's participatory rights as espoused by the UN CRC are a 'guiding principle... [which] should be part of every aspect of children's lives and should be extended to all settings and to all types of rights' (ibid). However, others are highly critical of the Conventions failure to explicitly recognise children as political actors (Kulynych 2001; Wyness et al 2004). For instance, Kulynych (2001) argues that rights discourse of children's citizenship often serves to reproduce biased, adult-centric notions of children and their autonomy in both the public and private spheres. She offers an assessment of the rights-based approach in general and argues that '[m]erely granting children rights of democratic participation is not likely to change significantly their political status in a culture that continues to define children as private beings' (p.239).

Therefore, the UN CRC serves to illuminate tensions between ... 'two sets of values and practices: between children's needs and interests and western and non-western childhoods' (Wyness et al 2004: 95). In addition, Wyness et al (2004) argue that the 'norms of childhood' and how children are represented in society serve to ... 'underpin a powerful discourse on children's needs at a global, national and local levels' (p.95). This in turn places the responsibility and priority on adults to protect and provide for children, which subsequently ... 'makes it difficult to take seriously children's political participation'... (Wyness et al 2004: 95; Kulynych 2001; Such and Walker 2005; Theis 2010; Wall 2011; Rehfield 2011).

John (2003) asserts Article 15. of the UN CRC includes 'an important international legal right to freedom of association and assembly' (p.211). According to John (2003) the ownership of political rights is seen – in international law – as being the highest level of 'political expression' (p.210). However, she highlights that participation without influence is downgraded to 'mere window dressing' in the shop front of social policy (ibid: 209). Similarly, Ben-Arieh (2005) asserts it is 'important to observe that the hierarchy of children's rights is a direct inversion of those of adults' in that '[a]ny hierarchy of adults' rights begins with civil and political rights... and relegates social rights to a lesser position' (Ben-Arieh 2005: 39). When placed within the context of the UN CRC, Ben-Arieh (2005) argues that ... 'it constitutes a revolution in the conception of children's rights [because] [i]t recognizes the civil and political rights of children and gives them a positive content' (ibid). Therefore, what 'rights' are perceived as being more

important for children's citizenship social or political? I now consider debates specifically about children's right to 'political' participation.

1.4 A reformation of democracy for children's political participation

Children's participation in the public sphere remains a contentious issue. Children's political rights (due to their contested nature) are placed on the bottom of the rights hierarchy (Ben-Arieh 2005). Efforts to incorporate children into political structures - at all levels - have thus far been met with ardent demands by some academics, politicians and policymakers to 'protect children and regulate their social and moral development' (Wyness et al 2004: 88). Political theorist Hannah Arendt (1961), for instance, asserts that when the 'private space' of childhood - seen as a time of preparation and innocence - is destroyed and 'authentic politics is no longer possible' (in Kulynych 2001: 234). Arendt (1961) sees it as being in the best interests for both the child and for the enactment of 'authentic' politics if the former remains an outsider of the goings-on in the political sphere (ibid).

Contrastingly, proponents of children's political rights argue against protectionist notions (upheld by democratic political systems) because they exclude younger citizens from engaging in a key aspect of social life (Kulynych 2001; Cohen 2005; Theis 2010; Wall 2011; Rehfeld 2011). Rather, they place precedence on children's political rights, which they argue is *the* vehicle for realising children's full citizenship. They argue that although children already have many civic and social rights, the same cannot be said of their political rights. This perspective argues children's segregation from political practices essentially denies them their right to a *full* citizenship status (Kulynych 2001; Cohen 2005; Theis 2010; Wall 2011; Rehfeld 2011). This infers political participation rights supersede social rights, as without the former, children's social (and civic) rights to participate are severely diminished (Kulynych 2001; Wyness 2001; Wyness et al 2004; Cohen 2005; Theis 2010; Wall 2011; Refeld 2011). According to Kulynych (2001);

...recognition as political beings precede the utilization of rights and attention must first be focused on whether children are conceptualized politically and whether the political culture promotes or limits the political recognition of children (p.242).

The subordination of children's political participatory rights implies they are being side-stepped by the State in favour of providing aspects of their civic and social rights, which are

deemed more amenable to uphold. To address this, some advocates of children's political participation argue for the conceptualisation of a children's citizenship that places children's political participation at its core which (in part) could be achieved through a reimagining of our current model of democracy (Kulynych 2001; Cohen 2005; Wall 2011; Rehfield 2011). According to Kulynych (2001), '[c]hildren's citizenship needs to be conceptualized as the inclusion of children in the broad political identity that defines a democratic society' (ibid: 262; Wall 2011; Rehfield 2011). This notion is challenged by the prevalence of dominant 'traditional' theorisations of children's democratic representation (Cohen 2005; Theis 2010; Wall 2011; Rehfeld 2011).

To ameliorate children's segregation and exclusion from the political sphere, Kulynych (2001), for example, suggests that the development of 'a revised understanding of political participation' needs to be in conjunction with the re-definition of children as capable of political engagement (p.263). Similarly, Wyness et al (2004) highlight that common political culture political communities stipulate 'exclusive adult membership' which disqualifies children who are unable to 'provide qualifications for entry' (p.82; Kulynych 2001). They argue that children's political rights will remain underdeveloped unless social attitudes move away from thinking about children as 'presocial' being's incapable of articulating 'coherent political views' (ibid: 82). This aligns with Millei and Imre's (2009) argument, who caution if we continue to abstract children from participatory democratic practices ... 'through the use of "citizenship" as a normalising concept' we will be unable to show children what democracy, 'the good society' and the 'good life' is all about (p.288).

To address this, Wall (2011) offers a 'childist' notion and a 'responsive' form of democracy. He asserts this reconceptualisation would offer a more 'child-inclusive system of political representation [that] would aim toward the political whole's responsiveness to lived experiences of difference' (ibid: 98). Similarly, Theis (2010) highlights the need to develop children's 'citizenship skills'. He asserts '[t]he more they [children] take part in public affairs the more they learn and develop as citizens' (ibid: 346; Janmaat 2012). Likewise, Rehfeld (2011) suggests the development of children's 'political maturity' through their introduction to and engagement with (age-appropriate) democratic processes at school. According to Rehfeld (2011), if children could better learn political participation processes this 'would be useful in cultivating the very political maturity that citizens need' (p141). He suggests this

could also alleviate adult-held fears and mitigate against the potential risks associated with children's inclusion into public political processes and participation.

Differences of opinions remain regarding what components/aspects of children's citizenship are the most important to realising children's citizenship participatory rights. For instance, Lister (2003) cautions against using political participation as a 'measuring rod' of one's citizenship (p.41). While she supports the development of children's political rights, she does not see an individual's citizenship status as being totally dependent on their political participation, rather, she suggests that participation ... 'should not be regarded as obligatory' (ibid: 41). She argues that '[t]hose who do not fulfil that potential do not cease to be citizens' (ibid: 42). Rather, participation tends to be more of a continuum where people might participate more or less at different points in the life-course (ibid). Cohen (2005) (also a proponent of children's political participation) points out that 'it is important not to favour one aspect of citizenship for the whole' (p.222). She asserts that by equally examining the three core elements of citizenship rights (social, civic and political) we can more clearly identify how children's citizenship is either included or excluded through certain practices within the public and private spheres (ibid). I now review some 'Critical'/Feminist authors arguments who advocate the expansion of conceptions of citizenship to encompass children's participation which is extended beyond formal political notions to include everyday 'acts of citizenship' (Larkins 2014) in informal practices such as within children's peer groups (Lister 2003, 2007, 2008, 2011; Bath and Karlsson 2016; Olsson 2017; Devine and Cockburn 2018 ^{vii}).

1.5 A Feminist perspective – A 'lived' citizenship

Feminist notions about citizenship draw our attention to the inclusionary and exclusionary elements of citizenship which are experienced in varying degrees based upon a persons' social position, gender, physical ability, ethnicity and age (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Lister 2003, 2007,2010,2011; Moosa-Mitha 2005; Bernard-Powers 2008; Lombardo and Verloo 2011). Feminist critiques have also highlighted 'the failure of citizenship rights vested in liberal democratic institutions' to meet the needs of women and 'socially and economically marginalised' groups in society (Taylor 1989 in Lister 2003:18; Lewis 2008; Bernard-Powers 2008; Pascall 2012 ^{viii}). Furthermore, Lombardo and Verloo (2011), highlight that feminist critiques of citizenship question;

...to what extent citizens are constructed in a gendered way and what are the gender implications of these constructions, and to what extent in existing concepts of citizenship gender intersect with other inequalities (p.42).

Given this, we cannot exclude how notions of gender influence the kinds of social roles women and men occupy (or are tacitly assigned) as citizens in society. The wider implications of gendered division of caring labour (Oakley 1974; Gilligan 1982; O' Brien 2008) and other gender-based assumptions continues to impact on women's citizenship status and practice. This also raises questions in terms of how ideas about 'gender appropriate' citizen roles inform children's understandings about 'citizenship'. I discuss this notion in more detail in Chapter Seven, whereby I explore gender socialisation processes at school (Thorne 1993; Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan 1996; Corsaro 2003; Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben 2009^{ix}) and how this could relate to children's ideas about citizenship practices/roles for girls and boys.

Feminist critiques of traditional notions of citizenship locate children's social and political position as citizens in terms of being 'acted upon' rather than as active agents and, they encourage the examination of children's social position in more egalitarian terms (Moosa-Mitha 2005; Lister 2003,2007, 2008; James 2011; Larkins 2014; Olsson 2017). For instance, Moosa-Mitha's (2005) 'difference-centred' approach draws our attention to the insufficiencies associated with normative and institutionalised liberal concepts of citizenship, specifically in relation to children's rights. Furthermore, she asserts, it is children's ability 'to have a presence in the many relationships in which they participate', which forms the basis of their ability to participate in society in a meaningful way (Moosa-Mitha 2005: 381). She defines 'presence' as being 'the degree to which the voice, contribution and agency of the child is acknowledged in their many relationships' (Moosa-Mitha 2005: *ibid*). Moosa-Mitha (2005) asserts that to be heard is to be present and thus it is 'equally important' with having an opportunity to voice one's opinions (*ibid*). This strongly suggests that children are oppressed by adult-centric biases and practices which deny them the opportunity to be 'present' in society as participating citizens.

1.5.1 Broadening the boundaries of children's citizenship participation

Roche (1999) and Golombek (2006) respectively draw our attention to the connections and interdependencies which exist ... 'among all members, even the youngest ones' (Golombek 2006: 28). Roche (1999) calls for a 'horizontal dimension of citizenship' to examine how

children are located in the interrelations in society. He asserts that by thinking in new and alternative ways about children and citizenship ... 'can prompt us to consider the similarity of concerns confronting child and adult, and to recognize the interdependence of our lives and how such interdependency is best fostered' (ibid.:475). Roche (1999) sees that the contestation over ideas about citizenship is 'opening up new possibilities of social organization and dialogue' (Roche 1999: 476). This reflects others' opinions who highlight the need to move citizenship theories from the 'empirical void' into the public realm (Conover et al 1991 in Lister et al 2003: 235; Cohen 2005; Wall 2011). This is the place where citizens 'lived' realities can be discussed and debated and, it is the only place that will facilitate a more authentic representation of what it *means* to be a citizen.

In addition, Lister (2007) argues we should not treat ... 'one element of citizenship as if it were the whole when we refer to children' (p.696). She asserts, in ... 'its substantive form, citizenship is not a unitary, either/or phenomenon' (ibid). Lister (2007) also contends that certain aspects of the 'building blocks' of citizenship such as 'membership, rights, responsibilities and equality of status' may be more applicable to childhood than others' (ibid). Although there are elements of citizenship which may be 'more applicable' than others during childhood, this does not belittle the ways children can and 'do' practice *their* citizenship in their everyday lives through their interactions with peers and adults alike (Larkins 2014; Olsson 2017).

Correspondingly, Larkins (2014), does not wholly define citizenship agency as formal participation, in that, she explores the activities children associate with citizenship (p.9). She argues that some of children's everyday activities can be interpreted as 'Acts of citizenship' (See also Isin and Nielson 2008; Olsson 2017). Larkins (2014) identifies these acts as relating to the 'negotiation of rules and creating selves', the 'contribution to social good', the 'contribution to the achievement of individual's rights' as well as to actions that contravene the 'existing boundaries of citizenship to dispute balances of rights, responsibilities' (p.17-18). However, she acknowledges that 'not all' practices constitute as children's citizenship, although she maintains that elements of them 'may be related to citizenship' (p.18). Therefore, she argues for the development of a more inclusive form of children's citizenship *and* a broader framework of understanding children's social (and political) agency in citizenship is needed

(Larkins 2014: 9-10). I draw on Larkins (2014) ideas relating to children's acts of citizenship throughout this thesis.

In addition to participatory rights, notions of belonging and identity are central to theories of children's citizenship and their rights to be recognised and treated as valued citizens (Ben-Arieh 2005; Lister et al 2003, Lister 2003, 2007, 2008; James 2011; Moskal 2016). There are however, numerous challenges in the construction of citizenship identities, which are constantly in flux and are affected by both internal and external factors. John Shotter (1993) articulates these difficulties;

...to be a citizen is not a simple matter of first as a child growing up to be a socially competent adult, and then simply walking out into the everyday world to take up one's rights and duties as a citizen. This is impossible. For...it is a status which one must struggle to attain in the face of competing versions of what is proper to struggle for (in Lister et al 2003: 240).

Yuval-Davis (2011) 'politics of belonging' also highlights 'who belongs, who is excluded, how groups and identities come to be constructed, and the power relations of how, and by whom, this is decided' (in Moskal 2016: 11 - 12). Equally, Jamieson (2002) argues particular attention needs to be paid to 'interactions with those in positions of power and experiences of being denied aspects of citizenship rights' (p.521). This aligns with Painter and Philo (1995) who assert that citizenship 'should mean the ability of individuals to occupy public spaces in a manner that does not compromise their self-identity' (in Moskal 2016: 90). These perspectives also locate how individual's citizenship status is inherently bound to '[t]he struggle for recognition' which in itself is recognised as 'a struggle for participation - to be included as a citizen through the broadening of the meaning of citizenship' (Moosa-Mitha 2005: 370; Fitzgerald et al 2010).

1.6 Conclusions

To recap, Chapter One provides an outline of four constructs of citizenship (Civic Republican, Liberal, Cosmopolitan and 'Critical'/Feminist) and a review of literatures relating to sociological and psychological theories of childhood development. The theories and ideas expressed in these literatures lay the foundations from which subsequent ideas specific to the development children's citizenship and their participatory rights have been built upon. The UN CRC (1989) scaffolds debates about the development of children's participation and I

discussed two differing perspectives: 1. Those who place primacy on the development of children's political participation in the public sphere (Kulynych 2001; Theis 2010; Wall 2011; Rehfeld 2011; Wyness 2001, 2009, 2013 ^x). Proponents of this view respectively call for a reimagining of democracy to include children's citizenship which they argue is rendered null and void under the current democratic model. 2. Feminist-led literatures highlight the importance of power, equality and social context in relation to marginalised groups' (such as children) access to full citizenship participatory rights. Feminist viewpoints also place precedence on the development of broader conceptions of citizenship which recognise non-formal everyday social interactions as forms of 'citizenship' and not just formal political activities (Roche 1999; Moosa-Mitha 2005; Yuval-Davis 2006, 2011; Lister 2003, 2007, 2008; Larkins 2014; Olsson 2017 ^{xi}). This approach more readily encompasses the recognition of children's 'acts of citizenship' which may be different to adults but are nonetheless important and contribute to the fabric of our social worlds. Both the Feminist and rights-based approaches to the development of children's participatory rights inform my ideas about children's citizenship practices and participation. The Feminist approach highlights the contested nature of citizenship and the impact this has on marginalised groups' (such as children) social position in society. It also expands the conceptualisation of 'citizenship' to encompass informal modes of citizenship practices within different social contexts which makes it possible to conceptualise children's modes of peer citizenship participation. The rights-based approach highlights the imperative for the development of children's individual participatory rights based on the premise that children are active social actors in their own right. This model informs my ideas about children as citizens-in-action who are entitled to be recognised as such to further the development of their citizenship participatory rights on an individual and collective basis.

My review also highlights three key issues associated with the development of ideas about children's citizenship and their participatory rights: 1. conflicting ideas about children's citizenship still affects their ability to claim a recognised status, practice, identity, membership/ and sense of belonging and agency as current citizens. 2. no common ground has been reached to systematically develop and sustain children's participation as valued and recognised citizens of society. Adult-centric and overly-protectionist perspectives have been attributed to limiting the development of an alternative social rhetoric that portrays children as capable citizens who can contribute towards wider society (Jans 2004; Wyness et al 2004; Moosa-Mitha 2005;

Millei and Imre 2009). Literatures suggest a balance needs to be struck between developing children's full citizenship participatory rights whilst protecting them from undue harm or undesirable influences. 3. Literatures also draw attention to the need for further research to examine how children's identities continue to be represented in policy discourses and the impacts this has on social practices with children (Kulynych 2001; Wyness et al 2004; Such and Walker 2005; Cohen 2005).

1.7 Theoretical Overview

... does children's citizenship then tend to devalue the right of children to remain children with all its implications - such as playfulness, lightness and "childishness"? (Daiva Stasiulis 2002 in Lister 2007: 704).

We need to recognise, respond and respect children's citizenship practices to ensure the development of ideas about *their* citizenship are congruent with children's lived realities as citizens. Therefore, in our efforts to develop children's participatory rights, we should not inadvertently devalue how children 'do' citizenship in the ways which matter most and make most sense to them.

This research builds upon and contributes to existing conceptualisations about children's citizenship because it generates new forms of sociological inquiry about younger children's social realities as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens - as interpreted by them. I use a 'citizenship' lens as an explanatory power to explore children's agency and autonomy as social actors. In doing so, I reveal the micro politics and social processes of children's peer-to-peer and child-adult interactions at school. My findings demonstrate that although children conceptualise themselves as citizens-in-waiting, they are nonetheless citizens-in-action who actively negotiate the social processes and protocols of two social worlds; theirs and adults.

I focus on the school as a site of social investigation as it is a key institution which can help develop children's citizenship practice(s) from a young age. I recognise the school as representing a form of micro-nation state which can provide or deny its school-citizen's rights. The questions which guide this research are: 1. How do younger children 'do' citizenship within their peer groups at school? 2. How do younger children's understandings and experiences of citizenship link to broader adult-centric notions of children's citizenship practice during childhood? 3. How is children's citizenship evident in the intersection between

their citizenship participation in their peer groups at school and the structures and practices of primary education and curricular policy? 4. Do children's experiences of participation during childhood have wider impacts on the development of their citizenship practices?

This thesis is based upon a grounded research approach. Instead of applying a pre-defined theory, I adhered to a process of analytic induction to analyse the data generated from qualitative (and ethnographically-led) research methods (participant observations, semi-structured group-interviews, focus groups, classroom-based project group work, classroom-based debates and classroom-based information sessions and worksheets). I used the constant comparative method (Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1965) to code transcripts which were then organised into emergent research themes.

My research findings highlight the importance of social context and the role it plays in shaping and dictating how children as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens 'do', understand and experience citizenship. I loosely applied Bronfenbrenner's (1979) childhood developmental *Ecological Systems Theory* which explains how children's development is influenced by their environment from their home (microsystem) to wider social contexts (macrosystem). I applied this to my analysis of the 'public' spaces and places which I identified can offer children practicable opportunities to participate and to be citizens-in-action. Within different social contexts, children's citizenship participatory rights are dependent upon social context and corresponding norms and values. I define this as representing *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* [See Fig. 4. Page 124 for an illustration of this].

Based on my grounded analysis, I offer my theoretical contribution which conceptualises children's peer group as a form of *Citizenship Polis*. I suggest children 'do' citizenship within this *Polis* which I identify as a prime locus for children's citizenship learning and practices. This *Polis* represents children's 'public' realm wherein through their peer cultures they re-form adult-centric ideas about social concepts (such as citizenship) and social practice (based on social hierarchy, class and gender). My qualitative findings (discussed in Chapters Three to Eight) demonstrate how wider social structures and children's peer culture reproduce and create the rights and duties children associate with *their* citizenship practices within the social context of the primary school [Fig. 8. Page 190 provides a visual representation of my conceptualisation of a children's *Citizenship Polis*].

This research contributes towards existing conceptualisations about children's citizenship and to current literatures about peer culture because my concept of a children's *Citizenship Polis* offers a re-imagining of children's citizenship practices at primary school. My findings also add to existing literatures about younger children's agency and autonomy as citizens and the role peer culture and gender plays in relation to children's citizenship practices at school. I observed children's participation as *citizen-peers* of their peer groups evokes a strong sense of agency, belonging/membership, and identity in ways which are most applicable to them at school. Therefore, I suggest children's peer group is *the* locus of social interaction which matters most to children at school (Pollard 1985; Jones 1995; Alder and Alder 1998; Devine 2009; Devine and Cockburn 2018^{xiii}). It is anticipated the empirical sociological insights into the social world of the Citizen-Child at school illuminated by this research, will assist policy-makers and educators to further develop participatory practices (in collaboration with children) that are more compatible with young children's everyday experiences as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens. The continued development of children's citizenship participatory rights is necessary for two key reasons: 1. to ensure that children's citizenship wellbeing as school-citizens is upheld and, 2. to assist children to develop positive citizenship identities and practices - which has wider reaching impacts - as they transition from childhood into young and later adulthood.

1.8 Chapter-by-chapter Synopsis

Chapter Two - discusses literatures which highlight a divergence between Irish citizenship education policy discourse and practice whereby the education system at primary level is leaning towards an education *about* citizenship as opposed to an education *for* citizenship (Kerr et al 2002; Deegan et al 2004; Waldron 2004; Devine 2004, 2008; Jeffers and O' Connor 2008; Gleeson 2008; Waldron et al 2014). Furthermore, existing research asserts that children's opportunities to participate in democratic decision-making processes at school remain insufficient which reproduces asymmetrical power relations between children and adults (Horgan 2016; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Waldron et al 2014; Devine 2003, 2004; Deegan et al 2004; Murphy 2004; McLoughlin 2004; McSharry 2008). This suggests that Irish educational practice has not fully reconciled the tensions between developing children's citizenship participation rights at school and adults' treatment of them as non-practising citizens (Devine 2004, 2008; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Devine and Cockburn 2018).

Chapter Three - discusses the methodology supporting this research and, the challenges and limitations when conducting research with children within the formal school-setting. I found the social context of the school significantly influenced my ability to fully facilitate children's participation and collaboration during this research. Finally, I discuss some of the broader issues associated with research with children which I specifically look at in the context of children's participation in adult-led research.

Chapter Four - aims to explore children's understanding of their social position and role as citizens during childhood and, to tease out the tensions and contradictions revealed through children's articulation of their understandings of citizenship. This first data chapter is divided into two sections. Findings are discussed in relation to: the physicality of childhood, mobility and surveillance and, children's concerns. Section Two, discusses children's subjective understandings of what citizenship means to them. Four reemergent themes were identified in children's responses to my questions about citizenship: citizens belong to their country, citizens have passports, citizens can vote and, citizens must respect their country and obey the law. Based on my analysis, I found children essentially recognise citizenship as a status and a practice that is reserved for adulthood.

Chapter Five - introduces my concept of *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* as a framework to scaffold findings in relation to children's experiences of participation and decision-making at primary school [See Fig. 4. Page 124 for a representation of this]. Children's articulations of their experiences at school reveal pertinent issues about the structure, ethos and pedagogical approach towards children's schooling at primary level. I suggest, the way children are schooled significantly impacts on the level and amount of opportunities they can participate in different forms of collective democratic processes such as; peer-to-peer decision-making, debating and voting. I found children's opportunities to learn and to practice democracy is largely diminished and consigned to occasional as opposed to integral aspects of children's formal schooling. I propose school practices which foster group-work and children's participation could further the development of what I term *democratic competencies (DC)* [See Fig. 5. Page 135 for my representation of DC]. I suggest better developed *DC* could help children to flourish as *citizen-peers* and as school-citizens. Furthermore, *DC* could positively impact on children's *citizenship-esteem* as valued and recognised school- citizens.

Chapter Six - explores the different ways children collaborated with each other during their school day. I infer that collaboration is strongly linked to the level of social bonding within the peer group which also impacts on children's *citizenship solidarity*. This is revealed by the types and context of collaboration children engaged in. I identify children's *Collective Social Action(s)* (CSA) as representing children's forms of *citizenship solidarity* within their peer group (*Citizenship Polis*). I observed children's CSA were borne out of competition or protest. Competitive-based CSA focused on the act and the outcome of winning. Whereas protest-based CSA were a way for children to safely assert themselves against adult power and, to try to gain some control or autonomy over their circumstances. I propose that children's CSA demonstrate some of the ways they 'do' citizenship as *citizen peers* and school-citizens.

Chapter Seven - discusses findings through a gendered focused analysis, which considers the ways children are constrained by structural inequalities which inhibit the translation of alternative discourses and ideologies about gender. Emergent themes are discussed in terms of: self-enforced gender segregation, rule keeping, making and breaking, dominance hierarchy strategies, autonomy and justice and, gender role division. My findings point towards the wider implication of children's 'learned' gendered behaviours and attitudes on their citizenship practice at school and beyond.

Chapter Eight - addresses the importance of peer group relationships for children at primary school to position my conceptualisation of children's peer group as a form of *Citizenship Polis* [See Fig. 8. Page 190 for a representation of my concept]. I offer a re-imagining of children's citizenship practice(s) in the context of the primary school-setting. Although the children participating in my research were acutely aware of their subordinate position as social actors (citizens) this does not belie the fact that children practice citizenship everyday as citizens of their peer groups. This was revealed during my observations of children's peer-to-peer and peer-adult interactions at school. Based on this, I conceptualise children's peer group as a *Citizenship Polis*, wherein they 'do' citizenship on their terms which are shaped, reproduced and created by their peer culture as are the rights and duties associated with *their* citizenship.

Chapter Nine - presents my contribution to existing research literatures. I also summarise key findings from each Chapter and I offer recommendations to address the issues raised by this research.

Chapter Two: Children's Participation at School

Overview

... to fully understand the nature of children's citizenship, we need to explore, in any context, not only how 'citizenship' is made legally available to children but also how children experience that framing – and respond to it – through their everyday lives (James 2011: 173).

Critiques of Liberal and Civic Republican approaches to citizenship, discussed in Chapter One, highlight the need to develop conceptualisations of citizenship which are more inclusive of children's citizenship participatory rights. This notion sets the context for this Chapter, which focuses on the social politics of Irish childhoods and its relationship between schools 'structuring effects' (James 2011) and children's experiences of their citizenship participation at school. I begin this Chapter with a brief review of broader literatures about children's citizenship participation, which provides the framework for my inquiry of children's social position as participating citizens at primary school in Ireland. Next, I discuss the historical development of the Irish State's approach to citizenship education; more specifically at primary school level through the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). Lastly, I refer to research that provides empirical assessments of Irish citizenship education policy and practice. The aims of this Chapter are to: 1. investigate how constructions of Irish childhoods influence children's citizenship practice at school. 2. Examine how the provision of educational policy and practice influences children's experiences and self-conceptualisation of their citizenship practice at school. 3. Offer a critical assessment of how 21st Century Irish children's citizenship is evolving within the primary school system and, 4. to set the context for the rationale of this thesis, which explores children's participatory practices at school.

My analysis of literatures in this Chapter suggests; firstly, the primary Irish education system - in practice - leans more towards an education *about* citizenship as opposed to an education *for* citizenship (Deegan et al 2004; Devine 2004,2008; Gilleece and Cosgrove 2012; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Horgan et al 2015). Secondly, existing literatures highlight that 21st Century Irish educational practice has yet to reconcile the tensions between children's citizenship participation rights and their insufficient opportunity to participate in democratic processes at school (Devine 2004,2008,2009; McSharry 2008; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Devine and Cockburn 2018). Thirdly, research suggests that Irish

primary school children's participatory rights remain constrained by social structures, discourses and practices within the school which implies that children's experiences of schooling is largely inequitable. Fourthly, research literatures draw attention to the lack of empirical sociological research that explores children's subjective experiences of school life in Ireland.

2. Introduction - Children's participatory experiences at school

[Participation is] the expression of one's agency in the multiple relationships within which citizens are present in society (Moosa-Mitha 2005: 375).

Changing perceptions of childhoods has led to the wider recognition (in rhetoric) of children as citizens and social actors who both influence and are influenced by social structures (Qvortrup 1994; James and Prout 1997; Alder and Alder 1998; Corsaro 1987, 1992, 2000, 2006, Nichols 2007; James 2011^{xiii}). Researchers have examined childhoods in generational and relational terms highlighting the beneficial effects that can be created through reciprocal child-adult interaction such as learning, knowledge and social practice exchanges (Devine and Cockburn 2018; Leonard 2016; Greene 2016; Tisdall and Punch 2012; Mayall 2008^{xiv}). Similarly, Leonard's (2016) concept of *Generagency*, provides a 'useful overarching framework for exploring ongoing connections and disconnections between children, childhood and generation' (p.154). Leonard (2016) asserts that *Generagency* draws our attention to how children's position in society continues to be determined by their relational agency in micro and macro social settings (ibid).

The debate surrounding children's participatory rights continues to generate questions about the social and political positioning of our youngest citizens within key social and educational institutions (Hart 1992; Lundy 2007,2018; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Shier 2010; Cockburn 2010; James 2011; Tisdall 2012; Wyness 2009, 2013^{xv}). Existing research highlights that children's opportunities to participate in decision-making processes is dictated by the context of the social situation and, that children and young people 'have varying levels of space, voice, audience and influence from one sphere of their lives to another' (Horgan et al 2015: 3; Quinn and Owen 2014; Horgan 2016; de Róiste et al 2012; Bjerke 2011). For instance, Baker and Lynch's (2005) examination of dimensions of equality within formal education, highlight 'basic principles of equality of condition' which they 'believe are essential for

promoting equality in education' (p.132). They argue that a key inequality experienced in education is lack of respect and recognition which is ...'rooted in the symbolic realm, in patterns of interpretation, definition and communication' (ibid: 142). This aligns with existing Irish-based research which indicates that children and young people do not feel respected or recognised because of their experiences of voicelessness at school. Horgan et al's (2015) Irish-based research for example, finds that the school is a place which is 'least conducive to listening to children and young people' (p.3). Findings from other Irish studies also raise issues concerning children's participation at school and, children's sense of injustice, frustration and dissatisfaction with their lack of opportunity to participate in decision-making processes at school (Devine 2002, 2009; McSharry 2008; Kelleher et al 2014; Martin et al 2015; Horgan et al 2015; Horgan 2016 ^{xvi}).

In contrast, children and young people's perceptions on decision-making contexts revealed more positive responses when they were asked about their participation in decision-making at home (Horgan et al 2015). McCoy, Byrne and Banks (2011) refer to 'concerted cultivation', claiming that children from middle class backgrounds gain an advantage in educational and employment settings over those who are not parented in ways that encourage discussions with their parents and, affords participation in extracurricular activities. They refer to Lareau's (2003) argument which sees 'concerted cultivation' also creates ... 'a sense of entitlement in middle class children which plays an important role in institutional settings (schools) where middle class children learn to question adults and address them as relative equals' (ibid: 157). This notion implies that socioeconomic factors and parenting styles also influence children's self-perceptions and experiences of equality and participation at home and at school.

This notion aligns with Bourdieu's (1984, 1986) theory of habitus - the embodiment of forms of cultural and social capital. My findings also demonstrate children's peer group as an accumulation of different capitals and, intelligences/understandings about how to use them to ones individual advantage. For instance, I found that some children used parental capital by proxy and their own modes of peer cultural capital to maintain their social status within their peer group(s) and, to demonstrate their level of social class in their interactions with adults. As such, children are also aware of the power different capitals (cultural and social) embodies and how their socioeconomic origin and circumstance impacts their equality of opportunity to engage in activities which involve economic capital.

Similarly, Bjerke's (2011) Norwegian study which explored the differences between child-adult relations finds that social context is a key factor that informs children's perception of their experiences of participation within different social settings. She notes, children had more positive associations of the autonomy at home. However, at school, children's shared experience 'is the feeling that staff do not listen in the same way as parents' do, and that they are not valued as decision-making partners (p.100)^{xvii}. Notably, Bjerke's (2011) participants did not see 'agency and dependency' as being in opposition with each other. Rather she found these children felt they could express their agency, but they could also continue to be 'dependent on nurturance, support or regulation from adults' (p.101). Bjerke's (2011) findings contest more adult-centric ideas that fail to recognise children as simultaneously dependent and agentic.

Numerous EU and Irish studies (Ruane 2010; Kränzl-Nagel and Zartler's 2010; Arensmeier 2010; Martin et al 2015; Horgan et al 2015; Horgan 2016^{xviii}) have investigated children's experiences of participation within different social contexts and, they provide a theoretical frame of reference to address tensions evident in the implementation of more egalitarian and participatory school policy and practices (Devine 2003, 2004, 2008, 2009; Deegan et al 2004; Baker and Lynch 2005; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Devine and Cockburn 2018^{xix}). Children's equality of opportunity and level of participation at school is contingent upon power and control. Baker and Lynch (2005) highlight that inequalities of power ... 'include processes of exclusion, marginalization, trivialization (tokenism) and misrepresentation when people are engaged in decision-making or policy-making in schools' (p.148). Given this, children's experiences of different forms of powerlessness though their repeated exclusion from decision-making processes at school matters on macro and micro levels. On a macro level, '[i]f we are to educate students to engage in public life as democratic citizens, it is essential that they learn how to participate democratically in the public domain' (Dewey 1916, 1950 in Baker and Lynch 2005: 149). On a micro level, my findings indicate that children largely conceptualise themselves as a non-participating social group - reinforced by their experiences of non-participation as school-citizens, which I argue could have implications for children's *citizenship-esteem*^{xx}. I now examine some of the main issues raised - such as 'Tokenism' - and, how children's negative experiences of participation could have a negative influence on their overall sense of wellbeing^{xxi} and their *citizenship-esteem*.

2.1 Tokenism and participation – not such a bad thing?

Wyness et al (2004) caution about the use of ‘tokenistic’ attempts to include children in decision-making processes (p.87; John 2003). Drawing on Hart's (1997) analysis of children's participation they emphasize the dangers of tokenism in children's participation. According to Wyness et al (2004), Hart (1997) sees this kind of participation as ‘a form of non-participation whereby agendas are limited to peripheral issues prescribed by adults’ (p.87). Hart (1997) also proposed that small scale community level initiatives are better suited to incorporate children's participation (in Wyness et al 2004^{xxiii}). In response, Wyness et al (2004) warn that tokenistic actions towards children's participation in decision-making processes at any level generally ‘has the effect of turning young people [and children] against the whole idea of participation and further alienating them from the system’ (p.87; Fleming 2013). They also assert that the incorporation of children's participation needs to be seen in the context of how... ‘the ways that the protection and control of young people can lead to their segregation and seclusion’ from decision-making processes in the public and private spheres (ibid: 88; Such and Walker 2005; Cohen 2005; Kulynych 2001).

Lundy (2018) revisits the issues associated with ‘tokenism’ and its negative associations with children's participation; suggesting it plays some part in furthering children's participation. She argues there is research to support that the consequences of children's experiences of tokenistic participation ‘are not always permanently or necessarily negative’ (p.12). Rather, she asserts there is ‘evidence’ to suggest it provides learning experiences for children who ‘can be galvanized into further action and claim recognition in other ways’ and, how they may even use ‘the opportunity for their own individual ends’ (ibid). Participation is not always perfect. However, Lundy (2018) maintains, ‘[i]f we classify less than perfect participation as tokenistic’ we intimidate ‘generations of decision-makers from attempting to engage at all or directly’ with children (p.13). Furthermore, we are essentially, ... ‘shutting the door to the engagement of millions of children on countless issues affecting them’ (ibid).

2.1.2 Children's wellbeing and *citizenship-esteem* at school

Notwithstanding, existing studies highlight children's disaffected feelings about their level and opportunity to participate in decision-making processes at school has some level of influence on their sense of wellbeing. The relationship between children's participation at school and their wellbeing is a theme explored in de Róiste et al's (2012) Irish-based research. They find,

in general ‘school participation is associated with reporting positive general school perceptions, positive health and positive well-being’ (p.97). Yet, de Róiste et al’s (2012) findings indicate that ‘the levels of school participation among school children in Ireland range from substantial to inadequate’ (p.97). Respective Irish-based studies from Kelleher et al (2014), Martin et al (2015), Horgan et al (2015) and Horgan (2016) also found that children inferred adults’ lack of follow-up with them after they had participated in research consultations as an indication of their perception of them as lower status citizens. Comparable issues were also picked up in other EU studies with children and examinations of children’s participation (See Kränzl-Nagel and Zartler (2010)^{xxiii}, Arensmeier (2010)^{xxiv} and Fleming (2013)^{xxv}).

Overall these studies highlight two key questions: 1. Could children’s negative internalisations about their experiences of participation have long-lasting negative impacts on their overall wellbeing as social actors (citizens)? 2. Children know when adults are not sincere in their interactions with them. Therefore, could this ‘knowledge’ reinforce ideas they may (already) have about adults’ lack of respect for them? I add to this and question if this could also affect children’s *citizenship-esteem* at school and in other social contexts? To explore these questions within an Irish context, I now review historical representations of children in Irish education policy and practice in relation to children’s participatory experiences at school.

2.2 Childhood and citizenship in Irish education policy and practice

Four-year-old’s entering junior infant classes...will spend about a million minutes in school by the time they finish their Leaving Certificate at age 18 (Quinn 2012:127).

In 1831 the Irish National Primary School was established. After the formation of the Irish Free State in 1924, Nationalism and the creation of a unique Irish identity were to the fore of the education agenda. Hereafter, the early primary school became central to the dissemination of Catholic doctrine and nationalist ideals and as a means of distancing the new Irish Republic from old British colonial rule (Tussing 1978 in Walsh 2005; Coolahan 1981; Hyland 1989; Coolahan, Hussey and Kilfeather 2012 O’ Connor 2014). A core function of the early Irish education system was to ... ‘teach children to save their souls’ and to ‘love all things Irish’ (Walsh 1999:263). Also, during this period a ‘symbiotic relationship’ developed between the state and the Catholic Church (framed within a theocentric vision) which historically informed

the development and maintenance of Irish education provision (Coolahan 1981; O' Connor 2014; O' Toole 2015).

Children were regarded as both passive and active agents and they simultaneously occupied two positions in early 20th Century Irish social discourses and practices. Children were largely recognised as inactive recipients of education, yet they were also viewed as more than just 'passive babies' (O' Connor 1987 in Walsh 1999:259). This notion was also reflected in the state's vision of children as ... 'the leaders of the language revival movement in Ireland' which, greatly depended ... 'on the work of the infant classes' (ibid). This historically ambiguous conception of Irish childhood and children is also evident in early Irish educational policy discourse (Walsh 1999; Devine 2004, 2008; Smith 2007). However, Devine (2008) notes, the prevailing discourse in policy at this time 'viewed children as subordinates, [and] the property of their parents' (p.85). Under these circumstances, 20th Century Irish children were largely recognised and treated by adults as a form of 'generational continuity; a source of cheap labour...and security in old age' (ibid).

In the 1960s a 'dramatic increase in government and public interest in education' took place (Coolahan 1981:131). This was clearly demonstrated in the influential Investment in Education Report (1965), which according to Brown (1985), was a 'foundational document of modern education' and, a 'radical ideological departure in Irish educational thinking' (in Considine and Dukelow 2009: 310). Furthermore, Ferriter's (2007) analysis of the Report, finds it also contrasted with the Irish State's historically ... 'destructive lack of ambition and vision that plagued the Irish education system' (in O' Connor 2014: 193).

In addition, the introduction of the 1971 primary school curriculum signaled other notable changes in the Irish State's provision of education. For example, Walsh's (1999) analysis of the 1971 curriculum highlights the dual learning role of children as being able to work 'individually to promote independence and self-reliance' and equally to be able to work as part of a group so as 'to promote cooperation and social development' (p.265). The rationale underpinning this change in educational provision, was to take the focus away from 'the dominance of the class textbook' and to facilitate 'a more active and heuristic approach to pedagogy' (Coolahan 1981: 169-170).

Nonetheless, Walsh (1999) points out a contradiction evident in the 1971 primary school curriculum; it advocated ‘group work’ and encouraged Educators to adopt a heuristic pedagogical approach. However, it also placed more emphasis on the child as an ‘individual’, in that ... ‘he deserves to be valued for himself and to be provided with the kind and variety of opportunities towards stimulation and fulfilment’ (Department of Education 1971 in Walsh 1999: 265). In subsequent texts, Devine (2008) identifies that the 1971 policy emphasis on the ‘individual’ child was in conjunction with wider EU policy agendas, which were to maximise ‘the development of individual talent for the betterment of the [Irish] economy’ (p.88). This implies 1970s education policy rhetoric regarded Irish education as a form of ‘economic investment’ with Irish citizens representing the wealth of the nation (Coolahan 1981:13; Walsh 1999; Smith 2007; Devine 2008). As such, Irish educational changes occurred in correspondence with wider political, social and economic relations forming between Ireland, the EU and wider international markets.

Additionally, between the 1970s and 1990s there was a notable development of ideas about Irish childhoods in policy discourses. For instance, the 1971 curriculum was the first educational policy wherein childhood was recognised as ... ‘a distinct period of human development’ (Walsh 1999: 265; Smith 2007; Devine 2008; Greene 2016). This change of focus was mirrored in the new ‘child-centred’ and ‘discovery type’ approach to the 1971 Primary Curriculum (Coolihan 1981: 169-170; Walsh 1999; Waldron 2004; Devine 2008; Smyth 2007; Considine and Dukelow 2009). The Key aims of which were to; ... ‘enable the child to live a full life as a child and; to equip him to avail himself of further education so that he may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society’ (Department of Education 1971 in Walsh 1999: 265; Considine and Dukelow 2009). Nevertheless, the predominant policy and societal view of children still regarded them as vulnerable beings in need of protection and segregation from the public sphere as opposed to social agents in-their-own-right (Waldron 2004; Devine 2008).

2.2.1 Ideological shifts and the provision of education

The 1980s brought further ideological changes in relation to the teaching of patriotism and religion. Devine (2008), finds that the patriotic fervour in schools was more curtailed and inclusive of a ‘broader approach to framing activities for children’ (p.88). In addition, Faas and Ross’ (2012) analysis of changes in the focus of Irish primary curriculum from 1971 to 1999

identify that it no longer makes ‘reference to such a persistent influence of religion’ (p.577). This suggests an effort by the State to move away from the historically State-Church symbiotic relationship in the provision of education during this period. Similarly, Considine and Dukelow (2009) note the introduction of a denominational model of education was demonstrated in 1978 by the opening of the first Educate Together school^{xxvi} (Dalkey, Co. Dublin). They assert this event marked the beginning of a ‘broader move towards diversity and greater democracy in the Irish education system’ (p. 311). Nevertheless, they caution that ‘the existence of greater choice and diversity in the education system does not necessarily lead to integration and inclusion’ (ibid: 323).

Diversity is also examined by Waldron and Pike’s (2006) research which explored children’s construction of national identity. They posit children’s lack of reference to religion indicates an ‘uncoupling of the dominant religion, Catholicism, from Irish national identity’ (p.247). Nevertheless, they note that children’s comments revealed a lack of awareness about diversity which they see as ‘antithetical to the idea of cultural pluralism’ (p.248). They assert the tensions and contradictions which were evident in children’s discussions about immigration, highlight ‘ambiguities that need to be acknowledged and resolved’ (ibid). Correspondingly, findings from Smyth, Darmody, McGinnity and Byrne’s (2009) report into adapting to diversity in Irish schools indicate students’ ‘lack of awareness of other cultures’ (p.184). Furthermore, according to Smyth et al (2009), ‘[r]eligious diversity among newcomer pupils is a challenge for the Irish school system which is largely denominational in nature, especially at primary level, and under the control of the Catholic and Protestant Churches’ (p.33). Devine (2008), equally asserts that Catholic ideology remains a key focus in the 1999 Revised Primary School Curriculum (RPC) whereby school activities continue to be informed by and carried out in conjunction with Catholic feast days^{xxvii}.

The primary education system continues to be criticised for being overly reliant on the historical state-church approach to educational provision (Considine and Dukelow 2009; Faas and Ross 2012; McCarthy et al 2013; O’ Toole 2015). Figures for 2013 state that ‘96%’^{xxviii} of our primary schools remain under the patronage of the Catholic Church. This is pertinent, as the ‘ultimate responsibility’ in the Irish national school, still lies with the patron who delegates schools’ daily management to the school board of management (Faas and Ross 2012:574). The importance of equal educational provision is further demonstrated by

Department of Education and Skills POD figures for 2016/2017 which show 10.4% of the primary school population included children from foreign national heritages^{xxix}. These figures highlight the growing necessity for the equal provision of access to education for foreign-national and non-Catholic children. Congruently, issues regarding Catholic primary schools' enrollment criteria based on religious ethos are beginning to be addressed. According to the Minister for Education, '[n]ew rules banning discrimination against children who are not baptised in school admission policies should be in place for September 2019' (O' Kelly, 2018). This new policy indicates that the Irish State is moving towards developing and implementing educational reforms that embrace the changing cultural landscape of a more globalised Irish society by providing *all* children their right to educational opportunity.

2.3 Irish citizenship education 1960 – 1990

It is beyond doubt that schools have a unique opportunity not only to teach children democratic principles and values, but also to reinforce and demonstrate these principles and values by their practices and procedures (Horgan et al 2015: 86).

Kerr, McCarthy and Smith (2002) see the development of citizenship education in the Republic of Ireland 'closely shadowed the evolution of the country's political and economic development'; characterised by its 'very conservative and inward looking economic and political policies (p. 182; Coolahan 1981; Lynch 1989; Walsh 1999; O'Toole 2015). They regard the introduction of the first Civics syllabus into secondary level (1966) as a defining moment in the development of Irish citizenship education curricula. Kerr et al's (2002) analysis, for instance, notes that the absence of Civics from the primary and secondary curricula prior to 1971 has largely been attributed to the Catholic Church's objections toward the introduction of it as a discrete subject. This objection was based on the similarities between Civics and Religion and as such it was conceived that 'civic issues should be incorporated within the Religious Education Programme' (Kerr et al 2002: 182). As a result, this curricular approach reinforced the historically ambivalent attitude towards Civics expressed by pupils and teachers alike. Also, when placed in comparison with core subjects (English, Irish and Mathematics) Civics was perceived as 'limited, marginalised [and] of low priority and status' (Kerr et al 2002: 183; Carr and Hartnet 1996; Gleeson 2008; Jeffers 2008). The subsequent 1971 Curriculum placed emphasis on learning ... '*about* civic responsibility and citizenship rather than to educate *for* and *through* citizenship' (ibid:183; Kerr 1999). Yet, Waldron (2004)

(and others) note it also reinforced the notion of Civics as a lower status subject wherein ‘the explicit and sustained focus on political education’ remained as a separate subject which was mainly associated as an off-shoot of religious studies (p.211; Gleeson 2008; Jeffers and O’Connor 2008; Waldron et al 2014).

The status and curricular position of Civics did not alter in any significant way throughout the 1970s. However, the future of civic education looked more positive with the establishment of the Interim Curriculum and Examination Board (CEB) in 1983. The establishment of the CEB has been described as a ‘watershed’ in curriculum development where more credence was given to the importance of ‘social and civic responsibility’ (Gleeson 2008: 75). Nonetheless, the further development of citizenship education was again characterised by ambiguity, evident in the CEB’s (1984) ‘wheel’ which articulated it as an ‘off shoot’ of religious teaching (ibid). Ambiguity surrounding the development of Civics was also compounded by a change in government in 1987 which pushed citizenship education lower down on education and political agendas. Under these circumstances ambitions for the further development of a citizenship education curriculum were significantly diminished during this period (1980s to 1990s).

2.3.1 Citizenship education in 1990s Ireland

The Crick Report (1998) marked another defining moment in the development of citizenship education programmes in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The impetus for the report was borne out of governmental concern for rising levels of political apathy, alienation and cynicism amongst the UK’s youth (Lockyer 2008). To ameliorate this, Crick’s Report (1998) advocated the importance of developing citizens’ political knowledge and civic competencies (Lockyer 2008:21). Active citizenship, learning-through-doing and, community engagement were fundamental concepts endorsed in the report which was framed within the competing elements of Civic Republican and Liberal approaches to citizenship (ibid). A similar theoretical approach to civic engagement was applied in the development of Irish citizenship education programmes which were introduced at primary and secondary level during the mid-1990s.

Ireland’s approach to citizenship education was (is) also informed by EU and international debates about childhoods and children. These discussions also identified citizenship education as a cure-all for the development of children’s participation rights at school, and as a means of equipping them with the civic competencies necessary for participation in wider political activities (Niens and McIlrath 2005, 2010; Arthur, Davies and Hahn 2008; Jeffers and O’

Connor 2008; Haste 2010; Janmaat 2012^{xxx}). On this basis, Niens and McIlrath's (2010) propose what they see as a threefold rationale for the development of citizenship education programmes (in Ireland) which aim to: (i) address discourses on citizenship in contemporary, multi-ethnic, globalised societies, (ii) prepare young people to be able to thrive in a fast-paced globalised world and, (iii) tackle political apathy in young people.

In conjunction, 1990s Irish society experienced unprecedented socio-cultural, political and economic changes; a period which has been characterised by the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom. A bi-product of the Celtic Tiger was dramatically increased employment levels, a change in work demands (O' Brien 2008), and a more culturally diverse demographic (Niens and McIlrath 2005, 2010; Rami and Lalor 2006). In response to these societal changes, the Irish State made significant changes to educational policy across primary and secondary levels. At primary level, these changes are largely reflected in the policy discourse in the 1999 RPC. For instance, Sugure (2004) identified two notable changes in the 1999 RPC's approach, such as a 'greater emphasis on skill development generally' which he proposes is a recognition of the need to prepare young people 'to compete for market share in the global economy' (p 200 – 201). According to Collins (2013a), Sugure's (2004) argument should be 'placed alongside the introduction of a curriculum (SPHE)...which arguably has the potential to develop marketable social and personal skills, among other things' (p.11). She notes another significant change in the 1999 RPC's approach 'is the attention paid to psychological well-being, clearly manifested in SPHE' (ibid).

Equally, the 1999 RPC embraced ideas which conceptualised children as active learners who ought to be heard and encouraged to participate at school (DES 1999; Waldron 2004; Devine 2008; Considine and Dukelow 2009). In contrast to the 1971 curriculum, Waldron (2004) notes that the RPC 'is premised on an inclusive concept of identity and on the idea of the citizen as informed and critical' (p.226). She adds, emphasis is placed on 'taking the perspective of the other, on listening to and taking account of the opinion of others is coupled with the promotion of respect for evidence and the capacity for independent thought' (ibid). In later texts though, Waldron (2004) (and others) note that the RPC still leans towards representations of children as 'duty bearers' as opposed to 'rights holders' (Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016). Notwithstanding, the implementation of a citizenship education curriculum, in the form

of the SPHE, signaled the beginning of efforts to make citizenship education a permanent fixture within primary schools.

2.3.2 The development of citizenship education at primary level

Following the introduction of Civic Social and Personal Education (CSPE) at secondary level (1997), the SPHE was introduced at primary level in 1999. Discourses about primary schools, articulated them as prime locations for the provision of a citizenship education and ‘uniquely suited to developing the civic dispositions needed for the maintenance of a democratic society’... (White 1999 in Waldron 2004: 212; Deegan et al 2004; Richardson 2008; Devine 2004; Sugrue 2004). The overriding rationale underpinning the SPHE curriculum is to help children to ... ‘value and take pride in their national, European and global identities and come to an understanding of what it means to be a citizen in the wider sense’ (Government of Ireland 1999 in McCarthy et al 2013: 201).

The SPHE curriculum encourages children to develop their understanding and awareness of their place as a citizen of their communities, country and the wider world. SPHE aims to introduce children to citizenship in a developmental and integrated way which is integrated into its three content strands: 1. Myself. 2. Myself and others. 3. Myself and the wider world. Most of the citizenship-specific issues are covered under the third strand. SPHE is given discrete time slot of the school curriculum; 30 minutes a week is recommended. The delivery and time given to SPHE is organised as teachers see fit.

In addition, SPHE ‘is the curriculum area most associated with circle time’^{xxxi} (Collins 2013b: 423). Some primary schools incorporate the use circle time as a democratically-led pedagogical method in conjunction with aspects of the SPHE. Circle time is also used to afford children the opportunity to voice their opinions about issues of concern in a safe space at school. However, it is not a mandatory aspect of SPHE and therefore it is not used by every primary school. Nevertheless, Collins (2013b) argues that due to the potentially large numbers of primary school children engaging in circle time, this deems it as an area which warrants further investigation. She also highlighted that ‘there is little evidence of the use of circle time for citizenship or rights education in Irish primary school’ (p.423).

Like CSPE, concerns have been raised about the ambiguous curricular status attributed to the SPHE curriculum. This also poses significant issues around the delivery of the curriculum

which is based on the positioning of SPHE as a non-core subject within the wider primary curriculum. In addition, school ethos and management have been identified as independent variables which may also affect the delivery of SPHE due to the strong ‘moral and ...spiritual dimension’ (Department of Education and Science 1999: 2; Collins 2013a) of the curriculum. This raises questions about the elements of SPHE that are taught and the ones that are not. Insofar as, how much of the citizenship component of the SPHE is facilitated by schools’ individual ethos and pedagogical approach? And, to what extent are the values of inclusivity, diversity and participation (as encouraged in the SPHE curriculum) allowed to ‘permeate all aspects of school life’? (Waldron et al 2014: 253; Waldron 2004).

2.4 Expressions of citizenship and diversity in Irish educational policy

[The] conceptualisation of citizenship embraced by the primary school curriculum draws on a similar philosophy of civic republicanism (Waldron et al 2014: 36).

According to Waldron (2004), in 1971 Irish curriculum citizenship was framed in terms of it representing an idea of collective membership that is both defined and confined by a sense of responsibility and duty *and* the “cultivation of good habits” (Department of Education 1971 in Waldron 2004). Waldron (2004) contends, the version of citizenship education espoused in the 1971 curriculum articulates children as citizens within an ‘exclusive concept of identity and a model of the citizen as the good and dutiful son/daughter who neither questions nor challenges the status quo’... (p. 225). In contrast, she asserts that the 1999 RPC frames citizenship as ‘an inclusive concept of identity and on the idea of the citizen as informed and critical’, which is explicitly demonstrated through the introduction of SPHE (p.226). Waldron (2004) see this demonstrates that the RPC has placed more emphasis on ‘taking the perspective of the other, on listening to and taking account of the opinion of others is coupled with the promotion of respect for evidence and the capacity for independent thought’ (ibid: Faas and Ross 2012; Waldron et al 2014). Notwithstanding, she notes when the RPC’s ideas are ‘stripped of its more liberal context, the conception of action implicit in the SPHE curricula has its roots in the dutiful concerns of the earlier child/citizen’ (ibid: 226; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016).

Waldron’s (2004) analysis implies that the type of ‘citizenship’ espoused by the SPHE curriculum leans towards a Civic Republican approach, which places emphasis on citizens’

civic duties over their individual rights. Literatures discussed in Chapter One, point out that Civic Republican notions about citizenship have been critiqued because it draws the ‘sharpest lines of inclusion and exclusion in its expressions of political membership’ (Abowitz and Harnish 2006: 659). This aligns with Lister’s (2003) Feminist critique of Civic Republican approaches whereby she ‘parts company’ with this ideology because of its demanding nature in that ‘[c]itizenship is elevated to *the* defining identity, overriding all others’ (p.33). She adds, ‘the more demanding the conception of citizenship, the more likely it is that those willing and able to meet its stringent tests will represent a minority’ (ibid). Civic Republican approaches do not recognise all types of ‘public political participation under the rubric of citizenship’ (p.30). Therefore, Lister (2003) asserts that this perspective risks ‘casting out from the body of citizens all those unable or unwilling to match up to its demanding requirements’... (p.34). This issue clearly applies to children whose ‘acts of citizenship’ (Larkins 2014) under a Civic Republican ideal would never be recognised as worthy forms of ‘political’ participation or otherwise. Due to Civic Republican ideologies propensities to draw stark lines between inclusion and exclusion, this infers that it could pose significant problems for culturally diverse societies. Therefore, I raise the following questions, 1. what kind of ‘citizenship’ are primary school children being introduced to at school? and, 2. does it educate children *for* and *about* diversity in theory *and* in practice? I now consider these questions with specific reference to the SPHE; the core curriculum for citizenship education at primary school level.

2.4.1 SPHE - a citizenship education *for* and *about* diversity?

Key educational areas in citizenship and diversity are outlined in the SPHE curriculum. According to Faas and Ross (2012), the SPHE curriculum has the most ‘explicit’ concern for citizenship education (p.578). They (and others) assert, the SPHE curriculum articulates emergent themes on ‘active citizenship’ in a ‘pluralist society’ which also demonstrates the change in focus in education in general whereby it prioritises ‘an active and collective pedagogy’ (ibid; Waldron 2004; Waldron et al 2014).

However, Bryan (2008), suggests that this approach to educating children about diversity is limited (p.47). She makes specific reference to the Intercultural Curriculum Guidelines (2005), which she asserts the purpose of which ... ‘is to supplement and enhance existing curricular materials, without radically revising or indeed overhauling the curriculum that is already in place’ (p.51). She continues, ‘contrary to interculturalism’s aim of “normalising diversity”,

national...curricular materials and intercultural practices ironically have an abnormalising effect' (p.53; see also Bryan 2009, 2010 in O' Toole 2015). Likewise, Deegan et al (2004) assert that without 'core curriculum status, there is real threat that diversity will be treated sporadically and strewn across the broad sweep of the curriculum in fractured bits and pieces' (p.253). These concerns are echoed in Richardson's (2008) Irish study, which highlights education about ... 'issues of cultural diversity and mutual understanding is superficial and lacking in depth and progression' (p.56). Notwithstanding, Faas and Ross (2012), maintain in comparison with earlier primary school curriculum, the SPHE curriculum puts a 'stronger emphasis on the celebration of diversity'... as well as promoting ... 'a sense of active citizenship' (p.586; Waldron 2004). They suggest that authors of the SPHE made significant efforts to take account of the growing cultural diversity of Irish society (ibid). However, if the SPHE curriculum is not given the same level of status or time as other core subjects, the extent to which it can inculcate ideas about inclusivity, diversity and an active sense of citizenship is questionable (Deegan et al 2004; Waldron 2004).

2.4.2 SPHE issues and challenges

Existing research highlights the important role teachers play in ensuring the integration of SPHE into the wider RPC (Devine 2004; 2003; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016). Waldron, et al (2014) assert that the notion of participation as being a fundamental aspect to the curriculum is limited and constrained in its conceptualisation. They also argue children's participation is generally confined to spaces where 'active citizenship can be recognised without threatening the status quo or challenging adult-child relationships' (ibid: 35-36). Furthermore, they point to patterns of dependency on NGO's to drive citizenship participation in some primary schools. For instance, they cite the 'The Green Schools programme' which they see occupies a significant portion of the citizenship education space at primary level. Although this initiative advocates child participation, according to Waldron et al's (2014) analysis, it does so in the context of environmental protection, as opposed to empowering children by equipping them with the skills and opportunity to participate in collective action to address environmental issues in their local areas. They also query whether external agency agendas could in effect 'militate against the implementation of a coherent and embedded citizenship curriculum at school level' (Waldron et al 2014: 43; Waldron and Oberman 2016).

Broader issues and challenges also remain in the implementation and delivery of the curriculum at primary school level. For instance, a Department of Education and Science (2009) consultation with children about the SPHE curriculum suggests that areas of content on ‘citizenship and media education’ were found to receive ‘less attention’ (p.79). Thus, ‘fewer resources [were] readily available to deal with the areas of developing citizenship’ (ibid: 87). The literatures above identify: (i) school ethos, (ii) pedagogical methodologies and (iii) the positioning of SPHE within the wider school curriculum, as key factors which affect the integration of citizenship education into school policy and practices (Waldron 2004; Deegan et al 2004; Jeffers 2014; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016^{xxxii}). Several Irish scholars argue that policy rhetoric and practice are divorced. They assert that children’s opinions about school issues are still not taken into consideration by adults, nor is their participation in decision making processes an integral element of school life (Waldron et al 2014; Horgan et al 2015; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Devine and Cockburn 2018^{xxxiii}).

Furthermore, an interchangeable curricular relationship between SPHE and Religion remains at primary level. Most Irish primary schools remain under the patronage of the Catholic Church. This is pertinent, as both school patronage and management ethos have also been identified as having a significant influence on how curriculum is delivered at primary school (Waldron et al 2014; Faas and Ross 2012; Jeffers and O’ Connor 2008; Baker and Lynch 2005; Deegan, Devine and Lodge 2004; Drudy and Lynch 1993). This is specifically relevant to how SPHE is taught and delivered at primary level due to the continued close curricular links with religious studies. This is demonstrated by the ethos underpinning SPHE at primary level wherein it explicitly refers to the role of religious instruction in terms of the ‘moral and ... spiritual dimension’ of the curriculum and how this is linked to ... ‘its development and implementation are influenced significantly by the ethos or characteristic spirit of the school’ (Department of Education and Science 1999: 2; Deegan et al 2004; Coolahan et al 2012; Faas and Ross 2012). Overall, literatures suggest that the SPHE appears to be a limited and ambiguous response to advance children’s citizenship participation rights at primary school.

2.5 Irish government policy responses to children’s citizenship participation

The lack of historical legal provisions for children’s rights in Ireland has been formally addressed by Irish State in the publication of the Child Care Act (1991). Since the 1990s, numerous government strategies were rolled-out to address the hitherto sluggish approach to

the development of children's participatory rights in Irish society. Following the Irish State's ratification of the UNCRC (1989) in 1992, the National Children's Strategy (2000) (the first of its kind in Europe), was a notable moment in the development of children's rights policies in Ireland (Keogh and Whyte 2008). The subsequent establishment of laws and children's representative platforms demonstrate the concerted efforts made by the Irish government to place children's rights firmly on policy-makers' agendas. Namely, the Children's Act (2001), the formation of Dáil na nÓg (2002)^{xxxiv} and Comhairle na nÓg (2003). These policies were followed by; the appointment of an Ombudsman for Children (2004) and the establishment of National Youth Council of Ireland – the role of which is recognised in legislation through the Youth Work Act 2001. Furthermore, in 2011 the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) was established, under which there is a Citizen Participation Unit and a Participation Support Team; with a remit to specifically support and develop children and young people's active participation in Irish society. These initiatives reflect a notable change in discourses and practices about childhoods and children in Ireland and they indicate a concentrated effort made by the Irish government to develop children's participation rights – in rhetoric at least. According to Horgan (2016), these strategies also provide potential opportunities for children and young people to engage in participatory democratic practices outside of the formal school setting. She also points towards initiatives (Foróige Youth Café's and clubs) and representative platforms (Dáil na nÓg and Comhairle na nÓg)^{xxxv} that offer some children opportunities to participate in ways they are often not afforded at school (ibid).

In the more recent national policy framework Better Outcomes Brighter Futures (2014 – 2020) the school is still regarded as being a key player in achieving the national outcome 'Connected, respected and contributing to their world' (p.99). This policy also identifies the education sectors' role as 'promoting participation, citizenship, understanding of...democracy and human rights (p.102). This is also reflected in the (DCYA 2012b)^{xxxvi} report The State of the Nation's Children which indicates that 'children aged 10-17 who report that students at their school participate in making the school rules has increased...from 22.5% in 2006 to 32.6% in 2010' (p.114). Thus, suggesting a move towards the development of a national government strategy that may support children's participation in decision-making both within and outside of the formal education sector.

According to Greene (2016), more recent government policies such as the National Strategy on Children and Young Peoples' Participation in Decision-Making (2015)^{xxxvii} indicate a symbolic step on the part of policymakers to afford children more opportunities to participate in decision making in Irish society (Williams et al 2016). Other seminal research initiatives need to be mentioned here, such as the ongoing national longitudinal study of children Growing up in Ireland (GUI) (2006-2019). The GUI study is the first of its kind commissioned in the history of the Irish state. The valuable insights recorded from the research data warranted the study's extension to 2019 to facilitate the gathering of more longitudinal information about children and young people's overall experiences life in Ireland (Greene 2016; Williams et al 2016).

2.5.1 Irish educational reform – where are the children's voices?

Issues remain in translating rights-based policy discourses into practice and into the everyday lives of children in Ireland. Kelleher et al (2014), assert that participation and consultative opportunities offered by government initiatives frequently do not attract marginalised children. Equally, Devine (2004, 2008) draws our attention to the fact that children were not part of the widespread consultation process that informed both the 1999 RPC and the National Children's Strategy (2000)^{xxxviii}. She also maintains that 'a discourse of children's rights is not widespread and has not filtered into common-sense understandings of what it means to be a child and the experience of childhood in Ireland' (ibid:99). She argues that the education system is still regarded as a 'key mechanism for the cultural (re)construction of childhood' where adults still speak on behalf of children (ibid:100). This aligns with findings from Waldron and Oberman's (2016) research which explored Irish primary school children as rights holders. They conclude that there is 'a tendency amongst teachers to conceptualise their pupils as duty-bearers in relation to rights rather than as rights-holders' (p. 747). Furthermore, they assert that 'the restricted scope and adult-orientated goals' relating to most participative structures 'suggests a limited realisation of children's citizenship rights' (p.756). Regardless of 'the dominance of social constructivist theories of learning in educational and curriculum policy' they argue their findings support 'concerns of a continued ambiguity in Irish primary schools towards children's status as social actors' (ibid; Murphy 2004; Deegan et al 2004; Devine 2008; Waldron et al 2014).

2.6 Irish primary schools - democracy in action?

...educating children about democracy, justice and inclusiveness, about rights and responsibilities, will be most effective where children themselves are afforded greater responsibility through active involvement in school (Deegan et al 2004: 9).

Primary school is one of the first social institutions that children encounter outside of the private familial sphere. Schools encapsulate an intricate combination of socio-cultural processes framed within structures that are influenced and defined by issues of inequality, power and control manifested in the relationships between children and adults (Waldron 2004; Baker and Lynch 2005; Baker et al 2006; Devine 2009; James 2011; Kustatscher 2016). As such, Baker and Lynch (2005) recommend that it is necessary to open up ‘the inside life of schools to democratic scrutiny and public challenge’ (p.140) as it is widely accepted that schools transmit and disseminate societal norms and values which have a lot to do with social control (Drudy and Lynch 1993; Devine 1999,2003,2009; Kustatscher 2016) ^{xxxix}. For instance, social research must interrogate and examine schooling practices such as surveillance (Foucault 1977) used to maintain power and control over children’s behaviour (Devine 2009; Marx and Steeves 2010; Rooney 2010). Schools also have the potential to inculcate notions about responsibility, duty and (to a lesser degree) rights to our youngest citizens (Putnam 1995; Crick 1998; Kerr 1999; Davies et al 2014^{xl}). Indeed, they can offer many opportunities for children to learn about citizenship *and* to and practice democracy (Dewey 1963; Deegan et al 2004; Horgan et al 2015). While State policy has evolved to develop citizenship education programmes, they remain limited in many key respects and often fall short of this ideal (Deegan et al 2004; Robinson and Aronica 2015; Davies et al 2014; Smyth et al 2014).

According to Deegan et al (2004), three core principles are necessary to facilitate a truly inclusive vision of primary education which they identify as, ... ‘democracy in education, activating subordinate voices and the caring/emotional dynamic within educational relationships’ (p.245). They argue that these principles should form the foundations of key educational practices. Deegan et al’s (2004) approach strongly relates to John Dewey’s (1963) theories of democracy and education. Central to Dewey’s (1963) conceptualisation of democracy is the egalitarian and communal way shared principles are reached; a process which he sees equally applies to the school community.

Deegan et al's (2004) analysis of the primary education system also finds that this is often not the case. They assert this is explicitly apparent in Irish education legislation and policy discourse. Devine (2004) also draws our attention to Section 23. No. s 1. and 2. in the Education Act (1998). She acknowledges that children are given the right to; be told about activities planned for the school, to take part in school operations and, to be asked about schools' objectives. However, she maintains, the level of access to these rights is based on the opinions and actions of adults, such as school management and educators. Moreover, she highlights Section 27. No. 3. (a) of the act which outlines that the establishment of school councils is only reserved for students at secondary level. This is also dependent upon conditions associated with adult opinions and level of motivation to undertake such initiatives (Devine 2004; McLoughlin 2004). According to Deegan et al (2004) and Devine (2004) (respectively) the sanctioning of children's voices in this manner, is representative of a 'limited model of democracy' which is evident through the silencing of certain groups – such as children (Deegan et al 2004: 246). It is assumed that primary school children are not capable to engage in collective decision-making processes at wider school level (in the form of student councils) or even at classroom level. Consequently, the lack of legal provision for children to form school councils at primary school strips them of their right to form and participate in a 'recognised' collective union with their peers (Devine 2004; McLoughlin 2004; Deegan et al 2004). Others concur with this assessment and argue the imperative of facilitating children's opportunity to put citizenship education concepts into practice, however, to do so 'the whole-school ethos has to be supportive' (Claire 2002 in Richardson 2008; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Kelleher et al 2014; Horgan et al 2015).

Democracy is an active and collaborative process which schools need to reinforce and demonstrate through their school policy and daily practices. However, this ideal is not reflected in legislation (such as the Education Act 1998) as no statutory pressure is placed on primary school management boards to facilitate children's councils or any other form of peer representative bodies. The lack of statutory enforcement in the development of student school councils at primary level also demonstrates that some primary schools are largely adhering to a narrow and limited model of democracy and citizenship education. In addition, this infers that the provision of citizenship education at primary school is still largely premised on an 'education *about* citizenship' as opposed to an education *for* and *through* citizenship (Deegan et al 2004:245). A similar theme is picked up by Faas and Ross' (2012) analysis of the primary

school curriculum, who note that schools' role in developing citizenship has not been considered enough. On a broader level, they point out that 'debates about the meaning of the good life or the good of education rarely occur in Ireland' (p.583). A later study by Horgan (2016) highlights that these kinds of opportunities for debate 'appear to be far more limited in public spheres, particularly in schools' (p.7). This situation is also reflected in Gilleece and Cosgrove's (2012) earlier examination of student civic participation in schools in Ireland. They conclude, although Ireland has a 'strong legislative framework recognizing the right of children and young people' this is different in practice due to the 'limited opportunities' for these rights to be realised (ibid: 237).

On this basis, the extent to which schools can be conceived of as being democratic institutions remains highly questionable. As highlighted by literatures (and research studies) herein, it appears the realisation of a democratic primary school is hindered by structures which support teacher-directed pedagogical practice as opposed to more collective and communitarian approaches to pedagogy and educational provision. This indicates the translation of education policy rhetoric into practice remains a constant challenge for schools and educators alike. Notwithstanding, Bryan (2008) contends that schools are often used as a 'scapegoat' when they do not ameliorate complex social problems. I accept Bryan's (2008) critique insofar as we cannot expect schools and educators to be *the* panacea for an apathetic and poorly equipped citizenry, however, we cannot let this notion override the fact that schools do and can play a central role in providing a citizenship education for and about democracy.

2.6.1 Locating children's citizenship participatory rights in primary school

As discussed in Chapter One, numerous authors have debated the challenges and issues associated with developing children citizenship rights, particularly in terms of their right to voice and to participate (Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Cockburn 2010; Theis 2010; Wall 2011; Rehfeld 2011; Wyness 2009, 2013^{xli}). Within an Irish context, since the State's ratification (1992) of the UN CRC, educational provision has been increasingly linked to children's right to an education and their right to be able to participate in their learning. Scholars have also looked at this in relation to primary school children's participation in Ireland and how this is facilitated through human rights education (Devine 2004, 2008; Waldron and Oberman 2016). Devine (2004) highlights that the 'traditional concepts of children's rights and schooling in Ireland have tended to focus on children's right to schooling rather than on their

rights as a group within the school system itself' (p.113). Correspondingly, Waldron and Oberman's (2016) research found that, when referring to human rights, participants did not tend to foreground participation rights, but when asked about school policy and practice, they gave clear examples of children's participation. Overall, Waldron and Oberman's (2016) noted a 'restricted scope and adult-orientated goals pertaining to the majority of participative structures' which suggests there is a limited realisation of primary school children's citizenship rights (p.756).

Concerns have also been highlighted regarding the influence children's lack of participation could have on their self-perception as active citizens at school. McSharry's (2008) study, explored secondary school students' experiences of participation and finds that some children had developed individualised notions about success which they equated to successful exam results as opposed to their participation at school^{xlii}. This raises a red flag as it suggests that older children have learned to place a different level of importance on individualistic exam outcomes rather than collective educational outcomes. Her findings raise questions insofar as; what 'kind' of citizenship values does Irish education inculcate in children? Does children's lack of opportunity to participate at school negatively influence their development of ideas about collective participation? and, what impact could this have on their willingness to participate in collective activities over individually-led ones at school?

2.7 An EU or an Irish citizenship education?

Citizenship is about creating what ought to be rather than adapting to what is. ...The essential task of citizenship is not to predict the future, it is to create it (Foróige 2018).

As I have mentioned in this Chapter^{xliii}, Irish education policy has been influenced by wider EU economic agendas since the 1970s. In terms of a citizenship education specifically, from the 1990s onwards, Irish citizenship education discourses moved away from representative forms of democracy towards more active forms of citizenship^{xliv} ideas that were espoused by EU agendas. Similarly, ideas about active citizenship as a means of engendering civic practice and social cohesion is a goal of EU citizenship aiming to 'forge a European Identity based on a set of common ideals' (Piattoeva 2009:724). The need to inculcate knowledge about Europe and European integration has remained a persistent theme in EU Citizenship Education

programmes (Keating 2009:160; Keating 2014). Therefore, what level of influence does an EU citizenship agenda have on member State's citizenship education systems?

According to Piattoeva (2009) education plays a central role in 'legitimizing the power of the state and connecting succeeding generations to the imagined community of the nation' (p.724). Due to the strong links between 'citizenship, state, and education' any changes in the conceptualisation of citizenship, state and nationhood would be expected to influence the aims/goals of citizenship education in schools (ibid: 730). Hence, citizenship education is an effective manner of examining a country's 'self-perception of states' (ibid). Correspondingly, Olson (2012) links EU constructs of citizenship to how citizenship education policy is developed in EU states. She argues, ... 'the very actuality of education as an institutionalised practice gathers influence with its alleged aims of producing well established European paternalistic orders of inclusion' (p.85; Aldenmyr et al 2012). These critiques draw our attention to the influential role supranational structures can play in the development of citizenship education policy.

Within an Irish context, Keating's (2009, 2014) examinations of the EU's influence on Irish citizenship education programmes at secondary level (CSPE), finds it has placed 'increasing significance on European issues' (p.161). Overall, Keating's (2009) analysis finds that the Irish curriculum's limited discussion of individual participation in European integration shows a 'passive mode' of EU citizenship could be formed in students' understandings of citizenship and, there is little evidence that students are encouraged to learn about EU citizenship and EU institutions (ibid: Keating 2014).

The EU's influence on Irish educational reforms is also evident at primary school level. EU-led initiatives such as 'The 'EU Blue Star Programme' (2011), was launched as an educational initiative and, is managed and coordinated by European Movement Ireland - an enterprise of the Communicating Europe Initiative. Its main objective is to 'foster a strong sense of citizenship and leadership among participants that goes far beyond the school walls and into the wider community' (Department of Education and Skills 2015; European Movement Ireland 2015). The programme is designed to be 'curriculum friendly' so teachers can fit it in with lesson plans already in place. However, there is no independent analysis of this programme's level of influence (to date) in terms of its role in engendering EU-led notions of citizenship in Ireland's youngest citizens.

2.8 Conclusions – moving children’s citizenship participation forward at school

This Chapter situates debates about children’s participatory rights at school in Ireland and, it offers a critical assessment of how 21st Century Irish children’s citizenship is evolving within the primary school system. It also sets the context for the rationale of this thesis. This is necessary to link my discussion of research findings (Chapters Three to Eight) in relation to children’s understandings of citizenship and their experiences participation at primary school.

My review of literatures highlights the disconnect between the Irish State’s educational policy discourse and its implementation into schools’ pedagogical practices that facilitate children’s participatory rights. Furthermore, primary schools - in practice – are leaning more towards an education *about* citizenship as opposed to an education *for* citizenship. Children also have little say in what they learn about and/or how they are schooled and, their opportunities to participate at school continue to be reliant upon adults’ motivation and time to facilitate, guide and support their learning process. These literatures draw our attention to the imbalance of power between adult-child relations and, children’s experiences of inequality as school-citizens which appear to remain as a hallmark of children’s participatory experiences at primary school in Ireland (Horgan 2016; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Waldron et al 2014; Devine 2003, 2004, 2009; McSharry 2008; Baker et al 2006; Baker and Lynch 2005; Deegan et al 2004; Murphy 2004; McLoughlin 2004). My analysis of literatures also suggests that the development of children’s participation as valued and recognised school-citizens continues to pose problems for students’ and teachers alike.

There are many reasons for these issues. However, a key factor identified is that school management/leadership, ethos and resources are central to how much (or little) teachers are sufficiently supported and guided in their implementation of school curricula. Other factors include: (i) overcrowded primary school curriculum puts time pressures on teachers which is not congruent with more collaborative pedagogical practices that require more time and effort than teacher-directed modes of pedagogy, (ii) the positioning and timetabling of citizenship education curriculum (SPHE) and, (iii) the importance teacher training in terms of how (and what kind of) pedagogical approach educators develop.

In response to these issues, a ‘whole systems approach’, which mainstreams participatory practices across institutional ethos, structure, and culture, has been identified as a way of addressing children’s participatory rights at school (Kirby et al 2003 and Wright et al 2006 in

Kelleher et al 2014: 48). This is not an easy process because the development, implementation and sustainability of more participatory democratic practices are fraught with pitfalls and challenges (Melton et al 2014; Malone and Hartung 2010). Malone and Hartung (2010), highlight that ‘narrow’ definitions of participation pose a challenge towards children’s participation, because their participation can only exist ‘if it is named and operated by adults in their domain’ (p.33). But what do children feel about this? And, how does existing research findings compare to their direct experiences of participation at school?

Current research has also identified a paucity of studies concerned with the exploration of how people in general understand citizenship (Lister et al 2003). Lister et al (2003) identify childhood/adolescence as a period in life ‘when the relationship to citizenship is in a state of flux’ (p.236). They argue, this makes it a ‘particularly interesting period’ to examine the changes in self-perceptions of citizenship (ibid). Calls have also been made for more child-focused ethnographical studies to ‘fully understand and appreciate how children experience citizenship and agency within the context of the cultural, economic, social and political powers that constitute their lives’ (RAPCAN 2010:14). Our knowledge deficit also raises pertinent questions about the possible long-term repercussions to children’s wellbeing in terms of how they relate to and experience the world around them (Ben-Arieh 2005).

In an Irish context, earlier research notes the scope for investigation to learn more about children’s ... ‘own understandings of diversity, and how these meanings become embedded in their everyday judgements and lived experiences’ (Deegan et al 2004: 7). Share et al (2007) also cite that ‘micro-level analysis is rare in the Irish sociology of education’ with ‘little’ space provided for children’s voices, even though they are the main consumers of education (p.218). In addition, more recent Irish-based research conducted by Waldron et al (2014), assert there is ‘little direct evidence of the implementation of citizenship education in a primary context’ (p.37; Deegan et al 2004; Holden 2006; Gilleece and Cosgrove 2012; Waldron and Oberman 2016). The GUI’s (2006 – 2019) seminal research is addressing gaps in our knowledge about children’s lives in Ireland, however there is still scope for further research to investigate children’s experiences of citizenship participation at school - as told in their own words.

Children’s opinions offer a potentially valuable source of information which should be considered in the development and implementation of more egalitarian participation policies at school. Therefore, my research with children addresses gaps in our knowledge (as

highlighted by literatures above) about children's own understandings and experiences of participation at primary school. The next Chapter discusses the methodological premise and methods I used when conducting research with younger children. Chapter Three also discusses findings in relation to: the challenges and limitations experienced during the research process, sampling and sourcing schools for participation and, gaining *and* maintaining access to children in primary schools.

Chapter Three: Methodological approaches conducting research with children

Overview

...good research should be seen as a thinking person's game. It is a creative and strategic process that involves constantly assessing, reassessing, and making decisions about the best possible means for obtaining trustworthy information, carrying out appropriate analysis, and drawing credible conclusions (O' Leary 2010: 7).

This Chapter begins with a brief description of the data I aimed to collect, my rationale for my research sampling approach and, the research methods I used to conduct this research. I provide an overview of the ontological and epistemological perspectives taken; including my justifications for taking this research position. This Chapter concludes with a reflective discussion about some key factors identified that influenced my level of access to children participants in primary schools and, children's level of participation and collaboration during this research process.

3. Introduction

This research is an exploration of 9 to 12-year-old childrens' subjective understandings and experiences of citizenship and democratic practice at primary school in Ireland. I conducted qualitative and ethnographically-led participant observations, direct observations, focus-groups, semi-structured interviews, classroom-based discussions/debates and classroom-based group work/information sessions, with children from six co-educational primary schools across Ireland [See Table 1. School Index Page 55].

Questions that framed my research aims were: 1. How do younger children 'do' citizenship as *citizen-peers* within their peer groups at school? 2. How do younger children's understandings and experiences of citizenship link to broader adult-centric notions of children's citizenship practice during childhood? 3. How is children's citizenship evident in the intersection between their citizenship participation in their peer groups at school and the structures and practices of primary education and curricular policy? 4. Do children's experiences of participation during childhood have wider impacts on the development of their citizenship practices?

This research adheres to a grounded analysis which involves a process of analytic induction (Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1965) of the data generated. Given this, I conducted an inductive analysis of children’s articulated perspectives and actions to integrate them in an explanatory model to explain children’s peer social processes as citizens (social actors). This process allowed the categories of analysis to form out of the data rather than imposing my own pre-determined interpretative framework on it. I used the MAXQDA qualitative analytical software package for intital coding and categorizing of transcripts and fieldnotes. Next, through the constant comparative method (Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1965), I simultaneously coded and analysed data from audio transcripts and fieldnotes to develop and refine explanatory concepts in order to: identify their properties, explore their relationship to one another and, to integrate them into an explanatory/conceptual model.

Existing research literatures, theories and models of citizenship, citizenship education and childhood development (discussed in Chapters One and Two) also supported my data analysis. I discuss findings in relation to these research themes in subsequent data Chapters Four to Eight [Table 1. below provides information about the six primary schools I worked with over the course of 12 months from 2016 - 2017].

Case Study No.	Pseudonym, School type, Patronage, Location, Size, Economic background, Teaching approach, Ethos	Duration, Data Collection Methods, No. and age of participants, Class year
1	<p>Pseudonym: St. Finbarr’s</p> <p>School type: Co-ed. National School</p> <p>Patronage: Catholic Church</p> <p>Location: Rural, South East</p> <p>Size: 332 pupils</p> <p>Gender breakdown: Girls:137 Boys:195</p> <p>School Demographic: Homogenous</p> <p>Socio-economic background: Low-Middle income class</p> <p>Teaching approach: Directive</p> <p>School Ethos: Catholic/Traditional</p>	<p>Duration: Jan-April 2016</p> <p>Methods: Focus groups, in class group project and participant observations</p> <p>Number of children worked with: 28</p> <p>Age of children: 9–11 years</p> <p>Class Year(s): 4th & 5th</p>
2	<p>Pseudonym: Oakfields MD</p> <p>School type: Co. Ed. Multi-denominational</p> <p>Patronage: The Patron Committee</p> <p>Location: Large Urban</p>	<p>Duration: April – May 2016</p> <p>Methods: Group Interviews, in class group project and participant observations</p>

	<p>Size: 254 pupils Gender breakdown: Not available School Demographic: Mixed ethnicity</p> <p>Socio-economic background: Middle income class</p> <p>Teaching approach: Co-operative School Ethos: Secular/Democratic</p>	<p>Number of children worked with: 28 Age of children: 9–11 years Class Year(s): 4th & 5th</p>
3	<p>Pseudonym: Hillcrest ET</p> <p>School type: Co. Ed. Educate Together Patronage: Educate Together</p> <p>Location: Urban, East Midlands Size: 224 pupils Gender breakdown: Girls: 93 Boys: 131 School Demographic: Mixed ethnicity</p> <p>Socio-economic background: Middle income class</p> <p>Teaching approach: Not Observed School Ethos: Secular/Democratic</p>	<p>Duration: October 2016</p> <p>Methods: Group Interviews</p> <p>Number of children worked with: 18 Age of children: 9–10 years Class Year(s): 4th & 5th</p>
4	<p>Pseudonym: Mary Immaculate</p> <p>School type: Co. Ed. National School Patronage: Catholic Church</p> <p>Location: Semi-rural, South East Size: 288 pupils Gender breakdown: Girls:138Boys: 150</p> <p>School Demographic: Homogenous Socio-economic background: Low - Middle income class</p> <p>Teaching approach: Not Observed School Ethos: Catholic/traditional</p>	<p>Duration: November 2016</p> <p>Methods: Group Interviews</p> <p>Number of children worked with: 41 Age of children: 9–12 years Class Year(s): 4th, 5th & 6th</p>
5	<p>Pseudonym: St. Joseph's</p> <p>School type: Co. Ed. National School Patronage: Catholic Church</p> <p>Location: Rural, South East Size: 60 pupils Gender breakdown: Girls: 25 Boys: 35 School Demographic: Homogenous Socio-economic background: Low – Middle income class Teaching approach: Directive School Ethos: Catholic/traditional</p>	<p>Duration: November – January 2017</p> <p>Methods: Participant observations and in-class group work sessions</p> <p>Number of children worked with: 18 Age of children: 9–12 years Class Year(s): 4th, 5th, & 6th</p>
6	<p>Pseudonym: St. Assumpta's</p> <p>School type: Co. Ed. National School Patronage: Catholic Church</p>	<p>Duration: January 2017</p> <p>Methods: Participant Observations</p>

<p>Location: Rural, Midlands South East Size: 175 pupils Gender breakdown: Girls: 92 Boys: 83 School Demographic: Homogenous</p> <p>Socio-economic background: Low – Middle income class Teaching approach: Directive School Ethos: Catholic/traditional</p>	<p>Number of children worked with: 25 Age of children: 9-11 years Class Year(s): 4th & 5th</p>
--	---

Table 1. School Information Index

3.1 Ways of knowing - Ontological and Epistemological Approach

This research follows the philosophical perspectives of interpretivism and constructivism. These paradigms adhere to the notion that ‘social reality is socially constructed’ by humans (Schutt 2012:86; O’ Leary 2010). This notion is also premised on the understanding;

Meaning does not inhere in the object, merely waiting for someone to come upon it...meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Crotty 1998: 42-43).

Peoples’ knowledge and ‘truth is ambiguous, fluid and relative’ (O’ Leary 2010: 5; Schutt 2012). I adhere to the view that children ‘interact and engage in interpretation’ to reach an understanding of what ‘exists’ in their social worlds and how they understand and categorise these things (Schutt 2012). Researchers are also ‘products of society’ (O’ Leary 2010: 30). I applied a reflexive approach when gathering and analysing data which takes the view that researchers’ world views are ‘value bound’ (ibid; Emond 2005; Green and Hill 2005; Warming 2011; Spyrou 2011; Soffer and Ben-Arieh 2014). Emond (2005) notes that it is a ‘difficult task’ for researchers to help young children to understand that ethnographically-led ... ‘interactions and activities is a different form of surveillance’ (p.126). I acknowledge I could never separate myself from being an adult. To mitigate against this, I remained cognisant about the issue of surveillance and adult-power throughout my research with children and I spent as much time as possible building rapport and trust with my research participants. I reiterated and explained to participating children why I was at their school and what I was doing to counterbalance any uncomfortable feelings they may have experienced due to my presence and social position.

3.2 Feminist viewpoints - reflexivity and research methodologies

Children's unique views and experiences of our social world and the practices which go on inside of it can: 1. help adults to better understand what *children's* lived realities as citizens feels like and, 2. provide new insights into the impacts the processes of social reproduction have on wider society. Therefore, I chose a qualitative and ethnographically-led methodological design, which is more appropriate for exploring people's, reasoning, motivations, opinions and subjective experiences at a deeper level (Snape and Spencer 2003; Green and Hill 2005; Watson and Till 2009; O' Leary 2010; Schutt 2012). The qualitative tradition also ... 'appreciates subjectivities, accepts multiple perspectives and realities, recognizes power of research on both participants and researchers' (O' Leary 2010:113; Richie et al 2003; Greene and Hill 2005).

In addition, a Feminist approach defined my role as a reflexive researcher which allowed me to unpick the notion that the 'fundamental characteristics of people regardless of their history or social context' are an innate consequence of their 'human nature' and bound by natural laws (May 2001: 18). Feminist perspectives also recognise the position of marginalised and powerless people, such as children, in society. According to May (2001) socially relegated positions are ... 'not a natural phenomenon, but a social, political and economic product... perpetuated by the bias of "science"' (p.19). Therefore, Feminist methodology identifies the non-mutual exclusivity of 'reason and emotion', whereby ideas of 'disengagement' or the cool objective reserve of the researcher are tactics, which are strongly criticised and are a 'mythical aim' (May 2001:21; Edmond 2005; Harding 1987). This notion of reflexivity during the research process infers that the experiences of both the researcher and the researched are equally important. As such, the reflexive feminist-led epistemological approach I adopted allowed me to 'operate from both an oppressed position as a woman and a privileged position as [an adult] scholar' (May 2001: 22; Harding 1987). I adhered to a core aim of Feminist methodologies which is that they produce non-biased, or 'distorted descriptions, explanations, and understandings' (Harding 1987:11-12) of participant's meaning-making of their social worlds.

I understand that my position as a researcher and the assumptions 'social constructivism' and 'subjectivism' which I worked under also affected this research process. These epistemologies informed my research approach and methodologies throughout. I acknowledge that my own

subjectivity about children's social realities did not always align with *their* 'truths' and 'reality' about their social worlds. I was cognizant of my own childhood experiences of powerlessness and, my ideas about what are 'right' and 'wrong' pedagogical approaches, so as not to overemphasise or underemphasise the aspects of children's voices that were more congruent with my own subjectivities. As such, I am aware my positionality as a researcher could have undue impacts on the credibility of my research conclusions. Yet, my reflective approach to my research enabled me to 'think' my way through this process and to keep my internal biases in-check.

The Feminist methodological approach also informs my analysis of citizenship as a contested concept (Roche 1999; Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Lister 2003, 2007, 2008; Moosa-Mitha 2005). It allowed me to consider 'traditional' notions of citizenship in non-androcentric terms. This research counter-poses the traditional *androcentric* perspective that deems women as being 'passive objects' (Eichler 1988 in May 2001:20). Chapter Two, extends this notion to children's position as citizens in society, whereby I discussed research literatures that highlight how adult-centric bias about children's 'best interests' frequently renders them as passive as opposed to active social actors (citizens). Feminist critiques of traditional notions of citizenship also locates children's social and political position as citizens in terms of being 'acted upon' rather than as active agents (ibid; Lister 2003,2007, 2008; James 2011; Larkins 2014; Olsson 2017).

3.2.1 Operationalising elements of children's citizenship participation

Several conceptualisations have been offered to define the Citizen-Child (Doek 2008) and children's citizenship participation such as; 'citizens-in-the-making' (Marshall 1950), 'childist' citizenship (Wall 2011), 'demi-citizenship' (Lister 2007), 'semi-citizens' (Cohen 2005), 'child-sized' citizenship (Jans 2004), 'Apprentice citizens' (Wyness et al 2004) and 'human becomings' (Ennew 2000 in Golombeck 2006). I predominately refer to Lister's (2003,2007,2008) ideas about children's citizenship. Lister's (2008) Feminist-led approach, unpacks 'the building blocks' of citizenship - in terms of citizens' membership, rights, responsibilities, and equality of status, respect and recognition – to examine if they 'accommodate' children's citizenship (p.9, 10-13). I then use this as a frame of reference to explore the relationship between 'elements' of children's citizenship practice at school which I observed in terms of their: Membership, Status, Belonging, Agency and Identity as 'present'

citizens (Moosa-Mitha 2005) [Fig. 2. Below provides an illustration of the relationship between the core elements of children's citizenship].

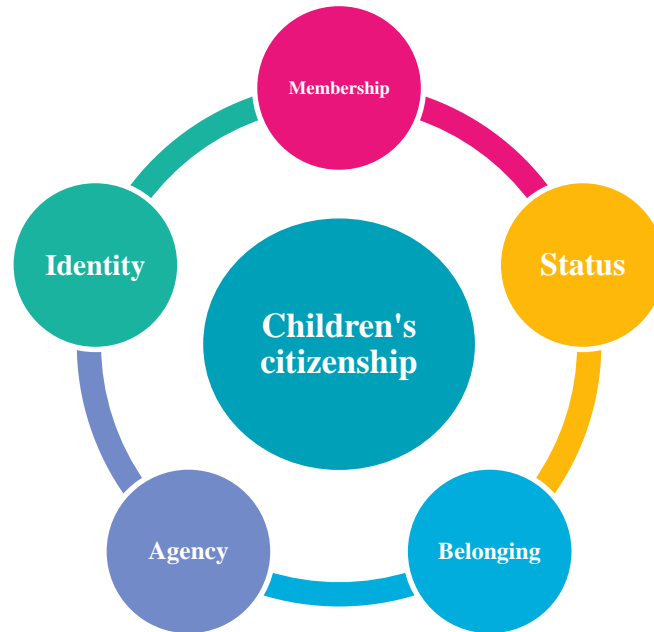


Fig. 2. The relationship between the core elements of children's citizenship

This reference frame also helped me to identify how these elements of children's citizenship are impacted upon in terms of their social positioning as citizens and, the affects this has on their opportunities as a social group to participate in democratic practices at school and, as individuals within their peer group.

I recognise **membership** as a state of belonging to a member of a group/community. I see children as members (*citizen-peers*) of their peer group which I conceptualise as a form of *Citizenship Polis*^{xlv}.

Children's citizenship **status** is largely diminished during childhood. Status is linked to an individuals' ability to exert their influence within different social contexts. When status is diminished, the right for agency and autonomy are also limited.

Belonging is strongly associated with membership. An individual is connected to a group/community. Group members share a sense of belonging to or ownership of their collective. This also reinforces the extent to which individuals identify as a member of a group/community, thus, children are members of their peer groups and of their school community.

Children have very limited **agency** to enact their participatory rights during childhood. This is compounded by their diminished status as citizens, which is indicated by their lack of opportunity to participate in democratic processes (such as decision making) at school and in their wider community.

I associate **identity** with children's self-conceptualisation as citizens. Identity is closely linked to a sense of belonging and membership. People often 'identify' with others who are involved, or members of, a group/community/nationality. Children also identify with their national, sporting^{xlvi} and their peer group cultures.

All these 'elements' of children's citizenship are strongly related to their opportunity to participate as citizens during childhood. Several authors (Hart 1992; Lister 2003, 2007, 2008; Larkins 2014 and Olsson 2017; Devine and Cockburn 2018^{xlvii}) have offered conceptualisations of forms of citizenship participation;

Participation is ... 'the expression of one's agency in the multiple relationships within which citizens are present in society' (Moosa-Mitha 2005: 375).

There is 'no universal definition of children's participation' - adults need to be cognisant of children's different criterion of what 'it means to participate' for them (Malone and Hartung 2010: 26-27). Nonetheless, for the purposes of clarity and continuity I adhere to Moosa-Mitha's (2005) and Horgan et al's (2015) respective definitions of participation which encapsulate my conceptualisation of children's citizenship participation;

The concept of participation can be usefully described, then, as a democratic task which is difference-centred, acted out in private and public spaces individually and collectively, but is essentially a relational space, where children's play, education, and work all are considered acts of participation (Horgan et al 2015:3).

3.3 Reflections about research with younger children

Research which values children's participation is necessary to develop their opportunities to contribute to the social fabric of our social worlds (Green and Hogan 2005; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Melton et al 2014). Existing literatures highlight the potential research limitations and challenges (methodological and ethical) which need to be considered when conducting research with younger participants (Delamont 2002; Warming 2011; Einarsdottir 2013; Dunn 2015; Horgan 2017^{xlvi}). Delamont (2002) and Croll (1986) respectively look at social context in relation to conducting fieldwork from within formal educational settings. My research experiences also highlight that the combination of conducting research with young children within the formal social context of the primary school is peppered with challenges and issues. As part of my reflexive approach to this research process, I now discuss the challenges and issues I experienced out in the field in terms of: 3.4 mediating power relations during research (Spyrou 2011; Einarsdottir 2013, Dunn 2015; Christensen et al 2008), 3.5 the researcher's role (Thorne 1993; Corsaro 2006; Mayall 2008; Warming 2011), 3.6 research sampling (O' Leary 2010; Schutt 2012; Yin 2009), 3.7 gaining and maintaining access; gatekeepers' power and control in relation to children's participation (Leonard 2007; Árnadóttir and Kristinsdóttir 2016) 3.8 data collection methods - benefits, challenges and limitations (Malone and Hartung 2010; Soffer and Ben-Arieh 2014) and, 3.8 the ethics of researching with children (Green and Hill 2005; Alderson and Morrow 2011; Soffer and Ben-Arieh 2014).

3.4 Mediating power relations during research with children

...listening to children makes us reconsider some of the habits we have taken for granted (Cullingford 1991 in Jones 1995: 190).

Spyrou (2011), Einarsdottir (2013) and Dunn (2015), highlight some limitations and challenges in relation to power and hearing children's voices during adult-led research. Dunn (2015) draws our attention to the issue of 'an oversimplified view of the child and listening' (p.395). She refers to Rinaldi (2001) who highlights a key skill in any sociological analysis is the ability to listen, to hear and to try to understand. Listening is not a passive endeavour, rather it is an action that 'involves giving...meaning to the message and value to those who are being listened to' (in Dunn 2015: 396; Watson and Till 2009). Dunn (2015) highlights the importance of recognising listening as 'an active verb' which is more appropriate for accessing children's

views (p.396). I applied this approach towards listening to more effectively hear what children had to say about their experiences.

Spyrou (2011) also draws attention to the issue of adult's representation of children's voices in research. He asserts that researchers need to familiarise themselves with these discourses to 'fully appreciate the social and cultural significance of children's voices' as well as acknowledging their role as a reflective reproducer of children's voices (p.160). Likewise, Jones (1995) reminds us that we must be cognisant of the fact that '[u]ltimately we read behind what the child tells us' (p.189) which could also be a methodological limitation of research with children.

Lizzio et al (2011) note that more qualitative methodologies' and methods may bring forth 'greater insight' into childrens' 'lived experiences' (p.99). I aimed to listen to children's voices with intent and to mindfully represent their voices from their vantage point and perspective. My rationale was to illuminate the way(s) in which their social worlds and forms of citizenship practices interacted with the social, cultural and political practices at primary school and, to give children some time and space to express their opinions and feelings [See Appendices [12-16] for copies of worksheets and Appendix [5] for sample interview questions].

I aimed to ensure - as much as possible - that my interpretation of these children's voices was *their* truth and not my own (O' Leary 2010). For instance, Smyth et al (2014) assert that 'critical' ethnographically-led research facilitates young voices to speak back to adult power. They look at this in the context of formal education, and refer to a term 'voiced research', which they argue ... 'involves "listening with intent" to what young people themselves have to say to "gain insider understanding" about students' lifeworlds' (p.45). I also ascribed to this philosophy during my research. For example, I asked participants if I could record our group work sessions, group-interview and focus groups. I explained to participating children that I wanted to listen back over what we had discussed to ensure I could hear *exactly* what they had said. At the end of each interview/focus group and recorded group work sessions, participants had some time to listen back over excerpts of our session. Our recordings provided participants with an endorsement that I would indeed listen back to what they said and take a considered account of their opinions. I add, it also encouraged myself as the researcher and participating children to be self-reflective during and after the research process (Spyrou 2011; Soffer and Ben-Arieh 2014).

In addition, I was cognisant of other power relations and contexts such as children's peer power and the influence this had on how I collected my data at my respective case studies. Hill (2006) addresses this issue as part of his ethical considerations when researching with children. He asserts, it is 'an oversimplification to suggest that all power resides with the researcher' (ibid: 63). My research experience reflects this, and, at times it was apparent that I was not the person with *all* the power. For instance, during a focus group with children from St. Finbarr's [See Table 1. Page 55 School Information Index], peer leaders consistently tried to influence how other children in the group responded. These children appeared more intent on disrupting the flow of the focus group. This led me to ascertain firstly, these more *powerful* children were more confident to make use of their teacher's absence from the group, and secondly, they capitalised on the non-authoritative least adult role I had adopted.

On another occasion at St. Finbarr's, I observed this groups' rebellious classroom strategies which they used to shape an activity into something they found more fun [See Appendix [4] - I interpreted this as a form of *Collective Social Action (CSA)* which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Six]. Nevertheless, children's ability to engage in this form of participation was largely constrained due to the research setting, which was not predisposed to organic and unstructured activities. I see this as having a direct impact on the how the children participated during the research process. I was mindful of this and I tried to mitigate the power relations between myself and participants and between themselves and their peers. As a researcher during the research process, I constantly had to mediate between two social worlds, each with their own set of norms and values.

3.5 The researcher's role – a balancing act between two social worlds

The primary school is a formal place which is inherently imbued with adult power and control. Even though children significantly out number adults, the school remains a zone of adult-centric operation. I had to negotiate a space within this place as both a capable adult researcher and as a 'visitor/helper' to the school. However, adopting a 'least adult role' (Warming 2011) helped to counter the asymmetrical power imbalance between myself and these children. From this perspective 'the researcher makes an effort to participate in the children's everyday lives in as childlike a way as possible' (Warming 2011: 42; Mandell 1991; Thorne 1993; Mayall 2008; Christensen and James 2008). Warming (2011) refers to a means of achieving a 'critical sociological empathy' with children's experiences. She asserts this is significant in assessing

and representing children's perspectives in a sound and ethical way, which considers the diverse positions occupied by children within society (ibid). According to Warming (2011), this reflective insight provided her with a 'tacit knowledge' about taken-for-granted norms of appropriate behaviour...acquired unconsciously through participation in and observation of everyday practices' (ibid: 46; Thorne 1993; Qvortrup 1994; Curtin 2000; Corsaro 2006; Mayall 2008). Throughout, I aimed to adhere to Warmings's (2011) reflective approach towards data collection with children to mitigate against any adult-centric internal bias or preconceived ideas I had about children's social practices at school.

Some participants^{xlix} gradually became familiar with my position as a non-authoritarian figure in their school, which was due to my 'least adult' stance. Through my actions I tried to reinforce that I was neither the 'go-to person' when they wanted permission to do something nor was I 'in charge' of what they did at school. Some of the children picked up on my social cues more readily than others which I tried to reinforce by behaving and acting in the following ways; sitting at a child's table and chair in class, wearing causal clothes such as jeans, t-shirts and trainers and lining up with children as they waited to go back into class after break times. In addition, I made no attempt to tell the children what to do or to keep order over the class when the teacher was not present. I also joined in their games, when I was invited by them, during breaktimes. Whenever appropriate, I verbally reiterated my non-authoritarian role to participating children.

Nevertheless, the least adult role as a methodological stance when working with children has also received criticism. Christensen and James (2008) and, Greene and Hill (2005) respectively assert it is not possible to dissolve inherent adult power during research. This aligns with Soffer et al's (2014) view who highlight a limitation with this strategy and they assert it may 'involve ethical and moral complications...if the researcher is the only adult around' (p.567) [See appendix [11] for an excerpt of my fieldnotes which illustrates my own experiences of ethical/moral dilemmas during participant observations at St. Finbarr's].

Even though I tried to keep my adult-centric persona in-check as much as possible, children frequently pointed out to me when I was not 'behaving' the way an adult should. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes demonstrates this;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

'Little Break' had finished and Fiona (class teacher) had not yet returned to the classroom. I was left alone for a few moments with the class (30 kids) who became very noisy and rowdy. One of the more confident girls (Emer) instructed me to tell the rest of the class to; 'be quiet!'. I replied; 'No, I won't, I'm not the teacher'. Emer responded exasperatedly; 'But you're an adult!'

Emer¹ 'expected' and 'wanted' me to behave as 'normal adults' are supposed to. She subsequently became one of my 'gatekeepers' and she was part of the group of girls at St. Finbarr's who would recount what happened at school during my absences. This suggests my lack of 'normal' adult behaviour did not negatively impact on my rapport building with Emer, or at least it did not impact on her inference of me as someone she could possibly trust. I maintain, my decision to adopt the least adult role helped me to: 1. develop and maintain a good level of rapport with children. 2. facilitate my reflexive analysis of field notes which assisted me in rooting my findings in children's understandings of their social worlds. 3. Furthermore, my reflexive approach to conducting participant observations, group-interviews, group work sessions and focus group sessions helped me to be mindful of my own interviewer bias when working with children (O' Leary 2010; Schutt 2012; Delamont 2002).

To children, I largely remained as an unknown quantity; the 'other'. I often had to strike a balance between not unsettling my adult gatekeepers (who I depended upon to facilitate my participant observations with children in class), whilst maintaining the rapport I worked hard to build between myself and the children (who were also gatekeepers) as I did not want them to believe I was in allegiance with their teacher. On occasion, I also found it difficult to keep an objective stance when I witnessed incidences where I felt adults in authority treated children unfairly. The fieldnote excerpt below describes an incident where I openly questioned a teacher's authority in front of a group of children and upset this balance;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

There was another heated debate between some of the girls and boys as they waited in line to get back on the bus after swimming lessons (same as last week). ... The arguing continued between the two lines, they were getting louder and more agitated, so I suggested they pick a number between 1 – 10 to decide who should go first. Gina (9), suggested that Anna (5th class) guess the number as she was considered to be the most honest. Anna picked a number and told three others her number to validate her

choice. It was decided that the girl and boy who were first in line each would go head-to-head to guess the number Anna picked. The boys went along with this up to the point when the correct number was guessed by Nickie. The boys argued the process was not fair. I tried to mediate between the groups and banter went back and forth until Ms. B arrived. Each of the lines instantly made their plea to her. She flippantly said, 'Boys go first'. Nickie immediately protested that it wasn't fair, and she attempted to tell Ms. B how they were trying to sort out who should get to go first. Ms. B responded directly to Nickie; 'You don't get to decide'. Nickie looked crest fallen and turned to me for a reaction. I tried to explain to Ms. B, but she reiterated to Nickie, 'You don't get to decide'.

My actions here risked alienating an adult gatekeeper, which I depended upon to allow me access to these children during my research. However, I maintain my questioning of adult authority in this instance was in keeping with the 'least adult role' (Warming 2011) I adopted during my work with children. For instance, I found some children^{li} reciprocated my attempts to build rapport with them by divulging information to me about the things which mattered to them at school and, about what had happened when I was not there. In some of our conversations they openly expressed frustration about their lack of autonomy and control over the injustices they experienced at school. I suspect they did not tell other adults at the school about some of the issues they told me about which were in relation to other teachers at their school. For example, Kelly (9, St. Finbarr's) said during a group conversation with other girls from her class; 'Caitriona is easy to talk to cause she knows how we feel'. This suggests that I had built up a good level of trust with some children at St. Finbarr's. However, maintaining a foothold between two social worlds (childrens' and adults') in the school-setting posed challenges and issues around upholding validity during this research process.

3.6 Research sampling rationale, processes and limitations

...children are not all the same, rather they are a group of diverse individuals whose experiences and realities are equally diverse (Greene and Hill 2005: 3).

Children are 'experts' about their own lives (James et al 1998; Green and Hill 2005; Soffer et al 2014). Each child who participated in this research was respected and seen as 'a unique and valued experiencer' (Green and Hill 2005: 3) of her/his social world framed within the social context of the primary school.

The school is a key social ‘habitat’ (Jones 1995: 6). Therefore, I chose the school as a social site for investigation for three key reasons: 1. I recognise the school as a micro nation-state. Schools are key socialising agents and disseminators of wider social, cultural and political norms and values (Drudy and Lynch 1993; Lodge and Lynch 2004; Baker et al 2006; Devine 2009; James 2011; Kustatscher 2016) and, they potentially can be zones of democratic participation and practice (Dewey 1963; Robinson and Aronica 2015; Davies et al 2014; Smyth, Down and McInerney 2014; Horgan et al 2015). 2. Education policy and practice greatly inform the way schools and educators engage with children throughout their school lives. Furthermore, governmental policies generally reflect how a society provides for its citizens’ needs ... ‘through structures and systems of distribution, redistribution, regulation, provision and empowerment’ (QAAHE 2007 in Lister 2010:23; Baker et al 2006). This is a relevant point in respect of how educational policy does or does not provide for our youngest citizens. 3. Schools have direct access to a rich and potentially valuable database of qualitative information. This data bank comprises of children’s ideas and opinions which could help us to develop school practices that are more in-sync with what matters most to children at school.

I specifically chose to work with children from the ages of 9 – 12 because this age group are frequently overlooked during research consultations (Horgan 2017; Horgan et al 2015; Quinn et al 2014; Smyth et al 2014; Lizzio et al 2011, Devine 2004). Furthermore, this age group represents a key developmental stage in a child’s life; they are on the cusp of adolescence. I was interested in exploring how children at this age appropriate information from the adult world and the influence this has on their citizenship practice. In addition, I reasoned it was more likely to gain access into a class that was neither a Communion or Confirmation class as these years are generally less accessible due to the time commitment expected from teachers to prepare children for religious ceremonies which are specific to Ireland.

Initially, I planned to conduct an in-depth case study of a primary school over the course of a year to allow me to ‘delve into the detail’ (O’ Leary 2010; Yin 2009) of the social processes of children’s interactions school. However, I was unable to source a school that was willing to grant me access for a sustained period. This meant that I had to revert to an alternative sampling strategy. Consequently, I choose a purposive snowball sampling technique, and through my extended social networks, I sourced six different primary schools that were willing to allow me access for shorter periods. Yet, to build trust and rapport with the children and the class

teacher, I needed as much time as possible at each respective case and I acknowledge that the amount of time and level of access I was afforded at each school contributed towards the validity of the data collected (O’Leary 2010:173-174; Yin 2009).

In light of the fact that I was unable to source a single case for extended study, I chose to conduct studies from multiple sites to try to ensure my sample of schools were as representative as possible [See Table 1. Page 55 School Information Index]. I ensured the schools I worked within comprised of a mix of co-educational National Schools (NS) and Educate Together schools (ET) (also known as Multidenominational schools MD) in rural and urban areas. According to The Department of Education and Skills (2015), there are ‘3,137’ primary schools aided by the state in the republic of Ireland. NS under the patronage of the Catholic Church make up approximately ‘90%’ of this total (Department of Education and Skills 2013)^{lii}. There are currently ‘91’ ET primary schools operating in Ireland (Educate Together 2018^{liiii}). My selection of ET/MD primary schools for study was also premised on the understanding that children are a diverse group of individuals who come from a range of social and cultural backgrounds (Greene and Hill 2005).

I defined the boundaries of the schools for study to characterise the class of “elements” (O’Leary 2010: 175) I wanted to explore which were primary schools (social institutions) and children’s (social processes) interactions and experiences of schooling. I subdivided the characteristics of each respective school to accommodate this. Firstly, I defined the people I wanted to look at, which were 9 to 12-year-old girls and boys attending full-time formal primary education in Ireland. I focused on co-educational schools to ensure both genders subjective realities were equally accounted for. Secondly, I defined the social institutions, which were co-educational primary schools, in receipt of state funding and delivered the same NCCA (1999) RPC. Other core definitive ‘elements’ I wanted to take account of were schools’; managerial structure, patronage, economic and sociodemographic area, geographical setting (urban/rural), size, cultural demographic of its population, and teacher: pupil ratio. Thirdly, as previously discussed, I used a non-probability purposive snowball sampling technique (Schutt 2012; O’Leary 2010; Ritchie et al 2003).

My sample selection process takes account of the credibility of non-random selection of schools for study which can be attained if this is conducted with a mind to represent the wider population (O’Leary 2010). This ensures the schools I identified for study matched the defined

characteristics of the population chosen for study (ibid). O' Leary (2010) also acknowledges that purposive selection of case studies is criticised on the basis that it is not 'statistically assessed for representativeness' (p.168). However, my research does not aim to generate findings, which can be generalised for the wider population. Rather, my research methodologies aim to create new insights and understandings into the social actions of the Citizen-Child at school and, to foreground children's often marginalised, misrepresented and unheard voices. My findings could also provide 'lessons learned,' which may be applicable when exploring larger population samples within similar contexts (O' Leary 2010:39). Furthermore, I assert that the 'multisite studies' I conducted research in, could also add more validity because the information I gathered was on a first-hand basis. Therefore, my data has a veracity which mitigates somewhat against the lack of generalisability of my findings (Schutt 2012:160).

In addition, I considered the factor of unwitting bias and I tried to be aware of my own biases throughout the research selection process. I understand that bias can seriously undermine the validity of research findings. Sampling error was also considered during the process of finding suitable schools for participation (Schutt 2012). I tried to ensure that any primary school I identified was in-line with the characteristics I had defined for study. Furthermore, I was cognisant of erroneous assumptions and I remained vigilant of incorrect assumptions about the characteristics of 'elements' I defined for study. I recognise this is a factor which has serious implications for the validity of my research findings (O Leary 2010: 168-169).

3.7 Adult gatekeeper's influences over gaining and maintaining access

As previously highlighted, gaining and maintaining access in primary schools was a protracted process which was characterised by ethical concerns, time limitations and restricted access. I applied a tripartite approach to address some of these issues. Firstly, I established a trustworthy relationship with the school principal, after which I obtained the informed consent from the school principal, management (and subsequently the class teachers). Secondly, I obtained informed assent from *all* children from the participating classrooms (chosen by the school principal). Thirdly, I obtained the informed consent from *all* participating children's parents/guardians. These procedures took place prior to any research taking place.

An additional challenge was the level of power and control held by adult gatekeepers. Others have also highlighted gatekeeper power and control as a substantial challenge for researchers

when conducting research with children (Árnadóttir and Kristinsdóttir 2016; Leonard 2007). For example, Árnadóttir and Kristinsdóttir's (2016)^{liv} research highlighted that adult gatekeepers would like to be more involved in the research process and that they expressed doubt about the researcher's ability to work with children. They contend that gatekeepers' concerns are in part due to lack of communication between researchers and gatekeepers, and an overemphasis on protection over participation on the part of gatekeepers (ibid).

My experiences of gatekeeper power and control affected four key areas of this research: 1. **Sourcing schools** that were willing to allow me access to conduct research with children, the level of access I was granted to engage with children, how much they were facilitated to participate and, the modes of data collection I could use posed a challenge throughout. For instance, at Oakfields MD [See Table 1. Page 55 School Information Index], I was originally granted access by the school principal and the participating teachers to work with 4th, 5th and 6th class children. However, two 6th class children's parents subsequently did not consent to their child's participation. Therefore, in adherence with ethical protocol, I had to abandon any work with the other children in this 6th class (Oakfields MD). 2. **Adult gatekeeper's facilitation** varied across case studies. Overall, the level of facilitation offered by teachers - indicated by the amount of time/opportunities I was granted to engage with participating children - was very curtailed. My restricted access had a knock-on effect on the amount of data and the diversity of findings from some schools. For instance, at one school in particular, an adult gatekeeper's prohibitive level of access meant I was not granted sufficient time or opportunity to work with the children and to build rapport with them. I foresaw this would have compromised the validity of the data gathered at this case study, therefore, it was necessary to cut-short my time at this school than originally scheduled. 3. **Adults' influence over children's responses** to group-interview questions also interfered with their level (and manner) of participation in the research. For instance, I noticed some children used the same words, terminology and phrases to answer my questions; Who is a citizen? and What does a good citizen do? I assumed this group had been 'prepared' beforehand by their teacher. My intuition was confirmed when a child divulged, they had been told 'stuff about citizenship' which they had not talked about before in class. I was glad my presence at this school had prompted the teacher to engage in a more focused manner about what citizenship means. However, I was frustrated by the effect this inadvertently had on some of these children's

answers. I suspected they were sometimes reciting what they had been ‘told’ to say about ‘citizenship’.

I acknowledge this situation could pose a validity issue with some of these children’s answers, which I was cognisant of when analysing my data from these sessions. This issue is a finding in itself because it reveals some gatekeepers felt the need to tweak or to control for children’s answers even when they were not present. This also illuminates broader issues about how adults’ necessity to control can inadvertently undermine research data and impact on children’s right to voice their own unfettered opinions without adult interference.

Therefore, adult gatekeeper’s role during the research process highlights a broader query in relation to schools’ willingness to facilitate children’s participation in research which could prove to be a worthwhile endeavour for everyone involved. This also raises questions about how much of a say these children had in being ‘allowed’ or ‘not allowed’ to take part in this research. I directly asked each child for their assent^{lv} to participate which they all readily gave. Yet, I strongly suspect if adults decided against facilitating this research (no matter how interested the children were in participating) they still would not have been facilitated to do so. This issue is indicated by the access issues I faced at schools, whereby some parents denied their consent for their child’s participation. As a result, I was unable to conduct participant observations at three schools. Equally, some children may not want to participate, but again, whether they should or should not participate is ultimately decided upon by adults.

3.8 Data collection methods - benefits, challenges and limitations

Methods need to fall from questions (O’ Leary 2010:92).

The data collection stage of my research endeavoured to be a collaborative process between myself and the participants. This approach was challenging because of the social context of this research and the subsequent time constraints and access issues it posed. Children’s level of in-pu was often limited in terms of deciding upon topics for discussion during classroom-based group work.

According to Soffer and Ben-Arieh (2014) the researcher’s choice of methods is embedded in their vantage point considering childhood and children’ (p.558). Furthermore, Christensen and James (2008) assert, it is not merely the types of ‘methods *per se*’ that makes research child-participant friendly, but rather it is the ‘practices that resonate with children’s own concerns

and routines' (p.9). This notion informed my decision to use ethnographically-led participant observations, focus group, group-interviews and group work sessions. These modes of data collection have already been identified as among the most appropriate tools for unearthing qualitative information from research participants (Emond 2005; Soffer and Ben-Arieh 2014; Schutt 2012; O' Leary 2010; Lewis et al 2003; Mayall 2008; Christensen and James 2008). Methods such as: semi-structured group-interviews, focus groups and group work sessions give freedom and breath for participants to express their subjective experiences. Likewise, Dunn (2015) refers to Clark and Moss' (2001) 'Mosaic approach' which involves several research methods such as; observations, map making, role play and photography, as a means of listening to children's views both verbally and non-verbally (in Dunn 2015:397; Alderson and Morrow 2011). I adhered to this methodological approach as much as was practicable within the confines of the school classroom. For instance, as a map-making exercise, I facilitated a 'Time Capsule' project with children from Oakfields MD. As part of this project I asked this cohort to write a letter to themselves^{lvi} which they could read before they moved on to secondary school.

3.8.1 Mediating situation bias during research with children

Talk, like documents, is produced in a context, and the researcher has to be constantly aware of these contexts (Delamont 2002: 126-127).

My first point of contact with research participants occurred when I was introduced to them by their teachers/school principal. This introduction was facilitated by adults in authority and it set the relationship-tone before I even began the research process. I understand the rationale for this approach; children trust their teacher and her/his presence during my introduction could help put them at ease. Yet, this approach could prompt normative responses from some children. Jones (1995), for instance, notes that children 'seem to participate in an adult-approved "script"', which is certainly the case in the social context of the school (p.191). Children, 'for the most part, like to please adults, and adults, for the most part, like to hear that children are enjoying school' (Jackson in Jones 1995: 191). In addition, most children want adults to believe that they are grown-up and have acquired an adult wisdom about things, which also influences the kinds of responses children give to adults' questions^{lvii}.

For example, at St. Finbarr's^{lviii}, I facilitated a class debate between the children which was largely about the differences between what children and adults can do. I noted some of the more vocal children tailored their answers and questions to suit what they perceived would be regarded as acceptable responses by their teacher who was present throughout this session. This suggests some of these children were acutely attuned to what is and is not perceived as acceptable behaviour in this social context. I also infer, children had a sense of loyalty to their teacher and they did not want to let her down by saying something they thought she would disapprove of. In this incidence, this social dynamic impacted on how children chose to respond to my questions which infers they sometimes said what they thought I (or other adults) would like to hear as opposed to what they thought themselves.

To overcome the pitfall of situation specific biases creeping into the children's responses, I incorporated other modes of collecting data such as focus groups and group-interviews, as well as engaging with children outside of the classroom setting. All these interactions were conducted in the absence of the class teacher. Furthermore, I reiterated to children that I wanted them to tell me what they thought; I was looking for *their* opinions and feelings - not adults'. I also encouraged children not to worry about saying the 'wrong' thing because there was (is) no wrong answer to my questions. Children's body language suggested they appreciated my 'permission' to be honest and more open; arms were unfolded, and they sat back in their chairs. To appease any concerns, they may have had about me telling what they said to their teacher, I assured them only myself and my supervisors would have access to what they told me. In addition, I promised to uphold participants' anonymity by using a fake name if I quoted anything they said. I gave this reassurance before I turned on the recorder, to give children an opportunity to say anything they may not have wanted recorded on tape.

3.8.2 'Child-friendly' data collection methods

Children's language and words expressed during group-interviews opens a ... 'window to the ways children structure and categorize experience, communicate culture, and construct reality' (Saywitz and Camparo 2014: 376).

Warming (2011) asserts that first-hand accounts of children's perspectives 'only represent snapshots of children's multiple and fluid perspectives' (Warming 2011: 49). She also notes that first-hand accounts are generally orally given, which benefits children who are verbally articulate over those who express themselves in other ways (ibid). Therefore, it is advisable to

use a mix of data collection methods when working with children such as, drama, art, drawing, photography (Soffer et al 2014; Warming 2011; Christensen and James 2008). However, Warming (2011) asserts this does not necessarily solve the issue that language remains the leading form of communication and representation, ‘which is reflected in the fact that these apparently inclusive activities are typically used as tools to promote or supplement verbal expression’ (p.49; Christensen and James 2008). This concurs with Christensen and James (2008) who refer to ‘participatory rural appraisal’ (PRA) research methods, which were ‘originally developed to help people with limited literacy or verbal skills’ (p.158). They assert, simple resources are used during this method, which encourages techniques that are generally seen as ‘empowering’ as ‘through their use people whose views rarely get heard are enabled to express them and are provided with a medium through which to “speak”’ (ibid). Likewise, Soffer and Ben-Arieh (2014) assert that ‘child-friendly techniques’ are also useful methods for addressing the unequal power relations between adults and children and therefore they ‘elicit children’s perspective’ (p.563).

I also used ‘child-friendly techniques’, whenever possible, to off-set my power as a researcher and to make the data collection methods more inclusive for children who were not verbally confident. For example, I used methods such as ‘sentence completion’ (Nelson and Quintana 2005 and Punch 2000 in Soffer et al 2014: 562), ‘worksheets’ (Punch 2000 in ibid), ‘play and games’ (Nelson and Quintana 2005 in ibid) and, ‘draw and write’ (Banister and Booth 2005 in ibid).

A child’s life at school is parceled out in specific units of time and any activity which bleeds out of its allotted slot and into another is not well facilitated in the formal primary school setting. Consequently, I did not have enough opportunity to decide how I could engage with children within the school environment which is bound by hierarchal relational structures and processes. It was a challenge to facilitate opportunities for children to participate in ways which meant they were not overly constrained by time. Children’s inputs and suggestions were respected, but I acknowledge I was driving the research frame and processes even though I made every effort to facilitate their involvement as much as possible.

3.8.3 Limitations - validity and reliability of data from younger children

Is there anyone who can recover the experience of childhood, not merely with the memory of what he did and what happened to him, what he liked and disliked... but with an intimate penetration, a revived consciousness of what he felt like then – when it was so long from one Midsummer to another (George Eliot 1903 in Hill 2006: 62).

Children are experts about their own life experiences. Their memories and recollections of childhood are current and tangible in comparison to adults' memories about their long past experiences of childhood. Existing research identifies three core arguments for employing children as information sources in research: 1. Only children know what it feels like to be a child and therefore they are the best people to go to for information about their experiences (Soffer and Ben-Arieh 2014; Ben-Arieh 2005). 2. From a normative-legal standpoint, children have the right to be participants in research processes and to have a voice in such matters (UN CRC 1989; Melton 2005). 3. Adult-led theoretical perspectives recognise children as social actors who create their own social worlds and therefore argue ... 'adult proxies do not validate children's social worlds' (p.558; Qvortrup 1999; Corsaro 2006). Furthermore, involving children in the research process also presupposes that they are beings in their own right who deserve respect. Children's respectful treatment is demonstrated by researchers who encourage and facilitate their voluntary and informed participation during the research process.

Notwithstanding, I acknowledge the limitations associated with participant observations with children. For instance, Soffer and Ben-Arieh (2014) refer to the work of Backett-Milburn and McKie (1999) who see these types of data collection as 'projective techniques', which limit children's participation and keep the 'power relations and ethnocentric view of adults by casting them as interpreters of children's work' (p.563). Nevertheless, Weller et al (2014) assert that participant observations also give researchers the 'advantage of actually observing how children behave' (p.365). The amount of time and frequency to observe and participate with children is a paramount factor in participant observations. Delamont (2002), for example, asserts that, 'proper fieldwork is time consuming', and she argues 'interviewing as a quick fix' does not bring forth quality data (p.122). I accept what Delamont (2002) says insofar as participant observations allow researchers more time to immerse themselves in the social and cultural contexts of the research participants. Nevertheless - as is often the case - time and money frequently prohibit researchers from being able to immerse themselves for long periods in the research setting. These factors are reflected by my research experiences. When I was

granted more access and time in schools, I built a better level of trust and rapport with the children and with the class teacher. More importantly it allowed me to hear not just what children say, but also to see what they did over time. This approach facilitated more natural behaviour from all parties, due to their gradual normalisation of my presence. Nonetheless, I maintain that ethnographically-led group-interviewing/focus groups are a good supplementary method for qualitative research where time and access pose significant challenges; a characteristic of conducting research in formal educational settings. The following is an outline of the process I applied when conducting group-interviews/focus groups and participant observations.

Group-interview/Focus groups - I gave each child a copy of the proposed interview questions at least one week prior to interviews taking place [See Appendix 5]. I did this to ensure children were comfortable with the nature of the questions and to give them time to think and talk about the questions with their peers in advance of the interviews. I used a semi-structured approach and open-ended questions to mitigate against children following a ‘scripted’ version of their answers. I also worded the questions slightly differently to what I had previously given them. This approach facilitated my in-depth exploration of how children ‘understand and interpret their social reality’ (Bryman 1988 in Richie and Lewis: 2003:3).

Sessions began with general small talk and ‘open ended’ background questions. This approach put participants more at ease (Weller et al 2014). I also used humour to try to connect with the children and to make them laugh, which helped them to get rid of any bodily tension. I explained why I was asking participants these questions because I saw them as ‘experts’ about their own lives (Weller et al 2014; Greene and Hill 2005; Saywitz and Camparo 2014). I told children that I could no longer remember what it was like to be a child and therefore I was asking them to remind me of what being a child feels like (Mayall 2008). Then I introduced more specific questions about citizenship and democracy. During the interview/focus group process I remained vigilant of confident vocal peer leaders speaking over other children and, therefore voicing their opinions more than other quieter and less vocally confident children. After each group-interview/focus group, all participating children were debriefed to ensure they were happy with how the session went, giving them the chance to ask any questions or to clarify their responses and to give me time to reassure participants about my confidentiality pledge.

Participant Observations - facilitate a deeper understanding of the social worlds of children, whilst allowing the researcher to overcome communication problems with participants (Soffer et al 2014: 561; Schutt 2012; O' Leary 2010; Watson and Till 2009; Delamont 2002; Curtin 2000). I chose to observe the children *ad libitum*. Therefore, I noted anything which seemed interesting to me whilst concentrating my focus on one element at a time rather than trying to observe numerous elements at once. This observation method provided me with a general idea of what was happening with whatever group of children I decided to observe at any one time (Weller et al 2014: 365). The main advantages of this type of participant observation are that it is in keeping with ethnographic principals and, it is unsystematic which, was more practical for the scope and time constraints afforded to each case study. However, the *ad libitum* method was limited in terms of only being able to focus on certain behaviours, individuals, and groups at the expense of ignoring others (ibid). Nevertheless, this does not infer that data from *ad libitum* observations is not recorded in a systematic manner. Researchers who use ethnographically-led observations also need to concentrate reflexively throughout the observation process, to properly and methodically document the data collected and, to have a clear aim(s) for observations (Croll 1986; Delamont 2002).

My observations were conducted within three main social contexts; the classroom, the school playground and during collaborative school (assembly) /class activities such as drama class, GAA training, or music lessons. I began observations by scanning the scene in front of me. After five or 10 minutes, I zoned in and payed close attention to specific groups/individuals and to a selective set of phenomena. I also observed: participants' clothing, playground space, classroom décor, children's seating arrangements, the position of the teacher's desk and seating, materials children used during lessons, lesson plans, timetables, league tables, items on class/school notice boards such as classroom rules and codes of conduct. Where possible, I tried to capture *verbatim* the language used by the participants. I also kept a record of the time of observations and any emerging patterns of activities and behaviours, which took place during class lessons.

3.9 Ethical considerations during data collection with children

Previous authors have highlighted and discussed the ethical issues relating to research with children (Green and Hill 2005; Alderson and Morrow 2011; Soffer and Ben-Arieh 2014, Melton et al 2014). Soffer and Ben-Arieh (2014) advise that these can be 'overcome' by ...

‘engaging in reflexivity, responsiveness, and on-going communication, and via the encouraging of full participation of children in the research team’ (p.570). For my part, I recognise the Code of Ethics - researchers are duty bound to uphold, which I continuously tried to weave into the fabric of my entire research process (Alderson and Morrow 2011; Green and Hill 2005). My research also adhered to the American Sociological Association’s Code of Ethics (1997) five core ethical guidelines in respect of;

1. ensuring participants were given information about the aims and objectives of the research;
2. ensuring no harm was caused to any of the participating children;
3. obtaining informed consent from all participants’ parents/guardians and obtaining informed assent from all participating children *prior* to any research taking place;
4. ensuring that confidentiality was always maintained throughout and after the research process;
5. at various stages during the data collection phase, I sought confirmation from participating children for their on-going consent to participate. I also informed them they could withdraw from the research process at any stage. This was to ensure that the benefits of participating in the research outweighed any foreseeable risks to the participants (Schutt 2012; O’ Leary 2010; Richie et al 2003).

I devised and applied system of research checklists to ensure I adhered to correct ethical guidelines and procedures during my research practices with children [See Appendices 1 - 3]. Also, to ensure participating children understood what the research was about *and* to gain their informed assent to participate, they were given an information (assent) sheet about the research [See Appendix 8]. Research participants’ parents/guardians were also given copies of parental/guardian’s consent forms [See Appendix 7] and an information sheet [See Appendix 9]. Participating schools were also supplied with an information sheet [See Appendix 10]. These forms were distributed and collected *prior* to any research taking place. My confidentiality pledge to participating schools, children and their parents/guardians was explained on their respective consent forms and information sheets [See Appendices 7 - 9].

To uphold my duty to protect participating children from harm, I directly explained to them that I would not pass on any information to other people unless I felt they were in danger or at

risk. This information was also provided in their assent sheet [See Appendix 8]. I reiterated this to them throughout the data collection stage and they were also given opportunities to clarify any questions they had about the research and what I meant when I said, ‘if I thought they were at risk of harm’. Prior to group-interviews/Focus groups taking place, I explained to the children (in an age appropriate manner) that only partial anonymity was possible. I clarified that their interview transcripts would be stored in a secure encrypted location on my laptop, which only I would direct have access to. All children listened attentively^{lix} when I explained the formalities of data processing and storage. I also ensured children were given some time to listen back over their recorded interviews before they returned to class. This practice solidified the research experience for children as it proved their opinions had been recorded and would be take account of.

3.10 Conclusions - facilitating children’s participation in adult-led research

Adults have divided up the social order into two major groups – adults and children, with specific conditions surrounding the lives of each group: provision, constraints and requirements, laws, rights, responsibilities and privileges (Mayall 2008: 109).

The argument for children’s involvement, participation and consultation in research no longer needs to be justified, but ‘we do...have to do it well’ (Darbyshire et al 2005 in Dunn 2015: 397). We are duty bound as professional researchers to be objective and reflective about our failings and lessons learned otherwise, we cannot advance, change and develop our research practices with children. This approach is also necessary to challenge adult-centric views and agendas which can hinder and/or side-line children’s research participation. My methodological findings also highlight the significant influence social context has on the extent to which researchers can empower children through their research participation. I found that my efforts to introduce children to democratic practices were often side-lined due to adult gatekeeper’s access, time constraints and the classroom schedule which highlights issues remain in translating collaborative and participatory research theories into practice - certainly from within formal educational settings. Overall, my research experiences reiterate the pitfalls of locating schools willing to participate in longitudinal research projects and, I query the willingness/ability for schools to facilitate research within their highly structured daily schedules.

Chapter Four: Children's self-conceptualisation of childhood and citizenship

Overview

This Chapter discusses findings in relation to children's self-conceptualisations of childhood and citizenship. Children juxtaposed the differences between childhood and adulthood to demonstrate their understandings and experiences of agency and autonomy. My analysis reveals three key findings; firstly, children's articulation of their experiences highlighted contradictions *in* and *between* their understandings of their social role during childhood. Secondly, children's ideas about citizenship echo adults' perceptions of them as apprentice citizens. Children clearly understood that 'citizenship' is a status and a practice which is reserved for adulthood. My findings suggest children are socialised to understand they are immature and incapable, which leads them to believe they cannot claim their participatory rights as citizens. I argue this is indicated by children's self-conceptions of themselves as citizens in waiting who must remain on the periphery of social action. Thirdly, I suggest children's experiences of participation at school (and elsewhere) could impact on their development of either a positive/negative association of their social position as valued and recognised social actors (citizens).

4. Introduction - changing perceptions of Irish childhoods

The predominant view of early 20th Century Irish children was one which largely viewed them as malleable 'moral subjects', whereby the 'presumed moral/spiritual superiority of the religious legitimised [the provision of their education and their] institutional care' (Smith 2007: 2; Greene 2016). In the 1990s a noticeable shift occurred in Irish policy discourses towards a perspective of children as 'psychological subjects with emotional needs' with emphasis placed on children's protection (Smith 2007: 3; Greene 2016). These changes occurred in conjunction with unprecedented socio-cultural, political and economic change - characterised by the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom. A bi-product of which, was the increased diversification of Ireland's predominantly homogenous society and the development of political and economic-based relations between Ireland and the EU (Niens and McIlrath 2005, 2010; Rami and Lalor 2006). During this period, Devine (2008) notes a shift from representations of children as 'cultural products' towards notions of them as being 'key forms of human capital' during this period in Irish society (p.92).

21st Century Irish policy discourses placed importance on children's competence and agency, where the Irish government has made consistent efforts (in rhetoric) to recognise children and young people as participating citizens in Irish society (Smith 2007; Devine 2008; Greene 2016). Devine (2004) draws attention to the Irish government's move towards 'a greater recognition of rights and voice in discourse about children in Ireland' (p.112). This move is further demonstrated by subsequent governmental strategies such as; the establishment of the Ombudsman for Children's Office (2004) - on the back of the Ombudsman for Children Act (2002), The State of the Nation's Children biennial reports (2006 – 2014) and, Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014), the latter of which demonstrates the government's move to recognise the importance of children's participation in informal and non-institutional settings (Horgan 2016). The substantial investment towards the (ongoing) national longitudinal Growing Up in Ireland study (GUI) (2006 – 2018)^{lx} reiterates the Irish government's commitment to the continued development of child-focused policy and practice in Ireland. Furthermore, at the launch of the most recent strategy for Children and Young People's Participation and Decision-Making (2015 – 2020), the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs made an explicit reference to children and young people as current citizens and not just citizens-in-waiting;

Key to this strategy is the recognition that children and young people are not "beings in becoming" but "citizens of today" with the right to be respected during childhood, their teenage years and their transition to adulthood (in Greene 2016: 32).

However, specific to Irish childhoods, Smith (2007) maintains that although the notion of 'innocent children has been challenged by the idea of the knowing, competent child [this] does not necessarily lead to a transformation in child-adult relations' (p.4). Correspondingly, Devine (2008) finds that Irish debates about children's participatory rights continue to centre on the tensions between protection and safety over children's rights to agency' (p.99). She also notes the medias' influence on the portrayal of a notion of a 'loss' of childhood in modern Ireland, which she argues, reinforces ideas of childhood 'rooted in notions of vulnerability and innocence of the child' (ibid).

Childhoods - as a construct, experience and social practice - are shifting in-line with broader social changes and on-going debates about how to protect *and* empower children. 21st Century

Irish society is grappling with new social risks which heighten societal discourses about children's safety. Social, economic and technological changes are encroaching on family life and presenting 'new' social risks and issues pertaining to children's wellbeing and safety. Children's increased use of SMART mobile phones has raised concerns about their online protection from undesirable influences transmitted through social media platforms. Furthermore, parental anxieties for children's physical safety (and shrinking public spaces for children) can influence Children's Independent Mobility (CIM), which effects the level of autonomy and agency afforded to them during childhood (O' Keeffe and O' Beirne 2012; Cook, Whitzman and Tranter 2015). This social dynamic also intensifies children's sense of surveillance, whereby their actions (and whereabouts) are monitored by adults at home and at school.

Children's overall sense of wellbeing is also influenced by wider economic changes such as increased work patterns and demands which often reduce the amount of time available to parents (particularly mothers) to support children with their educational needs at home (O' Brien 2008). Likewise, Byrne (2016), draws on GUI data (Waves 1 and 2) to examine the possible 'short-term effects of after-school care arrangements' on children's cognitive and socio-economic outcomes from age 9 – 13 (p.545). She finds that cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes are 'best explained' by familial influences (p.571). However, she maintains 'the lack of influence of after-school care on children's outcomes may be linked to ... low levels of provision and the variation in the delivery of after-school services' (ibid).

This Chapter is divided into two sections. In **Section One**, I discuss findings relating to the main areas of difference children identified between themselves and adults: 4.1 physicality, mobility and surveillance during childhood and, 4.2 children's concerns. **Section Two**, considers children's formal ideas about citizenship; 4.3 children are theoretical citizens, adults are practicing citizens, 4.4 citizens belong to their country, 4.5 citizens have passports and, 4.6 citizens can vote. Overall, my findings suggest children are (inadvertently) socialised during childhood to identify themselves as citizens-in-waiting as opposed to citizens-in-action.

4.1 Section One – Physicality, mobility and surveillance during childhood

Child-participants recognised their relatively powerless position as social actors, but they also believed that there were some advantages attached to childhood. To explore this further I asked children; What can children (citizens) do that adult (citizens) cannot do? The following

excerpts from children attending Mary Immaculate show the physical advantages some children associated with childhood;

[Excerpt, group interviews, Mary Immaculate^{lxi}, group 3a]

Derek (9) [Giggles]: [Children are] able to run properly.

Joseph (10): Play under 12's.

Levi (10) [Adds]: You'd play sport a lot more...

Jane (9) in a different group told me; 'We can do the splits!' [Group 5a]. Barbara (9) also noted this difference too; 'Children are more flexible because when you get older your back starts to hurt more' [Group 4a]. In another group, Aideen's (9) reply demonstrates her awareness of the physical changes taking place in children's bodies as they grow; 'They [adults] can't get to as high notes as children can when they are singing, because you kind of lose your voice and you get a different voice' [Group 6a].

Children from across my case studies choose to describe the positive differences between what they could do and what adults could not do in physical terms. This was often the first thing children said, which infers it was something they felt very sure about because they had physical evidence to prove it. For instance, Julie (9) from Oakfields MD^{lxii} told me that; 'We can fit through small spaces when we don't want to be talked to, we can just kinda hide somewhere very easily'... [Group 7]. Julie's opinion was also expressed by another group, Grainne (9), for example; 'If there was a small space, we'd be able to fit through and most adults' wouldn't' [Mary Immaculate, Group 5a]. Spatial size was also picked up on by Colin (9) 'children can go in tiny places' [Mary Immaculate, Group 4a]. Likewise, physical size and space was a difference noted by Edel (9) who understood that; 'They [adults] can't go on like, lots of rides cause their taller and we're smaller' [Group 1a]. Equally, Joe (10) in a separate interview said; 'Am...like, if you're going Karting or somewhere, most of them are under 16's, there's very few [Karts] that are made for adults' [Group 5b]. This view was also shared by Lina (10) from Hillcrest ET^{lxiii}; 'You can reach places adults can't, you can [pauses] it's easier for you to learn when you're a kid, you are able to absorb more' [Group 4]. Lina's comment also indicates she believes children are naturally primed to take on new information; children know they need to

quickly learn the social nuances and protocols expected of them in formal and informal social and educational contexts to get on well.

Sam (9) and Cian (12) during separate interviews (Mary Immaculate) expressed similar opinions about the differences between children's and adults' physicality. Sam said when children were out playing and having fun; 'They're [adults] probably sitting around having a cup of tea' (the others laugh) [Group 5a]. His opinion was echoed by Cian; ... 'On a holiday they are always just lying down' [Group 5b]. These boys' comments demonstrate they saw the physicality of playing and moving freely as a fun activity which adults do not participate in; they learn this from observing adults' behaviours. Tina (10, Oakfields MD) shared this view, she understood that children are physically freer to move about unencumbered by stiff joints which she associates with adulthood; 'We can move around more freely... we can move without having to worry about breaking our back' [Oakfields MD, group 7].

These children's comments suggest they characterised physicality as part of a 'normal' childhood. For instance, Sam (9) and Cian's (12) respective comments (and their laughter when they spoke about them) indicates they saw adults' decline in mobility (or physical/mental tiredness) as a weakness in comparison to their youthful vibrancy. I noted most children relished the fact they could physically do things adults could not. Furthermore, they felt secure in their knowledge that many older adults cannot compete with their level of physicality as children. This was one of the few things they could readily identify as a form of agency and autonomy, which also gave them some leverage to recalibrate the power imbalance between themselves and adults.

Although children largely identified adulthood as a state of physical inactivity they mainly recognised it as a life-stage which represented full autonomy. The top four examples children gave to represent the positive things they associated with adulthood - in order of preference - were that adults could; drive, vote, drink and have access to money (credit cards). These children believed that adults have 'a life' and the autonomy to do whatever they want to do. In stark contrast they know they cannot do these kinds of things.

4.1.1 Mobility in childhood

Lisa (10): Adults have more responsibility so they're able to do stuff without having someone with them, you know what I mean? [The others make sounds in agreement].

They [adults] have more freedom as to what they can do to help the community. Kids have to do something that's safe and approved [Hillcrest ET, group 4].

Participating children were cognisant of their total dependence on adults. Most of them regarded this as an advantage of childhood. Yet, they also yearned for the positive aspects of adulthood which they identified as adult's autonomy to go wherever and do whatever they liked. Susie (9); ... 'they [adults] can drive, and they can drink beer and get drunk' [Mary Immaculate, group 6]. Several children gave the example of adults' ability to drive and drink alcohol^{lxiv}, which suggests these are common activities children's see adults engage in during adulthood. Children strongly associated driving and owning a car with independent mobility and drinking alcohol represented agency. For instance, Lina (9) said when you are an adult; 'You can drive and go off on holiday on your own' [Oakfields MD, group 5]. 'Driving' was the first example most children gave to illustrate what adults can do in comparison to what they cannot do. Adults' ability to drive literally represented a vehicle for freedom, autonomy and un-impinged mobility, which also represents the contrast between children's restricted mobility and autonomy and, their limited ability to do things beyond adults' gaze. Adam (10) voiced a similar opinion; 'Sometimes it's like a child has to go somewhere with adults all the time' [Hillcrest ET, group 3]. His view was echoed by Mina (10); 'Children are almost tagging along', which suggests a sense of powerlessness as children must go wherever they are told to go [Oakfields MD, group 7].

Children also associated regular access to money as another benefit of adulthood. Money enabled freedom, power and autonomy; all the things in limited supply during childhood. Adults have fun too and they have the financial means to do things children cannot. Joe (10) gave the example of; 'Going on holidays and maybe at the weekend if you went out to a concert or maybe out to dinner or something' [Mary Immaculate, group 5b]. Linda (9) also understood that when you become an adult ... 'you can own your own house' [Oakfields MD, group 5]. Children clearly desired money which enabled autonomy and the social status it represents. The examples children gave such as; holidaying, eating out and owning a car and a house are things only people with enough money can participate in; they recognise money allows adults to display their social standing in society. Children's comments also indicate they understand that participating in these kinds of money-dependent activities represents the social mobility of a certain social class of adult. These children were conscious that their parent's level of

access to money (social class) served as a proxy for the things they could/could not do as children. They recognised their ability to do fun things such as holidaying abroad and going on playdates - which involved paid activities - were only possible if their parents had the financial means to fund them.

4.1.2 Surveillance during childhood

In an adult-led world there are few ways children can demonstrate their agency and autonomy. I found children's comments also indicate the value they attach to *their* personal space – this is important because it offers children a reprieve from adults' gaze. For instance, Waffa (10, Muslim heritage) asserted there should be adult-free zones where only children can go because adults can go wherever they want and change structures (social and physical) to suit themselves;

I think that adults shouldn't be able to do the things that children can do cause well, they can like sneak through little holes and sometimes adults bring drills and make it bigger, so they can go through... [Oakfields MD, group 3].

Waffa's inference about drilling holes into children's spaces suggests that he is frustrated about adults' ability to go wherever and do whatever they like; especially if this impinges on his personal space. Waffa is very aware of adults' power over his space and actions and his comment clearly indicates his displeasure about his lack of personal autonomy and agency as a child.

I found children's awareness of their position as physical and socially mobile beings operated in tandem with their keen awareness of adults' surveillance of them. At home, children knew that they were watched by their parents, particularly if they were online, which they understood to be a source of parental concern for their wellbeing and safety. Some children expressed parental protection as an advantage of childhood, for instance, Cathy (11) told me that; 'We don't have to worry about stuff because they have to worry about money and safety and everything'... [Mary Immaculate, group 1b]. Tom (10) echoes this; 'Parents are basically children's bodyguards', which suggests he is secure in the knowledge that his parents are looking out for him [Oakfields MD, group 9]. Yet, other children found adults' surveillance stifling; 'They [adults] get to go outside without someone watching you' [Clare, age 10,

Oakfields MD, group 7]. Clare's comment indicates her sense of powerlessness induced by her inability to go to places or to do things by herself.

I also found children understood (expected) that their circle of autonomy and agency would expand with age. This is illustrated in Cian's (12) responses below;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 5b]

Cian: I see a difference growing up because my mam would allow me, or they trust me, to go to the shop and trust me with money. You know, or to cycle into town or something, they trust me.

I ask: How does that make you feel?

Cian: Happy, because I'd probably be helping my parents. I feel like I'm more responsible and I'm getting to learn how to do that, if I'm in College or something.

Some children were keen to point out the responsible things they can do now are an indication that they are growing up. Adam (10) told me that he could walk to and from school by himself. His body language and tone when he spoke suggested that he felt empowered because his parents trusted him to be responsible enough;

Adam [sits up in his chair, clear voice]: I'll walk to the sweet shop, so I walk to school and I walk back from school almost every day now. So, that's quite a responsible thing [Hillcrest ET, group 3].

These boys' comments reveal their tacit understanding that the level of autonomy afforded to them is built upon reciprocal child-adult notions about trust, safety and responsibility. When adults afford children the opportunity to do more things by themselves (such as walk to school), children can prove to adults *and* to themselves that they can be capable and responsible too. As indicated in the comments above, children can develop positive associations with responsibility and capability when they are given opportunities to learn new skills that will help them to cope with challenges now and later in life.

Existing research finds that children's ability to be independently mobile gives them a feeling of personal power, control and security. For instance, Growing Up in Ireland (2009) found that; '95%' of children (9-year old's) felt safe in their neighbourhood, whilst '77% of children said

that they felt that there were places for children to play safely near their house' (p.137)^{lxv}. These findings infer that most children living in Ireland feel safe to be mobile in their local area. Nonetheless, I found children from across my case studies were openly frustrated by their lack of unsupervised mobility. This issue is also picked up on by studies which specifically examine Children's Independent Mobility (CIM)^{lxvi}. For instance, O'Keeffe and O' Beirne's (2012) analysis of Irish data relating to CIM note its decline which they see is a 'striking finding', as is the 'apparently growing divergence' between CIM in Ireland^{lxvii} and other EU countries (p.96). O'Keeffe and O' Beirne (2012) assert that children's age 'has a strong bearing on the degrees of freedom' they experience (p.x). They argue children need to be a part of decision-making processes^{lxviii} about the development of public spaces which 'empowers children to have a meaningful say in shaping the environments in which they live, study, play and move about' (ibid: xii^{lxix}). Likewise, Cook et al's (2015) Australian-based research links CIM to children's active citizenship which they assert is 'integral to the exercise of children's rights' (p.526). My findings add to this as children's comments clearly revealed their awareness of how their age and social context dictates the level independent mobility and, their ability to be active citizens during childhood.

The school is a 'public' space wherein children's mobility, activities and behaviours are curtailed and monitored by adults. Lynch and Lodge's (2004) analysis of equality and power within the Irish secondary schools, notes the 'little privacy' and 'very little personal physical space' available at school (p.161). My observations of primary schools also revealed how children's activities and behaviours in and outside of the classroom were carefully monitored/surveyed by adults. For example, I observed children frequently used the toilet space to escape the boredom of classroom lessons and/or to compose themselves away from adults' and from other children's gazes when they were upset. I also noted that adults reiterated to children throughout the school day that their behaviour was being monitored and assessed; is their behaviour good or bad? Children were told to 'keep an eye on' each other's actions too; there was an implicit understanding that they are expected to inform adults of their peers' misbehaviour^{lxx}. The excerpt from my fieldnotes below illustrates a form of surveillance I observed;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's^{lxxi}]

I notice there's a new poster up. It's supposed to be written by one of Santa's little elves; it's written in blue crayon in a childish scrawl. The words are misspelt and crossed out and re-written. The 'elf' writes that he's heard some of the children are not doing as they are told at home and not getting ready in time for school. The elf is saying that he's going to go invisible, so he can see which children are being good/naughty. Then, he'll tell Santa. At the end of the letter, there is an illustration of elfish looking eyes; just the watching eyes are drawn, there is no elf body. I point to the letter and say to Patricia that I see we have a little elf? She laughs and tells me the kids are having great fun with this. They are not sure if he's real or not. She told me one of the younger children came to her and said; 'Well, he's just fabric and plastic!'. Patricia was really amused by this. She tells me the teachers' put the elf in a different location in the school every day. When the younger kids come in (Junior infants to 1st class) and see that he's moved again, they question what's going on; can he really visit their homes and see what's going on? I wonder how this makes the children feel; being watched like this?

This activity was carried out in the spirit of fun and make-believe. Patricia's comments suggest that both adults and children enjoyed the possibility of some 'magic' occurring at their school. However, I argue that there is a sub-text attached to this seemingly benign activity which tacitly informs children that they are being watched by an all-seeing invisible presence both at home and at school. Children are not monitored 24/7, yet, they have learned through experience, there is always a possibility that they are being monitored. This notion is not dissimilar from Foucault's (1977) conceptualisation of the Panopticon (*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*) which he uses as a metaphor to analyse surveillance as a form of power to control people in society (Caluya 2010). Schools reinforce the notion that students are constantly monitored - even when they are not; a practice which maintains control and order over their citizenry body (Lynch and Lodge 2004). CCTV technologies, religious doctrine and school policy remain key ways in keeping order and control over children's morality and behaviours at school in Ireland. Most Irish primary schools remain under the patronage of religious denominations^{lxxii}, wherein the notion of an omnipresent, all-seeing God, is reproduced and reinforced through religious doctrine and paternally-led classroom practices. This notion strongly relates to Foucault's (1977) surveillance theory. Once the idea of the possibility of being watched is internalised, the watched become the watchers of themselves and they modify their behaviours accordingly even when there is no active surveillance taking place (in Caluya

2010; Marx and Steeves 2010). How could the ‘assumption’ of being watched manifest in children’s behaviours at school?

It is possible some children may internalise these types of surveillance practices more so than others. Leonard (2016) cautions that top-down modes of participation turn children into ‘mini adults’ who essentially end up policing one another (p.103). I argue this reinforces adult-centric notions which assume children are unable to act responsibly by themselves. Furthermore, I see that these kinds of surveillance practices imply to children that adults do not trust them to follow school rules and social protocol. This reflects findings from Rooney’s (2010) research which explored the impact of surveillance technologies on children’s experiences of trust, risk and responsibility. She asserts that ‘[w]ithout a surveillance gaze, children have the opportunity to be trusted, to learn how to trust others, and perhaps to show others they can live up to this trust’ (p.354). This also raises questions in terms of the possible impact surveillance - as a form of social control - could have on children’s self-development as autonomous citizens. For example, I observed that the possibility of surveillance encouraged more covert types of (individual and collective) resistance from and between children to react against adults’ control. When children were alerted that they were being watched, I noticed that this also appeared to foster anxiety within some children who dared not engage in any form of resistance or protest. Based on my observations, I argue that surveillance as a form of social control leaves children in a largely insecure and anxious state^{lxxiii}, which could have negative influences on their overall sense of wellbeing and agency at school.

4.2 Children’s concerns – diminishing ‘quality’ time with parents

Children largely expressed childhood as a fun, playful, creative and dynamic time. These positive aspects of childhood reveal children’s sense of autonomy and agency. I question whether participants described the reality of their childhoods or, was it an ‘ideal’ type of childhood they believed they should have? I raise this question because many of my chats with children demonstrated their acute awareness of the worries and responsibilities attached to adulthood. This is what they see their parents (and other adults in their lives) grappling with daily; juggling family life with work-life, fretting about bills, taxes mortgages and insurance. Children saw parents are time-poor because of their responsibilities and duties;

Katie (10): You get to like, be more free than adults, because adults are always working and if they’re not working they might be at home with all the ironing and

cooking. And the kids get to go and have fun and be with all their friends [Oakfields MD].

In an ideal world, children's inner family circle is their safe-haven. According to GUI (2009) findings, '90%' of children would go to their mother if they had a problem and, '61%' said they would go to their father (p.84). This statistic clearly indicates how gender roles (division of labour) play out within the home. My conversations with children revealed that they wanted more 'quality' time with their parents to do fun things together. They felt their time with parents was hampered by their busy lives which are often encumbered with numerous responsibilities and duties. Some children's responses also reveal they are missing out on uninterrupted time with their parents to talk to them about things of concern. For example, Nina (10, Vietnamese heritage) expressed concerns around homework; I suspect she was talking about her own anxieties, but she chose to refer to this issue in a broader sense;

They [parents] can work as much as they want but they need to listen to their kids sometimes, because, they might be having a hard time if they can't get their homework done. They might be losing grades and if they're in 6th class they need help...So, if they are not listening, then it's their fault if they are failing their grades, it's their fault [Hillcrest ET, group 4].

Nina's concern was also reflected by Marina (10, Muslim heritage) from Oakfields MD, who told me;

My parents are always like busy with other stuff and my dad's like on the phone doing meetings and stuff like that and my mum's always with my little brother and stuff like that [group 6].

Nina's comments suggest that she puts the responsibility back onto parents for not listening to her concerns which she infers could lead to bigger issues such as falling behind at school. Similarly, Marina's comment demonstrates how she felt she was not getting enough time at home to talk with their parents about what is going on in her life now. This issue is also referred to by O' Brien (2008) who notes the issue of 'ever-increasing demands for more intense involvement and longer hours in paid work' is problematic in relation to 'the issue time and energy for care including schooling support' (p.137). O' Brien's (2008) gender analysis of emotional capital and the importance mothers' care work plays in education, also finds that

mothers still assume the role of main carer in the home. Yet, when mothers are unable to fully assume a full-time/uninterrupted supporting role, a possible effect of this is suggested by some children who feel they are not getting the level of parental support they need. Regardless of the developments in gender equality, women are predominantly faced with the issue of upholding a double-shift; maintaining their role as full-time mother in the home, whilst maintaining their full/part-time working roles outside of the home.

4.2.1 Balancing school and homelife

School days are demanding for children and I observed they spent a considerable amount of their time and energy managing their friendship circles and negotiating adult imposed rules at school. Children (like adults) have many demands outside of school hours. Their comments about school and homework reveal how children identify some parallels between their daily lives and adults'. For example, some children directly identified their school work as equally valid as adults', Josh (10); 'Adults have taxes and stuff and have to work and children just... they also have to work but in school' [Oakfields MD, group 9]. His classmate Denise (10) held a similar opinion;

[Excerpt, group interview, Oakfields MD, group 1]

I ask: What's your favourite thing about school?

Denise [Exclaims]: Home time!

I probe: You're not too keen about school Denise? [I smile].

Denise [Defensively]: School IS work! You don't even get paid to do it; we have to pay to do work, it makes no sense.

Ingrid and Adele (10) shared a similar view;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET]

I ask: What can you do now as children?

Ingrid: We kind of go to work.

Adele [Adds]: And we have to do tests!

Edwina's (10) comment also reveals the powerlessness she feels about school; she must attend, whereas adults' can choose to work;

[Excerpt, group interview, Oakfields MD, group 2]

I ask: What's the difference between children and adult citizens?

Edwina [Replies]: Adults are like meant to go to work, but they don't have to. But, like children sort of have to go to school.

School *is* work for children and they feel a double sense of injustice which they articulated in terms of their lack of payment for the work they must do in school which is just as time consuming as adults' paid work and, their lack of opportunity to have a say about their 'working conditions' at school. I also found homework represents a duty (it encroached on valuable home-time) and concern (reprisals if not done properly) for most children who frequently complained about the amount of homework they get and about the insufficient time they have at home to complete it. The following excerpt with children (age 9 – 10) illustrates this issue;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 5a]

I ask the group: So, what don't you like about school?

Avril: The only thing I really don't like about school is the homework.

Sam and Steven [Agree]: Yeah.

Sam: They don't give us that much.

Avril [Disagrees]: I like school, but it's just I don't like going home and still having work to do. What I think is we do enough work in school.

Margo [Agrees]: Yeah.

Avril [Adds]: Especially if we are working hard that day.

Margo: When you do your homework, you could be really busy, and you'd be worried if you mightn't have enough chance to do your homework.

Steven: Or, you might forget to bring something ... [Trails off here].

Margo [Adds]: Yeah, and then you'd be worried all morning before school and going school that you're gonna get givin' out to because you didn't have enough time to do your homework.

Time management posed a significant issue for some children. Children found it difficult to balance their homework with familial demands such as, looking after younger siblings, and their participation in (numerous) out of school activities. My finding aligns with McCoy, Byrne and Banks' (2011) research which considers how social class and gender influence the children's out of school activities. McCoy et al (2011) refer to 'concerted cultivation' as a term to describe middle-class parenting which facilitates 'enrichment activities' (i.e. after school activities, which need to be paid for) (p.156). Although research finds that 'concerted cultivation' gives children from middle class socioeconomic backgrounds an advantage 'in educational and occupational settings', McCoy et al (2011) note that, '[m]iddle-class children are generally more stressed and exhausted, less creative, and fight more with siblings than working class or poor children' (p.157). In addition, the issue of homework reveals a deeper sense of injustice and powerlessness in children. Not only must they go to school - I was reminded by several children they work for 6 hours at school, they must also work at home too *and*, face punishment from their teacher if it is not done properly. This concern is discussed by a group of 6th class boys (11 – 12) in the following excerpt;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 5b]

I ask the group: If you could change anything about school, what would that be?

Cian [Responds immediately]: No homework!

Jon and Eddie [In unison]: The same

Jon [Adds]: I'd go to school and Saturday and Sunday if I'd no homework.

Me: Gosh!

Cian: Usually on Sunday nights you'd be dreading school but if there was no homework we'd be grand.

Eddie [Adds]: It's annoying being in school for like 6 hours and then you go home, you'd like have an hour or an hour and a half of homework, but yet you might have stuff to do like going to a match or something and you could be up until 11.30pm doing your homework.

I say: That's a late night.

Cian: Yeah, like I've things on, I've cubs and soccer and hurling so it's hard to do all the homework. It doesn't help that there's a Black Book and you get homework for the weekend...that doesn't help.

Eddie [Clarifies]: If you forget one sentence, in the Black Book you'd get like eight sentences.

Cian: Even if you did it [homework], but you just like left it at home you'd be in the Black Book.

Jon: We have this thing called Concessions where if you do your homework neatly you'd get less...

Cian [Adds]: He doesn't do it every day, just Mondays.

Jon [Continues]: If you are in the Black Book you lose all of them as well, then you have extra homework for the week and you have extra homework for the weekend as well.

Homework essentially socialises children into behaviours which are favoured in the working world such as; discipline, time management skills and obedience. Furthermore, I found children's comments indicate more emphasis is placed on their duties/responsibilities as children (to be orderly, obedient and studious) as opposed to their right to voice and participation as school-citizens. My findings indicate that school life is informed by a wider neoliberal agenda which essentially aims to prepare children to become dutiful and responsible 'worker-citizens' (See Lister 2006).

4.2.2 Adults' concerns are children's concerns

Children's comments also revealed the kinds of things their parents (or other adults) spoke about. This suggests children are the receivers/appropriators of adult information. They are also transmitters/disseminators and re-appropriators of adult's views, opinions and concerns to and between other children. As such, children *need* to be in-the-know about the goings-on in their social world, and they *want* to know what is going on in adults' worlds too. I assert we need to listen to what children say if we want to know about wider societal opinion(s)/concerns. For instance, children frequently referred to homelife and to social issues on a local, national and international level such as; meeting household expenses, work-life balance, homelessness, immigration, taxation, national security (terrorism), the environment, health insecurity, national and international political and humanitarian concerns. These matters were primarily adult concerns, which trickled down to children and they become their concerns too. My findings reflect Holden's (2006), study which found that 'there is evidence that the concerns of the adult world have informed [children's] opinions'... (p.239). This was also noted in the GUI (2011) study which cited children's awareness of wider social issues such as 'poverty,

unemployment and the environment' (p.12). Likewise, my findings reveal that children's understandings, and concerns, about social issues (national and global) and their meaning-making of such matters. Top of the list for children was money worries which perhaps has the most immediate impact on their lives as children.

Parental financial responsibilities and obligations was a common issue raised by children. This suggests they have been privy to their parent's (or other adults') talk about household financial concerns. For example, during a class debate about what should be included in 'The Children's proclamation for a new generation'^{lxxiv}, Carol (10) justified why 'no water charges' should be added to their class' proclamation;

... Our mortgage rent is more than what our home is worth and then there's the electricity bill, so, there's so many bills...if you want us to live we need our water... why are you making us pay for something that makes us healthy?... [St. Finbarr's]

Carol's comment shows her acute awareness of parental money concerns and social justice. I suspect that she overhears (eavesdrops on) such matters being discussed between her parents which has informed her views. I recall Carol was very passionate about why water charges should be abolished, which suggests that this was of personal concern for her. Her classmates also spoke about bills and the costs of living during their debates^{lxxv} which ended with a unanimous agreement that water charges should be banned. As the children thrashed out what should be done to ameliorate the cost of living, they also inadvertently revealed parental (other adults') opinions about such issues;

[Excerpt, audio transcript, St. Finbarr's]

Lea (9): Our parents are paying for enough already.

Eamon (9) [Responds]: The government should give money to homeless people, because some of them are dying and hospitals should be better because people get sick eventually and, when a person gets sick they will be sad.

Gina (9) [Adds]: Next year we'll be like where's all our money gone?! It's gone to the taxes and there're goin' up in thousands a month and some people just can't pay that.

Carol (10): Yeah, not only should the government give people money, he should also make houses cheaper... [She refers to the government as a male entity]

Janine (10) [Suggests]: Maybe the hospitals should be free, like our Medical Card is free and we don't have to pay, and some people have to pay who can't pay, like old people...

Hannah (10) [Proposes]: We should use less electricity and cut down on the cost of bills ourselves.

Emer (10) [Adds]: Like in my house we have one of the pre-paid power machines and sometimes we don't even use our electricity and it actually just takes money out of the machine. All we have to do is pay €20 out of the shop and keep putting it into the machine but it still just takes the money even though we don't use it...so it's basically the company's fault.

This excerpt reveals children's awareness of social issues and, of wider societal norms and values about such matters. Eamon and Janine's comments shows their awareness about notions of deserving and undeserving poor such as homeless and sick people who cannot afford to pay for social services. Similarly, Carol and Gina's comments reveal their parental attitudes about the State's obligation to its tax paying (therefore deserving) citizens. Hannah's comment implies individuals need to take more responsibility about such matters, which prompted Emer's comment that inadvertently revealed her personal (familial) frustration about their lack of agency/control over rising household bills.

Regardless of the different side of the social rights fence these children hail from, their knowledge about such issues also creates anxiety and a sense of insecurity for them. Some children's comments also suggested that their parents were aware of this and tried to protect them from overhearing their conversations about things which could worry them;

Kelly (9): Yeah, my mum hates when I listen when they're in conversation...or if I mention to her later on she'd be giving out to me about listening [St. Finbarr's, Focus group 2].

Kelly's frustration suggests she believes her mother was being somewhat unfair by not letting her 'in' on some things that were going on at home. Rather than seeing this as a form of parental protection, Kelly saw her mother's reaction as an indication of her lack of trust in her ability to cope with certain adult issues. However, it appears that children still manage to either eavesdrop and/or over-hear adults' conversations. Children also talk amongst themselves too, which reinforces what they hear and see on a first-hand basis. For instance, the American

Presidential election was in full swing (2016) when I conducted group interviews. I noticed that children from across my case studies mentioned similar things about politics and voting. Donald Trump was a name which popped up several times in group interviews. The children introduced him into our conversations; usually this happened when I asked them about voting. This highlights that these children were actively tuning into adult conversations and, getting snippets of information from the television or social media about political representatives such as Donald Trump.

4.2.3 Children's appropriation of adults' issues

My findings demonstrate children's awareness of wider global issues which they saw as encroaching on their own country. Children's attitudes about President Trump stem from what they have heard adults (parents, family members, teachers and the media) say about him. This was suggested by a group of girls from Mary Immaculate who referred to Donald Trump during my conversation with them;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 1b]

I ask: Do you get to talk about voting and stuff at school?

Tania (10): Oh yeah, about the election...but we don't talk about stuff like that, we normally talk about what Ms D. wants to talk about.

Kiera (10) [Adds]: Yeah, like Ms D. was saying how she hates Donald Trump.

Likewise, children from Hillcrest ET also directly referred to Donald Trump in their interview with me;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 3]

Adam (10): I see A LOT about Donald Trump. I know the stuff he's doing is really, really bad that he shouldn't be allowed to be a President'.

Sem (10) [Adds]: My mom is obsessed about Donald Trump. Everyday she's like half an hour on the phone saying, "Oh look what Donald Trump is saying".

I ask: Do you think you could learn about this kind of stuff at school?

Adam: Maybe in 6th class. It depends on the kind of stuff, because some of the stuff you shouldn't really know...some of the stuff that Donald Trump is maybe too bad for us to learn about.

Gearoid (10) [Adds]: He's probably like the next Hitler.

Gearoid's comment shows that he has learned (through adult and peer attitudes) to recognise Donald Trump as a politically destructive person who is a dictator of sorts and, a societal nemesis. This suggests that Donald Trump represents something more for children; he is the 'bad' citizen. He is someone who does not follow the rules, someone who does not help society to be a better place and therefore, he is a source of concern for children (and adults). For instance, when I asked Simon (10) what he would do for the rest of the children in the world if he had a magic wand he told me; 'I would get rid of Donald Trump...then people wouldn't have to live in fear of him bombing us' [Oakfields MD, group 8]. Simon used very strong words such as 'fear' and, stark imagery such as 'bombing' to articulate his intense dislike of Donald Trump. I interpret Donald Trump as representing a worry for this child (and for other children) as his actions are unpredictable and inflammatory.

In addition to political disquiet, children spoke about war, terrorism and starvation. For instance, when I asked John (11) what he would do if he had a magic wand he told me; 'Stop all war and everything is all right and there's no war or fighting or people starving' [Mary Immaculate, group 4b]. John's wish is poignant because it reveals his acute awareness of world strife. Other children's views about terrorism also shows that they are very aware of international issues about national security. I refer to an excerpt from my observation of a class debate to demonstrate this;

[Excerpt, audio transcript, St. Finbarr's]

Liam (10): People should be more protected as terrorists are in the countries.

Fiona (teacher): What do you mean?

Liam: I mean we should be more protected because of the ISIS in Asian countries. I think the countries should get more armed police due to the fact that the ISIS are invading countries and they are planning to invade other places in 2016.

Fiona: Very good.

Rina (9) [Adds]: More armed police is not going to stop terrorism or whatever they call it like that's not going to stop them because they're not afraid of armed police.

Liam [Responds]: ... The police need guns, they need loads of ammo', I think police should have some bombs, just to help a little bit.

Both children's views refer to common opposing societal opinions about counter-terrorism, which demonstrates that children are transmitters of wider societal attitudes and, how knowledge exchange between generations influences children's development of their own ideas about broader social issues. This dialogue between children and their teacher also demonstrate the transgenerational transition of ideas and culture. Liam and Rina's respective viewpoints were informed by a combination of information they appropriated from adult's conversations at home, school, from social media, the television, their peer culture (video gaming), and/or what their older siblings tell them. For example, on the one hand we have Liam (10), who argues countries should fight fire-with-fire to protect their citizens from invading terrorists. This also hints at his personal (and/or familial) insecurity about Ireland's lack of armed police to combat terrorism. On the other hand, Rina's (9) highlights that such acts of terrorism cannot be tackled with more armoury, rather she understands that this is a highly complex issue which requires a different response.

Young children know about serious issues. Yet, they are also aware of the boundaries between knowing and not knowing about things they feel may be too much for them to cope with. Some children were very clear that worrying about broader issues was a task that was reserved for adulthood;

Simon (10): Children don't have to worry about the world...only if it's global warming and stuff [Oakfields MD, group 8].

Simon's comment implies he is certain of the kinds of issues children need to be concerned about. However, his comment about Donald Trump (p.121) contradicts this and reveals his worries about 'the world' and what goes on inside of it. Children believe (in theory) that they should not know about certain things, but, they do know and something which is known cannot be unknown. Children's comments also indicate how their exposure to adult realities and concerns - without the corresponding autonomy and agency to engage with these issues (in an age appropriate manner) - creates a sense of frustration, anxiety and insecurity for them. I also assert that children's vague sense of citizenship influences how they conceptualise themselves as a non-participating social group who are not equipped with the knowledge or social skills to participate and/ cope as citizens of wider society.

4.3 Section Two – theoretical and practicing citizens

Nadene (10): Is everyone a citizen? [Mary Immaculate, group 1b].

Overview

Section Two explores children's ideas specific to 'citizenship' to gain a deeper insight into their self-conceptualisations of their identity as citizens and, where (or if) they feel they can enact their citizenship participatory rights during childhood. My analysis finds that 'citizenship' is an abstract concept for children which is literally abstracted from their lives. Also, children largely identified themselves as citizens in namesake or in 'theory' as opposed to citizens in practice. Children who had some understanding about citizenship^{lxxvi}, generally linked it to formal (narrow) definitions of citizenship, which represented it as a status and a practice reserved for adulthood.

Furthermore, I found that children who attended schools with homogenous demographics^{lxxvii} (St. Finbarr's, Mary Immaculate, St. Joseph's and St. Assumpta's, NS) were less attuned to ideas about citizens' human rights and residency rights. Children who attended schools with more diverse populace^{lxxviii} (Oakfields MD and Hillcrest ET) had more awareness about citizens' residency rights and they had more nuanced understandings of equality and human rights. I posit if schools with more diverse populations make more considered efforts to ensure their policy and practices are focused towards developing children's ideas about equality and cultural diversity.

Based on my analysis, 'citizenship' represents four key features for children: 4.3 children are citizens in theory; adults are citizens in practice, 4.4 citizens belong to their country, 4.5 citizens have passports and, 4.6 citizens can vote. I now discuss each of these themes, to illuminate how children's understandings of formal notions of citizenship informs the development of their identity as citizens and social class and, the subsequent impact this has on their citizenship practice during childhood.

I began my enquiry by asking participants if they could describe to me what/who a citizen is [Fig. 3 page 103 provides a visual representation of this].

This group completed two other worksheets (on separate occasions) which asked; ‘What good citizens can, have, and, are?’ and, ‘What good children can, have, and, are?’. The kinds of attributes and behaviours respondents wrote for ‘good’ citizens were ones they associated with adulthood/parents^{lxxxv}. The words they used to express the characteristics and actions of good citizens were; ‘nice’, ‘caring’, ‘kind’, ‘thoughtful’, ‘helpful’, and ‘accepting of everybody’. Their responses for what ‘good’ children can do mainly centred around the physical, playful, creative and fun aspects of childhood.^{lxxxvi} When children were asked to complete the sentence, ‘Good children can...’ they used words such as; ‘make jokes’, ‘play games’, ‘do something fun’, ‘run and jump’ and ‘work hard’. My analysis^{lxxxvii} indicates these children strongly associate what ‘good’ citizens do with what ‘good’ adults do. Furthermore, they saw the role of ‘good’ citizens as embodying a sense of responsibility, obligation, and duty; all of which they strongly associated with caring adults - not children^{lxxxviii}. The following interview excerpt illustrates other children’s dissociation with citizenship;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 1a]

I ask: Are children citizens too?

Tim (9) [Replies]: We are just children.

Tim’s comment reflects a common understanding shared between children from across my case studies. His use of the word ‘just’ implies children are *just* expected to be children. I found children primarily understood citizenship was something that *only* related to adults - they largely accepted they must forgo their citizenship participatory rights until they are old enough to enact them. Notwithstanding, some cohorts confidently identified themselves as citizens, which is illustrated by Lucas and Marina’s (10) comments below; in the excerpt below;

[Excerpt, group-interview, Oakfields MD, group 6]

I ask: Do you think children are citizens too?

Lucas [Emphatically]: Yes!

Marina (Muslim heritage) [Adds]: They’re [children] human so they are citizens.

I noted this understanding was shared predominantly from children attending ET and MD primary schools. For instance, Simon's (10) response to my question; Do you think kids are citizens too? Said they are; 'Miniature citizens' [Oakfields MD, group 8]. Simon's classmate Mia (10); 'I think everyone is a citizen, it doesn't matter what age you are; it still belongs to us' [Group 7]. Likewise, Nina (10, Hillcrest ET) believed; 'I think everyone should be a citizen, we should all have legal rights for everyone [Group 4].

4.4 Children's understandings of belonging and citizenship identity

Tina (10): Well I think a citizen is a person, who belongs to their country... so they don't have to live in the country, but they belong to the country [Oakfields MD, group 7].

Under the current model of democracy, children cannot realistically be regarded as 'full' citizens (Kulynych 2001; Cohen 2005; Theis 2010; Rehfeld 2011). This is partly because their (in)formal modes of citizenship participation are not formally recognised (Moosa-Mitha 2005; Lister 2008; Larkins 2014; Olsson 2017). Lister (2008) and Roche (1999) respectively see citizenship as constituting a membership of a community, that embodies rights, duties and equality of status and participation. According to Lister (2008), 'children's claim to citizenship lies in their membership of the citizenship community' (p.10). She contends, although children's 'relationship to that community may be different from adults'... this does not essentially affect their right to hold citizenship status (ibid: 11). Citizens' sense of belonging is closely linked to their opportunity to participate as members of their citizenship community. Correspondingly, membership is closely linked to a sense of belonging to a community of individuals. Chambers Dictionary (1990) states membership is directly linked to the notion of belonging; to Belong, 'is to be a member of...; to be born in or [to] live in' (p.27). Therefore, 'a person who belongs to a group; society' (ibid: 216) is a recognised member of that group which implies they have equal status and rights as other group members.

Moosa-Mitha's (2005) difference-centred approach, adheres to the notion that belonging is central to theories about children's rights of equality, as is the importance of participation central in defining children's citizenship rights. This notion is challenging when realising children's participatory citizenship rights, because to be able to participate as a member of a group/community, you must be recognised and accepted as a member to do so (ibid: Lister

2008). She highlights the importance of acknowledging children's 'presence' as participating social actors and asserts;

[p]resence^{lxxxix}, more than autonomy, acknowledges the self as relational and dialogical, thereby suggesting that it is not enough to have a voice; it is equally important to also be heard in order for one to have a presence in society (ibid: 381).

Similarly, Nutbrown and Clough (2009) assert, it is a combination of voice and action which 'can lead to genuine participation, inclusion and belonging' (p.193) They also argue that teaching citizenship in primary schools demonstrates ... 'practical involvement is key to learning to be a citizen and taking a view on issues affecting people' (See Adams in Nutbrown et al 2009: ibid). In addition, they state that '[i]dentity and self-esteem are the two most important issues to be addressed through curriculum and early years pedagogy if children are to successfully experiences a sense of inclusivity and belonging' at school (Nutbrown et al 2009: 202). How then, does this notion compare to my findings about children's own understandings about 'citizenship' and, how this relates to *their* citizenship participatory rights during childhood?

Children's responses to my questions about citizenship also reveal they understand citizenship infers a sense of being a 'part of' a community and 'belonging' to a country. I found children frequently used the word 'belong' when they spoke about citizenship. In response to my question; Who is a citizen? Tina (10) replied; 'It's someone who belongs to their country' [Oakfields MD]. In addition, children also linked their ideas about belonging to their sense of identity as Irish citizens. However, I found a difference between some children's understandings of how the notion of 'belonging' relates to one's citizenship status and their claim for residency rights. For instance, children who have a long-standing Irish ethnic heritage, understood 'to belong', you must be born in a country and you must live in that country. These children, strongly associated citizenship as synonymous with one's birth right and national identity. This aligns with Carrington and Short (1995, 1996) who found that both British and American children's conceptions of national identity were defined in terms of their birthplace (in Waldron and Pike 2006: 233). Within an Irish context, Waldron and Pike's (2006) research finds that the 'idea of place of origin, where one is born or comes from, was seen by some of the children as a significant and immutable source of national identity' (p.244).

Contrastingly, I noted children from different ethnic heritages and those who attended either ET/MD schools did not place the same level of precedence on citizens' birth origin as a precursor to their residency rights. This cohort clearly felt people do not necessarily have to be born in a country 'to belong' and to have a right to live there. This kind of understanding is illustrated in the group interview excerpt below;

[Excerpt, group interviews, Oakfields MD, group 3]

Ina (10): I think a citizen is someone who has lived in their city or their country for a long time they live there, and they are a citizen of their country.

Frida (10) [Adds]: A citizen is someone who like... is part of a city or a country...someone who is part of a community, or has lived there for a while, they might not have been born there.

Furthermore, children attending ET and MD primary schools were more aware of the legal formalities associated with citizen's residency rights. ET/MD schools have more diverse demographics, which could have contributed to these children's knowledge about applications for Irish residency either because of their direct experience, or from second hand accounts from peers who experienced this process. For instance, some children understood that people could be a citizen in more than one country which suggest more nuanced understandings of citizenship residency rights as is demonstrated by Niall's (10) comment; 'I think a citizen is someone who is part of a country like, you may be born in a different country, but you can get citizenship in other countries too' [Oakfields MD, Group 7]. These children also understood that citizenship is a status which can be earned or applied for, then you could 'belong to' or be 'part of' a country too;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET^{xc}, group 4]

I ask: Can you describe to me who/what a citizen is?

Lisa [Replies]: Well it's kinda like if you're born somewhere you are automatically a citizen and if you want to move somewhere you can apply for citizenship.

Susan [Adds]: It's a person who lives in a country someone who's born there gets citizenship and someone who's not born there can earn citizenship.

Children with different ethnic heritage also had more of a general knowledge about the number of years you must be resident in a country before you can ‘apply’ to be a citizen of that country. For instance, Mia (10, heritage unknown) directly linked a citizen’s rights to the number of years they have lived in a country; ‘It’s someone who for a period of time has lived there em... I think it’s more than 4 years of something?’ [Oakfields MD, group 7]. Mia’s classmate Marina (10, Muslim heritage) expressed a similar understanding;

I think it is... it doesn’t have to be if you were born in that country, but if you stayed there for a long period of time like 5 years or eh... if you have relatives, you might go there a lot, so you might be a citizen there because you go there so often [Oakfields MD, group 6].

Likewise, Nina (10, Vietnamese heritage), directly associated citizenship status with residency rights and she told me; ‘I think you can apply for it, but you also have to be there 2 years to be a complete citizen’ [Hillcrest ET, group 4]. In addition, children with a different ethnic heritage, strongly associated one’s legal right to live in a country as a representation of their full status as citizens of a country. Nadia (9, Polish heritage), for instance, explained to me that a citizen is; ‘... someone who has the right to live in a particular country’ [Mary Immaculate, group 1a]. Nadia’s comment demonstrates her belief that someone does not have to be born in a country to have a right to live there. Both Nadia’s parents are Polish which implies she has adopted this viewpoint based on her own experiences of integrating into an Irish community.

Notably, I also found some children from Muslim heritages face challenges due to racism which children who come from a longline of ‘Irish’ heritage^{xci} are not exposed to. The issue of racism was raised during a group-interview which clearly demonstrates the racist-based inequality experienced by some young children as they negotiate the frictions between their personal and public identities;

[Excerpt, group interview, Oakfields MD, group 3]

I ask the group: Who do you think a citizen is?

Waffa (10, Muslim heritage): I think a citizen is [Pauses]... I think that people can treat them em... [Pauses again] ... as if like “go back to your own country!” [Raises his voice]. Because I was like born here but a couple of weeks ago people told me to go back to my own country and I didn’t really like that. So, if you’re born here even if your mom and dad are from a different country, you shouldn’t be told to go back to

your own country just because your parents are from a different country and you're from Ireland.

Waffa clearly identified himself as Irish. His comment reveals his frustration about some peoples' inability to recognise him as being Irish and not Muslim. This suggests Waffa is experiencing a friction between his Irish identity and his ethnic heritage and, perhaps he is pulled between the two? Waffa publicly identified himself as Irish. However, at home, I posit if he must negotiate a space for himself between his familial ethnic heritage and his Irishness. Waffa is caught between a rock and a hard place. He must deal with external racist comments and, with his own internal wrangling's about his self-identity in a country which does not *fully* accept him or his family. Waffa's experience(s) reflects a quote by Painter and Philo 1995 who state;

[i]f people cannot be present in public spaces without feeling uncomfortable, victimized or 'out of place', then it must be questionable whether or not these people can be regarded as citizens at all, or, at least, whether they will regard themselves as full citizens on an equal footing with other people who seem perfectly 'at home' in public spaces' (in Moskal 2016: 90).

Waffa's comment suggests he felt 'out of place' because he was victimised by other citizen's racist remarks. Notwithstanding, Waffa's lived experiences of racial inequality may have fostered a strong sense of universal rights and equality within him too, which is alluded to in a comment he made later in our interview; 'I think everyone is equal, no matter where they are from or where their parents are from' [Oakfields MD, group 3].

These tensions expressed by Waffa regarding self-identity were also evident in other children's comments. For instance, some children with 'dual' nationality (i.e. when one or other of their parents had a different nationality), were less sure about *their* nationality. I found, children from dual/mixed heritages negotiate or rationalise this as part of their development of notions about their self-identity;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 2]

I ask the group: When we go to other countries, what would we be known as?

Pranay (10): Foreigners. In India we are supposed to pay more because we are Foreigners.

I ask Pranay: Are you Indian citizens as well?

Pranay: We are half Indian, I'm not sure. [He was uncertain if he identified as Indian, Irish or as both]

Riya (10) [Explains]: His mom is Irish, and his dad is Indian.

Pranay [Adds]: And Riya's dad is Irish, and her mom is Indian^{xcii}.

Children attending urban schools with more diversity in their school population offered more information about citizenship and rights. This is heartening, as it suggests that some schools are making a concerted effort to include notions of equality and human rights into their school policy and practice. For instance, children from Oakfields MD frequently referred to equality and rights during their interviews with me, as is evident in Rosa's (10) comment below;

I think a citizen would be someone who belongs to a country and was part of that country. And they have a right in that country and that people accept them [Oakfields MD, group 8].

Yuval-Davis (2006) highlights that the politics of belonging relates to issues of citizenship rights in terms of citizen's rights to migrate, to live and work and the right to 'plan a future where you live' (p.208). Ideas about residency rights also emerged as a theme from my participant observations and group-interviews with children, whereby they strongly linked residency rights to citizenship. This proposes that ethnicity is also a criterion for children's sense of belonging and membership which is also linked to their identity as citizen's who rightfully 'belong' and can participate in civic life on an equal basis.

My analysis highlights two factors which I suggest influence children's understandings of 'formal' notions of citizenship: (i) children's own personal lived experience of challenges they face due to racist attitudes/assumptions about their ethnic heritage (as demonstrated by Waffa's experience of racial inequality) and, (ii) school ethos and policy appear to have informed some children's understandings about human rights and equality. Likewise, Waldron and Pike's (2006) research found 'in a number of cases, children's expressions of concern for the environment, their identification of rights-based issues and their views on diversity accorded

with the particular and visible ethos of the school' (p.248; Smyth et al 2009^{xciii}). They also note 'there is some evidence' to suggest that schools can make a difference towards children's socialisation about rights-based issues and diversity.

4.5 Citizens have passports

Darren (10): You have to have an Irish passport to become a citizen [Oakfields MD, group 1].

I found most children did not explicitly use the word right/rights when they spoke about citizenship^{xciv}, however, they understood that only certain people (citizens) have specific privileges or opportunities which others do not have. Therefore, I cannot infer the absence of the word 'rights' in children explanations about citizenship indicates a lack of comprehension about the positive and negative rights associated with citizenship. For instance, most children understood that only full citizens were legally permitted to own a passport. This was a commonly-held assumption between children from across my case studies, which demonstrates they are very aware of an important 'right' they associated with 'formal' aspects of citizenship. The following excerpt demonstrates children's understanding that citizenship rights were also associated with holding a passport;

[Excerpt, Mary Immaculate, group interview, group 3b]

I ask: Can you describe to me what a citizen is?

Daryl (10) [Replies with a question]: Isn't it like you're considered a citizen in Ireland if you have an Irish passport?

Brian (11) [Adds]: A citizen is exactly what Daryl said. Like if you moved to America, I wouldn't be a citizen over there, because I'm Irish and I'd have to get an American passport and if I married someone over in America I'd be a citizen of America.

Furthermore, I noticed a lot of participants had passports from a very early age^{xcv}. According to figures issued by the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (2018) the number of passports issued to children in 2017 was '285, 633'. In 2010, 217, 002 passports were issued to children. This suggests children's foreign travel is on the rise and that some younger children are more familiar with various modes of travel and have been introduced to other cultures at an earlier age than previous generations. Children's exposure to different cultures could also inform their ideas about citizenship. For instance, the following excerpt

demonstrates children's nuanced understandings about what their European citizenship status entitles them to in European countries and how this does not apply in non-European countries;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 1]

I ask the group: Can you describe what/who a citizen is?

Craig (10): A citizen is a person from a country and of what they are.

Graham (10) [Adds]: I'd say a citizen would be a person in a country with a passport who has rights; not everybody has rights.

Conor (10): Eh... a citizen is someone who lives in a country who like, has a passport who can; like if I just go to France, no well no, if I go to Russia for 2 years I'm not a citizen. I need like, like say my dad to live there and then I could get a passport.

Graham [Asks]: Isn't it like if you live there for a certain amount of time you can get a citizenship?

Conor [Replies]: Yeah, like European's we don't really need one.

Conor's comments, show his nuanced understanding about EU citizen's rights to freedom of movement between other EU countries. Earlier, he made a point of telling that he is half Canadian, and he regularly visits extended family members in Canada. This suggests his experiences at home, school (or what he sees in the media) are introducing him to information about EU and international citizenship(s).

Children from across my case studies understood that a passport identifies and proves that you are a valid and full citizen of *your* country. They also knew that passports holders could legally travel to other countries too, therefore, passports represented status, residency and mobility rights for children. I also suggest passports represent a form of security for some children. Perhaps this is more pertinent for children who were not born in Ireland, where *their* passport proves they are 'recognised' citizens of this country?

In addition, I found that passports symbolised a form of social capital for some children^{xvii}. The manner some children chose to speak about passports, in terms of it identifying their ability to go on holiday abroad, suggests they are aware of the proxy social power their parent's social status brings to their own social status within their peer group. For instance, some children (both genders) from St. Finbarr's often referred to their experiences of foreign travel during

group chats to demonstrate their level of social status/class to their peers, and to adults (i.e. me) they wanted to impress;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

9.15am [before class] – Our pre-class chat then moves onto people going away on holidays and trips abroad. This is started by Kelly (9) who announces to me that she's going to London next week for four days to visit her brother and his girlfriend. I comment that she's lucky and must be excited. Kelly looks pleased at my response. Susan (10) then butts in and reminds me that she's going to Australia for 3 weeks in March. [Later that day, during class she asks Fiona (class teacher) if school assembly will be on in March, she makes a point of saying that she'll miss it if it is as she's going to Australia]. Susan says her dad can't go as he's to stay at home to look after the farm so that they'll probably go on another holiday with him in May or June. Tina (10) tells me about the time she stayed with her Nanny. She tells me that her nan cut her toast into the shape of a love heart. I notice Rebecca (10) doesn't add to our conversation and looks somewhat uncomfortable.

This was not the first time this group of girls spoke to me about their respective holiday plans. I noticed it was the same handful of children who offered this kind of information. Others were not forthcoming about their holiday plans. I infer their silence and awkward body language during these conversations suggests they do not go abroad on holiday and they feel at a loss because of this. Children who did, were very aware of the expenses attached to going abroad. For instance (in a different conversation) Carol (10) listed off all the things which had to be paid for when they went on holiday; ... 'like, there's the plane and then the hotel and the theme parks' [St. Finbarr's].

When children announced they were going abroad on holiday, I infer they were sending a clear message to their peers, which is they 'belong' to a certain group of people who could afford to do so. This suggests, some are very aware of social class and how it impacts on the kinds of things you can/cannot do. These children used their holidaying as a form of bragging, which indicates their awareness of their acquired level of social class by proxy through their parent's financial circumstances and access to cultural and social capitals. My findings propose that owning a passport also implied a status other than citizenship per se for these children. As well as proving someone's residency and mobility rights, passports *also* indicated a certain level of social mobility and social capital. Given this, passports signalled two forms of mobility for children; physical (in terms of the legal right to visit/live in other countries), and social

economic (in terms of the financial ability to afford to travel to other countries). Furthermore, I query; if children who do not hold a passport feel *less than* or *less secure* than children who do?

4.6 [Some] citizens can vote

Maura (10): You can act less mature at certain ages [Oakfields MD, group 6].

Children from across my case studies linked maturity to chronological age. They recognised adults as embodying a complete state of maturity, which infers they automatically have more sense, competency and the ability to do things which children cannot. For example, children strongly associated voting rights with adulthood which corresponded with their understandings of citizenship. Children defined voting (which they also saw as a form of decision-making) as one of the ‘more serious things’ and ‘important’ activities adult citizens can do. Susan (10) explained that voting was something you are only allowed to do when you get older; ‘You can vote when you are in double-digits’ [St. Finbarr’s]. Olivia and Danielle (10, Hillcrest ET) expressed similar feelings about voting and how this relates to children. However, they expressed more nuanced ideas about why children should not be allowed to vote;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 5]

I ask: Do you think children should be allowed to vote too?

Olivia: Well children can’t vote, which I think sometimes is bad and sometimes it’s better because most children would hear stuff off of the internet or the radio or anything and, then they could just choose sides and then there’s probably more children than adults in the world and if more children voted for something that wouldn’t be right for their county, or town or country.

Daniella [Adds]: Yeah, cause even if like when you're younger and you don't like have the choice to do this, you're just told to do this and this...your parents might teach you some, like if you don't learn any of that stuff a vote might come up or something and then like you won't know what to do and you'll kinda be like, wait, I need someone to tell me what to do!... you need to learn.

Olivia and Danielle’s concerns are also reflected in a comment made by their classmate Craig (10);

I would like children to vote but if they are voting they need to be taught a bit more about people. So, probably they'd need to know a bit more before they could vote... [Hillcrest ET, group 1].

Colm alluded to the wider implications of people not properly learning about the voting process or being informed about the candidates/issues they are voting for;

I would like children to vote but if they are voting they need to be taught a bit more about people. So, probably they'd need to know a bit more before they could vote. Also, something dangerous could happen if you were unprepared [Group 2].

Likewise, Ingrid (10, Oakfields MD) highlighted the wider implications of children's disassociation from citizenship as a practice;

Yeah, we are the next generation then again like somethings we don't get asked, and we don't really get asked so we don't really care or know much about it [citizenship] [Group 3].

Nonetheless, other children felt that their involvement in political matters may not be such a good idea; 'I think a government that has an adult-child government might turn our city into a play land'... [Giggles] (Rosa 10, Oakfields MD). According to Rosa, children and adults operate from opposing agendas. Top of children's agenda is to have fun and play whereas adults priorities involve more serious things such as voting and governing people. Rosa's view was shared by many children from across my case studies, in that, people (i.e. children) are not capable to vote before 18 because that is when you *become* more mature and therefore responsible to do 'serious' things like voting;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 3b]

Daryl (11): Well, we shouldn't be really allowed to vote because we'd just vote for some random person.

I ask: So, what age is a good age to vote?

Daryl: 18 is a good age to be allowed to vote.

I probe further: Why do you think they choose 18?

Brian (11) [Responds]: Because you are then an adult and you are not a teenager anymore.

Me: So, what happens when you become an adult?

Daryl: You become a bit more responsible.

Children from Oakfields MD had similar ideas about the impossibility of children voting;

[Excerpt, group interview, group 7]

Niall (10): Say they [children] are voting they wouldn't really know...say they voted this guy, but they don't really know what his policy was or what he's going to do for the country.

Tina (10) [Adds]: An adult citizen can do the voting. Like, I find it pretty fair cause it would be a bit strange if kids could vote.... [Niall interrupts her]

Niall [Reiterates his point]: I don't think children should [vote], I think they should do it where children can try it for a day.

Tina's use of the word 'strange', suggests she has learned (through experience) that the idea of children participating in general elections is unusual and contra to the socially accepted norm which dictates that only adults should be allowed to vote. Again, these children's justification of the age restriction rule was based on maturity and responsibility. Yet, Niall's response also suggests that although children should not be allowed to vote in an official capacity, they still should be afforded the opportunity to practice it^{xcvii} which would give them a better chance of making the 'right' decision when their time comes to vote too.

Most children agreed in principle with an age-restriction voting rule, however, some chose to significantly lower it to an age they felt was appropriate for children to participate;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 1]

I ask the group: Would you put an age restriction on who could vote?

Graham (10): Yeah, seven and over, or eight and over. Normally younger than that they wouldn't understand.

Conor (10) [Butts in]: Yeah, that guy has a cool fringe, lets vote for him. [They all laugh]^{xcviii}

Conor's implication here is that only young children would vote for someone like Donald Trump. Even though most children believed that adults are equipped with the necessary maturity and cognitive skills to vote, some alluded to adult's fallibility. For instance, Pranay's (10, Hillcrest ET) response to his classmate's comment about age-based voting restrictions, reveals his sense of injustice about his inability to vote. Pranay knows adults make mistakes too, not just young children, but adults are still about to vote; 'Well, adults can vote, and they can make the wrong decisions as well' [Group 2]. Carol (10, St. Finbarr's) expressed a similar opinion;

We can't be the President, we are not old enough. But the one thing I disagree mostly about the Presidency is that, the fact that, some Presidents in the world make bad choices...

These children's comments also demonstrate their understanding about the relationship between power and rational thought. Children know adults are the powerholders because they have autonomy, agency and the cognitive skills to make (good/right) decisions/choices. Indeed, children were very aware of their voiceless position in society and they linked this directly to their lack of opportunity to participate and to have a say in activities such as voting/decision making processes;

Tom (10): The adults kinda do much more in the world. They've got bigger rights [Oakfields MD, group 9].

Most children were very critical about their lack of opportunity to vote and make decisions during childhood, which they largely accepted as the status quo. However, some children were more willing to discuss alternative possibilities around developing children's voting rights. For instance, some suggested lowering the age-restriction. They also pointed out, to be more equipped to vote at a younger age, they need to be given more opportunities to learn how do to so. This suggests children understand that voting requires more than maturity and responsibility; it also requires access to information and practice. Interestingly, only one child suggested children could play an unofficial role as a way of getting around the age-based voting restriction. For instance, Eddie (11) believed children; 'can still give advice to their mum and dad and say, "you could pick this person"'... [Mary Immaculate, group 5b]. In addition, I noted a minority of children felt very strongly about their lack of voting rights and they argued children should be allowed to vote as soon as they reached 'double-digits' (10). I observed this

cohort (St. Finbarr's) did not get many (if any) occasions to vote as a collective or to participate in decision-making in class.

Children's comments about voting indicate their (inadvertent) awareness of two central aspects of citizenship. Firstly, children knew about the basic legalities associated with citizenship rights (most knew 18 is the legal voting age in Ireland) and holding a passport. Secondly, they were aware of social and political structures which govern the level (and type) of rights afforded to citizens. Tom (10), for instance, explained; 'But some people aren't allowed to vote cause they're not completely Irish' [Oakfields MD, group 9]. His comment shows his understanding that *only* full citizens can vote, whereas people who do not fulfil all the necessary citizenship criteria (i.e. age and legal residency rights) are not permitted to vote.

4.7 Conclusions – children's citizenship socialisation

To act on and relate to rules and responsibilities in society is to act as a citizen (Olsson 2017: 545).

Children's age is the centre from which their autonomy expands or retracts. I found children repeatedly referred to their age as a benchmark to signify their level of autonomy, agency, social status, maturity and responsibility during childhood. Findings discussed in **Section One** indicate children largely recognise childhood as a period of apprenticeship in preparation for adulthood. Overall, my findings demonstrate children adhere to adult-based theories of children's citizenship which recognise it as a state of *becoming*. As such, children are (inadvertently) socialised during childhood to identify themselves as non-participating citizens as opposed to citizens-in-action. In addition, children's comments reveal they are inadvertently exposed to challenging information/ misinformation about social issues at home and at school. They acquire this knowledge; from peer-to-peer knowledge-exchange, snippets of opportunities they get to discuss notions of ethics/human rights in the classroom^{xcix} and, from parts of parental/adult conversations about wider social issues. I found children can be uncertain, confused and conflicted by the mixed messages they appropriate from their own social world and adults'. I suggest this could be because they are not given the chance to process this kind of difficult information in a more supportive manner.

Furthermore, children expressed their own concerns about balancing school and home life and, some felt they do not get enough 'quality' time to chat to their parents about *their* concerns.

For instance, Homework posed a significant concern for children from across my case studies. Children's comments also reveal some schools' policy towards disciplining them into completing their homework 'properly' which also created a source of anxiety. Furthermore, school practices which foreground responsabilisation, exam performance, individualised learning and competitive initiatives suggest school policies are being informed by neo-liberal approaches towards education.

Citizenship is a practice which needs to be learned (Heater 2002). However, findings discussed in **Section Two** indicate that abstract social concepts - such as citizenship - remain abstract to younger children. Many children could not describe to me who/what a citizen is, and they had very little (if any) comprehension of how citizenship related to them. For these children, 'citizenship' was literally abstracted from their lives as it was something they could not directly relate to.

Even though some children could not directly answer my questions about citizenship, their responses about the differences between childhood and adulthood exposed their understandings about responsibility, duty and rights. All of which are inextricably linked to citizenship. I found some cohorts had quite defined understanding about formal aspects of citizenship, which they spoke about in terms of; citizens' residency and voting rights, and citizens' obligations. Children attending ET/MD schools also articulated more nuanced understandings about residency rights which suggests children at these school have more diverse populace. This could also imply cohorts attending ET/MD schools are introduced to information about such issues either through school policy and practice or through peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. In addition, my analysis indicates that children from across my case studies referred to adult citizens' responsibilities and duties as opposed to their rights. This implies children are being socialised towards Civic Republican ideas about citizenship which place precedence over citizens' duties and civic action as opposed to their individual rights.

My findings raise two key questions, 1. how does this asymmetrical social dynamic between children and adults make children feel - especially when they neither possess the autonomy and agency nor the skills/support to do anything about the issues they worry about? 2. What possible implications could children's experiences of limited autonomy and agency have on the development of their esteem as valued and recognised members (citizens) of society. With these issues in mind, Chapter Five discusses findings in relation to my examination of

children's participatory experiences at school and the influence this has on their sense of agency, membership, belonging, identity and status as citizens. I also indicate how children's experiences of (non)participation impacts their development of *citizenship-esteem* as school-citizens.

Chapter Five: Children's experiences of participation and decision-making at school

Overview

Findings discussed in Chapter Four indicate children locate their social position as citizens in theory and not in practice. Children broadly conceptualise themselves as a non-participating social group. I suggest their experiences of limited autonomy and agency is inadvertently socialising children to recognise 'citizenship' is a practice reserved for adulthood.

This Chapter considers this issue and discusses research findings which illuminate children's positive and negative experiences of democratic participation at primary school. I begin with a concise review of literatures which highlight the broader importance of participation as part of a citizenship education. From this, I introduce my conceptual framework *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* [See Fig. 4. Page 124 for an illustration of this]. I use this concept to scaffold my findings in relation to children's experiences of participation within different 'public' social contexts. Overall my findings reveal the tensions between the social structure of the primary school and children's agency to participate and enact their 'right to voice'. My findings indicate school practices largely do not facilitate children's opportunity to develop what I term as their *democratic competencies (DC)* [See Fig. 5. Page 135 for a representation of the interdependency between *DC* and children's social development as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens]. I propose this unequal social dynamic could impact on children's *citizen-esteem* as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens.

5. Introduction - Primary school children's citizenship practice in Ireland

Lisa (10): It might be easier if you are taught citizenship at a young age rather than at an older age. It might be easier for you to get into that habit, of being a good citizen [Hillcrest ET, group 4].

The historical aim of mass education was to produce an educated citizenry for the wellbeing of democracy (Carr and Hartnet 1996; Tröhler et al 2012; Robinson and Aronica 2015). Schools have long been regarded as key sites of socialisation; inculcators of social control, moral guidance and the dissemination of nationalistic ideology (Tröhler et al 2012: 33; Drudy

and Lynch 1993; Jamieson 2002; Lynch and Lodge 2004; Moskal 2016; Kustatscher 2016). This notion is evident in both the structure and principles of the organisation of mass education (Tröhler et al 2012). Therefore, it is reasonable to query the ‘type’ of citizenship education and the kinds of citizenship (and social) practices children are introduced to at school, which also encapsulate wider societal ideologies about childhood and children’s place as citizens in society.

Irish-based research suggests children’s sense of belonging (membership) and ownership is linked to their opportunities to engage in participatory processes at school which has positive effects on their sense of wellbeing at school (Horgan et al 2015; Smyth 2015; Yetunde et al 2013; de Róiste et al 2012; Devine 2009). Moreover, it suggests children place significant importance on their sense of belonging, membership and participation in terms of their peer-to-peer relationships at school (Devine 2009; Yetunde et al 2013). Similarly, Cockburn (2010) asserts, ‘if children and young people are happy with their peers, we find that they are indeed capable of critical thinking, responsibility and learning’ (p.313-314). In addition, a key aim of democratically-led pedagogical practices and school policy, is to develop pupils’ sense of inclusion, membership, belonging and ownership as citizens of their school. Quinn and Owen (2014) draw attention to the positive impact student voice has on ‘improving [their] engagement and their personal and social development, as well as fostering a sense of inclusion, citizenship, and school attachment among the student body’ (p.193; Aronica et al 2015; Smyth et al 2014). Belonging, participation and ownership are therefore important factors for children’s social and emotional development and their wellbeing as *citizen-peers* within their peer groups and as recognised school citizens.

Due to the influence of broader structural forces within and external to the primary school, the development of children’s participatory rights is hampered and fraught with challenges (Devine 2002, 2003, 2009; Waldron 2004; Deegan et al 2004; Devine and Cockburn 2018)^c. The primary school is argued to be a key site for the dissemination of citizenship education (Coolihan 1981; Walsh 1999). However, Kustatscher (2016) asserts ‘schools do not exist in isolation’ and the social relations and practices of the primary school extend beyond the school setting (p.12). She notes, child-adult and peer-to-peer relationships are also formed by, and contribute to, wider social relations in terms of how we do gender, how we engage with notions of ethnicity and class – and I add - how we ‘do’ citizenship. Therefore, it remains questionable,

‘the extent to which schools can be considered to be centres of democratic practice’ (Waldron 2004: 229; Lynch and Lodge 2004; Devine 2002, 2003, 2009; Drudy and Lynch 1993; Carr and Hartnet 1996; Tröhler et al 2012). Waldron et al (2014), for instance, draw attention to pedagogical methodologies, the delivery and positioning of citizenship education within the broader school curriculum and, the implementation of school ethos, policy and practice. They assert these factors create tensions around the practicalities of empowering children to become active citizens (ibid). Findings from this research contribute towards existing studies because they extend and deepen our understandings of how (some) primary schools interact with children’s forms of citizenship participation.

5.1 Children’s Social Circles of Citizenship Participation

At this point I return to my concept and framework *Children’s Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* which locates children’s forms of ‘public’ citizenship participation in the spaces and places they can participate the most during childhood [See Fig. 4. Page 124 for a representation of this framework]. This idea is informed by my participant observations of children’s peer-to-peer and child-adult interactions at school and, children’s responses to my questions about citizenship and childhood.

I loosely applied Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) *Ecological Systems Theory* to scaffold my findings about children’s understandings and experiences of citizenship and democratic practices. Bronfenbrenner’s theory aims to explain how children’s development is influenced by their environment from their home (microsystem) to wider social contexts (macrosystem).

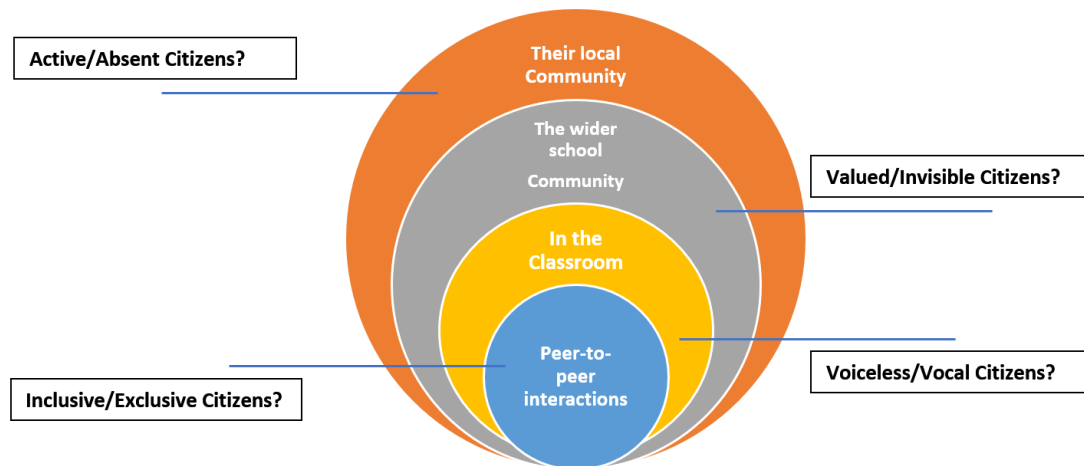


Fig. 4. *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation*

My analysis finds children's participatory practices predicate from their *citizen-peer* interactions (micro) in their peer groups. Their opportunities to participate move towards (and are interconnected with) their participatory practices in wider social arenas (macro) such as the classroom, the school and their local community. I recognise these 'public' spaces and places can offer children practicable opportunities to be citizens-in-action. However, I found it is as *citizen-peers* of their peer groups where children have the most opportunity to fully participate as citizens in their own right.

Within these differing social circles, children's participatory rights are dependent upon social context and its corresponding norms and values. The level of rights afforded to children dictates if they are included/excluded, voiceless/vocal, valued/invisible and active/absent within these shifting social contexts. I do not see these social positions as dichotomous states in opposition to each other. Rather, children's social position is experienced along a continuum. I found children's citizenship participation within these different social contexts could range from non-participation, partial to full participation. For instance, as *citizen-peers* of their peer groups, children can enjoy full participatory rights which gives them more influence over peer activities, partial rights which means they have less of a say, or no rights, which usually results in exclusion from peer group activities. In the classroom, children's voices can be silenced,

listened to but not heard, or given space and due credence. In the wider school environment, children can be recognised as citizens in namesake only, they can be given tokenistic offerings of inclusion, or they can participate in student platforms which communicate with management about school affairs. In the wider local community, children can be absent or active whose participation is afforded or overlooked in local initiatives, such as the Tidy Towns^{ci} [Represented in orange in Fig. 4. Page 124]. I now consider *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* in relation to their participation at school [represented in yellow and grey in Fig. 4. *ibid*].

5.2 Children's right to voice and to participate at school

Children Learn What They Live (Dorothy Law Nolte 1954)

My participant observations^{cii} reveal teaching and social practices largely reinforced notions of authority, control and obedience, which are echoes of the Catholic Church's historical management of Irish primary schools. I also noted schools actively promoted behaviours from their young citizenry to fulfil these types of social practices. For instance, children were praised for sitting quietly with their fingers to their lips. Furthermore, I observed most children could not formally enact their citizenship participatory rights at school because they did not get enough opportunity to voice their opinions or to contribute towards decision-making processes in class or in the wider school. I also observed children attending NS appeared to get fewer opportunities to voice their opinions in class in comparison to children attending an MD school. In addition, I noted children from NS tended to be afforded tokenistic opportunities to participate, again in comparison to children attending Oakfields MD^{ciii}. To illustrate 'tokenistic opportunities', I refer to an incident during a Circle-time^{civ} session at St. Joseph's^{cv} with children from 4th, 5th and 6th class;

[Extract, fieldnotes from Circle-Time Session, St. Joseph's]

2.30pm - The kids are scattered around the room and they occupy all the space. I look to see where I can sit. Karen (12) says, 'Caitriona you can sit here', she points to the bench beside her. I say thanks. Patricia (school principal and class teacher) then says to Karen, 'Maybe you could give your chair to Caitriona?' [Karen is sitting on an adult-sized chair]. I interject and smile and say; thanks, but that I'm OK here. Patricia doesn't press Karen any further to give up her chair to me. I glance at Karen, she seems pleased and smiles quietly to herself.

Patricia begins the session by asking the children to write down anything they want to discuss, they are told they can do this anonymously and no one will know who wrote what. She gives them a few moments to do this, then she calls them back into the circle and takes each child's carefully folded piece of paper. The first issue raised is about better play equipment for the schoolyard. The children are quiet as Patricia explains to them that they are waiting for a grant to come through from the Department of Education before they can buy these resources. The next issue is about games banned at playtime;

Colin (9) [Protests]: Most of our games are banned!

Patricia asks: Why do you think that is?

Colin: It's because our teacher doesn't like them.

Patricia: It's because sometimes people get hurt during games when the others play rough. [The discussion is then dropped]

Patricia moves onto her next piece. She says someone is 'feeling a bit sad' but she says she'll talk about this another time. The discussion moves back to playtime. The group ask when they can go back up to play in the pitch. Patricia explains, 'It's too mucky'. The group then complain that they don't get enough time to play. Patricia tells them the official departmental time for play is 5 minutes. Darren (9) exclaims, 'That's scandalous!'

Another issue is read out, someone is 'finding the shouting in the yard a bit tough'. Again, Patricia sets this aside for discussion at another time. The group then chime in and complain about Irish and Maths and how they find them tough; they also say they want more time to do English. Patricia doesn't give them any sympathy and the discussion is closed-down. Another issue is read out; 'I don't think people respect choices and opinions', again, Patricia doesn't open the floor for discussion about this matter.

[3.10pm] – Sonia (class teacher) comes in to collect the children, they line up in front of the door. One of the first things Patricia says to Sonia [she raises her voice, so all can hear], 'They are complaining that they don't get enough time to do English'. Sonia fumes in dismay and says, 'They get more than enough time!'. The kids don't respond.

I understand the rationale behind this session was to afford children a safe space wherein they could talk about issues that mattered to them at school. However, the public exchange between Patricia and Sonia undermined some of the concerns raised by the group during their circle-time session. I also noticed Patricia mediated what issues could/could not be discussed throughout the session; she permitted the discussion of practical issues, whereas she side-stepped any emotional or social issues raised by the group. When a dialogue ensued, it was

quickly shut down and Patricia moved onto what she saw as being more time-friendly and appropriate topics to 'discuss'. I observed that the children did not protest over Patricia's decision to exclude questions/concerns from the group discussion, rather they passively accepted her authority. Neither the children (nor I) were privy to Patricia's reasonings for her treatment of this group's issues; she did not explain why she would not discuss some of the issues raised. I suggest this could have produced two possible negative impressions in this groups' understanding of their social position as participants of open-discussions at this school. Firstly, children's views and concerns are dismissed unless warranted otherwise by adults'. Secondly, adults do not see children's issues as important as adult's issues. Based on these two assumptions, children learn they are in a powerless social position and these 'circle-time' sessions do not really make much of a difference to them at school. This type of learning was reinforced in this context by the tight control Patricia maintained over the circle-time session

Collins (2013b), who writes about the use of Mosely's Circle Time (CT) in Irish primary schools, notes CT provides both an audience and a space for children to talk^{cvi} which ... 'might allow them take their place more assertively as citizens'... (p.434). However, she also highlights that whether children's participation in CT alters their level of influence over their classroom space or the likelihood of entering into an open dialogue with their teacher (or the wider school governing body) about school rules remains unclear. Collins (2013b) refers to Devine's (2003) earlier research about CT, where she sees it as a more democratic type of schooling. However, Devine (2003) also cautions against the possible negative aspects of CT in terms of the potential for power imbalances between the teacher and the children. Where children under an adult's interpretation may be seen as 'deviant or deficient' and socialised ... 'in line with adult-defined goals and expectations' (Devine 2003 in Collins 2013b: 422). My finding reflects both Collins (2013) and Devine's (2003) research which respectively draws our attention to the interplay of adult power and control in the use of democratic pedagogical methodologies such as CT.

I acknowledge there are broader structural forces which often impede teacher's pedagogical practices within the primary school space. The primary school curriculum is overcrowded, and teachers are under considerable pressure to complete various curricular programmes within a short school year. Classroom activities and lessons operate within a time sensitive space. This reality is often not compatible with time-hungry democratic processes (such as CT) which

encourage children to negotiate consensus. Nevertheless, I argue my example above highlights how teacher training could provide an opportunity to further enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and methods. Another contributing factor when using pedagogy to promote and develop children's positive associations with democratic practices at school is adults' willingness to remain cognisant of their adult power, and to alter their perception to see younger children as active rather than passive social agents.

I observed some classroom practices and wider school initiatives which aimed to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging whereby children saw themselves as valued members (citizens) of their school community. For instance, during my time at St. Finbarr's^{cvi} a School Assembly was introduced as part of the school's policy to foster a sense of 'community cohesion' (Smyth et al 2014). This type of school initiative concurs with Smyth et al (2014), who highlight that schools which make efforts towards a 'socially critical approach to school/community engagement' are the ones where; 'students feel a strong sense of identity, belonging and acceptance' (p.72). St. Finbarr's School Assembly has the potential to develop participating students' sense of identity as recognised and valued school-citizens and to form positive and meaningful participatory experiences. The school principal visited each class and explained to the children; how the Assembly would be coordinated, what would go on inside of it and, what was expected of them in terms of their behaviour and participation. I observed this information session and noted the children listened intently to their principal's instructions and some (more confident children) asked questions about what exactly would be required of them. I was dismayed to hear that only certain children would be 'chosen' to present their achievements to the Assembly; only children from 1st up to 6th class could attend. The youngest cohort (Junior to Senior Infants) were not invited. Although this initiative was borne out of a positive notion of community, from the outset, it was clear that the parameters of inclusion did not extend to *all* members of the school community. This raises questions in terms of, how age-restricted approaches to children's participation could influence their meaning-making of notions about identity, belonging, inclusion and exclusion as dual-citizens in their social worlds and adults.

Yuval-Davis' (2006, 2011) conceptualisation of belonging sees that, '[b]elonging tends to be naturalised and part of everyday practices' and it is established by emotions, relationships and attachments (in Kustatscher 2016: 3). This notion of belonging can be placed in the context of the school wherein children 'perform' their sense of identity and belonging in their peer-to-

peer interactions and within their relations with adults (ibid). Kustatscher (2016) also draws attention to ‘ambivalent forms of belonging (or non-belonging)’ (p. 10). She asserts it is the responsibility of adults at school ‘to create spaces for discussing, and challenging’ the ‘politics of belonging’ (Yuval-Davis 2011) in terms of ‘who belongs, who is excluded, how groups and identities come to be constructed, and the power relations of how, and by whom, this is decided’ (ibid:11 - 12). From this perspective, St. Finbarr’s (School Assembly) age-based restriction rendered the youngest school-citizens invisible from this schools’ *Social Circle of Citizenship Participation* [Represented in yellow and grey in Fig. 4. Page 124]. Likewise, children’s voices at St. Joseph’s largely went unheard during their CT session. These incidences demonstrate the tensions between primary school social structures and facilitating children’s citizenship participatory rights.

5.3 Democratic practice – ‘Pick a number between one and ten!’

To observe children’s behaviors during participatory processes, whenever possible, I introduced different types of democratic practices into my participant observations. For example, I introduced the cohort at St. Finbarr’s to practices such as; ‘blind’ voting, consensus building, group decision-making, class debates and group work. These practices were built around a class project on the Irish State’s 1916 Centenary^{cviii} which was taking place at the time of my fieldwork. Children were asked to produce a Proclamation for their class which represented what they thought was important for the citizens of Ireland in 2016 and beyond. It was clear from the outset, that issues about fairness, justice and transparency were very important to these children. Every decision made - no matter how small - had to be reached in a fair way. Any time this group had to reach a consensus/ decision (without adult intervention) invariably proved to be a long and drawn out process. My fieldnotes below provide an illustration of this;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr’s]

After the votes were cast, the group had to decide who would count the votes; chaos ensued, some children waved their arms over their heads to get my attention, they pleaded with me; ‘Pick me, pick me!’. I asked the group what they thought would be the fairest way to choose and after another cacophony of voices it was eventually suggested by Emer (10) - a vocal, peer leader in the class - that Fiona (class teacher) should randomly pick the name of two children from her box, which contained all the class’ names. However, Emer then raised a concern and said, ‘What if the people picked are sitting at the same table; then that would not be fair’. This prompted another debate, whereby the children ultimately looked to me to decide what they should do.

A consensus was not forthcoming. I suggested as Fiona would choose the names at random, this would mean whoever was picked would be due to the 'luck of the draw'. The children were happy with this and under the group's watchful eyes two names were then chosen at random by Fiona. But after the votes were counted, it was discovered there was an even number of votes in favour of doing a drama and for doing an art project; another debate erupted. Again, Emer expressed dismay about a possible revote 'as it would take too long'. Instead, she suggested that the two vote counters 'pick a number between 1 and 10' and that I (as a trusted adult) should choose the number. The rest of the class agreed with this and I wrote the number I had chosen down on a piece of paper and folded it up; again, all of which was done under the watchful eyes of the class. Then there was an issue of who would guess the number first; another eruption of voices. Eventually after more debate, a consensus was reached.

I observed how invigorated the children were by this activity. They readily participated - even though they were frustrated by the toing and froing generated by the process of collective consensus. In contrast to the children's reactions, I recall how tired I felt; this process took just under one hour to complete. In addition, I was aware this process was encroaching into time reserved for other lessons^{cxix}, which created an added pressure to conclude our debate. Therefore, wider structural forces can inflame the kinds of challenges teachers face when (if) they try to integrate democratic practices into a time sensitive pedagogical space.

My observations and subsequent conversations with children also revealed some of the challenges collective decision-making posed for them too. My fieldnotes above gives a flavour of how these children operated during decision-making processes. Subsequent observations revealed children from St. Finbarr's found it particularly difficult to reach a consensus over the smallest of decisions by themselves. Whenever this cohort could not come to an agreement they often told me; 'You decide!'. The fallback method for reaching a consensus was the 'number between 1 and 10' process^{cx}. This group frequently defaulted to this method as they saw it was a legitimate way of making group decisions (when they could not) and, it was less bothersome for them. This decision-making/consensus issue was also discussed during my focus groups^{cxii} with these children. Some openly expressed their frustration about their classmates' inability to make 'fair' decisions. The following excerpt of a conversation between three focus group participants (age 9) recalls an incident where I asked their group to decide amongst themselves who should collect and return their completed information sheets^{cxiii} to me;

[Excerpt focus group 2, St. Finbarr's]

I ask the group: What did you like or not like about my visits to your school?

Rina: The voting to bring up the piece of paper, I didn't really get that.

I ask Rina: What do you mean?

Kelly [Responds instead]: It's only a piece of paper, it's not that big of a deal! [She mimics the behaviour of the children at the table they were referring to here] "Oh I wanna do it, oh I wanna do it". I was just saying that it wasn't that big of a deal...we had to do stuff like eeny-meany-miney-moe at our table.

Gina [Adds]: She was saying [does not give the name of the person], whoever made up that vote wasn't really fair.

I noted, some children also found it difficult to accept when a vote did not go their way. For instance, my case study observations revealed children tried to undermine the decision/vote by either questioning its validity or by deliberately thwarting the outcome of the decision. Furthermore, I found children's ability to vote and/reach a collective consensus is also dependent upon the level of social bonding within and between group members. Reading between the lines of Rina, Kelly and Gina's conversation, they unintentionally revealed the power struggle between some of the children in this group. Peer leaders (Carol and Emer,10) who felt most entitled to carry out the task and were dissatisfied when the task was not automatically given to them. Even though the task was a small one - and in my adult opinion it was not an important one - these children obviously thought otherwise. The power struggle between two peer leaders compounded this group's difficulty in reaching a 'fair' consensus. I refer to a fieldnote, based on my observation, which recalls my version of the incident discussed by Rina, Kelly and Gina above;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

After the class had completed their worksheets about citizenship, I asked them to decide who at their table^{cxiii} should collect the forms and return them to me. Two out of the three groups reached a consensus and they agreed who should do the task without too much difficulty. I noticed one group were not able to reach a consensus. I observed them and noted as time went on they were becoming more vocal with each other about how they should pick the person for the task even when the other two groups had decided and since completed the task. I noticed both Carol (10) and Emer (10) were at this table. These girls often vied for attention in class and I've spotted on a few occasions that there's a power struggle between them. At this stage some of the

others at the table were getting openly frustrated and upset (e.g. Molly, 9) because their group could decide who should do the task. I stepped in^{cxiv} to mediate for them after which they agreed to pick a number between 1 and 10; they felt this was the best way to decide. Emer picked the correct number. Carol was suspicious about this and when I held up the paper with the number I had written to prove that it was the correct number guessed she questioned the validity of the outcome and said snottily; ‘That’s a funny looking number 5?’. I showed her the number again more closely and I said to her; ‘Can you see it’s a 5?’, she says ‘OK’. Carol was annoyed that Emer got the right number and that the group did not choose her to do the task in the first place. My suspicions were confirmed as no one else in the group endorsed her query and backed her up. Yet, Carol still got her jibe in which was a subtle way of undermining the outcome of the process because it did not go her way.

Throughout my case studies, I witnessed and was told about similar types of reactions by children who did not get what they wanted after a group decision. These following excerpts demonstrate the difficulties children experienced when they tried to reach a group consensus;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET^{cxv}, group 4]

Nina (10, Vietnamese heritage): Say if we were doing like Art, like if someone wants to do sunflowers, or someone wants to do something like fruit, half the class like that and half the class like that...

Susan (10): [Sighs audibly]

Nina [Appears not to notice and continues]: Then, we’d have to pick another painting, then we’d all have a fight... [Trails off here]

I probe further: So, it can be hard to reach a consensus?

Nina: Yep.

Lisa (10) [Adds]: Whenever we work in groups in class we all try to be as equal as possible, but... [Trails off here]

Susan [Adds exasperatedly]: It ends up being worse!

Lisa [Agrees]: Yeah, some kids are just... it isn’t even that they want to do something it’s that they just want to annoy us and do the opposite of whatever we want to do, you know what I mean?

Nina: But, sometimes they just want their opinion, it’s fair that everyone gets their own opinion. [Looks dejected]

Lisa [Responds dismissively]: That’s fine, that’s fine [placating Nina] but, when they are suggesting something that they don’t even want, just to do the complete opposite to what we want; that can be very annoying...we wasted half an hour about wining about it.

A similar sense of frustration was expressed by children attending Mary Immaculate;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 2a]

I ask the group: How does it make you feel when you make a decision?

Jon (9): Well if she does pick the DVD, the one that you like, you might feel happier, cause, some people when they don't get to pick – including me – they get kinda annoyed and they kinda say, “I don't wanna watch this DVD”.

Noelle (9) [Adds]: That happens a lot [she says this quietly]. Yeah, cause usually when you are doing a DVD cause it's raining, and we'd have a vote and the others would be upset because they wanted to watch the other one.

I ask Noelle: What happens then, when the other people get upset?

Noelle: It kinda turns into, kinda a fight.

I probe further: Is that hard to manage?

Noelle [Replies]: Yeah cause then they go off and play a game and you can't really hear the movie or something. That's usually what happens.

I ask: So, people who don't get what they want...

Jon [Adds]: They start talking.

Noelle [Agrees]: Yeah, and they might play “sausage”^{cxvi} or something.

Based on my observations I noted three key ways collective decision making/consensus posed challenges for young children at school. Firstly, children found it difficult to reach consensus/group decisions if social bonds were weak in and between peer members in the group. I measured the level of social bonding between group members by how much/little they collaborated with each other in and outside of the classroom. Social bonds were built between children who liked each other or who were friends. Bonds were strengthened if children reciprocated in their support of each other. Yet I observed social bonds between children are fragile and can easily be broken (or reformed) and they are dependent upon the ever-changing social dynamic/hierarchy within children's peer groups. Consequently, I see that social bonding acted as a bridge by facilitating reciprocal interactions between children which enabled them to build a process of consensus between them [I discuss findings in relation to social bonding and citizenship in more detail in Chapter Six]. Secondly, some children found it difficult to accept the outcome of decisions when they did not go their way. To counter their

sense of injustice, I observed they sometimes tried to undermine or thwart the decision. Thirdly, I noticed if the decision-making process took too long, children became more frustrated and they either disengaged or they got upset.

‘Democracy’ can be a time-hungry, challenging and frustrating process for adults too. Therefore, it is not surprising children find collective forms of decision-making equally challenging. I suggest children could become more attuned at democratic processes (such as collective decision-making) if they got more frequent opportunities to do so at school. For example, my observations at Oakfields MD revealed children appeared to get more regular opportunities to participate in collective decision-making and voting in class. I also noticed this cohort of children listened to each other more during debates and they reached consensus relatively quickly. They did not interrupt each other, rather they waited until their classmate finished their point before they put their opinion forward. Contrastingly, my observations at St. Finbarr’s, St. Joseph’s and St. Assumpta’s (all NS) highlighted a distinct lack of opportunity for children to participate in regular democratic processes.

Furthermore, I noted some cohorts^{cxvii} propensity to more actively participate in decision-making processes where they directly associated the outcome with their personal gain as opposed to the collective good of the group. I also found children did not associate themselves as a social group (collective) which could achieve more for the greater good if they united. I posit, if children are not given regular opportunities to make collective decisions/build group consensus, they could find it more difficult to associate how solidarity is also a form of social power which could be used to exert positive social change.

On this basis, I suggest democratic processes could be more streamlined if children developed *democratic competencies (DC)*. My concept of *DC* is informed by Janmaat’s (2012) ideas about civic competencies which he identifies as a ‘motley collection of competencies’ (p.52)^{cxviii} [See Fig. 5 page 135 for a visual representation of this]. I define these competencies as skills relating to democratic processes such as; collective decision-making, consensus building, mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution. I see skills such as; active listening, verbal and non-verbal communication, the ability to see other perspectives, and patience as beneficial for these types of democratic processes. Not only do these kinds of democratic processes occur inside of the classroom, they also occur within children’s peer groups. For example, when children are playing games in the schoolyard and someone gets upset about

playing fair, these types of skills could help peers mediate their differences of opinion without it escalating into a fight.

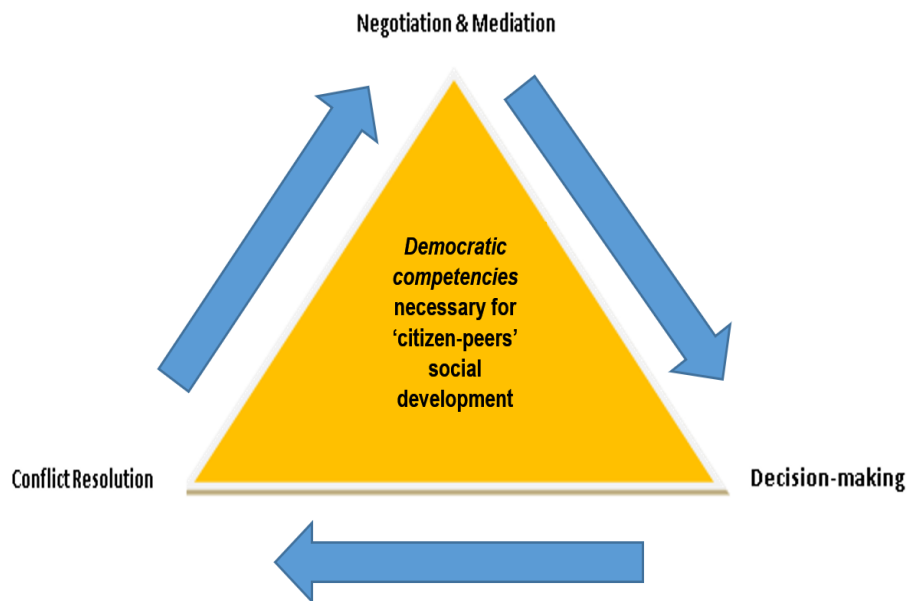


Fig. 5. The interdependency between *democratic competencies* and children's social development as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens

I posit that a key aspect of children's citizenship learning practice involves the development of their *DC* in an incremental and age-appropriate manner at school. Better developed *DC* could help children to cope better with the cut and thrust of school life both inside and outside of the classroom. In addition, I found that *DC* and social bonding are interlinked; when social bonding is high, it can act as a bridge which enables children to apply their *DC* more readily. Given this, I recognise social bonding and *DC* are necessary to support children as they learn to negotiate the social rules of engagement as school-citizens and as *citizen-peers* within their peer groups.

5.4 Participation and children's citizenship-esteem

Chapter One highlights how citizenship is of great significance for children's lives. Ben-Arieh (2005) (and others) assert this is 'evident both on a practical level...and on a psychological level, invoking a sense of belonging and identify formation' (p.35; Lister et al 2003; Lister 2007, 2008). Several authors also identify the importance group membership plays in terms of

citizens' sense of belonging and identity in society (Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Yuval-Davis 2006; Lister 2007, 2008; James 2011; Moskal 2016) ^{cxix}. This view locates the importance of the relationship between identity and citizenship, whereby citizenship is recognised as comprising of a 'fundamental identity that helps situate the individual in society' (Conover et al 1991 in Lister et al 2003: 240). Correspondingly, Moskal (2016) refers to Painter and Philo (1995) who claim that citizenship 'should mean the ability of individuals to occupy public spaces and [institutions like schools] in a manner that does not compromise their self-identity' (p.90). As such, Painter and Philo (1995) query whether individuals can 'regard themselves as full citizens on an equal footing with other people' if they are unable to feel comfortable in public spaces because of others maltreatment of them which *puts* them 'out of place' (ibid).

However, I assert children's experiences of non-participation (at school and elsewhere) raises concerns about the impacts this could have on their sense of *citizenship-esteem*. I define *citizenship-esteem* in relation to citizens' feelings of self-worth as recognised and valued members (social actors) who can contribute towards issues which matter most to them in their everyday lives within different social contexts - such as at school.

I found that most children interpreted the ability to make proper decisions as an indicator of responsible and mature behaviour. Children also understand that when they get the chance to participate in decision-making processes, it provides them with the opportunity to prove to adults (and to themselves) how responsible they can be. The following extracts from group interviews with children from different schools demonstrate how some children felt about their insufficient opportunities to make decisions at school. In addition, I note these children's comments reveal their experiences have socialised them to accept non-participation as the norm at their school(s);

[Excerpt focus group 2, St. Finbarr's]

I ask: Do you get a chance to vote on stuff at school?

In unison: No.

I ask the group: Do you get a chance to make decisions about stuff at school?

Janine (10): No, but maybe in class about maybe like art and stuff.

Molly (9) [Adds]: Teacher makes the decision for us.

A similar view is also reflected in other children's responses, attending Mary Immaculate^{cxx};

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 4a]

I ask: Do you get the chance to make decisions at school?

Séan (9): No.

Amy (9) [Adds]: When teacher says we can.

These children's comments also infer that they are being socialised to understand the reason they do not get the chance to make decisions is because it is their teacher's job to do this on their behalf. This cohort's classmates also gave me examples of what they saw as valid opportunities for them to make decisions at school. I found that five out of the six groups of children^{cxxi} I interviewed provided the same example^{cxxii}. This cohort largely associated collective decision-making with choosing between two options posed to them by their teachers. The following excerpt illustrates how children (age 9) felt about this practice;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 1a]

I ask: So, what kinds of things can you decide at school?

Tim: If there's a movie in class, someone brings in a movie and someone else brings in a movie and we'd have a vote.

Nadia [Adds]: And whichever one had the most [votes], we'd get to watch that one.

Conor [Provides an example]: Very recently XX brought the Empire Strikes Back in and YY brought in *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

I ask the group: Did everyone get a vote?

In unison: Yeah.

Tim: Cause it wasn't fair if the teacher just said, "Oh, let's just watch Star Wars" and everyone else wanted to watch a different movie.

Nadia and Conor [Agree]: Yeah.

I probe further: How does it make you feel when you get to make decisions and stuff?

Nadia: It kinda, well you are happy if it's the one you voted for, but if you didn't vote for it you're kinda, you don't really feel as good, like you just don't really want to watch it.

My initial adult-centric interpretation of this was it represented a tokenistic and somewhat benign attempt made by teachers to give younger children a chance to make decisions/vote. It neither changed the status quo of how the school was run nor did it make a significant difference to these children's lives at school. However, when I tried to understand this through what these children told me, I realised that these 'tokenistic opportunities' at voting and decision-making were more meaningful to some of them. It mattered to some children that they got the chance to vote to decide which DVD to watch; they saw this was fair because they got to decide and not their teacher. It mattered because it gave them some sense of control over what goes on inside of their classroom. They felt this practice was the fairest possible way to choose what to watch as a group; even if it meant they did not always get the outcome they hoped for. Jon (9) in a different interview expressed a similar opinion in response to my question about how decision-making made him feel; 'If she [teacher] does pick the DVD, the one that you like, you might feel happier [group 2a]. However, Jon's comment reveals that the final decision ultimately rests in his teacher's hands. This implies even though children go through the process of voting teachers (in some incidences) still make the final choice. How could this practice make children feel about decision-making/voting at school?

Children from across my case studies were frustrated by what they saw as age-based restrictions which blocked them from participating in decision-making activities at school. For example, Graham (10) felt; 'Kids are the last to be told' about things at his school [Hillcrest ET, group 1]. Graham's view is reflected in other children's responses who also believed that they are neither consulted nor asked for their ideas or opinions about changes to their school. This is clearly indicated by Simon (10); 'I think adults get more say cause children don't get to vote' [Oakfields MD, group 8].

Furthermore, I found some children believe adults do not expect much from them in terms of their opinions and ideas about school-matters. For example, when I asked children if they thought that it was worthwhile that I was asking them questions, Denise (10) replied: 'Yeah...cause they [kids] don't get a say...adults just say it all' [Oakfields MD, group 1]. This view is shared by Susan (10) and she points out the importance of adults' paying attention to children's opinions at school;

It would be great for adults to actually know how kids feel at school. Cause they misunderstand us sometimes and they give us the wrong things and we don't want these things. Sometimes they make it worse, and they make it better, but when they do make

it worse; we just wished that they understood how you were feeling [Hillcrest ET, group 4].

Many children referred to the wider importance of adults paying attention to children's opinions and listening to more intently to what they say at school. For instance, Tom (10) felt it was a good idea I was asking children these kinds of questions about citizenship; 'Like, half of these questions I've never been asked before... at our age we don't get asked these questions; we kinda have to stick to our ABC's' [Oakfields MD, group 9].

Notably, Tom's classmates Marina and Lucas (10, Oakfields MD) openly expressed their frustration about the consequences of adults' disregard for their opinions;

[Excerpt, group interview, group 6]

I ask: Do adults listen to you?

Marina (Muslim Heritage): I would say in my life, not too much.

Lucas [Adds]: Children need their say about what they want to do in life... and if children aren't heard they might be taking a huge portion of the world away from us. We might have better ideas than adults... we need people who think big if we want the world to be good.

Marina and Lucas' comments also show their nuanced understanding about how 'we' as a society are connected. Lucas relates adults' disregard of children's opinions to wider society, which is in deficit because children's ideas and opinions are not seriously taken account of, as Lucas points out; 'we need to think big if we want the world to be good'. His opinion is also reflected in Gina's (9) comment from St. Finbarr's whereby she told me; 'We have good ideas, we can make the world a better place!'.

Children from across my case studies understood the social construction of adults is that of responsible, mature and capable beings. Fionn (10), for example, sees; 'Adults kind of have to bring up the next generation, so Ireland doesn't like collapse'... [Oakfields MD, group 2]. Children understand that adults' voices are always the loudest and that their social power is steadfast. I argue children's experiences of (non)participation could teach them that adults' treatment of them is an indication of their lack of regard for children's ideas/opinions. Moreover, this situation could have negative impacts on children's *citizenship-esteem* as they

are being socialised (through experience) to believe that adults do not trust them to be able to participate in activities which require a certain skill level.

5.4.1 Social context and children's 'right to voice' at school

I found most children were not afforded any opportunities during the school day (or week) to engage in an open dialogue with their teacher and fellow classmates about matters which affect them most at school. My finding concurs with Irish-based research conducted by Horgan et al (2015) which finds that;

[m]any children were dissatisfied with their level of input into decision-making processes in school. They had very low expectations of schools being participatory sites and recognised that they had little say in anything apart from peripheral matters in school (ibid: 7).

My analysis of children's comments also reflected their awareness of social context and how it influences their level of autonomy during childhood. Most children I spoke with clearly differentiated between their opportunities at home and at school to enact their agency and autonomy through democratic processes (such as decision-making). This is demonstrated by the following excerpts;

[Excerpt, group interviews, Mary Immaculate, group 5b,]

I ask: Would you get a chance to make decisions about things at school?

Joe (11): Not really.

Eddie (11): I would get to at home, but not at school.

Cian (12) [Agrees]: Yeah, not at school.

Joe [Adds]: I think we should just be given a bit more of our own opinion on things.

Seán (12) expressed a similar sentiment in response to my question; Do you get a chance to make bigger decisions? replied; 'No sometimes at home, but not at school' [Mary Immaculate, group 1b]. Likewise, children from Oakfields MD felt the same;

[Excerpt, group interview, group 7]

Tina (10): I get to choose most things in my home.

Niall (10) [Adds]: Yeah, home is completely different to school, COMPLETELY different!

Clearly, these children's responses indicate they are very aware of the different rules of engagement between the private (home) and public (school) spheres (Horgan et al 2015; Bjerke 2011). If children come from a safe and happy home, they have more opportunity to behave in ways they may not in public. At home, children also have more opportunity to contribute (on a smaller scale) as recognised members of their inner family circle. Ideally, the familial home is grounded in love and intergenerational kinship relations which provide forms of trust and security. These strong foundations help children to contextualise their level of autonomy and agency at home and elsewhere. Existing research also suggests that cultural capital influences children's contextualisation of their experiences of school life and beyond. As discussed in Chapter Four, McCoy, Byrne and Banks (2011) refer to 'concerted cultivation' as an influential factor in children's lives. They also highlight children from middle class backgrounds experience parenting 'strategies' which actively encourage offspring to express their ... 'feelings, perceptions, opinions and thoughts' (ibid:156). It is argued, these types of parent-child interactions in the home, coupled with 'enrichment activities' give middle class children an advantage in the school and in employment (ibid). McCoy et al (2011) also refer to Lareau (2003) who argues that '[c]oncerted cultivation processes ... create a sense of entitlement in middle class children which plays an important role in institutional settings (schools) where middle class children learn to question adults and address them as relative equals' (p. 157). Additionally, as suggested by Lareau (2003), children who experience forms of concerted cultivation may also develop a sense of entitlement to be listened to more by adults at school.

My findings indicate that school practices often do not respond to these kinds of reciprocal social interaction. This is partly because educators do not have the same relationship or vested interest in children's opinions as their parents/guardians. My findings also suggest children's expectations/perception of their level of participation rise in accordance with their experiences of participation in the home (wider familial circle). For instance, children from Hillcrest ET and Oakfields MD, largely came from middle income socioeconomic backgrounds. I deduced this from the (unprompted) information this cohort offered me in respect of their; parents' employment, foreign holidays and extracurricular activities. I noticed children from these case studies, were particularly forthright about the injustices they felt when not given the chance to

participate in decision-making processes at school. The following excerpt demonstrates some of these children's frustration about their exclusion from making 'bigger' decisions at their school;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 1]

I ask the group: Do you get a chance to make decisions at school?

In unison: No.

Graham (10): Say we were told we were gonna do this and everyone was really excited more than likely we'd come in the next day and we'd be told that we're not gonna be doing that.

Craig (10): There's never any time to do PE.

Colm (10) [Adds]: Say like there was a big change in school...they don't ask us, and they don't ask us our opinion. But if we did get our opinion we would say what we wouldn't want them to do.

Graham: I'd say the school would be different if we were given an option.

Colm [Adds]: But our biggest decision if really like if we'd like to do a bit more English or more Maths in class.

Contrastingly, children attending St. Finbarr's, Mary Immaculate, St. Josephs and St. Assumpta's did not (openly) express the same level of injustice about their diminished autonomy^{cxxiii}. Children from this cohort, largely came from lower-middle income socioeconomic backgrounds. Again, I deduced this from these children's comments about family life during participant observations and group interviews/focus groups. For instance, when I asked children if they make decisions at school, Molly (9, St. Finbarr's) replied; 'Teacher makes the decision for us'. Likewise, Amy (9, Mary Immaculate) told me; 'It's the teachers' job'.

Nevertheless, children throughout my case studies clearly expressed positive associations with decision-making at school. For instance, Patrick (9, Mary Immaculate) told me; 'It feels good' [Smiles] [Group 4a]. Similar feelings were expressed by other children attending Mary Immaculate;

[Excerpt, group interview, group 3b]

I ask: How does it make you feel when you get the chance to make decisions at school?

Lorcan (11): A bit of responsibility.

Darren (11) [Adds]: You feel more adulty, more responsible.

Children in a separate interview used the word ‘responsible’ to describe how they felt when they were given the opportunity to make decisions at school;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 5b]

I ask the group: How does it make you feel when you get the chance to make more decisions at school?

Cian (12): More responsible.

Eddie (11): I’d feel way better, cause I’d get to pick what I want; not what the teachers’ want.

Cian [Adds]: I’d feel like I was getting older because probably when you were younger you couldn’t make that decision and when you get older you probably could.

These boys’ classmate Keria (10) told me in a separate interview;

It makes me feel thought of, because someone thought of asking you a question. Like, they feel like your opinion is good as well and they thought of asking you [Group 1b].

Equally, children attending Hillcrest ET expressed similar feelings about decision-making/voting at school. Olivia (10), for example, told me; ‘Yeah, I think it’s kinda cool the way that I always think that it’s good that I feel that I’m getting more responsibility’... [Group 5]. Olivia’s classmates expressed a similar sentiment;

[Excerpt, group interview, group 3]

I ask: How do you feel when you get to make decisions at school?

Sem (10): More important.

Gearoid (10) [Adds]: A LOT more important.

Adam (10): It makes me feel happier too.

Imelda (10, Oakfields MD) shared these boys' feeling when she told me what she felt about decision making; 'It's important... good, I feel good' [Group 7]. Simon (10, same school) told me; 'It kinda makes you feel part of what they [adults] are doing' [Group 8].

These children's responses clearly indicate that their participation in decision-making processes at school makes them feel good about themselves and, it proves (to them) they are valued and recognised because they are included and able to voice their opinions which ought to be considered by adults. However, children's responses also reveal tensions between social context and structure and, their personal autonomy and agency as school-citizens.

Children's marginalised social position as school-citizens is compounded by current legislation (Education Act 1998), which places no statutory obligation on Irish primary schools to provide democratic participatory platforms such as student councils^{cxix} (or any other form of representative platform) for younger school children (Deegan et al 2004; Devine 1999, 2004; Mcloughlin 2004). My research also reflects this issue; I found only one^{cxv} out of the six schools I conducted research in had a Student Dáil in operation as part of the school's wider policy and practice. I assert the absence of student representative platforms indicates some primary schools still do not formally acknowledge children's 'right to voice', nor do they fully recognise children as school-citizens who can contribute towards democratic development.

In addition, I posit this unequal social dynamic could hinder children's citizenship development as it restricts and/or denies them the opportunity to voice their opinions and thus to exert their agency and autonomy as school-citizens. This situation could also foster negative associations with children's identity as non-participating school-citizens. Furthermore, my findings infer that wider school policy (and practice) has not considered the possible side-effects children's non-participation could have on their *citizenship-esteem* at school and in other social contexts (social circles).

5.5 Children's appropriation of ideas *about* and *for* citizenship at school

Amy (10): Sometimes you hear [about] it on the news [Mary Immaculate, group 2b].

Schools can play a key role in the dissemination of information *about* citizenship and *for* citizenship. However, I noted the absence of the term citizenship and/citizens during class lessons. This could suggest children are not directly being introduced to the concept of citizenship and how they can relate it to their everyday lives as young citizens. How then, do children appropriate information about citizenship?

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 1b]

I ask the group: So where do you find out this kind of information [about citizenship] from?

Keira (10) [Replies]: I just kinda pick it up when my mam or dad are talking, or when I got to my cousin's houses.

Nadene (10) [Adds]: ... when my mam is listening to the news.

Tania (10): Or posters up around town.

I found older children (6th class, same school) seemed equally uniformed about 'citizenship'. Three out of the five groups from 6th class (Mary Immaculate) specifically referred to America when I asked them about citizenship. The American Presidential elections (2016) were taking place when I conducted interviews with this cohort, which suggests they were picking up snippets of information about political topics and issues from sources such as; the television, social media, peers, family members or from what some teachers mentioned to them in passing during unrelated lessons at school^{cxxvi}. Some children told me that they picked up information about 'stuff' like citizenship and voting from events which were taking place in their community or from posters which they saw up around their town. For example, Eddie (11, Mary Immaculate) told me he picks up information about 'citizenship' from '...stuff that would be goin' on...they had a yoke remembering 1916 and at that I found out a bit, stuff like that' [Group 5b]. My analysis of children's responses infers they may only have sporadic opportunities to explore and engage with abstract concepts such as citizenship at school - and

more importantly - how this relates to them as citizens now. Therefore, 'citizenship' remains an unfamiliar word, linked to a foreign land which speaks a language *only* adults understand.

In the few incidences when I observed lessons about citizenship and human rights/ethics, it was generally ringfenced for SPHE lessons^{cxvii}. SPHE Teacher Guidelines (1999)^{cxviii} outline that the curriculum;

... provides particular opportunities to foster the personal development and well-being of the child and to help him/her to create and maintain supportive relationships and become an active and responsible citizen in society (p.2).

The SPHE curriculum forms a key component of citizenship education at primary school level. However, I observed (and was told by children) that SPHE was something which was not practiced as frequently as other subjects such as Irish, Maths and English. When I specifically asked children if they got the chance to do SPHE at school they replied 'No' or 'Sometimes'. For instance, Lily (10) said; 'We do it once a week; we do it rarely' [Oakfields MD, group 5]. Some children also expressed their frustration about being unable to do more of a variety of subjects at school; 'We should do more of the smaller subjects that we really never get to do' [Mia, 10, group 7]. Similarly, Lucas (10) told me;

I think we should have more creative stuff like this, because children are learning from this. Because they'd get more persuaded to learn if they did more work like this and if you keep just putting work in their face, they'll get bored with it and they are not going to learn, they might fail [Oakfields MD, Group 6].

Children from ET/MD schools also told me that they tended to find out about these sorts of things from family members at home as opposed to at school. The following interview excerpt illustrates this;

[Excerpt group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 5]

I ask the group: So, where do you find out about stuff like this?

Deirdre (10): I kind of hear it from my mom mostly, because she works in a charity.

Olivia (10) [Adds]: Normally my mom or dad would say it because my dad is great for like giving me information as well as the information I get from books that I read.

Aideen (10): Am... my granny and grandad do lots about politics, mostly my brother and my mom talk about politics and like and... lots of debates at home, so I mostly pick up from that.

However, when I directly asked children if they got the chance to learn or speak about stuff like citizenship at their school they generally said ‘No’. To find out more about how children felt about this, I asked them where they thought they could find out more information about citizenship. I refer to the following excerpt which gives a flavour of children’s opinions about this;

[Excerpt group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 3]

I ask the group: Where do you think you could learn more about stuff like citizenship?

Adam (10): You could listen to the news. Sometimes I listen to the news... [Trails off here]

I ask Adam: Do you think you could learn about this kind of stuff in school? [The group seem unsure and no one responds for a moment]

Adam [Suggests]: Maybe in 6th class. It depends on the kind of stuff, because some of the stuff you shouldn’t really know.

Sem (10) [Adds]: Probably in Holland^{cxxxix} you wouldn’t have this kind of subject, but you’d talk about it... [Trails off here]

A similar view was expressed by another group of children from Hillcrest ET. For example, Ita (10) said; ‘When you go into secondary school, that’s when you start to learn about everything like, politics, democracy and all that’ [Group 6]. However, Ita’s use of the word/term ‘democracy’ (unprompted by me) suggests that she is already aware of some words and discourses which relate to citizenship.

According to Jones (1995) collaborative learning as a teaching method ‘seems to enhance best the mastery of abstract concepts’ (p.159). However, these children’s comments suggest they are not specifically introduced to the concept of citizenship or given regular opportunities to practice democratic skills associated with it in-class or as part of the wider school community (or elsewhere). Nevertheless, from my observations of school-based democratic initiatives^{cxxx} and from what children told me during our interviews (Oakfields MD and Hillcrest ET), it appears that some schools are making efforts to introduce children to democratic practices and to issues such as human rights and ethics^{cxxxix}. In addition, children who attended schools - which appeared to facilitate classroom based democratic participation^{cxxxii} - displayed more knowledge about their participation rights. However, this cohort (Oakfields MD and Hillcrest

ET respectively) still eluded to only getting sporadic opportunities to do SPHE and to engage more directly with the notion of citizenship and how this applies to them as school-citizens and as citizens in their wider community.

Overall, I found three key differences between children's responses who attended schools which seemed to engage more with democratic processes and those who did not. 1. They had a deeper sense of entitlement to participate in activities that involved 'bigger' decisions (and more responsibility), 2. they have more nuanced understandings about citizenship and rights, they also identified more readily as current citizens than other groups and, 3. they listened to each other more attentively during in-class debates, group work sessions and group-interviews than children attending schools which did not appear to foster or encourage democratic participation the classroom. Children who are engaging with democratic processes such as debating, voting and group work could be getting the opportunity to foster skills such as; 'reasonable disagreement' (group work and/or debating), 'reasoned argument' (group work and/debating) and learning about 'procedural values' (through voting and/ or collective decision making) (in Lockyer 2008: 23; See also Crick 2000). I refer to these specific terms (Crick 2000)^{cxixiii} as they clearly articulate the types of democratic school practices which could systematically introduce children to learning *about* and *for* citizenship.

5.6 School children's awareness of citizens' civic duties and rights

Waldron et al's (2014) analysis of the primary school SPHE curriculum finds the '[c]onceptualisation of citizenship embraced by the primary school curriculum draws on a similar philosophy of civic republicanism' (p.36). They (and others) also assert, that the primary school curriculum is generally 'open' and 'facilitative', and it supports a number of practices (ibid: 38; Deegan et al 2004; Devine 2004, 2008, 2009). Nevertheless, they note these practices tend to be led by 'traditional and teacher-directed classroom practice' which afford few chances for children to take control over their environment (ibid; Deegan et al 2004; Devine 2004, 2008, 2009; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Devine and Cockburn 2018). Likewise, Waldron and Oberman's (2016) research into the conceptualisation of primary school children's position as 'right-holders', found that children are predominantly treated and conceptualised by adults as 'duty-bearers' (p.744).

My participant observations (and group-interviews/focus groups) with children concur with existing research. I noted children's comments about citizenship showed they understood it as

predominantly representing citizens' civic duties and responsibilities. Voluntary work ['The Tidy Towns' was the only local initiative children saw they could possibly participate in as current citizens - Represented in orange in Fig. 4. Page 124] and charities featured largely in children's notions of what good citizens do. Some suggested 'people should' help disadvantaged people and they gave the following examples of how this should be done: more local soup kitchens available, give more money to charities to help the poor people in Africa/India and, help poor homeless people in Ireland. The following excerpt also demonstrates the kinds of proactive social participation children referred to when they described what good (adult) citizens would do for their wider community and country;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 5]

I ask: Can you describe to me who/what a citizen is and what they'd do?

Olivia (10): I think a good citizen would be someone who always votes...who always helps out in charities...they recycle, and they don't do anything bad and they fill out the census and they like follow all the rules.

Aideen (10) [Adds]: It's a person who lives around an area and who won't break the laws and stuff.

Olivia and Aideen's opinions are also shared by Eddie (11, Mary Immaculate) who told me a good citizen is; 'Someone who like lives in a certain community and takes part in stuff and tries to help make the community better' [Group 5b]. I noted children used the words 'help' and 'take care of', when they spoke about what good citizens do for their country. For example, Susan (10) told me a citizen is; 'Someone who helps others, cleans up the town and all. Generally, who helps the town and helps the people' [Hillcrest ET, group 4]. Likewise, children also spoke about obeying the law, respecting your country and following the rules. Children from Oakfields MD appeared to have very defined ideas of what citizens should do for their country. Indeed, obeying the rules and laws of a country was a prominent feature in this cohorts' responses about what good citizens do. Jane (10), for instance, told me; 'Good citizens obey the rules, do stuff for your country or something' [Oakfields MD, Group 4]. According to this group, a good citizen adheres to the following; 'obeys the law', 'doesn't break all the rules', 'respects the rules of the country', 'doesn't commit crimes' and 'doesn't deal drugs'.

These children's comments demonstrate their understanding about the difference between proactive social participation encouraged by the state, and negative individualised actions which are discouraged and sanctioned against. Furthermore, children's notions about compliant 'good' citizens also reveal they are based upon a sense of patriotism. This is illustrated in the following responses. For instance, Darren (10) told me as a citizen; 'You have to respect Ireland...' [Oakfields MD, Group 1]. His view was shared by Ina (10), who related patriotism as part of a citizen's duties; 'A citizen is someone who stands up for their country' [Group 3]. Again, a sense of patriotism is evident in Lucas' (10) response whereby he told me to be a good citizen you must; '...be good towards your country, because I don't think you are being a good citizen if you talk bad stuff about your country' [Group 6]. His classmate Tina (10) said; 'A good citizen is someone who takes care of their country' [Group 7]. Similar views were also expressed by children attending different schools (Hillcrest ET and Mary Immaculate). For example, Melissa (9, Mary Immaculate) told me a citizen is; 'a person that lives in the country and is happy that they live in the country and supports the country' [Group 5a]. Correspondingly, her classmate Damien (9) said that a citizen is; 'Somebody local and loving to the country' [Group 6a]. I found a sense of nationalism and/or patriotism was more evident in children's responses from St. Finbarr's, Oakfields MD and Mary Immaculate. These cohorts shared a view which emphasised citizens duties and responsibilities to their community and country.

Although children mainly referred to citizenship as something which related to adults' positive proactive social participation, some choose to describe the difference between what good and bad (people) citizens do. For example, Deirdre (10) told me;

Well a good citizen wouldn't do things that are bad for the environment...but a bad one would like not even care, like say after finishing a can of Coke or something they'd probably just throw it behind them even [Hillcrest ET, group 5].

Marina (10, Muslim heritage, Oakfields MD) also spoke about 'really bad' citizens behaviour;

... In other countries there's people being really, really bad citizens like killing other people because of war and stuff like that... [Group 6].

Similarly, when I asked children about the differences between them and adults, sometimes the conversation would turn towards what bad people do. For instance, when I asked Lucy (10)

what a citizen was she replied; ‘Oh no...I thought a citizen might be someone who’s bad or something?’ [Mary Immaculate, group 1b]. Other children described bad citizens as people who did not follow/obey the law or who broke the rules. Fionn (10), for example, told me that a good citizen would not; ... ‘go around breaking things and vandalising things and stuff’ [Oakfields MD, Group 1]. Furthermore, I noted children from Oakfields MD, directly referred to ‘bad’ citizens more so than children from my other case studies and they gave examples such as breaking the law or disobeying the rules as things only ‘bad’ citizens would do. The Gardaí were also mentioned by some children^{cxix} who recognised them as being the key enforcers of the law. They were also seen to act in a disciplinary capacity by keeping adults’ bad behaviour in-check as is suggested by Marina’s (10, Muslim heritage) comment; ‘I think if everybody acted like a Garda or a policeman there wouldn’t really be any bad stuff in the world’ [Oakfields MD, group 6].

For these children, the Gardaí were the only people who could control adult’s bad behaviour. This hints at the powerlessness some younger children feel when it comes to preventing or controlling adults bad or inappropriate behaviours. They know they have absolutely no power over how adults behave. For instance, Sam (9) compared the Gardaí as akin to adults’ keepers, just as parents are children’s keepers; ‘The guards are like their kindof parents’ [Mary Immaculate, group 5a]. For some children, ‘bad’ citizens were a source of concern. Lucas (10), for example, was the only child who directly associated ‘bad’ citizen behaviour with adults and children. He gave the example of ‘Juvenile delinquent centres’ and said; ‘if you were an incredibly bad boy you can get sent there...they get locked up for a year or something’ [Oakfields MD, group 6]. He seemed particularly perturbed about what could happen to ‘bad’ children and asked me; ‘If a kid killed someone, would they get executed?’ Before I had a chance to respond, Lucas’ classmate Marina (10, Muslim heritage) reassured him and explained; ‘Even if they [children] did something bad, you can’t take their life away’ [ibid]. Marina’s comment shows her clear understanding of the difference between innate human rights and ‘citizenship’ rights whereby the former stands above *all* rights. She was the only child in my sample who recognised a difference *between* rights.

Findings discussed in Chapter Four reveal that children more readily gave examples of the duties and responsibilities associated with citizenship (and adulthood) as opposed to citizen’s

rights. However, when some of them referred to citizens' rights, this was contingent upon citizen's age and obeying the 'rules' of their country;

Deirdre (10): A citizen has these particular rights and they have to go by the rules and eh...nobody can change the rules or any of the rights that you have, and your own rights and they change as you get older and younger [Hillcrest ET, group 5].

Deirdre's comment also shows her understanding about the formalities of how individual's 'rights' change when they move from childhood into adulthood - more citizenship liberty is bestowed upon adult citizens in contrast to children whose liberty is limited during childhood. Deirdre's comment represents a common-held understanding shared by children from across my case studies. As discussed in Chapter Four, children understood citizens' rights were connected to their legal status as citizens which meant they had a right to live in a country and to own a passport. Children also associated citizens' rights with their ability to participate in activities such as voting. I posit, children's comments indicate they are being socialised (at school and at home) towards 'formal' ideas about 'citizenship' which emphasises citizens' civic duties and responsibilities over their rights.

Based on my analysis, I suggest children's understandings about citizenship are mainly based upon Civic Republican ideas of citizenship. I base this on the notion that a Civic Republican perspective of citizenship, foregrounds citizens' duty (responsibility) towards civic engagement whereas individuals' personal (and private) rights are placed in the background (Dagger 1997 in Lockyer 2008; Abowitz and Harnish 2006; Osler and Starkey 2005). For instance, I found children placed more emphasis on citizens' obligation to participate in the public sphere for the common good of their community and their country. They rarely mentioned citizens' rights in the context of what the state is obliged to do in return for citizens' upholding their civic obligations. This suggests children are predominantly exposed to ideologies which foreground citizens' 'duty' towards their country, rather than their country's 'duty' to uphold their citizenship rights. My analysis of children's comments reflects this ideal as I found they repeatedly told me about what citizens must do for their country, not necessarily what their country is obliged to do for its citizens. One child made a reference which challenged this notion whereby he understood a citizen '...stands up for himself and is not being bossed around and stuff' [Adam,10, Hillcrest ET, group 3]. Adam was the only child who suggested

that a citizen is someone who has the autonomy to act against unjust circumstances as opposed to being passively acted upon.

5.6.1 Nationalism and children's understandings of citizens' rights

Graham (10): ... 'not everybody has rights' [Hillcrest ET, group 1].

Chapter Four also highlights children's rationalisation about passports, which they see as a citizens' proof of their full residency rights. To further demonstrate children's rationalisation processes around residency rights, I refer to an audio excerpt from a class debate^{cxxxv} I facilitated which clearly illustrates some children's justification for who should/should not be allowed to live in Ireland and granted the corresponding residency rights;

[Excerpt, audio of class debate, St. Finbarr's]

Fiona (class teacher) rings her bell to call order and says; We are going to start our debate, so your full attention please... [Emphasis placed on 'please']

Carol (10) [Turns to Fiona and asks]: Teacher can we write them on the board?

Fiona: We are only going to write on the board the ones we are keeping.

[Carol then reads out her groups' proclamation to the class in a clear and composed manner, the class listen attentively. She is enjoying having the floor and notice she takes on the role and demeanour of a teacher.]

Carol [Reads out in a clear voice]: Immigrants should not be allowed, until we solve our own problems of homelessness.

Gina (9) [Pipes up]: I agree with the last thing cause there's a lot of homelessness people in our country and more people coming in would just make it harder on the government to get a home for everybody [the class listen attentively]. Cause like, say if five people come into Ireland from Russia and they have no house to come in to they shouldn't be allowed in and I know we are kinda putting them away, but we have Irish people that need our help first, before Russia. So, they need to figure it out up in Russia or wherever they are. We need [Pauses] ... we have our own problems.

I respond to the class: So, are you in agreement that Ireland shouldn't leave anyone else into the country? [Silence]

Gina [Reiterates her point]: We have our own problems.

I probe: How does everyone else feel about that?

Gina [Responds again]: I think it's fair.

Sarah (10): Because we've got so much homeless people.

Carol [Adds]: Yeah, there's a few thousand now in Britain that are homeless and they're letting in thousands of immigrants, so their houses are going to be gone away.

I ask the class: Is everyone OK with that, are you all in agreement?... [Silence]

Carol: So, I'll put down the immigrants. [She writes 'No Immigrants' up on the whiteboard]

Gina (9) showed remarkable clarity when she justified why the Irish State should not permit non-Irish people's residency applications. These children's comments suggest they are operating from a position of scarcity which fueled their anti-immigration stance. I infer Gina, Carol and Sarah's comments reflect wider societal debates about the ongoing homelessness crisis and rising immigration into Ireland, which have subsequently informed their ideas about such social issues. It appears some children are being socialised to identify with nationalistic ideals (especially in times of scarcity) which place native citizens' rights over those of foreign-nationals who are not entitled to the same rights claims as natives. My finding reflects existing research. For instance, Smyth et al (2009) quote Gash and Murphy-Lejeune (2004) who conclude that Irish children are likely to be prejudiced about others whom they see as being different from them '...particularly when these others are not well known' (in Smyth et al 2009: 89). They also found that Irish students 'express empathy towards their newcomer peers, feeling it would be "scary" to be in a new country', however they note, 'some students expressed more negative views about the potential impact of immigration on employment and working conditions' (ibid). Likewise, Waldron and Pike's (2006) research into Irish children's constructions of national identity, find 'it is evident' that 'children's ideas about cultural diversity, immigration and national identity were influenced by the climate of debate in the wider society' (p.245; Smyth et al 2009). They also note although children were aware of not being racist they were 'fearful' of Ireland being 'eaten up or swamped by different, alien cultures' (ibid). My findings concur with Waldron and Pike (2006) because I also found children had 'mixed feelings around the idea of immigration into Ireland', whereby 'children were struggling with a number of competing impulses in relation to immigration' (p245).

Some children's responses from St. Finbarr's clearly revealed discriminatory-based nationalistic undertones in their understandings about the facilitation of native citizens' and non-native citizens' rights. I see this kind of understanding (which links ideas of nationalism with citizenship rights) could pose challenges in the delivery of citizenship education at

primary school level. My observations reflect McCowan's (2009) ideas about civic education, whereby he asserts, "Traditional" civic education is predominantly a nationalist one' (p.12). McCowan (2009) maintains that '[nationalist citizenship] is a vehicle for the suppression of minority ethnic, cultural, ideological or religious groups, the stifling of independence critical thought and the promotion of imperialism, xenophobia and parochialism' (p. 13).

The educators at St. Finbarr's addressed the discriminatory reference made by the children in their class Proclamation and it was subsequently removed and, adults at St. Finbarr's (rightfully) pointed out to the children how unfair their motion was. I also noted, during subsequent conversations with this group, some children told me (one-to-one) that they did not agree with the motion that was passed 'for no more immigrants into Ireland'. Therefore, upon reflection, some children took on more of a universal rights approach to the issue. This is heartening as it shows that schools are making a conscious effort to keep check on any discriminatory practices within its citizenry body. This incident also indicates when children are given the opportunity to 'consider and reflect on their perceptions of Irishness' (Waldron and Pike 2006: 248) it helps them to resolve any tensions and ambiguities around sensitive social issues.

Therefore, my findings add to existing Irish-based research because they indicate the important role adults' play in the dissemination of knowledge and maintaining their vigilance about how their opinions (which are sometimes biased/prejudiced) could inadvertently inculcate discriminatory attitudes and beliefs in young citizens. Furthermore, findings discussed in Chapter Four - Section One, also highlight the need to listen to what children say as they are often the conduit for the transmission of adult-centric ideas and attitudes about social issues, which could also be useful when exploring wider societal norms and values.

5.6.2 The role of nationalism in children's citizenship identity formation

[Nationalism] is in essence a cultural concept which binds people on the basis of shared identity (Jamieson 2002: 518).

Nationalism, national culture and the nation have also been identified as products of centralised government power and a way of delivering 'standard cultural messages' (Gellner 1983) to the State's citizenry (in Jamieson 2002: 513). Therefore, nationalistic ideals can be communicated

through formal education policy and practice which evoke a sense of a shared historical and cultural identity. Piattoeva (2009) asserts ‘national identity has to be learned through socialization’, which she sees operates through societal institutions such as the school (p.726). She also contends that formal education is the ‘locus of socialization of national identity, which recognizes the state and the nation as congruent’ (ibid: 724; Moskal 2016). From this viewpoint, she sees that education plays a central role in ‘legitimizing the power of the state and connecting succeeding generations to the imagined community of the nation’ (ibid).

Findings from my research also indicate how education is used as a means of disseminating nationalist ideals. For instance, the Irish State’s 1916 Centenary celebrations were taking place during the time I conducted fieldwork. As part of the centenary celebrations, schools nationwide were encouraged to participate in the dissemination of a shared historical and cultural bond built upon the struggle for Ireland’s independence during the 1916 Easter Rising^{xxxxvi}. Prior to the centenary celebration, members of the Irish Defence Forces presented primary and secondary schools with an Irish Flag. Each school was encouraged to raise their Irish flag as part of their respective centenary celebrations. During my school visits, I noted the Irish flag was raised at three out of the four NS I visited, however, I did not observe flags at either of the ET/MD schools. This indicates some schools overtly promoted a sense of nationalism in ways others did not. To illustrate my point here, I refer to another incident which occurred during a group work session^{xxxxvii} at St. Finbarr’s;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr’s]

As I made my way around to each of the children’s work groups, Gina and Molly (9) approached me and spontaneously broke into song. They sang out the Irish National Anthem in unison at the top of their voices. The rest of the class quieted initially but then they all joined in, in a raucous rendition of the Irish National Anthem. I recall an energy amongst the class and I noted the children appeared to thoroughly enjoy this ‘impromptu’ outburst; they laughed, and some thumped out the beat on their table. I noticed Fiona (class teacher) did not tell the children to settle down during their rendition of the National Anthem, which I found interesting, as I previously observed, children at this school were put in place whenever they got overly enthusiastic or raucous.

I posit children were exposed to more predominant notions about nationalism at school during this period which could have influenced some of their ideas about wider social issues. Let me be clear, I do not suggest schools are promoting fundamentalist approaches to nationalism,

however, I do suggest some children's responses about immigration and homelessness show how this kind of discriminatory thinking was used as a justification for their argument.

Given this, my findings reiterate Waldron et al (2014) and others, who find the delivery of citizenship education in Irish primary schools is 'complex and sometimes contradictory' (p.35; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Faas and Ross 2012; Waldron 2004). Ambiguous approaches to the delivery of citizenship education could pose issues around supporting children's learning and critical reflection of complex topics about diversity and inclusion. For example, Waldron and Pike's (2006) research into children's identity formation found the 'existence of an essentialist conception of Irish' in relation to children's ideas about Irishness and nationality (p.231). They also highlight the importance of providing children with the opportunity to critically reflect on their ideas about national identity which otherwise could risk distorting the boundaries between 'national identity and nationalism' (p.248). Thus, schools can play an important role in facilitating children's critical reflection about complex ideas such as diversity and inclusion to challenge behaviours that exclude or try to diminish children who do not adhere to their world view (Waldron and Pike 2006; Smyth et al 2009).

Notwithstanding, my analysis of children's comments also reveal that some children have a strong sense of equality based on their understandings of human rights. This was particularly noticeable in children's responses from Oakfields MD. For instance, Marina (age 10, Muslim heritage) in response to my question; 'Are children citizens too?' replied: 'They're human so they have rights' [Oakfields MD, group 6]. Yet, children's comments from this school also revealed a sense of patriotism. This implies children at this school are being socialised to see that citizenship can encompass both ideologies (human rights and patriotism) in theory at least.

5.7 Conclusions - The disempowered Citizen-Child at school?

Tom (10): The adults' kinda do much more in the world. They've got bigger rights [Oakfields MD, group 9].

Jamison (2002) draws our attention to 'interactions with those in positions of power and experiences of being denied aspects of citizenship rights' (p.521). This notion is especially applicable in the formal context of the school which is imbued with adult power and control (Devine 2002, 2003). My analysis of findings in relation to *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* at school, finds children are frequently denied aspects of their

citizenship rights due to the tensions between schools' social structures (and practices) which inhibit their autonomy and agency to participate in democratic processes. Given this, children occupy a largely disenfranchised social position and place as school-citizens. My findings also suggest, the process of developing children's participatory citizenship practice(s) at primary school is influenced by three key factors:

1. **Time constraints** – often squeeze democratic learning processes into an impossibly small-time space within the classroom dynamic which diminishes children's opportunities to 'learn' how to be democratic. This social dynamic inhibits children's opportunities to develop *democratic competencies* which I suggest could help them to negotiate the social rules of engagement as school-citizens and as *citizen-peers* within their peer groups. Children's lack of participatory opportunities could also deskill and disempower them because they have not learned how to participate in democratic processes.

2. **Attitudes and beliefs** – can dispel or encourage views that recognise children as immature and incapable. I propose children are being socialised to accept that they are non-participating school-citizens. My findings imply this could negatively impact on children's *citizenship-esteem*^{cxviii} and their development of positive associations with *their* citizenship practice at school.

3. **School ethos and management** – could hinder or promote the development of a more inclusive school culture and practices which readily facilitate children's age-appropriate participation at all levels within the wider school community. Notwithstanding, children are also *citizen-peers* of their peer groups, which I identify as a prime locus of citizenship learning and practice at school.

The next data Chapter discusses findings in relation to children's forms of *citizenship solidarity* as *citizen-peers*. Based on my observations, I propose social bonding is a precursor for *citizenship solidarity* between children at school.

Chapter Six: Social bonding - a precursor to citizenship solidarity between children at school?

Overview

Findings discussed in Chapters Four and Five, indicate that children largely do not directly identify as practicing citizens; either in the adult world or within their own peer worlds. Children's articulation about their experiences of (non)participation at school, indicate they largely felt excluded from important aspects of school-life (such as decision-making processes at classroom and wider school level) which I posit could have negative implications on their *citizenship-esteem*. Nevertheless, I argue, children's level of understanding about and experiences of 'citizenship' belies that they are indeed *citizen-peers* of their own peer groups (*Citizenship Polis*)^{cxvix}.

This Chapter explores the different ways children collaborated with each other during their school day. As part of my exploration of how children 'do' citizenship at school, I observed children spent a significant portion of their school-day negotiating and managing their social status within their peer groups. I frequently noted 'acts of citizenship' (Larkins 2014) between children were dependent upon the hierarchical social structures within the peer group. These social demarcations dictated the social status of individual peer members within the peer group structure and, how they were treated by their fellow *citizen-peers*. I now discuss the influence this social dynamic (and peer culture capital) has on *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* in terms of their peer-to-peer citizenship interactions at school [Represented in blue in the diagram Fig. 4. Page 124]. Overall, I assert my findings indicate that social bonding is an important factor for the development of inclusive and exclusionary forms of *citizenship solidarity* between children.

6. Introduction

My observations indicate children's collaborations/individual actions can be borne out of competition and/or the need to gain/maintain some power and control over their circumstances at school. I found children tended to work together as a collective when they wanted to achieve a common goal. A common goal can mean many things for children. For example, a goal could be to gain some control/power over situations/activities children would rather not participate in. Equally, a common goal could be to the 'winners'. Given this, I noted children's motives for their *Collective Social Action(s)* CSA were either competitive or protest-based.

Whether a CSA was competitive or protest-based, I found it (inadvertently) fostered a sense of solidarity amongst children who deduced they had a better chance of achieving a goal if they collaborated. For instance, I observed that children worked together during; sports games (such as the GAA^{cxl}), classroom-based group work and when playing games in the schoolyard, all of which fostered collaboration and peer solidarity between team members. Likewise, I noted (during classroom-based exercises or during focus group sessions) that children collaborated to divert or disrupt adult agendas they did not want to follow. These observations propose that children's forms of collaboration are also linked to the level of social bonding *within* and *between* peer group members (*citizen-peers*).

Corsaro (2000) asserts, the result of children's 'secondary adjustment's leads the development of an 'underlife'^{cxli} (see also Goffman 1961), which exists in parallel and in response to organisational school rules that restrict children's autonomy. Corsaro (2000) sees ... 'the underlife is essential part of the children's group identity' (p. 93). On this basis, I identify children's CSA (competitive/protest-based) as forms of 'secondary adjustments', which they used to negotiate their way through the social protocol of the school. I also suggest children's CSA represent forms of their *citizenship solidarity* within their peer group. What follows are some incidences I witnessed (or children told me about) which demonstrates children's *citizenship solidarity* as represented by their forms of CSA at school.

6.1 Competition - democracy in action?

I noticed adults constantly encouraged children to be neat, orderly and tidy at school. These types of behaviours were praised and associated with being a good student. For example, educators frequently made comments such as; 'What a beautiful table!', or 'Nice and tidy' and they would point out the 'good' table to other children as an exemplar. Some teachers rewarded children with small tokens (such as stickers) when they collaborated with each other to keep their table tidy. In other schools this practice was turned into a more competitive endeavour. For instance, at St. Finbarr's, I frequently observed a classroom practice called 'Tidy Tables', which I regard as demonstrating a type of classroom hegemony. A league table^{cxlii} was part of this activity and each of the three table groups had a name [See Fig. 6. Below for a photograph of a classroom table league]. 'Tidy Tables' was a permanent fixture of this class' routine. I observed when Fiona (class teacher) called out; 'Tidy Tables!' the children would immediately tidy their individual work space. Fiona praised the children who tidied their table the quickest

and who sat quietly with their fingers on their lips. The class would sit in silence as she decided upon the winning table. After which, she placed a star beside the winning table in competition against the other two tables in the classroom^{cxliii}. This classroom practice was repeated at least three times throughout the school day. The children readily participated in this process and I observed they often displayed frenetic attempts to ensure their table was the first to be tidied; the winning table. Children had positive associations with this practice and it was important to them that everyone stuck to the rules. I noted they kept a close eye on their teacher when she (or whoever else had been assigned the task) added the winning tables' star to the league table. In addition, I observed teamwork between children at their respective tables whenever 'Tidy tables!' was called. This was demonstrated when they helped each other to tidy their respective work space. This classroom initiative, therefore, had the potential to foster both individual competitiveness (non-democratic practice) and teamwork (collective democratic practice) between children.

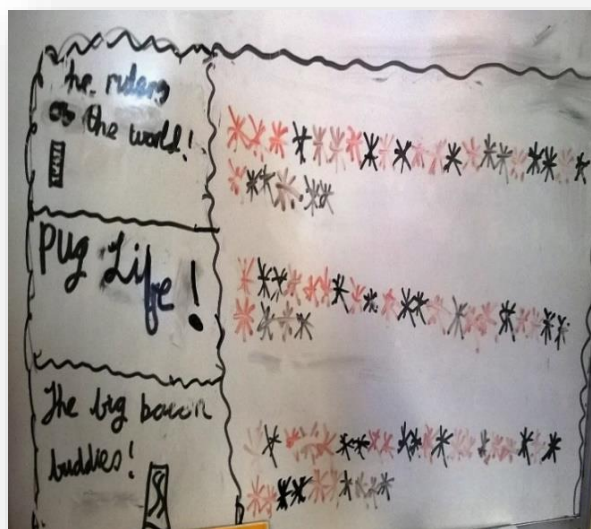


Fig. 6. Photograph of a classroom table league (St. Finbarr's)^{cxliv}

6.2 Social bonding - building *citizenship solidarity* between *citizen-peers*

I found the amount of teamwork often varied between the children's respective tables^{cxlv} and it was largely dependent upon the relationship dynamic and level of social bonds between them.

I refer to Hirschi's (1969) Social Bond theory which supports what I conceptualise as social bonding in this context (social circle). Hirschi's theory (1969) is premised on the existence of social bonds between individuals and groups, which when weakened or broken may cause individuals to engage in behaviour that goes against group norms and values. I gauged the level of social bonding between children based on the four components of social bonding as identified by Hirschi (1969): 1. attachment, 2. commitment, 3. involvement - in conformist or deviant activities – and, 4. a system of common values within peer groups. I also observed the children's willingness to help each other to complete tasks without adult interference and, I recorded changes in how much children helped each other, which I deduced was influenced by the level of social bonding between them. Each month, teachers assigned children new seating positions, which also influenced the relationship dynamic between them. Children had no say in this decision-making process^{exlvi}.

As such, children's allegiances with each other were in a constant state of flux. Furthermore, when I observed 'teamwork' between children there was a higher level of social bonding present; these children were friends and would have also socialised with each other during breaktimes. As a result, these peers had a stronger sense of attachment, commitment and a common set of values between each other (Hirschi 1969). This positive social dynamic was reinforced and reproduced through their interactions inside and outside of the classroom. Nonetheless, children's friendships are fragile, and they frequently altered as did the levels of cooperation and *citizenship solidarity* between them.

Contrastingly, social bonding was low between children if they did not like each other or they did not associate with each other outside of the classroom. I posit the reasons for children's choice of playmates could be due to several factors such as, proximity to playmates, parental influence; are children encouraged or discouraged to form friendships with 'certain' children? Are children exposed to the same type of 'concerted cultivation' (McCoy et al 2011)? Children's weak social bonds were illustrated by their diminished level of cooperation during group work and friendliness towards each other in class.

To demonstrate this, I recall an incident at St. Finbarr's involving children who were seated at a table with low social bonding between peers. I asked this class to work together to gather some information about the 1916 Rising as part of their class project. The behaviours displayed by the children sitting at a low socially bonded table suggest they found it very challenging to

carry out this task as a group. For instance, they argued with each other and complained to me about their classmates not doing their fair share, some children totally disengaged from the process and others left their table and joined another group (which their friends were in). This was an unenjoyable experience and I saw some children's body language indicated they found the activity to be a chore. Children (and adults) work better in groups when there is good communication and camaraderie between participants. I see this as a strong indication that social bonding is an important element of democratic practice between children in their own social worlds *and* in their interactions with adults.

A similar pattern emerged at different schools. For example, at St. Joseph's, I observed how the levels of social bonding between children impacted on their cooperation and teamwork during a 'Marshmallow Challenge'^{cxlviii} (Wujec 2015). The aim of this activity was for teams to build the tallest free-standing structure (in 18 minutes) out of; 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one yard of string and one marshmallow. To win, the marshmallow needs to stay balanced on top of the spaghetti structure. I observed how children cooperated in their respective teams (which were randomly selected) to complete the time sensitive challenge. I noticed where social bonding was high, the children participated more freely. There was more chatter and cooperation between them and, they all contributed to building the spaghetti tower either verbally suggesting what to do or by physically manipulating the structure. In contrast, where bonds were weak cooperation was non-existent. In the following excerpt from my fieldnotes I recall what happened when an older peer leader from 6th class took complete control over the task by excluding the younger group members;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

Every now and then I reminded the groups of the time and they got more panicked at this (I wanted to see how they'd react to this). I noticed that Karen (6th class) had taken complete control over the task. Henry, and John-Joe (4th class) watched her actions closely as she tried to figure out what to do. She had all the supplies around her and was totally focused on trying to build *her* spaghetti tower. She didn't ask the boys for their opinions or suggestions, there was no interaction between the group. (I suspect due to the time pressure, Karen decided she'd be faster completing the task by herself) Finn (5th class) was totally disengaged, he sat back in his chair and chewed on his nails. Karen was in a complete tizzy as she tried to do everything by herself. She kept looking over at Kerion, John, Ann, and Patrick's table, Kerion and John were also in 6th class and I suspect Karen especially did not want them to win.

This incident illustrates how collaboration was a slow, drawn-out process when children were put beside classmates they did not like. It also suggests children lost interest for two possible reasons: 1. they had nothing extra to gain because they were not friends and so this did not impact on their social position in their peer group and/or, 2. they deliberately wanted to frustrate the children they did not like by deliberately thwarting their chance to win/be on the winning team. I observed that children seated at tables with low social bonding tended not to cooperate, share with or help each other.

6.2.1 Social bonding, a prerequisite for *acts of citizenship solidarity* between children

I found teachers frequently used initiatives to motivate children to engage more during lessons and to cooperate with each other. There were many similarities between the names and types of initiatives used by different primary schools which produced similar results. For instance, 'Golden Time' and 'Tidy Tables' were initiatives referred to by children from two respective schools^{cxlviii}. I provide another description of a classroom practice (St. Finbarr's), which demonstrates how social bonding impacts on children's *citizenship solidarity*. Fiona (class teacher) often gave children - who she felt had worked hard - the option to choose between a Homework Voucher^{cxlix}, or to donate three stars to their group table which would be added to the classroom table league. I observed, at tables which had high(er) levels of social bonding the children chose to have three stars for their collective. Where bonds were weak, children opted for the Homework Voucher; they alone benefited. When I directly asked some of the children about this, Lisa (10) explained to me that this only happens for 'some things'. Lisa's response alludes to the criteria this cohort used to decide whether they would/would not donate their three stars to their group's table^{cl}. I noted, children generally donated their stars to their table if they had to choose between this or getting some 'Golden Time'^{cli} on Friday afternoons [See Fig. 7. Page 165, for a photograph of a Golden Time Chart].

However, if the option was either to donate their stars or having a Homework Voucher, they invariably choose the latter. As such, the Homework Voucher held more value over the chance of getting some 'Golden Time', meaning, the children were less likely to give up the former. This was certainly the case if the social bonds between them and their classmates at their respective table were weak.

Peer pressure and children's respective social position within the peer group could also influence their decision in these incidences. Not only did the strength of the social bonds

between the children and their social position within the peer group matter, they also set the parameters for how far children were willing to sacrifice their own individual gains for the greater good of their classmates. In addition, I noted that children who generally chose to donate the three stars to their table, were peer leaders.

I conceptualise peer leaders as akin to *1st class citizen-peers* who I observed were socially and/or academically astute. These children were popular with their peers, and adults looked favourably upon them in class (more so for girl peer leaders). I infer that a combination of; children's experience of 'concerted cultivation' within the private sphere, the possibility of having older siblings and, their own personal temperament and social skills could help some children achieve this *1st class* peer group status.

In this incidence, I observed that *1st class citizen-peers* deduced they would reap the rewards for their 'act of citizenship' by gaining popularity and status amongst their peers. They had figured out they could win on two levels. Individually, their status within their peer group was secured because they gave up their stars which benefited the rest of the table. Collectively, they also secured their chances of being part of the winning table on the 'classroom table league'; an important feature of classroom life at this school where all children participated. I also observed that *1st class citizen-peers* concentrated their attention on competitive endeavours and activities which also allowed them to assert and reinforce their social positions with their peer group.



Fig. 7. Photograph of a 'Golden Time' chart (St. Finbarr's)

6.2.2 Taking the blame - *citizenship solidarity* or clever social strategy?

Social bonds between children need to be strong for them to work more effectively as a collective at school. When bonds are strong, I suggest that children are more inclined to support each other for the greater good of their peer group and, they more readily show empathy and kindness towards each other. I observed many incidences which demonstrated empathic behaviours between children at school which often went under adults' radar either because they were too busy to notice and/or children did not openly display empathic behaviours. I noted children supported and comforted each other without prompting from adults, yet, these acts of kindness and solidarity were mainly reserved for friends or younger children. For example, I have witnessed children comfort upset or sick children at school; they would sit beside them, ask them if they were 'feeling better' and/or rub their arm. I have also observed how children tried to cheer up glum classmates by joking with them or trying to make them laugh, or by making eye contact and smiling if their classmate was feeling down. Other gestures I witnessed include; putting an arm around a classmate's shoulder, patting each other on the back, putting each other's seats up after class when not asked, showing their friend their reading spot so they could catch up on what they missed whilst on a toilet break, picking a classmate's book up off the floor and smiling when handing it back and, helping each other to do tasks in class. Teachers praised this kind of behaviour whenever they noticed it and I observed children appreciated this type of positive affirmation and recognition^{cliii}. To this end, some children were prepared to go the extra mile for their peer group; even if it meant taking the blame for something they did not do. The following fieldnote describes an incident where Lisa (10) took the blame for something she did not do, to prevent the rest of the class from being punished;

[Extract, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

1.10pm – Fiona called the class to attention. She held up the compost bin to the class, inside was a full uneaten banana and a full sandwich. Fiona; *'Whoever put these in the bin needs to be honest and take them back out. No good food is to be thrown away, this is not what the compost bin is for'*. Janine (10) admitted that the banana was hers and that she threw it away because it had gone all black. Fiona thanked her for being honest. The class then went silent; no one owned up for the uneaten sandwich. Fiona warned that they would not be allowed to do drama if no one owned up. A few in the class went up to have a look inside of the bin (still held by Fiona), they peeped in and justified how it could not be theirs. Fiona told them they didn't need to look inside the bin to know if the food was theirs or not. She repeated, no drama if no one admitted responsibility. Lisa then put up her hand and said, *'It's mine'*. Fiona thanked her for

being honest. Lisa went up and took the sandwich out of the bin. The class looked relieved. As they busied themselves with getting ready for their drama session, Susan (10) came over and whispered to me; 'It's not hers, it's someone else's'. I asked her Who? She shrugged her shoulders. I said; so, Lisa took the blame? She replied; 'Yeah, David did the same thing last week'. We both agreed that it was really nice of Lisa to do that. I then saw that Tina (9) had put her arm around Lisa and they walked over to the toilet together, so Lisa could wash her hands.

This incident also demonstrates children's covert forms of CSA. Fiona was unaware of Lisa's innocence and none of the other children alerted her to this. Everyone kept silent and allowed Lisa to take the hit for the rest of them. One reason for this could be that they also were not privy to the true wrongdoer's identity. Another is they did not want to reveal who this was as they could be chastised by group members for telling-tales. Susan's divulging of information about David's similar actions the previous week - again unbeknownst to Fiona - suggests this practice is an individual social strategy used by some children in this group. I posit, they did so to bolster their position in the peer group and/or it was a means some children used to exert power over individuals they could later use to their advantage. What is clear, is that children frequently closed ranks to block adults from gaining any insight or knowledge into the internal dynamics of their peer groups at school. I observed children used this form of CSA to gain some control over their limited autonomy in an adult-led world. Knowledge is power and the less knowledge adults' have about children's social worlds, the more power/control children can exert through adult's ignorance of their internal social dynamics. I also see this groups' behaviours represents a form of *citizenship solidarity* between these *citizen-peers*. To illustrate my point further, I refer to a different groups' actions;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

1.10pm – I spotted that Alice and Kerry (5th class) have gone behind the flip chart in the corner of the room to chat away from the gaze of their classmates. Earlier that morning Sonia (teacher) had a chat with the class about an incident where Kerry was excluded by the group from participating in the game at break time. Perhaps the girls are talking about this?

2.00pm – During my group work session^{cliii} with the class I asked them to divide up into smaller groups. I noticed that Kerry and Alice sat beside each other and formed a group of two; they did not join the other groups. When I asked the group to see if they could identify what was the common identity between them within their mini groups, Kerry and Alice said; '*We don't like it when our friends turn their backs on*

us'. I ask the rest of the group what they thought of this, but they remained silent; Molly (5th class) looked confused and leaned forward slightly in her seat, as did Karen (6th class) and Siobhan (6th class). However, Finn (5th class) left the cat out of the bag (so to speak) and started to say; '*It happened this morning*'... Before he could say anything else, Alice shushed him. Finn is a loose cannon in the group, I've noticed that he says things which the other group members 'know' they are not supposed to say. In this incident Finn was silenced before he had a chance to divulge what had really happened between the girls. He did not go against the girls' authority and he kept quiet.

This cohort were challenging to build rapport with. They were a 'closed' group and I suspect they had many implicit understandings between themselves which they did their utmost to exclude me from. They often blanked me and sometimes ignored my questions or pretended not to hear me. I also noticed that they got bored quickly during group sessions which they displayed through their mono-syllabic answers and apathetic body language. At no stage did they ask me about what I was writing or why I was at their school - outwardly they did not portray any curiosity towards me. Furthermore, I noticed these children frequently made faces behind their teacher's back and covertly protested against activities they did not want to participate in. I see these tactics/behaviours as representations of this groups' protest-based CSA which they used to exert their power against adult enforced activities/rules at this school.

Furthermore, I posit that these children did not want me at their school. Even though I gave each child an assent form to complete before I visited their school, I suspect they did not have much say in the matter. Given this, I recognise these children were also 'working the system' (Corsaro 2000) at this school, whereby they employed a strategy of non or reduced participation as a way of reacting to my presence in their social space. Children also used their knowledge of peer cultural capital as a *social power tool* which they used to exclude adults and other peers.

6.2.3 Children's peer cultural capital - a form of *social power tool*

At school, children must constantly negotiate their social position in their own social world and in adults'. Young children are especially limited in how they can exert autonomy and power in their interactions with adults at school. They are acutely aware of their subordinate social position and I observed that they (collectively/individually) used whatever means they could (such as non or reduced participation) to react against activities or situations they did not

want to engage with. Throughout my observations I witnessed numerous incidences where children protested adult interference or authority at school which I infer are linked to the nature of their experiences of primary schooling practices.

Frykedal and Samuelsson (2016) study explored a similar line of inquiry and used Ziehe's Cultural Theory to capture explanations for students' behaviour (at a micro-sociological level) to understand why they accommodate or resist during group work. Although the context of the group work sessions observed by Frykedal et al (2016) were different to my informal focus groups, I noted similar behaviours they witnessed as part of their analysis, such as; humour, non-responsiveness, or deliberately distracting other participants. For example, during some of my focus groups and group work sessions^{cliv}, more dominant children (*1st class citizen-peers*) who had more sway in the peer group tried to distract other participants in the group. They prompted other children to participate in disruptive behaviours or to say popular words or phrases which I refer to as their *peer lingo*^{clv}. I observed that children used their knowledge of *peer lingo* in three key ways: 1. It was used a form of social capital to exert power and influence over each other in their peer groups, thus maintaining their social status as *citizen-peers*. 2. Some children used *peer lingo* to covertly and/or overtly react against adult authority. As such, it was a form of protest-based CSA children used to thwart or interrupt adult enforced activities they did not want to participate in. 3. *Peer lingo* was used to maintain the boundaries between children's and adult's social worlds. Adults' do not know what children *mean* when they use *peer lingo*. Children appropriated words in ways which produced a double-meaning, only they knew the true context of. This social code puts adults on the backfoot when children use it to either covertly or overtly react against their authority. Children at St. Finbarr's frequently used their *peer lingo* in this manner. I refer to, two examples to demonstrate this;

(i) *Peer lingo* - a form of social capital and power between peers

To be able to use their *peer lingo* effectively, children need to be in-the-know in terms of its meaning and how it can be used to exert power/influence over others within different social contexts. Some children were more adept at this skill. I suspect this was partly due to the intergenerational knowledge they picked up from older siblings about what was cool. In addition, some children had more '*savour faire*'^{clvi} (Adler et al 1998: 42) which helped them to navigate more fluidly as competent social actors between their own social circles and the adult world. I observed that the quieter/less-dominant children (*2nd class citizen-peers*) were

sometimes pressured by peer leaders (*1st class citizen-peers*) to use *peer lingo* in situations which put the former in an uncomfortable position. For instance, during my focus groups some peer leaders prompted and prodded quieter children to say things which were totally out of context in the social setting of the focus group. For example, when I asked the children in the focus group to answer questions about their favourite food (as a warm up session) Darren (10) and Emer (10) interrupted the quieter children and told them to say, ‘I love Turtos!’^{clvii} or ‘You should say Terrific!’.

(ii) *Peer lingo* - a way to protest adult authority

As part of the ‘classroom table league’ (St. Finbarr’s), these children were allowed to choose their names for their respective group’s table. This was one of the few opportunities they had to openly exercise their agency in this classroom. However, it also revealed how these children used their peer cultural capital to covertly protest authoritarian practices, unbeknownst to adults. The group of children who named their table ‘Pug Life’ [See Fig. 6. Page 161, for photograph of this] knew that it represented a ‘naughty’ word. When I asked them what this ‘naughty’ word was, I was told to, ‘Google it’ and that, ‘It’s a word we are not allowed to use in school’. I duly googled the word and found that it was a play on the term ‘Tug life’ which refers to male masturbation. I knew that some of the children at this table had older siblings and perhaps they were more familiar with the true meaning of this term than others. Therefore, these children’s use of their peer cultural knowledge represents an example of how information about peer culture is passed down from children-to-children without adult intervention or knowledge. Furthermore, the children’s use of this term ‘Pug Life’ - which was written up on the class whiteboard for all to see - was a covert but assertive form of CSA against the adult power and authority at this school.

In addition, these incidences demonstrate how ... ‘peer culture is an important contributor to children’s acquisition of language practice and how language works to effect social goals’ (Nelson 2014: 245). Being in-the-know about peer culture (language) is important on two levels for children. Firstly, it is vital for them to maintain their social status as *citizen-peers* within their peer groups. Given this, I see *peer lingo* represents a broader aspect of children’s lives as *citizen-peers* of their peer groups at school. The correct knowledge and use of it allowed peers to fully participate in the group which could create a sense of belonging and inclusion; both of which are key aspects of children’s citizenship. Therefore, children were at

a loss if they were unaware of the ‘true’ social and cultural meaning of the *peer lingo* used in their group at school. Without this knowledge, they had less social currency at their disposal to maintain or build their sense of belonging, membership and status within the social hierarchy in the peer group (*Citizenship Polis*). Secondly, *peer lingo* is a form of peer cultural practice which may run counter to social practice approved by adults. Indeed, children frequently look for strategies to navigate a way around adult imposed agendas and rules (Jones 1995; Corsaro 2000; Nelson 2014). As such, children’s use of *peer lingo* represents a *social power tool* they use as part of their *CSA* to exert some autonomy and power over activities/people at school. *Peer lingo* is one also one of the few ways younger children can react and assert themselves against adult authority at school where they largely have very little (if any) autonomy. Yet, I noticed that in schools^{clviii} where children had the appearance of more autonomy they did not appear to rely as heavily upon their use of *peer lingo* as a *CSA* to overcome their lack of autonomy.

6.3 Collective Social Action(s) - children’s ‘safe’ ways of protesting

I noted children gauged the potentiality of repercussions before engaging in ‘risky’ behaviour. These (mis)behaviours were performed covertly and overtly. This depended upon the social context of the situation, and the severity of the reprimands children could face if they pushed their behaviour too far. I found that children generally engaged in ‘safe’^{clix} forms of protesting against activities they thought were unfair or boring. These ‘safe’ forms of protest-based *CSA* were often the only way children could assert themselves in their subordinate position as school-citizens.

I observed, when children collaborated, they were more likely to succeed in their social actions. In some schools’ children were not allowed to trade soccer cards because the older boys often tried to dupe the younger ones out of ‘good’ cards which usually ended up in a fight. Nevertheless, I observed the boys continued to trade cards during breaktimes and whenever was possible. Children also collaborated when playing games in the schoolyard. Their collaborations turned into a form of protest-based *CSA* when they worked together to modify games which were prohibited. I refer to a scenario I witnessed at St. Joseph’s to illustrate my point here.

All the games the children were allowed to play during the school week were timetabled on their classroom door. *Dodge Ball* was seen to provoke rough play between the older children

(4th to 6th class). It also encouraged unfair behaviour between the older and younger children, whereby the former hogged all the 'best' balls for their game. This was explained to me by Patricia (school principal). The older children had recently started to play this game again. Unbeknownst to them, Patricia made the decision not to intervene but to 'Keep an eye on it'. The older children took advantage of this reprieve and reintroduced this 'banned' activity as their game of choice. They pushed against adult enforced boundaries as much as possible without getting into trouble and to safeguard against this, they modified the 'banned' game by calling it by a different name. I asked Karen (12) to explain the rules of the game, she replied: 'It's like Dodge Ball, but, it's not Dodge Ball'. Yet from my previous observations of this game, the rules looked the same to me.

Therefore, playing this game was a bit risky on two levels, firstly, players could get hurt, the older girls and boys were very competitive and did not hold back when playing it and, secondly, the game was 'banned', and the children knew that the adults at the school disapproved of it. This created a dynamic that caused this game to take on more significance for the older children. I infer that by playing this 'banned' game, the older ones were sending out messages to both the adults and the younger children at this school. Playing this game had a certain social status attached to it and the younger children looked forward to playing it too when they were old enough. The older children were also giving a message to the adults. Technically they were not breaking the rules, but they were bending them because they still played this 'banned' game whenever they could. By changing the name of the game, they also tried to minimise the risk of getting into trouble as they could 'pretend' it was not the same game.

Nevertheless, during a later visit to St. Joseph's, I observed that trouble had started to bubble up again between the younger and older children during playtime. There was clearly more friction between the older (6th and 5th class) and younger (3rd class) boys over footballs and play space. This was more notable between the boys at this school which I posit was heightened due to their small schoolyard, which severely limited their play space(s). Furthermore, the games the younger boys (3rd class) chose to play (such as Goalie and practicing their football skills) also displayed features of hegemonic masculinity. The football related games these boys played could be categorised, 'in terms of its membership, dominance and control of space, its display of skill, [and] its control of power relations'... (Swain 2000: 103). I suggest they played these games as a form of masculine display to the older boys (6th - 5th class) who could not

play football as they were encouraged (by adults) to play games which allowed the whole class (mixed 4th, 5th and 6th class) to join in (including the girls). This created even more tension between the older and younger boys;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St Joseph's]

During the morning break, I spotted Patrick, Lorcan and David (age 10, 5th class) frantically trying to hide balls in their classroom, I overheard Patrick say to the others; 'I've got a strategy', from what I observed I deduced that the boys were going to hide all the 'best' balls in their classroom after break, so the younger boys (3rd class) could not get a hold of them. My suspicions were confirmed at the end of break, when the younger boys openly complained to Patricia as the children were standing in line, waiting to go back into class.

[Fieldnotes continued]

Joe (3rd class): And they take all the balls Miss!

Kieron (6th class) [Responded defensively]: We are only allowed seven balls!

Patricia [Replies]: Am I going to have to ban the game again? Remember when we banned the balls?' [At this the boys settled down and no more was said about it]

The boys' power struggle over space and resources was dwarfed by the power held by Patricia. They were acutely aware of this and they did not protest further for fear of further reprimands/restrictions. Patricia let them know that they were constantly monitored by her and she kept a watchful eye on their conduct and behaviour towards the younger children. She had the power to put a halt to their activities at a moment's notice. The children tacitly knew that they must not push it too much which would risk a total clamp down on playing their favourite games. This demonstrates how children – even when they conflict with each other - still collaborate towards pursuing a higher common goal which they regard as important to their daily lives at school.

Similarly, I noted that children used more overt means of protest-based CSA against adults who they saw as not having full authority. For children, teachers have full authority and power in the classroom and the wider school environment. Adults with lesser authority included; school Secretaries, Support Workers, Substitute/Trainee Teachers, Caretakers and other adult visitors (i.e. Researchers) to their school. When visitors came to do activities with children, some would protest in more overt ways against participating. This was a less risky way of gaining

some power or control over the situation as these activities were led by adults which children deemed to have less authority and thus power over them.

Children need to be resourceful in the adult-led world of the primary school and I witnessed their collective and individual actions which demonstrated their resistance to school rules^{clx}. The covert and overt forms of protest-based CSA I observed throughout my case studies suggests, children employed similar tactics to push against the constraints of the school environment. My observations are not dissimilar to Devine's (2002,2003, 2009) findings from her respective studies which explored children's citizenship and how adult-child relations are structured in the primary school setting. According to Devine (2002) such incidences of 'passive forms of resistance' are an indication of ... 'the absence of a culture of active participation of children in the process of change in schools' (p.316). This raises questions about the kinds of (cover and overt) behaviours and strategies children develop to assert themselves against forms of schooling which deny them more autonomy and agency as school citizens.

6.3.1 To participate or not – children's autonomy at school

Choosing whether to participate or not, is one of the few 'safe' ways younger children can exert their autonomy or power over adult-led situations they do not want to engage with (Corsaro 2000). Based on my observations of children's behaviours, I infer some participated at the most basic level, just enough to deflect any possible repercussions for not taking part in the activity – this was especially the case if their teacher was present. I took the following examples of children's behaviour (during group-interviews, class sessions and focus groups) as an indication of their level of engagement and interest such as; remaining silent, giving mono-syllabic answers to my questions, being giddy and deliberately disruptive towards other children's participation, playing with the recorder, or ignoring my presence and avoiding any contact with me during participant observations.

I refer to another incidence which I observed at St. Joseph's to illustrate my point here. Every Wednesday this cohort had a music lesson with Peter. Peter was from an older generation and based on my observations I suspect he believed children should be seen and not heard. I observed a couple of these lessons and noted some similarities in the types of behaviour and forms of protest children engaged in. I inferred from the children's body language that they did not enjoy this lesson. Their faces showed no joy or animation and ranged from bored to passive.

They yawned frequently and seemed to zone out of the lesson, they looked unenthusiastic and apathetic, slumped in their chairs. Peter seemed totally unaware of this and ploughed through the music lesson. His teaching approach was very authoritarian, and it created a stifled and uncomfortable atmosphere in the classroom. He was easily agitated by the children's lack of enthusiasm and chastised them throughout the lesson for not paying attention to his instructions. This was capitalised on by some of the boys in the class, who tried to provoke a reaction out of Peter by deliberately not following through on his instructions;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

The group starts to play out of tune. Peter exclaims: 'Ah, stop, stop, stop, sure you are all making false notes!'. I see John smirking over at Kerion (6th class peer leaders), they are enjoying Peter's agitation and lack of control over the class. The class is getting giddy and restless. Sonia puts her finger to her lips to signal them to be quiet. Colm (5th class, Peer Leader) has flicked his ruler over at Finn who sits opposite him; this goes unnoticed by Sonia who continues correcting copybooks at her desk [She appears to take no notice of what's going on around her; why?]. Peter moves over to another table and now focuses his attention on Darren and Henry (who are friends, 4th class). Peter goes through Darren's music folder and chides him for how unorganised and messy it is. Darren couldn't find the music sheet Peter has requested him to play a tune from. Henry smirks over at Darren as Peter fusses over his folder. Darren is unfazed by this and seems to be enjoying Peter's fluster. Henry now sticks the tin whistle up his nose and tries to blow through it behind Peter's back. Peter gives out to Darren who is now grinning widely at Henry's antics: 'Shush please, now come on! You're not listening to me at all, I'm explaining something to you and you're looking around the room!'.

From my previous observations of this class, I infer this group would not have behaved in this way if their teacher (Sonia) was giving this lesson. The children understood that Sonia had full authority and control, therefore, they generally did not overtly go against her authority. If they did, she quickly chastised them and put them back in their place, which reinforced these children's diminished autonomy in the classroom. Furthermore, this group had an ongoing (long-term) relationship with Sonia and perhaps her perception of them as 'good' obedient children mattered more than what Peter thought of them.

I was also at the receiving end of children's collective protest during my focus groups with children from St. Finbarr's. I had built up (what I had thought) was a good level of rapport with some of them (mainly the girls), who often included me in their breaktime games. However,

the peer leaders from this group took my sessions with them as a chance to mess about and to overtly protest against me. As part of the focus groups I introduced a group exercise I called ‘Would you rather’^{clxi} What follows is an extract from a focus group audio transcript which illustrates how these children overtly protested against me and the activities I introduced as part of session;

[Excerpt focus group audio, St. Finbarr’s]

I ask the group: Would you rather more time in school and less homework or, less homework and more time at school?

Rory (10) [Shouts out]: Extra Homework!

Mary (9) and Carol (10) [In unison]: Just say it!

Rory [Replies defensively]: No! I said extra homework!

I ask the question; ‘Would you rather work in a group or, on your own?’. The group huddle together to reach a consensus, again, Rory will not agree with the others. Mary is clearly exasperated;

Mary [Exclaims]: Oh my God! In a group you don’t have to do all the work.

Rory [Replies defensively]: On my own I don’t get annoyed by people!

Rory was deliberately trying to frustrate the group, which suggest he had decided not to participate on any level here; he was reacting against me and to his classmates.

The group reaches agreement on the other questions. Before I move on to the next stage of the session Carol asked me; ‘Why are we doing this?’.

I respond: I want to see how you work together to reach a decision.

Carol: Yeah, but some of them are really dumb! You would never come up with a question like that.

I smiled at Carol and did not pursue her comment further as my allotted time was running out^{clxii}. Later in the session Carol came back at me with another direct challenge. The group were very giddy, and Rory and Gerry were sniping at each other;

Carol [Exclaims]: How can you stand kids!

I reply: Why do you say that Carol?

She would not respond. I reiterated to the group why I was doing this research with them.

Carol [interrupts]: ‘You wanna get an A+’.

Rory [adds]: You wanta get a job!

In response I told them that I want to understand more how they see the world now, as a child;

Mary [in a soft voice]: We have a lovely time Caitríona.

Carol: Don’t take this offensive. But, when you came, it was like everybody loved you and all they did was talk to you.

David (10) [Adds]: It was so annoying they were always talking with you.

Carol: People, oh they were like, “Caitríona’s here now, let’s take the piss!”

Mary [Exclaimed]: Carol!

I replied: So, you don’t think people were being honest or behaving normally; they were just messing about?

Carol: Yeah!

I ask the others: Has anyone else anything to say about that? [I am careful with my tone]

Mary: I do, I don’t like that you are going.

I joke: I’d say some people are very glad that I’m going today! [I smile broadly]

Mary [Exclaims]: No!!

Carol: There we go! [Insinuating this is proof of ‘people’ not being honest with me]

It was my last day at this school, so the group knew (as a collective) that they could push against the boundaries of social protocol at this school without the worry of consequences. Perhaps this was the first time these children had the space to be totally honest with me and to

express how they ‘really’ felt about my presence at their school. The internal social dynamic of the group was more exposed as children openly snipped at each other during the session. Rory and Gerry (both 5th class) were having a spat over some issue I was not privy to. Gerry (Chinese heritage) was quite high up in the social hierarchy of the boys’ peer group and on occasion I noticed a tension between himself and Rory, the latter of which was lower down on the pecking order in the boys’ group. This incident also demonstrates the consequences of low social bonding between this group, who snipped and contradicted each other throughout their focus group or, they disengaged from it altogether.

My presence also irked some of these children and they were ‘annoyed’ about some of their classmate’s inclusive treatment of me. David’s comment suggests that he (and others) resented his classmates telling me about what was happening at their school when I was not present. Furthermore, Carol’s sharp comments clearly revealed her feelings about other classmates (false or two-faced) treatment of me and she implied they were not being sincere. This was aimed at Mary, and I suspect Carol said this to put pressure on her. I strongly suspect that this kind of conversation would not have occurred if Fiona (teacher) was present.

6.4 The *Exclusion Zone* - a form of children’s exclusionary CSA

There are clear divisions between children and adults’ social worlds at school which co-exist in parallel (Pollard 1985; Jones 1995; Alder and Alder 1998; Corsaro 2000; Devine 2009). I found children often used exclusion as a tactic to exert their power by denying adults’ and other peers’ access into their peer groups. My observations (and experiences) of children’s exclusionary behaviours/tactics also show they did not want adults to gain any real understanding or insight into the internal dynamics of their peer groups at school. I refer to this as the *Exclusion Zone*, the space which prevents children and adults from entering the larger peer group.

Friends make school fun and bearable for a lot of children but, friendships and wider peer-to-peer interactions can also cause children a lot of angst and worry. I noted this was especially the case if children were excluded or isolated by their peers. The following excerpt demonstrates how children used exclusion to keep me at arm’s length, but also to isolate other children from peer group activities;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

9.15am - I smiled at the kids as I entered their classroom. I said; 'Hi!' to Siobhan and Karen (6th class). They didn't respond, they were colouring Christmas pictures at their table. Sarah and Kate (5th class) were reading and drinking from their hot flasks, at the table opposite them, Kerry and Robyn (4th class) were colouring-in too. Finn (5th class) was sitting on his own at the 5th class' table, he was the only one who was not engaged in some activity. He sat apart from the others. He looked over at their soccer trading taking place between a group of boys at the next table; he was not included in the activity. I heard Colm say to Patrick (5th class) as he was walking away from the group; 'You owe me a 4 star, or maybe a 5 star'. I put my things on my chair and took off my coat. I tried to make eye contact with the kids, but no one reciprocated. I tried to strike up a conversation with the kids who were trading cards, but they blocked me and ignored my questions. I felt invisible. This class are barely tolerating my presence; I'm not welcome here; I suspect Finn is not entirely welcome either as he seems isolated from the main group's activities.

Children's collective exclusionary actions were mainly aimed towards other children as a way of asserting their social hierarchy in the peer group. For instance, Devine (2009) asserts that children's interactions are;

deeply implicated in processes of power and control; dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in their social world in the context of what is considered as normal or "other" in the society at large (p.59).

My findings reflect this, as in each of my cases I witnessed children's use of exclusion as a strategy to maintain/secure a good social position and to position others within the peer group. To explore this social dynamic further, I introduced another line of enquiry into my interviews/participant observations with children and asked them to describe the type of person they would like to have as a friend or to sit beside in class. I found children from different schools frequently used the same word 'Normal' in their descriptions. This reveals a commonality in what children deem as an acceptable social criterion for someone to possess before they could become a friend and a valued peer member. I posit, if children who are excluded/denied entry into the peer group social circle are not seen as 'Normal' in some way. This suggests children 'position themselves and are positioned, either negatively or positively with peers' (Devine 2009: 59) depending upon their social criterion. I refer to an extract from my fieldnotes which demonstrates a form of children's exclusionary CSA;

[Excerpt, Fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

During the Religion lesson, Sonia reads a story to the class about the prophet Jeramiah. The story narrates how challenging it was for Jeramiah as he preached 'the word of God'. She asked the children how they think Jeramiah must have felt. Finn (5th class) immediately responded by saying: 'Unhappy, because no one liked him'.

Later that day, when I observed children's playtime I witnessed Finn being excluded from the game. My fieldnotes relay the incident as it unfolded in front of me;

[Fieldnotes continued from above]

At breaktime, children from 4th, 5th and 6th class continued their game of *Rounders* from where they had left off after little break. They got into their teams and the game was soon in full swing. The group split into two sides, the opposing team's task was to get all the members of the other side 'out' by hitting them with a ball when it was their turn to do the circuit. The circuit was marked out by orange plastic cones, which spanned the width of the small schoolyard. The children must run over and back three times to complete it. If they made it through the circuit without being hit, they returned to their team. However, if they were hit, they were 'out'. It was boring when you were 'out' as all you could do was watch from the side-lines and the players did everything they could (within the rules of the game) to make sure they stayed in for as long as possible. It was Finn's turn to throw the ball to knock 'out' someone from the opposing team. His face lit up as he held the ball in his hand, I could tell he was looking forward to having a go. But when Colm (peer leader, 5th class) realised that Finn had the next throw, he shouted over to Lorcan (his friend); 'Make him sacrifice! Make him sacrifice!'. At this, Finn, without protest, handed the ball over to Lorcan. He looked totally deflated; shoulders hunched over, and head bowed as he walked back to the end of the line. Finn was totally excluded from the game; the others in the group also witnessed this and did nothing to stop it. The game continued as if he wasn't there.

It was obvious that Finn was not a member of this *Citizenship Polis* (yet) and he represented an unknown to the others as he had just recently moved to this school. Furthermore, I suspect some of the group saw Finn as untrustworthy because he sometimes said things (in the presence of adults) which ran counter to this groups' socially permitted norms. These factors could suggest why Finn was frequently excluded from games, conversations, group collaborations and group work in class. He was also not privy to what this group regarded as being cool or important; he had not yet 'learned' their social rules of engagement. I observed Finn struggled to grasp the social criterion and rules which had been formed and reiterated by this groups'

many years of interactions as they made their way through the school cycle. Finn was grappling with this and I witnessed none of the children helping him to get to grips with the group's social norms^{clxiii}. When I think of Finn's social status within this group's social circle (or lack of it) I see him as a social refugee. He could not identify with this group. He had no voice, no sense of belonging, no membership, no social status and therefore no citizenship rights; he could not fully participate as a *citizen-peer* in this social circle. Finn was an outsider; cut adrift with no social security or support. I was relieved when his exclusion was addressed by Patricia and Sonia^{clxiv}. The next morning before lessons began Patricia came into the classroom to speak to the children;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

9.30am - Patricia came into the classroom, she briefly spoke to Sonia at her desk, who then announced to the class that Ms. B. had something important to talk to them about; silence descended. Before Patricia began he said to Finn; 'I don't want to embarrass you Finn, but I must talk to the class about this'. I noted that Finn looked somewhat relieved and did not appear to be embarrassed. Patricia continued, she told the group she was '*Very upset*' by what she saw out in the playground yesterday. I observed the children's reactions as she spoke to them. She had their full attention and they listened intently as she recounted how they had excluded Finn from their game. Patricia was kind but firm in her tone and asked them to see if they 'Could come up with a solution'. She tried to prick the children's conscious and asked them 'How would you feel?' if they were in the same situation as Finn. She added that she was going to ... 'look and see if they put this into practice' and that she wanted them all to ... 'have happy memories of their time at school'. The children responded quietly, 'Yeah'.

Hitherto Patricia's chat, I was not aware that Finn had only joined the school two months previously. Patricia subsequently told me Finn was on the autistic spectrum. He also had a different ethnic heritage (unknown) to the main Irish-national demographic of this school. A child may have been able to knock down the barriers this group put up, for instance, if they were; socially confident, looked older than their years, were good at sport, were funny and 'cool', or a bit risky or naughty in their behaviour. Barnes' (2012) study found that humour was an important defense and supportive tool used by boys at school which she sees as a continuation of 'traditional hierarchies of maleness' and 'the repressive nature' of boys' 'hard-man' masculinity (p. 239). Physical prowess has also been associated with more favoured traits among boys who see it as a way of displaying their masculinity within their peer group (Thorne 1993; Swain 2000) [I discuss this more in the next Chapter]. I noted, the more dominant male

peer leaders in this group exhibited these kinds of traits. This suggests that some boys at this school were socialised to learn that traits which place emphasis on physical prowess and social skills (such as humour) are favoured over traits which demonstrate the opposite.

Of course, it is not just individual confidence/physical traits at play here, the social norms and structures this group developed largely dictated how Finn was treated by the wider peer group. Finn struggled to get to grips with this group's social norms and he sometimes said things in the wrong context which further hampered his attempts to push through this groups' *Exclusion Zone*^{clxv}. I suspect that both girls and boys saw Finn as being 'different' and this compounded his exclusion from the group. The peer groups' intolerant and exclusionary behaviour towards Finn also suggests they were 'enculturing' (Nelson 2014: 246) and/or disciplining him into the correct social protocol for their peer group (*Citizenship Polis*).

Jones (1995) draws our attention to the 'psychological impacts' on children who are bullied, isolated and excluded by their peers. She notes that victimised children blame themselves as they see that they are the reason/cause of their peers' nasty treatment of them. Furthermore, research conducted by (Nesdale et al 2009) found that children who were rejected by their peers displayed 'significantly more anxiety than children who were accepted by their peer group, regardless of age' (p. 138). They assert that one-off experiences of rejection do not have long-term impacts on children's self-esteem. However, if children experience repeated incidences of rejection, according to Nedale et al's (2009) findings ... 'it is plausible that substantial decrements in self-esteem would more likely occur' (p. 138). Moreover, they also found that 'peer rejection also has the capacity to instigate prejudice' towards minority and less powerful groupings (p.142). Their findings highlight the importance of peer group membership and 'the impact it can have on a range' of children's responses and attitudes (p.143).

Correspondingly, my findings raise questions about the possible long-term impacts peer-exclusion could have on the wellbeing and self-esteem of repeatedly excluded/isolated children at school. I posit if consistent peer rejection and/or exclusion could lead young citizens to develop negative and hostile attitudes towards others? Furthermore, what kinds of implications could this have on children's treatment of minorities who do not fit the 'standard' social criterion laid down by the peer group?

6.5 Citizenship as a community- influences on inclusion and exclusion

I also experienced children's exclusionary CSA. I found the cohort at St. Joseph's was the least forthcoming. For instance, they either overtly excluded and ignored anyone they were suspicious of or did not see as being a valued member/welcome visitor to their close-knit school. Children at this school generally ignored my presence and rarely spoke to me directly^{clxvi}. Sometimes I felt a chink opening in the *Exclusion Zone* around me, but alas this did not last for long. The following fieldnotes which describes an incident where one of the older girls shut-down any rapport building with me;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

Karen (6th class) took a tumble out in the schoolyard during a game of *Rounders*. Her friend Siobhan (6th class) supported her as she limped over to the teacher on yard duty. Karen and Siobhan are peer leaders in the 6th class group. They regarded themselves as being more mature and capable than their younger classmates and took on tasks which they saw as important, such as organising teams for their GAA matches at school. I went inside with them and tried to calm and comfort Karen as she sobbed. She injured her thumb and grazed her knees. I spent a few moments with her until Sonia stepped in to see to her injuries. Later that day, on a couple of occasions, I tried to make eye contact with Karen as she passed by my chair. I smiled at her, but she blanked me and ignored my gesture. Perhaps she felt embarrassed as I had seen her in such a distressed state? Maybe she was concerned that she would be undermined by acknowledging that I had helped her and seen her in a vulnerable position? I thought that it might encourage her to feel more included to talk to me but, it appears the opposite has occurred.

To tackle this stalemate, I facilitated some group work sessions^{clxvii} with these children. I also wanted to explore the kinds of ideas they had about community and citizenship. Yet, this approach did not break the ice between us, rather, it encouraged the children to see me as a teacher figure. Thereafter the group decided I was a teacher (per se) and I noticed that they seemed more at ease with my presence in their classroom. Although the ice thawed between us slightly, the children kept me on the periphery where I remained as an unwelcome visitor, who they tolerated at best. I acknowledge that this social dynamic could have impacted on the kinds of data I collected from my interactions with this group, which reiterates the importance of rapport building when conducting research with children.

Notwithstanding, I see this cohort's behaviours towards each other also suggests they found it difficult to relate to what was being asked of them by adults at the school (i.e. to be kinder and more inclusive) and to put this into practice. I posit this was compounded by the social dynamics of this group. To clarify, these children were in the same social group since Junior Infants and they knew each other very well. Some of them also lived in the same neighbourhood and played with each other outside of school. In addition, there were two sets of brothers in this small class (18 children) and I observed this added to the tight-knit bond between this group of children. The older boys (John and Keiron) were in 6th class and they were the peer leaders of *all* the boys in this group. Their younger siblings, Lorcan (5th class) and Henry (4th class) were peer leaders of the younger boys.

This groups' years together had established and developed the social norms and rules of engagement between them and they had subsequently formed a tight-knit *Citizenship Polis*. This could suggest their reticence about engaging with outsiders, such as myself, and including new peer members (Finn) into their group. Furthermore, I query if their behaviours towards 'outsiders' reflect broader Irish societal attitudes about non-natives and the 'other'. For example, their exclusionary behaviours toward Finn strongly suggests that they saw him as an unknown quantity, an outsider and therefore different. Similarly, Finn's inclusion into their group posed a threat to their well-formed social dynamic as his presence could have altered established allegiances and friendships - I suspect the boys were more bothered by this. Although social bonds are often a precursor for *citizenship solidarity*, they can also have negative impacts, as indicated by this group's treatment of individuals who are in the minority. This is concerning as it suggests children have learned that if they react as a collective they can exert their power by excluding and thus undermining the actions of individuals who are considered to pose a threat, who are different or who represent the 'other'. Educators need to remain vigilant towards an 'us' and 'them' dynamic *before* it becomes a common practice among young citizens at school. Current research highlights (Waldron and Pike 2006, Smyth et al 2009) discriminatory behaviour towards minority groups/children at school must be constantly addressed and challenged. Children need to be made aware of the negative implications of this type of behaviour and given the space to examine their ideas about diversity and difference at school (Waldron and Pike 2006).

6.5.1 The Citizen-Child - empathetic or exclusionary?

Children's exclusionary behaviours also raises questions about teaching (and showing) them the importance of recognising alternative perspectives apart from their own. For example, as part of my group work sessions, I asked the children at St. Joseph's; 'If someone was new in your class, or if you had a visitor to your class (like me), could you think of anything that might make it easier to find out new information?' We used a speaking object which was passed around the circle; children who did not want to contribute could pass the object to the next person;

[Excerpt, audio transcript, St. Joseph's]

Karen (6th class): You could go around to each person and they could tell them your name and what you like to do? [Poses this as a question, she is unsure]

Mairead tells us what they do at Scouts when new people join; they pair up and talk about hobbies and then they switch over until everyone has spoken to the new person. I next ask the group; 'Could you each tell me one way how they could help others to enjoy their class?'

Henry (4th class): Maybe you could play with them and do something with them at play time.

Lorcan (5th class) [Adds]: Be kinder to people.

I ask: What do you mean by that Lorcan?

Lorcan: Eh, just letting them join the game and stuff.

I probe: Make them feel included?

Lorcan: Yep.

Colm (5th class): You could just welcome them into your class.

I ask: How would you think you could welcome somebody, what would you do?

Colm: Ah...maybe...am...talk to them?

Alice (5th class) [Adds]: Am, when someone bullies your friend you stand up for them.

Molly (5th class): Try and make them laugh.

Finn (5th class): Give them some of your lunch. [The others snicker at this; Finn looks dejected]

These children's responses demonstrate that they 'knew' in theory how to include people, however, they appeared to find this difficult to put into practice. For instance, during our conversation about how we could make people feel more welcome, some of the group continued to undermine Finn, by snickering at his contribution. This shows a disconnect between what some of these children said and what they did. I posit, the boys said these things as they knew that these were nice and good. Yet, their behaviours towards Finn totally contradicted this and it appeared these boys were either unable or unwilling to relate to how Finn may have felt as an outsider. This could be due to peer pressure from the wider peer group. I infer the boys who had older siblings in the class felt this more so, as not only did they have to conform to the wider peer group, they also had to keep in line with what their older siblings prescribed. Exclusion was a social issue that adults at St. Joseph's often spoke to this group about. Whenever I was present to observe these chats, I saw the children listened intently. Therefore, I suggest in conjunction with verbal instruction, children also need to be actively guided and encouraged by adults to develop empathy and the ability to see others' worldviews.

6.6 Conclusions

This Chapter's findings illuminate incidences where children engaged in competition/protest-based forms of *Collective Social Action(s)* at primary school. Hirschi's (1969) Social Bond theory provided a framework to scaffold my analysis of children's social bonding which I see is a precursor for children's *CSA* at school. I also referred to Corsaro's (2000) use of Goffman's (1961) term 'secondary adjustments' in response to organisational (and social) rules that restrict children's autonomy at school (Jones 1995; Nelson 2014^{clxviii}). The 'secondary adjustments' I identified relate to children's inclusionary/exclusionary forms of *CSA* at school, which I suggest also demonstrate forms of children's *citizenship solidarity* as *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis* at school.

My observations also identified children's use of their peer cultural capital in their collective protests in reaction to social situations and/or activities they did not want to participate in. Children also used their peer cultural capital as a means of exerting power over peers within their peer group. I identified *peer lingo* as a form of children's cultural capital. *Peer Lingo* is used by children to represent their insider knowledge of their peer culture which they express through their particular use of words and/or phrases in different social contexts. It is also a form of social code which adults are not privy to. I found children used their *peer lingo* in three

key ways: 1. As a *social power tool* to react against adult-led activities they did not want to participate in. 2. as a form of *social currency* to maintain/enforce their social position within their peer group. 3. To maintain the boundaries between children's and adult's social worlds.

In addition, I found that children's protest-based *CSA* tended to be performed in 'safe' ways which would result in the least amount of repercussions from adults. Children often engaged in covert forms of protest (Devine 2000 refers to this as 'passive resistance') such as subtly reacting against a teacher's instruction. However, I noticed they tended to do this on an individual basis rather than as a collective. Children engaged in forms of collective protest against activities that were led by adults they deemed to have lesser authority and thus power over them. Visiting adults (such as Researchers) were seen to have diminished power and I observed children engaged in more overt forms of collective protest when their teachers were not present. For instance, I found that during some of my focus group sessions (St. Finbarr's), children resisted the activities I asked them to participate in, by distracting others from participating and/or directly challenging the types of questions I was asking them. Devine (2002) asserts, forms of 'passive resistance' are an indication of a school culture which does not foster children's active participation 'in the process of change in schools' (p.316). I add that overt forms of protest-based *CSA* are also an indication that children are not afforded enough opportunities to participate as active and recognised school-citizens. Otherwise, why would they have to develop alternative ways of asserting themselves if there were other 'legitimate' means of doing so?

I found that children's *CSA* were also used to exclude persons they did not want to allow access into their peer group. I term this as the *Exclusion Zone*, which is the space children create to prevent children and adults (alike) from entering the larger peer group. I witnessed and experienced how children collaborated to exclude people at their school. I see this as representing a form of children's exclusionary *CSA* and citizenship practice. Broader notions of citizenship encompass notions of inclusion and exclusion; those who are full citizens can enjoy full citizenship status and rights. Correspondingly, within children's *Citizenship Polis*, *citizen-peers* who fulfil all the criteria set-down by the wider peer group, can enjoy full inclusive citizenship rights. I observed children with full citizenship rights (*1st class citizen-peers*) can participate fully as citizens of their *Citizenship Polis*, whereas children who have diminished rights (*2nd class citizen-peers*) are sometimes excluded and thus cannot participate

as a recognised and valued *citizen-peer*. The level of social bonds between group members played a significant part in how willing or unwilling children were to include new peer members into their group. Even though I observed adults regularly spoke to children about their exclusionary behaviour, they still resisted. This suggests that children welcome/accept new members (*citizen-peers*) into their *Citizenship Polis*, on their terms and not adults. As such, I found children's use of CSA also influenced how they could participate within their peer-to-peer *Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* [Represented in blue in Fig. 4. Page 124].

The next Chapter considers gender socialisation and how it shapes the gendered social strategies girls and boys use to negotiate and manage their social position as *citizen-peers* within their *Citizenship Polis* and as school-citizens.

Chapter Seven: The gendered Citizen-Child at school

Overview

Findings discussed in Chapter Six suggest that social bonding is a precursor to forms of inclusive/exclusionary *Collective Social Action(s)* and *citizenship solidarity*, between children at school. My findings demonstrate *CSA* are important aspects of children's school-days, which they use to navigate their social position as *citizen-peers* of their peer group (*Citizenship Polis*) and as school-citizens.

Peer-to-peer interactions are recognised as a 'basic vehicle for developing social and cultural competencies, as well as a mechanism for transferring traditions values and belief' (Frønes 2009: 280; Nelson 2014; Devine 2009; Adler and Adler 1998; Jones 1995; Corsaro 1987,1992,2000,2006; Corsaro and Ayt 2003; Corsaro and Eder 1990; Pollard 1985). I build on previous theoretical notions about children's peer cultures and I refer to my conceptualisation of children's peer group as a form of *Citizenship Polis*. I suggest that as *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis*, children appropriate information about social concepts (citizenship) and practices (democratic) from adults and social institutions, which they re-appropriate and disseminate through their peer culture. I recognise children's peer interactions (shaped by their peer culture) also represent how they 'do' citizenship. As *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis*, children's rights and activities are defined and organised through their social criterion which is dictated by their peer culture [See Fig. 8. Page 190 which illustrates my conception of a children's *Citizenship Polis*].

This Chapter explores *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* in terms of their gendered peer-to-peer interactions and their interactions with adults in the wider school community [Represented in blue, yellow and grey in Fig. 4. Page 124]. I discuss findings specifically relating to girls and boys gendered social strategies which I observed they used to negotiate and manage their social position within their *Citizenship Polis* and in their interactions with adults at school [See Appendix 18 for a gender breakdown of research participants].

Children appropriate and modify adult information about social concepts and practices

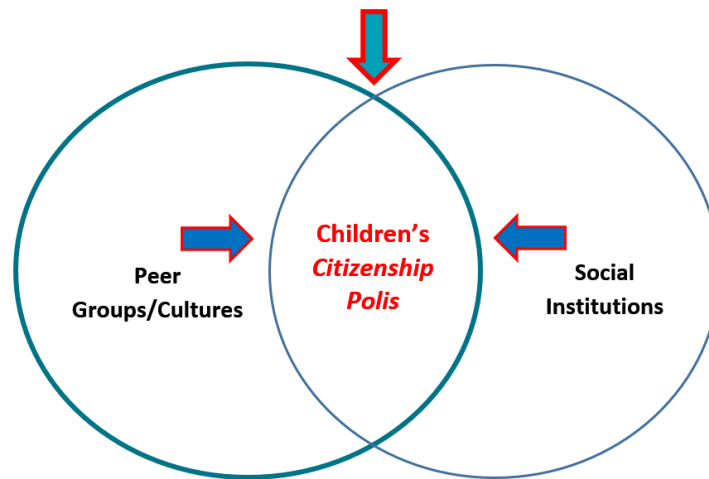


Fig. 8. Representation of children's *Citizenship Polis*

7. Introduction

Gender always exerts an influence on peoples' behaviours in society. It is ... 'not just woven into individual thoughts and feelings: it permeates throughout culture' (Woodhead and Montgomery 2003: 203). We 'do' gender in different ways depending upon social context, space and culture. Furthermore, the way we 'do' gender, influences and/informs our ideas about citizenship in relation to how we recognise the ways females and males participate as citizens in the public and private spheres (Lister 2011; Lombardo and Verloo 2011). Existing research had identified that girls and boys do gender differently, however, it is advised we remain cognisant about examining children's gender on oppositional terms (Thorne 1993, 1997; Woodhead et al 2003; Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben 2009). Thorne (1993, 1997) argues that girls' and boys' worlds are far from separate. When they are viewed as opposites this can stereotype the gendered natures of girls and boys which overlooks children who are on the peripheries of these worlds or outside them (ibid). Not all children adhere to the general trends of gendered behaviours ascribed to feminine and masculine traits and I acknowledge this in my research practice. Notwithstanding, deconstructing the assumed differences between girls and boys and how they 'do' femininity and masculinity, facilitates the exploration of the

complex relationships *within* and *between* genders, and the effects of context and situation (Woodhead et al 2003: 205).

Discourses about gender position children as ‘gendered subjects’ (Woodhead et al 2003). Corsaro and Ayt (2003) assert that ‘examining the ways that children shape their own culture, we can begin to understand gender as the children themselves construct it’ (p.1307). Gendered discourses and practices (as with adult-centric ideas about childhood and citizenship) play a key role in the outcome of children’s experiences, opportunities and expectations at school and, they shape how children participate in wider society. However, what does this mean for children’s citizenship practice(s)? How does ‘gender’ influence children’s development of ideas about their participation in society; where and how can they participate as equals? And, what are the wider implications of ‘doing’ gender on children’s citizenship participation?

Children are still constrained by structural inequalities which inhibit the implementation of alternative discourses and ideologies into social practice(s). This tension between structure, agency and inequality is visible in peer-to-peer and adult-child interactions at primary school. To consider this, I applied a gendered focused analysis of my findings^{clxix} about children’s citizenship practices at school which I discuss under the following thematic headings: 7.1 self-enforced gender segregation, 7.2. rules (keeping, making and breaking), 7.3 dominant social hierarchy strategies, autonomy and justice and, 7.4 gender role division. Overall, my findings indicate that gendered social strategies are a bi-product of gendered socialisation policies and practices at some primary schools. Furthermore, I found that participating children largely adhered to traditional social norms regarding gender roles and behaviours. My findings suggest that traditional gender order is being upheld – made visible in children’s peer-to-peer interactions – and that broader societal changes in relation to gender equality are not translating into social practices between children.

7.1 Self-enforced gender segregation - ‘We are always making lines’

To successfully navigate their way between different social/cultural contexts, children need to be able to notice and apply the subtle changes in social dynamics which alter depending upon the context of their *social circle of citizenship participation* at school. I noticed the schoolyard was a social space where social protocol was demonstrated by age-based segregation. Furthermore, I noticed where schools had a small population and a small schoolyard - children had fewer playmates and space to spread out from one another to form gender segregated

zones/groups. St. Joseph's, for example, had a very small schoolyard and the older girls and boys (4th to 6th class) had no choice but to play with each other as there was no other outdoor space for them to socialise. In schoolyards where more space and playmates were available, children largely defaulted to congregating and socialising in their age and gender segregated groupings. However, I noted that some children appeared to mix more freely, particularly if they shared the same interests. For instance, at St. Finbarr's, I observed a small number of girls played Gaelic football with boys during breaktimes. Nonetheless, I observed when children were back in their line-up or in the classroom, they defaulted to working in gender segregated groups whenever possible. This suggests that gender segregation changes in accordance with differing social protocol associated with different social circles within the school environment.

My findings reflect existing research, for instance, Blakemore et al (2009) note ... 'as soon as there is a choice and a group of children available...most children choose to play mostly with other children of their own sex' (p.306; Corsaro and Aydt 2003). However, I posit that self-enforced gender segregation is also bi-product of the kinds of gender socialisation practices I observed at some schools^{clxx}. For example, I noted some children had to wait in gender segregated lines^{clxxi} for their teacher before entering their classroom at the beginning and the end of each school day and, before going back into their classroom at the end of their breaktimes. I found children from across my case studies, had to form lines whenever they moved as a group to and from places within the school and during activities based outside of the school. In some schools (St. Finbarr's) this practice promoted self-enforced gender segregation between children as it reinforced and reproduced the notion that girls and boys ought to be treated differently. I also saw it encouraged a social dynamic which pitted one gender against another. For instance, I noted girls (St. Finbarr's) ^{clxxii} tended to actively reinforce their segregation from boys in class and elsewhere;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

After swimming lessons, the girls and boys form separate queues in front of the exit. A chant starts up between the girls; 'Girls go on the girl's bus and boys go on the boy's bus!'. I dutifully go on the "girl's" bus. The "boy's" bus becomes full, and four of them must come onto the girls' bus. Gina (9) jeers at them; 'They are girls with short hair!'. The boys sheepishly make their way to the back of the bus and sit together in a group. I can see that the boys in the other bus are jeering and gesticulating out the window at the four boys. At this, I hear Maurice (school principal) asking the bus driver if there's an adult on board. Rina (9) and Susan (10) shout out; 'Caitriona's here!'.

St. Finbarr's practice of segregating girls and boys whenever they had to wait in line was often turned into a competitive endeavour by both genders. Children frequently complained to their teacher about who should be allowed to go first. From my observations at this school I noted boys generally got to go first. I found it was more important for boys (especially peer leaders/*1st class citizen-peers*) to be first in line. I noticed boys frequently jostled with each other to manoeuvre themselves into first place, which suggests they were literally competing for their position within the boys' peer group. Boys further down in the pecking order did not seem to do this. In schools^{clxxiii} where girls and boys lined up in a unisex line, I observed no issue about getting back into the classroom first. I suspect this was because everyone was in the same line and there was nothing to be gained by arguing about who should go first. However, some girls (Oakfields MD)^{clxxiv} took on the role of keeping the boys in line and they physically positioned them back into line if they fell out of it; they did not do this to other girls.

Corsaro (2009) asserts, 'the first signs of differentiation in young children's peer cultures is increasing gender separation' (p.307) which 'begins at an early age and is often related to different types of work assigned to girls' and boys' (p.311; Corsaro and Ayt 2003; Blakemore et al 2009; Thorne 1993). Both girls and boys contribute to their gender segregation, however research has found that boys tend to develop gendered toy preferences before girls do, whereas girls tend to show a preference for same sex peer playmates and friends before boys (Blakemore et al 2009: 314; Corsaro 2009; Corsaro and Ayt 2003). Furthermore, children believe that other children prefer to play in same-sex groups; a notion which is approved and accepted by other children (Blakemore et al 2009: 315). Previous research also suggests that children assume other children of the same sex, favour them more (ibid). This suggests children use gender segregation as a form of social strategy to avoid rejection from other sex peers which reinforces gender segregation practices amongst children. To explore this gender dynamic further, I sometimes stood in the boy's line when waiting with the children for their teacher to return. The boys looked slightly bemused and smirked at my behaviour whereas the girls' reaction was to chastise me for breaking a golden rule.

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

We waited in line for Fiona (teacher) to return from her tea break after little break had ended. I jumped over to the boy's and inserted myself into their line, [it looked more like a huddle than a line per se]. At this, Janine (10) exclaimed; 'Ugh, you'll turn into

a boy!'. I asked her, 'Why do boys' queue in separate lines anyway?' She replied [her face was scrunched up in disgust], 'The boys would be touching off you!'

Janine insinuated that I would somehow get infected due to my proximity to the boys. The girls beckoned me back into their line; the correct place for me to be in. I was not surprised by Janine's reaction as children's behaviour and attitude towards each other has been explored by Barrie Thorne's (1993) work on *Gender Play*. Thorne's (1993) theory on 'Borderwork' embodies the teasing and chasing which takes places between genders which she identified as a possible method of maintaining gender segregation at school. This treatment is often enough to keep most children away from (public) relationships with the other sex (Barnes and Kehily 2003 in Blakemore et al 2009).

Thorne (1993) also finds that border crossing appeared to be more accepted for children who had a high social status (position) in the peer group. I noticed a similar practice during my observations;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

During line up today, Gerry (10, Chinese Heritage) slipped into the girl's line after they were given permission by Fiona (teacher) to go back into class ahead of the boys. He did this to skip in front of the other boys who I noted did not protest about – I suspect this was because Gerry is a peer leader (*1st class citizen-peer*). I saw this and exclaimed to the girls. Emer (10, peer leader) responded to my reaction by saying; 'It's OK he's an honorary girl'.

Emer and Gerry were friendly towards each other, therefore she disregarded his 'inappropriate' behaviour. These children both occupied a secure social position within the wider peer group, which implies they had more liberty to display contra-gender stereotypical behaviours. Emer openly displayed and discussed gender issues which infers she saw gender roles as being more fluid^{clxxv}. For example, her ease with socialising with both girls and boys in and outside of the classroom suggests she is a border worker (Thorne 1993). Emer was the only girl (I observed) in this cohort who openly included boys in peer games which went against the gender segregation norm in this peer group. Likewise, Gerry frequently chose to play the part of a girl during drama class. The class laughed at his antics and they enjoyed his portrayal of the feminine; he placed his hands on his hips and flicked his hair around - he donned a long blue

wig as part of this role. This aligns with Corsaro (2009) who asserts that ‘children tend to embellish role play themes to make them more interesting and dramatic in the peer culture’ (p. 304). Furthermore, he asserts that during role play children ‘have a sense of the status, power and authority over others, displayed in children’s action and language’ (ibid).

Gerry was also a *1st class citizen-peer* and the group accepted his behaviour even though it was in opposition to what I observed as the norm for male gendered behaviour at this school. Gerry’s comedic ability was an accepted social currency and a positive trait by most of the peer group (especially the males). Rory (10) who was lower down in the social hierarchy of the boys’ peer group also played the part of a girl during drama class whenever he could. He too enacted the same feminine stereotypical behaviours as portrayed by Gerry. However, the group did not seem to favour Rory’s rendition of the feminine. Furthermore, I suspect if Rory had slipped into the girls’ line Emer would not have been so accepting as she and Rory were not friendly with each other. This suggests that social bonding, and social position allow certain peer members to engage in behaviours which are contra to the norm. Furthermore, these boys’ mimicking and exaggerating stereotypical feminine behaviours demonstrate how gender and sexuality are used to socialise each other into behaving ‘properly’.

According to Thorne (1993) girls are more likely to engage in boundary crossing which implies ‘doing boy’ is more socially valuable. However, when Gerry and Rory were ‘doing girl’ they chose to do so in comedic way, which implies they have been socialised to see the feminine as lesser than the masculine. I infer these boys are achieving two things by making fun of ‘doing girl’; firstly, they are implying heteronormativity, for instance, interacting with girls is generally seen as ‘sign of femininity’ by boys and they poked fun at this through their playacting (O’Connor 2009: 96). Secondly, they were reasserting their masculinity within the male peer group because their comedic representation of the feminine subtly subordinated the females in their class (including their teacher).

Nonetheless, I observed whenever children were given the option to work in groups, they tended to gravitate towards their own sex. An occasion which illustrates this occurred during my observations of a group work session at Oakfields MD. The children were practicing for their Fashion Show at the school. Groups had been selected by Joan (teacher) to allow for gender parity, but the children defaulted to their own genders and a split occurred in the group;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, Oakfields MD]

Joan divided the class into four groups of seven by random selection. She has each child's name written on a lollipop stick which she keeps in a pot on her desk. Any time group work is called for, she selects the groups by randomly picking out names from her pot. I notice that she often goes against this 'random' approach and changes the ordering of the groups. The same occurred today, but this time Fionn (10) has also spotted that the random selection is not so random. He leaned over to Tom, sitting beside him and said; 'Ah, she's taken you out'. Tom (10) shrugged his shoulders to infer he was not too bothered by this. Joan then said to Fionn: 'Do you think that helped?'. Fionn didn't respond and Joan continued with selecting the groups. Later, I spotted that Fionn, Walker and Connor (10) had formed a huddle over in the corner of the classroom away from the girls in their group;

Joan called over to them: Boys and girls have to work together in groups.

Fionn [Replied]: We are just figuring out who will be the announcer.

Joan [Responds]: I'll decide who the announcer will be.

[Continuation of fieldnotes]

After break I started the time capsule project with the group. Joan handed me the lollipop sticks to randomly select the groups. I selected the names for the first group which was nearly all boys; Fionn piped up and said; 'It's nearly all boys'. I say; 'It's OK, it's random' - which it was on this occasion. I turn to Joan who responded: 'Well, we will see how the groups get on and we can change them if they are not working out'. [I suspect she wanted to see how well they cooperated and if they did she would move children into different groups.]

These children often called for the lollipop stick method as a way of choosing who should go in what group. They considered this to be the fairest way of doing this task as it was supposed to be random. Fionn (and others) knew that Joan did not fully select names at random and that she deliberately manipulated group selection. I understand Joan's motives in this incidence as she was trying to encourage gender balance in the groups, yet, she was not honest with the children about her motives and pretended to do this practice democratically. I suspect Fionn drew attention to the gender parity of this group as a way of subtly asserting himself against Joan's authority and, to let her know that he knew she was not entirely honest/fair in her 'random' selection method.

Girls also enforced gender segregation during group work. For instance, at St. Finbarr's, when I spoke to the children about our upcoming focus groups, Carol (10) suggested; 'We should

have a boy's group and a girl's group [because] boys won't take it seriously'. Later Carol told me she was concerned Gerry (10) would 'use' what she said in the session 'against' her. By suggesting that girls and boys work separately, Carol was minimising the risk of certain boys saying things about her afterwards. I noted Carol was a key enforcer of the gender segregation rule and she tried to maintain this whenever possible. This reflects existing research which suggests that some girls from an early age avoid other children (i.e. boys) who play rough, furthermore, as children get older, girls tend to lose their influence over boys behaviours (Moller and Serbin 1994,1996 in Blakemore et al 2009). Therefore, I suspect Carol felt uncomfortable with boys like Gerry (a boisterous and giddy peer leader) and perhaps she did not want to associate with him because she could not control or influence his behaviour.

7.2 Girls and boys - rule keepers, makers and breakers

Girls generally regarded boys as an unwelcome distraction and they sometimes found it difficult to concentrate in class because of some of their male classmate's behaviours. This was a common theme throughout my case studies. However, I noted this attitude was more noticeable from girls who attended schools where children were segregated by gender as part of the school's policy^{clxxvi}. This cohort often complained to me about the boys' 'disgusting' or 'annoying' behaviours. Yet, some of these girls also covertly encouraged boy's disruptive behaviours and, they appeared to use the boy's behaviour to deflect attention away from their own misbehaviour. This is a skilled social action as it allows them to participate in misbehaving in a 'safe' way as it gives them an 'out' if they are caught misbehaving. For instance, after listening back over one of the recorded classroom-based groupwork sessions, I heard Susan (10, peer leader) encouraging Liam and David (10, peer leaders) to make loud funny voices into the recorder;

[Excerpt, audio file, St. Finbarr's]

Susan: Go on.

Liam [Asks]: Is it recording?

David: I smoke weed every day.

Liam: Dogs do it five hours a day. [The boys laugh]

Liam orders someone else in the group to participate: Say something!

These children's collaboration - to disrupt an adult-led activity - is another example of a *Collective Social Action* (discussed in Chapter Six), which also shows a form of *citizenship solidarity*. The boys did not appear to be in the slightest bit concerned about me hearing their antics when I listened back over the tape. In fact, they wanted me to hear what they were saying as it was their way of letting me know; firstly, they were not 'afraid' of my authority (or lack of it) and secondly, they were not taking this activity seriously and preferred to muck about instead. In contrast, Susan was much more concerned about possible repercussions for their 'naughty' behaviour. After the session had finished, she asked me repeatedly if I would listen back over the tape and if I would play it back to the class. When I told her that I could play it back she replied; 'You probably won't be able to hear us cause it's so loud'. I noticed this was a common difference between how girls and boys engaged in 'risky' forms of protest-based CSA such as overtly going against adult instructions. My observations reflect findings from Thorne and Luria's (1986) observations of 4th and 5th grade children which found that boys were more inclined to break rules when they are in groups of other boys. Also, they suggest it appears boys find collective rule breaking as an 'enjoyable risk' (in Blakemore et al 2009: 311). To illustrate this notion further, I refer to similar behaviour from boys (age 9 – 10, St Joseph's) during a group work session;

[Excerpt, audio file, St. Joseph's]

Colm: I am a chicken. [He clucks like a chicken into the recorder]

Patrick: Do you see that thing there? That monitors our voices.

Darren: They are going to listen back to that.

Colm: I don't care!

Someone says: Chicken!!!

Henry: We should talk about problems.

Liam: What problems? We should talk about Henry solving problems.

Henry: What's your problem? [They laugh]

Colm: How do we solve our problems? [The boys laugh]

[I approach them at this point]

Henry asks me: Are we playing that back?

I reply: Yeah and you'll get to hear yourselves on tape. [Some of them smirk at each other]

Overall, I observed that boys tended to be the rule breakers and to use more overt forms of protest-based CSA, which they did more often and more blatantly. I also observed they directly challenged (female) adult authority. I refer to another occasion which illustrates my point here;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, Oakfields MD]

Joan instructs the class to tidy up their tables. I see that the children help each other to complete this task. She rewards the fastest table and the one which she said cooperated the most. She hands out stickers to the children which they take with thanks. Joan holds out a sticker for Simon (10), he refuses to take it from her. Joan encourages him to take it, but he will not. Joan is somewhat taken aback by his blatant refusal and does not know how to respond. Simon has snubbed her 'reward' in front of the others. This is not first time I have seen him directly challenge Joan's authority in class.

I saw a similar incident occur at St. Joseph's;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

Sonia (teacher) tells the group that she won't be in tomorrow as she's on a training day and that the sub-teacher will be covering for her. She warned the class to be on their best behaviour. The children feign disappointment and say; 'Awwwww....' in unison. Sonia tells them that she'll be back again on Monday. At this, Kerion (12) exclaims 'Yeah!'. Sonia replies; 'Thanks Kerion'. He responds; 'It's sarcasm'. Sonia responds; 'So is my thanks'.

Swain (2003) points out that boys' social position in their peer group is;

determined by the array of social, cultural, physical, intellectual and economic resources that they are able to draw on as they attempt to establish friendships and relationships in the course of their everyday interactions (p.302).

In this incidence, Kerion (*1st class citizen-peer*) was drawing upon his use of a 'social, emotional and linguistic' (Swain 2003) resource and he openly demonstrated his use of sarcasm as a direct challenge against Sonia's authority. As the oldest boy, Kerion maintained

his high peer status by overtly challenging Sonia, who embodied full adult authority in this classroom. I suspect Kerion would have gained a considerable amount of respect from the other boys for this head-to-head. However, I question if Kerion and Simon would have behaved in the same overt manner if their respective teachers were male?

This is not to say that girls did not engage in (mis)behaviours too, but they were subtler and more covert in doing so. I noted that girls tended to do things behind their teacher's back or they would say things just out of earshot;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

During Irish lesson I see that Ann (10) is trying to get Sonia's attention. She quietly says: 'Miss, Miss...' But, Sonia does not hear her. Ann then puts on a funny voice and scrunches up her face behind Sonia's back. 'Miss', she says again. Lena (10) is smirking at her behaviour. Sonia turns around to face Ann, who instantly reverts to her 'normal' voice.

During another day's observations at the same school, I saw Karen (12) testing the boundaries with the trainee teacher;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

The group have become giddy and Rona (trainee teacher) says if the group's not good, she won't give them a treat tomorrow. Karen shuffles her chair. Rona tells her to stop. Karen shuffles her chair again and looks directly at Rona. Rona says: 'Stop!'. Karen stops and glances over at Sonia who's correcting copybooks at her desk. Sonia 'appears' not to have noticed her behaviour. At the end of the session when Rona looks for helpers to put the class back in order, Karen is the first to volunteer. Is she feeling concerned about her previous behaviour towards Rona? Is she trying to smooth this over and make sure she doesn't get pulled up for it later by Sonia?

Karen would not have directly challenged Sonia's authority as she did Rona's. However, her glance over at Sonia infers that she was concerned Sonia would chastise her about her behaviour later. I noted whenever girls were caught in the act of misbehaving, or when they directly challenged adult authority they appeared to try to make up for this by being extra helpful afterwards. This suggests there is more tension between girls need to assert themselves

against adult authority and their sense of duty to comply with their accepted gendered behaviour.

Although both genders were equally aware of the rules of their school, I noted girls tended to more actively enforce and keep to the school rules. They frequently informed me of their school's rules and they reminded me when I was not sticking to them. Sometimes they (girls) also suggested that I should put my finger to my lips^{clxxvii}. Another common policy the girls reminded me of was they were not allowed in their classroom on their own. They sometimes prompted me to go back outside and wait in line, so they did not 'get into trouble' for being in class without their teacher present.

Similarly, I observed girls tried to take on the role of a mature responsible adult, in the absence of their teacher. This was in keeping with girls' persona at school; they wanted to appear more mature, capable and responsible than boys. Girls behaviours towards the boys also demonstrated that they frequently took on a 'mothering' or a disciplinary role. I often saw them telling the boys to 'Shush!' or to 'Be quiet!'. Sometimes the boys retaliated; 'No, you Shush!', but, they largely let the girls get on with their chiding and organising. Girls would also physically maneuver boys into position in their lines^{clxxviii}, and tell them to 'Keep the line straight'. When I refused to step into the role of authority figure (due to my 'least adult' stance, discussed in Chapter Three) some chastised the boys by proxy; 'Caitriona says to be quiet!'. Some girls also took it upon themselves to keep order during our focus group sessions; 'You can't talk without the ball!' or, 'Speak up!'. I noticed this was a practice which was frequently carried out by older female peer leaders^{clxxix} who actively tried to maintain school rules and social protocol. This behaviour suggests that some girls re-appropriated their understandings of what (responsible) adults do and enacted it during their interactions with their peers. Furthermore, girls outwardly expressed more concern about how adults regarded them at school. I noticed they tried to demonstrate to their teachers how capable they were and, they emulated attributes favoured and praised by adults; girls put their fingers to their lips to indicate quietness and obedience - I did not observe boys doing this.

Some (older) girls also felt more responsibility for their group members' behaviours during group work and they openly expressed a sense of injustice when group members did not cooperate or follow their instructions. I observed this during two respective case studies. For example, Emer (10, peer leader, St. Finbarr's) complained to Fiona (teacher) in front of the

whole class that the people in her group were not pulling their weight during drama practice. She was obviously frustrated and annoyed about her group's fragmented performance. Emer was also very competitive and it was difficult for her not to be in the best drama group. During a subsequent focus group, Emer drew down this issue again and she told me that she wanted to rewrite the script, but that; 'Teacher said we could not because it was too late'. Again, she told me; 'No one in my group would help me'. Similarly, Karen (12, peer leader, St. Joseph's) displayed annoyance about her groups' drama performance as part of their weekly drama class. She exclaimed at the end of their scene; 'That was terrible!'. As the oldest girl in this cohort, I suspect Karen embodied a mature and responsible role for three possible reasons: 1. she has been socialised to do so and perhaps she was expected by adults to show good example to her younger peers at school, 2. she enjoyed the status and power of an older peer leader and to maintain this (just like boys) she had to perform in a certain way at school and/or, 3. she is competitive and wants to be in the best group which could also be a motivating factor for her behaviour. Yet, the other group members decided not to cooperate and would not follow Karen's instructions. Therefore, this incident also shows the impact weak social bonds has on children's ability/desire to collaborate with each other.

Girls behaviours imply they feel they have further to fall from grace in contrast to the boys who did not display these kinds of behaviours as frequently, if at all. Moreover, this dynamic implies that the overriding social norm in primary school is that girls are more responsible, and boys are not. This suggests there is a gender discourse operating within some primary schools which reinforces children's positioning into gender prescribed behaviours and social roles. I refer to the theory of discourse positioning which draws our attention to how different gender discourses place girls and boys into different social roles. Children are accorded 'different levels and kinds of power and different means to exercise it' (Woodhead et al 2003: 205). In addition, I suggest my findings align with Gilligan and Wiggan's (1987) theory relating to sex-differences between girls and boys moral reasonings and the origins of morality in early childhood relationships. They assert that due to women's propensity to be the primary carers ... 'the pattern of childhood attachments and identifications and the pattern of adult moral or "prosocial" behavior typically differ for males and females' (p.278).

As such, I recognise that gendered discourses impact children's development of ideas about social roles and rules in two ways, firstly, teachers' expectations of the relative competence of

girls and boys impacts on how they treat them at school and, secondly, gendered discourses influence children's own expectations and ideas about how they ought to behave at school (Woodhead et al 2003). This discursive dynamic supports the reproduction and maintenance of gendered social norms and behaviours in Irish primary schools. Furthermore, the gender imbalance of female and male primary school teachers in Ireland provides an added dimension to the kinds of gender discourses espoused at school. Since 2006, male primary school teacher numbers have dropped from 17.1% to 13% (Central Statistics Office 2018). Contrastingly, within the same period, female primary school teachers have increased from 82.9% to 87% (ibid). This raises questions about the possible differences between the kinds of gender discourse and practice employed by female and male primary school teachers. Do female and male teachers have different expectations of girls and boys at school? If so, how does this impact on children's citizenship practice at school in terms of the kinds of roles and activities they readily participate in?

7.3 'Dominance hierarchies' – social strategies used by children at school

My observations of the slightly different social strategies girls and boys used to assert their social position within their peer groups agrees with existing research (Corsaro 1985; Kelly 1988 in Blakemore et al 2009; Gallas 1997,1998 in Blakemore et al 2009; Thorne 1993; Alder and Alder 1998; Swain 2003; Barnes 2012). Furthermore, I found both genders used forms of social capital to maintain or bolster their social position amongst their peers. Leonard (2005) draws attention to the importance of children's use of social capital in their social worlds. She cites Morrow's (1999) construction of social capital as "rooted in the processes and practices of everyday life" as a 'useful framework' for gaining more insight into the 'relevance' social capital has in children's lives (in ibid:607). According to Leonard (2005), children's social capital is mainly regarded as a 'by-product of their parents' which means their relationships with others 'as a result their own social capital networks' remain unseen (ibid).

I observed, both girls and boys used forms of social capital as a *social power tool* to exert influence and power over their *citizen-peers*. For example, research finds boys tend to use humour as a form of social capital to assert their social position with their male peers (Swain 2003; Barnes 2012). Barnes (2012), for instance, explored older Irish boys use of humour which she argues is both a ... 'defensive and supportive tool in the continuance of traditional hierarchies of maleness at school' (p.239). Chapter Six draws attention to findings from my

observations which note boys used humour and their *peer lingo*^{clxxx} more so than girls as a form of social capital and bravado amongst their *citizen-peers*. This was especially the case if they used it in class and within earshot of their teacher to provoke a reaction. However, both genders referred to holidays, birthday plans/gifts, extracurricular activities and playthings (computer games/garden trampolines) as a way of demonstrating the kinds of social capital they have access to. My finding implies children also see (some forms) of social capital as a ‘by-product’ of their parents’ financial mobility. Yet, the boys’ use of humour and *peer lingo* is an example of children’s *own* social capital which is not an offshoot of adults’ means.

Nevertheless, existing research finds some patterns of difference between how girls and boys maintain their social hierarchies. Boys tend to engage in longer episodes of conflict, and they use more physical and direct means to focus their aggression and dominance over other male peers (Connell 1995; Swain 2000, 2003; Lynch and Lodge 2004; Blakemore et al 2009; Bhana and Mayeza 2016). I also observed some boys physically tried to manoeuvre each other out of their space in line. This is also an example of hegemonic masculinity some boys used to reinforce the ‘dominance hierarchy’ (Blakemore et al 2009) in their peer group (Bhana and Mayeza 2016; Lynch and Lodge 2004; Swain 2000; Adler and Adler 1998). In addition, I noted boys had more conflict over access to physical space(s) at school. I did not witness any aggravation between girls over the control of and access to the physical spaces at school.

For instance, I observed out in the schoolyard boys participated in rough play. This was an issue at St. Joseph’s, which frequently banned games that were seen to promote rough behaviour between children (especially the boys) such as, physically grappling over access to limited resources (footballs) and tightly controlling access into their separate play spaces. Furthermore, some boys regarded adult’s curtailment or banning of games as an injustice. Connor and Graham (10, Hillcrest ET), for example, openly criticised adult’s views about the kinds of play they engage in;

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 1]

Conor: I know people say it’s dangerous...blah, blah, blah, like I’ve got injured loads of times more doing soccer.

Graham [Concurs]: They say tag rugby is too violent, when we haven’t actually tackled anyone.

Any curtailment of playtime or space was an issue for both genders. However, I noticed boys appeared to display a deeper sense of injustice when their access to play space was limited or when any modifications to the wider school environment impacted on their play areas. For instance, at Hillcrest ET, several boys (5th class) referred to issues pertaining to their schoolyard. A recent renovation project at their school impacted on the size of their play area in the schoolyard. As a result, some boys faced wider consequences due to increased conflict between them and older male peers (6th class) who would not allow them access into the coveted green space at their school. This suggests that boys use ‘important’ physical spaces to assert themselves within the wider male peer group. I noted, the power to control access into these important play spaces is a key factor in how some boys negotiate and manage their social position in and between male peer groupings at school.

Similarly, some boys used indoor spaces (the toilet) as a way of relieving the boredom of school work or composing themselves when they were upset. The toilet space also provided an opportunity for some boys to exert their dominance in their peer group. For example, Rory (10, St. Finbarr’s) policed other boys’ access to the class toilets which he used as a dominance strategy to maintain the pecking order in his male peer group. Rory often tried to get into the toilet before other boys however he only applied this tactic to male peers who occupied a lesser social status to his own.

Furthermore, I found boys tended to be more blatant and direct in asserting their social position within their peer group (Thorne 1993; Connell 1995; Swain 2000; Lynch and Lodge 2004). For instance, Kieron (12) and John (11) (6th class, peer leaders St. Joseph’s) both had younger brothers in this class. This social dynamic had a considerable effect on the overall relationship between children in this class; this cohort were particularly competitive with each other. Both Kieron and John were team members of the group that won the ‘Marshmallow Challenge’^{clxxxi} I introduced as part of my participant observations at this school. The fieldnote below illustrates how some boys asserted their social position and maintained their peer pecking order as well as their fervent competitiveness between each other;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

The class were giddy with excitement and keen to start the challenge. Patrick (10, 5th class) jumped up from his seat and quickly came over to me to have a 'quiet' word. This was the first time Patrick has spoken to me directly since I began observations here. He leaned closer to me and quietly said; 'Don't say this out to the rest of them, but can you stick the spaghetti on the table? Patrick was in the group with Kieron and John (peer leaders for all the boys in this class). The mix of children at this table made it extremely competitive. Ann (10, 5th class) was the only girl; she did not get actively involved in building the spaghetti structure but egged the boys on as they worked on it. At one stage Patrick kneeled on the table so he could get a better angle to work on their spaghetti tower. Kieron and John were nearly beside themselves with excitement as they frantically worked together to get their structure in place before the time was up. They also kept tabs on their neighbouring team's progress and shouted over comments such as 'You're copying us!'.

[Continuation of fieldnotes]

I told the winning group that the prize of a bag of marshmallows is there's to do what they want with. I point out to them that there is 50% extra in the bag... John responds in a funny voice 'That means you can share'. I gave the bag of sweets to Sonia (teacher) for safekeeping until breaktime.

At 1 O' clock on the dot, I saw Kieron elbowing John who asks Sonia; 'When can we have our sweets?'. She duly gave them their sweets and the winning team members went next door to dole out their stash. Shortly afterwards the group returned. Darren was chewing on a marshmallow and clutching the rest of his share in his hand, he announced; 'We got 5 marshmallows each'. [How did they decided on how to dole out their winnings? They deliberately went into another room, so no one could see their strategy.] The boys choose to eat their sweets in front of the others. None of them offered their 'pals' a sweet and no one asked them for one either. I saw David (6th class) stood expectantly next to Kieron and John as they chewed on their marshmallows. David sits beside these boys in class, yet, they didn't offer him a sweet. I also saw Darren (4th class) who's friends with Henry (4th class) did not offer his pal a sweet either. Both these boys sit beside each other in class and they also play together in the schoolyard.

I noticed there was more of a physicality attached to the kinds of behaviours boys engaged in during this team exercise. For instance, Patrick got up onto the table to get a better position to work on their spaghetti tower. The boys jumped up and down, they were animated by their overwhelming desire to win this challenge which ignited a palpable energy from them. This kind of behaviour was more visible between peer leaders who were vying for top position in their peer group.

I also noted some girls also reasserted and/or maintained their social position in the wider peer group by controlling their space and those within it. Girls also physically manoeuvred children back into line; they only did this to boys. I see this is an example of a hegemonic feminine strategy used by some girls to reinforce their dominance hierarchy. Yet, research supports that girls tend to focus their aggression towards the peer relationships they value the most. According to Blakemore et al (2009) girls are ‘particularly known for saying spiteful and mean things about other girls behind their backs, or purposefully excluding them from participating’ (p.309). My findings also reflect these kinds of dominance tactics. Although girls were equally competitive with their female peers for social status as boys were with their male counterparts, they tended to use more subtle and covert ways of asserting their dominance between them. Rather than using humour, I noticed girls used the following ways to maintain the pecking order within their peer groups such as; making passive aggressive comments about each other’s appearance, whispering unkind things about someone in their presence to intimidate them or make them feel excluded and, making snide remarks whilst walking away from a conversation. The fieldnote below illustrates my point here;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr’s]

During little break, Emer (10) told me that she was dressing up as a unicorn for World Book Day. As we filed back into class after break, Carol (10) (within earshot of Emer) said to me that ‘Unicorns are like rhinoceros because they have horns and are fat and ugly’. Emer said nothing. Why is Carol being so nasty towards Emer; perhaps she is getting back at her for something? I noticed that Emer looked hurt. There appears to be a love-hate dynamic between Emer and Carol (who are both peer leaders) and I’ve repeatedly seen them vying for Fiona’s attention and affirmation in class. It’s like they are in competition with each other for the biggest piece of the peer group pie. It appears, this also comprises of currying favour with adults in authority as I suspect the girls believe this will give them more power to manipulate social situations in their favour.

My observation of Emer and Carol’s treatment of each other is also reflected in other research. Blakemore et al (2009) cite Hibbard and Buhrmester 1998 and Putallaz et al’s 1995 respective research which ‘supports the general conclusion that girls do not like other girls who are assertive or dominant’ (p. 509), which goes against the notion of a hegemonic femininity. My observations also revealed girls had a propensity to be emotionally manipulative. I noted they used compliments to sooth egos and to encourage people (peers and adults alike) to think of

them favourably. They also used compliments about personal appearance as a way of making someone feel included and welcome;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

On my way into the classroom I pass Tania (9), Lisa (10) and Hannah (10) playing clap hands, they say they like my new hairstyle. I thanked them and continued towards their classroom. Shortly afterwards the girls came in to chat with me. Susan (10) was off with me today, she made a point of telling me that 'it's annoying when people forget your name' [last visit I got her name muddled up a couple of times and called her Sarah instead of Susan]. We talk about fashion. Kelly (9) came up to me to say, 'Caitriona I like your hair'. Rose (9) also came up [this is the first time she has approached me and spoken to me directly] and quietly asked if I've had my hair cut. I commented to the girls that I thought it was bit too short. I overhear Susan say snottily, 'Yeah it is'. A few moments later Fiona (teacher) came into the classroom and told the girls off for not standing outside in their line.

Girls use of personal appearance as a way of asserting their social position within their peer group was common amongst girls across my case studies. Although some called for no school uniforms (to allow them to express their identity and display their social capital), they put a cap on the number of days this could happen. Rebecca (12, Mary Immaculate), for example, suggested; 'Maybe twice a week cause then you'd be looking through your wardrobe'. Rebecca's comment suggests that she felt she could better manage the peer pressure of looking a certain way by limiting the number of days children had to wear their uniform. This also allowed girls some freedom to express their self-identity through their clothes and it sent a message to other female (and male) peers about their use and knowledge of their peer cultures' ideas about fashion and how much social capital they had access to. Peer pressure over fashion was an issue raised by a group of girls attending St. Finbarr's;

[Excerpt focus group transcript, St. Finbarr's, group 2]

Rina (9): Some people in the school are very judgey, like about what you wear and what you have...what you look like, they don't want to play with you because of the way you look like.

Gina (9) [Adds]: I won't say the name of the person, but she was slagging me because I was wearing two go-go's^{clxxxii} in my hair.

Kelly (9): Yeah, like I don't have the time to fix my hair in the morning and I get judged by other people'. Oh, tomorrow's going to be really judgey because it's non-uniform day!

Rina [Adds]: Yeah it will be like, “why is she wearing that, like who wears that!?”, like some kids are just brats!

This excerpt reveals younger girls concerns about their; personal appearance, treatment by other female peers because of their appearance; social position; if they were deemed to be unfashionable/uncool - what if their parents cannot afford to buy them the latest fashion items? Young girls’ concerns are also addressed by Haavind, Thorne, Holloway and Magnusson (2015) who explored Chinese-American girls’ experiences of subordination and resistance at school. According to Haavind et al (2015), through sharing their experiences and feelings about their unfair treatment, girls were able to oscillate ‘between suffering and anger that fuels their shared resistance’ against peer pressure (p.307). The girls’ comments during our focus group also suggests that they felt safe to share their feelings about peer pressure at school. I suggest this incident also shows a form of *citizenship solidarity* between these girls. I posit, (if given the opportunity) girls could experience more solidarity with peers who share similar views which they could channel as a means of resisting unequal treatment and discourses.

7.4 Competition - the strategic Citizen-Child

Chapter Six draws attention to children’s competition-based *CSA* as a form of *citizenship solidarity*. However, I also noticed there was more competition between girls and boys whenever they worked in gender separated groups in class. This was especially the case if resources were limited or if some reward^{clxxxiii} was put forth as an incentive to motivate the children to work together^{clxxxiv}. The following extract from my fieldnotes illustrates the ‘us’ against ‘them’ dynamic between the girls and boys at this school who *chose* to work in gender segregated groups whilst completing their art work relating to their 1916 Centenary Celebrations class project;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes & audio, St. Finbarr’s]

Carol (10): Who took our flags? The boys are supposed to share! [She marched up to the boys’ group and snatched the flags back] Give those back!

The girls in her group cheer: Carol won!

Carol turned to me: Boys are sooooo annoying, boys are sooooo greedy!

None of the boys protested against Carol; they allowed her to take the art supplies back and did not appear to be overly bothered by her display of assertiveness. I suspect this was a performance of sorts which allowed Carol to gain some attention from her girl peers (who perhaps saw her as being confident and assertive) and, from the boys who seemed to find her behaviour amusing. Furthermore, I noted the boys Carol took the supplies back from were not peer leaders. Later, as I made my way around to each of the groups I spotted that another group of boys had hogged a big portion of the sticky colourful jewels which I had brought in for the class to share;

I say to Frank (10): You've got all the jewels.

He replies: All the jewels. [Smirks at me]

Molly (9) [Seated close by overhears and exclaims]: Frank, you can't be taking all our stuff! [She makes no attempt to retrieve it from him]

I posit Carol and Molly's displays of assertiveness were a way of showing me how assertive they were and how they could control and/or manage the boys' in their class. If this was the case, why would these kinds of attributes be important for them to display?

Even when activities were not competitive, children sometimes turned them into a competition. For instance, the following excerpt from my fieldnotes from Oakfields MD recounts how a benign activity (children were asked to bring in food supplies and utensils for their cookery class) was turned into a competition between female and male peer leaders in this class;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, Oakfields MD]

Joan: Cabbage sounds interesting...

I see Darragh (10) has put his hand to his mouth and turns to some of the kids at his table and makes a disgusted face and says; 'Ugggggh' into his hand. He does this away from Joan's line of sight.

Tom (10) announces that he can bring in anything in any quantity which is not a problem for him: I can bring in

Joan [Replies, eyebrows raised]: That's a lot.

Tom [Assures her]: No, it's fine, I can buy it.

Later, the class has moved on to organising who will bring in the utensils needed for the cookery class.

Tom: I can bring in like 20 knives.

Waffa (10) [Adds]: I can bring in the pots and whatever else.

Ina (10) [Adds]: I can bring in chopping boards too, and other stuff.

Joan [Responds]: Has this turned into a competition for the biggest cheese grater?

Joan also noticed this voluntary and collective activity was hijacked by some of the peer leaders (*1st class citizen-peers*) who turned into a competition between themselves. She tried to alert the children to this, but her comment appeared to go unnoticed by them.

Anytime an activity was turned into a competition, both girls and boys were more motivated to participate; peer leaders (in particular) were very enthused by competitive activities. Children's competitive prowess and being a good sport were common social criteria amongst peer groups - female and male alike. This suggests, as well as being fun for children, competitive activities also offered them the opportunity to assert their social stratification within their peer group. My findings discussed in Chapter Six also indicate the importance of social bonding in relation to how much/little children chose to participate at school. For example, I found that boys more readily contributed towards the 'Tidy Tables'^{clxxxv} competitive cleaning activity. I posit they were more motivated because they knew their input could make the difference between winning/losing. Nonetheless, I observed even if social bonds are weak, both genders are still more likely to participate in an activity which has a competitive element. This implies competition is a prime motivating factor for both genders' forms of *CSA* and *citizenship solidarity*.

Nevertheless, I noticed that girls more readily participated in activities which had no competitive element attached. My observation reflects previous research (Kelly 1988 in Blakemore et al 2009; Gilleece and Cosgrove 2012) which also finds girls volunteer to participate in (cleaning) activities which did not produce winners and losers. However, Gilleece and Cosgrove (2012) note girls 'participation did not vary in accordance with perceived influence' (p.237) which they posit reflects that girls may be 'more oriented towards individual outcome expectations' that bring personal satisfaction (ibid). My analysis suggests girls' propensity to participate in non-competitive 'civic' activities could be; firstly, to develop a positive persona with adults at their school as this would place them in a favourable light

with their teacher. Secondly, it solidified social bonds with other female *citizen-peers* because most girls used ‘cleaning time’ to legitimately chat (quietly) during class time. This also gave girls some space to talk about other peers and to solidify their social position with their friendship group.

Contrastingly, boys of all ages readily participated in activities which had a clear competitive element attached, or ones which were fun and involved physicality. For instance, as part of a circle-time session at St. Joseph’s I introduced a ‘People Hunt’ activity. The aim of the game was for each child to find someone in their class who matched 10 items on their sheet within five minutes. Both genders participated fully, the classroom became a hive of activity as children buzzed over and back to their classmates to find out who matched the 10 items on their sheet. I observed that the boys were more preoccupied with getting *all* 10 items checked off, they called over to each other to check how many items their male peers had ticked off; ‘I’ve nearly got all mine!’, ‘I’ve only one more to get!’. Most of the children readily participated in this challenge. This (and the Marshmallow Challenge Activity) were the only times I witnessed Kieron and John (6th class peer leaders) fully participate in the activities I introduced as part of my participant observations at St. Joseph’s. They were almost frantic in their endeavor to ‘win’, which they succeeded in doing.

Throughout my observations, I maintain that boys only ‘fully’ participated in competitive activities. In contrast, most girls contributed more towards non-competitive activities as a way of reaffirming a positive persona with their teacher. Boys seemed less concerned by this. My observations reflect findings from other Irish studies such as Gilleece and Cosgrove (2012) who examined The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) data in the context of Ireland. They found that 14-year-old boys participated more readily if they believed they were going to directly gain something from doing so, which motivated them into action. They concluded that ‘boys are less likely to participate in civic activities at school if they perceive that they have little influence’ over the outcome (p.236).

My findings indicate that girls and boys are strategic (in different ways) about how, where and why they spend their emotional and cognitive energies at school. I maintain it appears while the girls are playing ‘mother’ and trying to control/influence peers and adults within their social circle, their male peers are learning to focus on activities which have more tangible outcomes. Therefore, I suggest a bi-product of competitive participation between peers is a form of

citizenship solidarity; because to win, children need to actively cooperate. Ideally, citizenship participation comes from a sense of democracy and justice, yet I have observed that a prime motivator for both genders collective participation is borne out of competition; their desire to win, to be the best and to stay on top of the social hierarchy in their peer group. Therefore, does the means justify the ends? If so, how can educators reconcile children's citizenship participation to embody a strong sense of democracy over competition?

7.5 Autonomy and justice or lack of it - 'We are bossed about!'

Some girls (St. Finbarr's) became my gatekeepers at school. They offered me information and told me about things which happened at school when I was not present. They openly expressed their frustration about being 'bossed' about by adults. They also felt they should have more say about things and they wanted adults to listen to them more at school. Likewise, it was mainly girls who told me about incidences when adults were not obeying the school rules, which they found very unfair as they were *always* expected to stick to the rules otherwise they would get into trouble;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

[This chat took place in the classroom before the bell was rung] The conversation moves onto the girls (Kelly, Molly (9), and Susan (10)) complaining about Ms. S. They tell me that she took them to Mass yesterday. Kelly says; 'Yeah, and we didn't even have permission slips!'. The girls seemed genuinely annoyed that their Math teacher took it upon herself to take them to Mass during their lesson. This was the second time these girls complained to me about this teacher not sticking to the rules.

Equally, Gene (9, St. Assumpta's) pointed out to me whilst we waited in our lines out in the schoolyard during a school fire drill, that Ms. A. was still holding her book in her hand. She commented that; 'everyone' was 'supposed' to leave all their things behind.

Girls also told me about boy's misbehaving in class. For example, Karen and Siobhan (6th class, St. Joseph's) informed me that some of the boys were messing about when my back was turned during one of our group work sessions;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

I walked into the classroom, Karen (12) and Siobhan (11) came straight over to me. Karen asked me if I've listened back over the tape from last week's session. I told her

I found it difficult to pick up on what was being said as everyone was talking at once. Karen seemed a bit disappointed by this. She then told me that some of the boys were messing on the tape and she gave me the names of the boys. The class was noisy, and I can't hear what she's said, I asked her to repeat the names, but she pretended not to hear me and instead walked back to her seat. I go over to my seat to get ready for the day. Before I sat down, Darren (9) came over to me and asked me if I'll be using the recorder again today. I said yes and asked him if he's OK with this, he nodded yes.

[Continuation of fieldnotes]

[Later] during lessons I saw John (11) bugging Siobhan. Sonia (teachers) spotted this too and told him to stop and to move over to the other side of the table away from her, he smirked at Sonia while he gathered his things. I suspect there's some friction between the 6th class girls and boys today; is this why Karen told tales to me about them earlier?

Contrastingly, boys did not *appear* to be as perturbed about inequalities and injustices as much as girls. During participant observations none of the boys spoke to me about any issues they had at school, nor did they openly express any sense of frustration about their lack of autonomy at school. They generally approached me on an individual basis, in contrast, the girls chatted to me in a group or in pairs. This is not surprising - because of my gender - boys most likely felt less comfortable with speaking to me directly. Similarly, during focus groups and classroom-based debates/work sessions boys were less vocal than girls about being treated the same as adults. However, I found boys were more forthcoming during my group interviews with them. I posit that some boys felt more comfortable expressing their concerns during these semi-formal chats. They also knew that they would not have to meet with me again which perhaps meant they could be more honest?^{clxxxvi} However, a commonality between both girls and boys, was their resignation to the status quo and they firmly believed they had no agency to address the injustices they experienced at school. I suspect, some of them (mainly the girls) saw me as a possible champion for their complaints and they hoped I would tackle their issues on their behalf. After all, I was an adult and therefore I had the power to change things; I had the power they intrinsically knew they did not possess in this social context.

7.6 Social rules - appropriate and inappropriate gender behaviour

When our words appear to contradict our actions, we blur the edges of what we say and do in social practice. I repeatedly observed that boys were referred to first when both genders were spoken to in a group; it was always boys and girls as opposed to girls and boys. This reflects

an argument posed by Martyna (1983) who asserts that '[t]hose who oppose the generic masculine are concerned with both equal rights *and* equal words' (p.30). Martyna's (1983) argument aims to focus our attention on the (over)use of male pronouns such as *he/man* in literature. This was more prevalent in 20th Century texts and, literatures have moved on somewhat from the generic use of male pronouns in text. I add to this and assert that we need to remain cognisant about 'word order' because positioning male before female in text and in our speech subtly implies that boys/men take precedence over girls/women.

Children pick up on these subtleties too. For instance, during a group interview (Oakfields MD), Adele (10) brought my attention to how I referred to her group collectively as 'Lads'. She added; 'And girls' to remind me to address *all* of them present and not just the boys. I explained my gendered *faux pas* to Adele and told her, 'Lads' is a colloquial term used to address people as a group. However, Adele helped me realise that I was using a term which suggested something else. She also pricked my awareness of how seemingly benign words can take on a lot more significance in different social contexts. Adele was confident enough to bring my attention to my oversight which I see as a positive reflection on how she is being socialised (possibly at home and at school) to understand that girls and boys should be equally recognised.

Educators also need to be mindful of their own internal biases and historical socialisations when engaging with children at school. On the one hand, girls and boys were (sometimes) encouraged to consider alternative possibilities to socialise them to see women and men as equals in society. On the other hand, I have witnessed school policies and practices that directly contradict this. Some schools^{clxxxvii} segregate children by gender from a very young age. For instance, from junior infants, girls and boys are taught to line up in separate groups. This social rule is enforced and reinforced by children and adults alike. Young children quickly learn that there is a 'difference' between them which is primarily based on whether they are a girl or a boy. This practice reproduces undemocratic notions that girls and boys ought to be treated differently as citizens (social actors). Moreover, it sets up an inequitable 'us' and 'them' social dynamic, which I have witnessed first-hand at my case studies.

Likewise, some classroom practices I observed reinforces this gendered dichotomy. Teachers, for instance, often instructed children to participate in tidying up after activities in class, to train them to take responsibility for their classroom space. Yet, girls were the cohort who

readily offered to assist. I did not witness teachers encouraging boys to help too, which suggests they defaulted to gendered assumptions about gender roles for girls and boys at school (and elsewhere). Therefore, girls were unofficially seen as the group who did this kind of work in class;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

The class' prop making session for their 1916 drama was coming to an end. The boys were less keen to help with the clear up and it was mainly the girls who coordinated the clean-up at their respective tables. I noticed Susan and Joyce (10) over at the sink washing up the paint containers. I went over to chat to them. Susan told me; 'Teacher has put us in charge of tidying up'. Joyce was all action, she enjoyed being given such a responsible task by Fiona and she was not interested in having a chat with me. She was also happy to have Susan all to herself. They chatted as they cleaned up. I left them to it. I noticed that they dragged the task out as long as possible, so they could sit away from their desks and chat without being overheard by the others. This cleaning duty was a sanctioned 'break' from lessons in class and it also gave the girls valuable time to chat about other peers.

This practice reinforces the division of labour in terms of accepted and unaccepted work for girls and boys. As such, tidying up is 'women's work' (Oakely 1974; Hochschild 1989; Erikson 2005; Bianchi 2011), and therefore, boys do not need to learn how to tidy up after themselves. It also reinforces the idea that girls are the ones to help, to organise and to keep order. Nonetheless, as previously mentioned the boys participated more readily participated in the 'Tidy Tables' cleaning initiative and whenever their teacher called 'Tidy Tables' the whole class jumped into action. The competition element appeared to ignite the boys' interest in a cleaning task they would otherwise disassociate themselves from participating in.

7.6.1 Gender division – 'It gets invaded by girls!'

Apart from teachers, the majority of which were women, children encountered many other adults in varying roles throughout their school day. Here are examples of the varying roles occupied by women and men; Teachers (women and men), School Secretaries (women), School Caretakers (men), School Health Nurses (women), Priests (men), GAA Trainers (men), Lifeguards (women and men), Receptionists (women), Bus Drivers (men), Cleaners (women), Music Teachers (women and men), Special Needs Assistants (women). I posit about the conclusions children could draw from their observations of the kinds of roles and jobs women

and men occupy. I refer to my notes about a reading group session which suggests that what children 'see' has a major influence on their developing notions about what are appropriate roles/jobs from women and men;

[Extract, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

A boy character in the book asked the protagonist if girls could be Whalers too. Sonia put the book on her lap and asked the children; 'Can boy's and girls' do the same jobs?'. Her question developed into a discussion amongst the children. Sonia tried to bring them around to the idea that it is not about the gender of a person, rather it is about whether they are suitable for the job or not. The children disagreed;

Sonia (teacher): What are men's jobs?

Colm (5th class) [Responds instantly]: Important jobs!

Patrick (5th class) [Adds]: Men's soccer is more important.

Sonia: Why? [Patrick does not respond]

Sonia: Is nursing a girls' job?

Patrick: Yeah.

Karen (6th class) [Pipes up]: Girls can do any job.

The boys in the group exclaim in unison: NO!

Patrick: Some jobs should be just for women and some jobs just for men and some for both. Some women don't want to do it and that's not the men's fault.

Colm [thinks only men should be a Garda]: How's a girl going to stop a boy?'... most robbers are boys.

Siobhan (6th class) [Agrees]: Boys aren't going to be afraid of girls.

Sonia: What about housework?

Siobhan: Women should do the housework, you wouldn't see a man hoovering a hotel.

Colm [Responds]: The girls clean, and men fix things.

Karen [Adds]: Girls Hoover, and boys mow the lawn.

This excerpt clearly demonstrates what these children see as appropriate and inappropriate roles for girls and boys. It also gives an insight into the predominant norms they are being socialised towards within their own homes and wider social circle. We know that children base a lot of their ideas on what they see, which is also revealed through the language they used

when discussing this topic. For instance, when children argued their point, they repeatedly used the phrase; ‘you wouldn’t see’. Children’s meaning-making is influenced by their social backgrounds which also informs their understandings of what are appropriate and inappropriate behaviours and roles for adults to engage in. I found this cohort were very unsure of embracing alternative views about what girls and boys can do. This implies they are being socialised towards accepting traditional gendered notions about role division in the private and public spheres. I suggest this kind of socialisation makes it difficult for children to conceive of different possibilities.

However, I also posit that it is comforting for younger children when they are more certain about what role adults occupy. Some children directly alerted me when I did not fulfill my adult role. For example, Liam (10, St. Finbarr’s) deliberately walked through a game of *Hot Potato* I was playing with some girls. He sneered over his shoulder; ‘You can’t play with Caitríona she’s not a child!’. Liam’s comment shows his annoyance/confusion about me ‘pretending’ to be a child. Equally, girls were annoyed when I repeatedly did not step into an authoritarian role; I was not adhering to the social rules of engagement. I posit when children are unsure about adults’ behaviours it blurs the boundaries between their social worlds and adults’. As such, they are unsure about how to behave around someone who is not sticking to the accepted norms for behaviour between children and adults at school. Behaviour is defined by one’s social role. When children have predefined ideas about who does what, this puts them at ease as they ‘know’ how they (and others) should behave in social contexts. In terms of their citizenship practice, what kinds of social roles/employment do girls and boys ascribe for themselves based on their experiences of gender socialisation?

Although there was gender parity^{clxxxviii} in terms of the number of women principals which equaled that of men, women teachers outnumbered men in all my case studies. This is representative of border trends in the gender imbalance between the ratio of female: male primary school teachers in Ireland. Central Statistics Office (2018) statistics state that in 2015, 87% of teachers are female in comparison to 13% who are male. This gender imbalance reinforces the notion that teaching is a job which is mainly done by women. Similarly, I noted that children saw women as the main care givers at school and some girls emulated this by taking on a mothering role if someone was injured or sick. This was a common occurrence throughout my case studies;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Assumpta's]

11.15am – The bell rings to signal time to go back into class. On my way to the classroom I saw a little boy fall in front of me. I go over to assist him and help him up. He's crying. I asked him if he's OK. Then his classmate comes over to him and puts her arm around him. I say, 'Look your friend has come over to help you'. She replied; 'I'm in his class'. She walks close to him and comforts him as he cries.

Children's attitude towards female and male teachers also varied. During group interviews (Mary Immaculate) children revealed their frustrations about female teachers' propensity to shy away from Physical Education (PE) This was a problem for children as most of them thoroughly enjoyed PE and called for more opportunities to participate in physical activities at school;

Cian (12): In our class we probably did it [PE] once a month or once every two months. It was only Rounders and usually if there was a cloud or it was dark, she'd say to go in, that was kinda bad. [group 5b]

During a different interview with children attending the same school, a group of girls from 6th class eluded to their male teacher's propensity to favour sporting activities;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 1c]

Kiera (11): When one of the boys brings up something about the matches at the weekend and he just goes on and on about it...

Cora (11): Or when there's a match in school, oh God! [The others groan about this too].

Kiera: It takes soooo long for him to stop talking about it! But, it's a great thing because you don't get to do work when he's talking about it [Giggles].

These girls' comments also imply that GAA unites this school community. However, I cannot infer if both girls and boys were equally encouraged to participate in Gaelic Football or Hurling. Furthermore, this raises questions in relation to children who are not sporty; do they feel fully included in school sporting activities and competitions too?

7.7 Conclusions - implications of ‘learned’ gendered behaviours at school

Overall, I found the common structure of Irish primary schools reinforces highly gendered socialisation practices such as; enforced gender segregation, language order, division of labour (in class duties), and, hegemonic gendered representations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviours. I identify this influences children’s behaviours and social strategies in terms of their: (i) social protocols/rules (gender roles and segregation), (ii) social position (dominance hierarchy) and, (iii) social action (forms of competition-based CSA). My findings suggest that traditional gender order is being upheld – made visible in children’s peer-to-peer interactions – and that broader societal changes in relation to gender equality are not translating into social practices between children. I posit that gendered socialisation also influences children’s development of ideas about citizenship in terms of the social roles they assign to female and male citizens.

(i) I noted that girls were more preoccupied with how they appeared to adults and they often took on attitudes or opinions they knew adults would approve of. Although both genders tried to bend or manipulate school rules, girls did so in more covert and subtle ways to preserve their mature and responsible persona. When they did (mis)behave, girls were more concerned about reprisals. Girls also reminded me about the school rules. Boys did not outwardly appear to be anxious about their teacher’s perception of them and they did not try to appease adults in the same way girls did. My findings align with Gilligan’s (1982) work relating to sex-differences between women’s (girls) and men’s (boys) moral reasoning/decision-making. She asserts that female’s orientation towards others is in an ethic of care (responsibility). As such, women experience moral tribulations when a choice is to be made between competing responsibilities. This notion is reflected in my observations of girls’ behaviours at school - I noted they more readily emulate/perform behaviours which are in sync with ‘approved’ and praised behaviours such as: obedience, quietness, tidiness, and efficiency. Girls put their fingers to their lips and kept order on their lines at school – they wanted to be seen by adults to be the ‘good girl’.

I observed, girls also sought more positive affirmation, clarification and encouragement from adults at school. My finding reflects Pomerantz et al (2002) who found that girls are ‘apparently more focused on pleasing their teachers’ (in Blakemore et al 2003: 366). I noted, girls from across my case studies, approached their teacher more often in class to show their work, to ask questions and/or to tell her/him something out of earshot of the other children. However, this was more noticeable in schools^{clxxxix} where children were segregated by gender as part of the

school's policy. I also noted that girls actively enforced gender segregation in schools where gender segregation was implemented under school policy and practice (St. Finbarr's). Furthermore, girls openly expressed their disenfranchisement about adults' treatment of them at school. They often called for more responsibility, to prove their ability to be responsible and grown-up; they wanted more voice, choice and freedom to express themselves and their opinions. Notwithstanding, I acknowledge my gender could have hindered boys from confiding in me as some girls did - therefore I cannot infer that boys did not feel an equal sense of injustice.

(ii) Both genders were preoccupied with managing and negotiating their social position as *citizen-peers* of their peer groups. I found boys focused their attentions on asserting their social position as *citizen-peers* amongst their male peers and they were not bothered by girls' peer hierarchies. Whereas girls appeared to be equally concerned with asserting themselves against other girls *and* boys at school - whenever possible they tried to take charge of a situation. Furthermore, I noted differences between girls and boys 'dominance hierarchy' strategies (Blakemore et al 2009). In general, girls tended to use more covert ways of asserting aggression or dominance over their female peers. However, boys tended to employ more physical and blatant expressions of aggression and dominance. Boys' modes of resistance were sometimes more obvious which drew more attention from adults who spent more time chastising them about their behaviours. This could impact on boys' willingness to participate if they feel negatively towards educators. My finding reflects what Gilleece and Cosgrove (2012) found from their analysis of ICCS data from Irish secondary school. They noted a greater 'dip in motivation' to participate at school among boys than girls (p.236). They also posit 'it may be the case that boys suffer more than girls from the mismatch between the environment of learning in the school and their developing sense of autonomy' (ibid).

(iii) I found both genders were more motivated when an activity was turned into a competitive endeavor which suggests that competition is a common (and important) aspect of children's social worlds. It also raises questions about children's citizenship practice which tends to emanate out of competition as opposed to democracy. Notwithstanding, girls' and boys' individual and collective participation appeared to be motivated by different reasons. For instance, I found that girls tended to volunteer to participate in non-competitive activities, which I suggest reinforced their persona as a 'good' girl. Whereas boys appeared to be

primarily motivated by competition and I observed they only ‘fully’ participated in activities where the outcome produced winners/losers. This suggests boys conserve their energy for activities that produce more tangible results. I acknowledge existing research which asserts that gender segregation ... ‘appears to be much more a product of the children’s culture’ as opposed to it being a product of adult encouragement (Corsaro and Ayt 2003: 1314; Thorne 1993). Yet, I maintain that my findings reveal there was notably more competition (for attention and resources) between children who attended schools that enforced gender segregation as part of their school policy and, applied more authoritarian/paternalistic modes of schooling. I also found that children who attended these school types, capitalised on every opportunity to covertly or overtly go against adult authority. They also policed each other more closely and enforced school rules such as age and gender segregation in the classroom and outside in the schoolyard.

Furthermore, my analysis suggests that girls are in a double-bind at school. Firstly, they are largely powerless school-citizens and secondly, they are constrained by gendered norms for what is and is not acceptable behaviours for ‘good’ girls at school. However, due to the highly structured and gendered nature of the school, girls tend to be able to negotiate their way in a manner which is more congruent with favoured social norms and behaviours. This could partly account for the reason why girls ‘do better’ at primary school (and secondary school) than boys (Gilleece and Cosgrove 2012). I question; what are the wider implications these types of practices could have on children’s social bonds and on their development of *citizenship solidarity*? Furthermore, do schooling practices (inadvertently) socialise children towards gendered assumptions about what ways girls and boys can equally ‘do’ citizenship?

Chapter Eight: *Citizenship Polis* - reimagining children's citizenship practice

Overview

Findings discussed in Chapter Seven suggest that gender socialisation processes and practices (enacted by children and adults alike) influence children's development of ideas about the social roles assigned to female and male citizens. As such, I question if gendered schooling practices (inadvertently) socialise children towards gendered assumptions about what ways girls and boys can equally 'do' citizenship during childhood. This final data Chapter explores *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* [Represented in blue, yellow and grey in Fig. 4. Page 124] in terms of a reimagining of their citizenship practice(s) in the social context of the primary school. This Chapter draws on my conceptualisation of children's peer group as a form of *Citizenship Polis* to frame my analysis of findings in relation to the following themes: 8.2 children's social criterion for 1st and 2nd class citizen-peers, 8.3 citizen-peer's social criteria for who's 'Normal', 8.4 children's treatment of 2nd class citizen-peers and, 8.5 children's citizenship practices in the schoolyard.

8. Introduction - A 'lived' citizenship can be a full citizenship

Ina (10): No one's ever done this to us before and asked us and there's a lot of things we've never said, like what is a citizen, we've never told anybody [Oakfield's MD, group 3].

To recognise children as 'present' (Moosa-Mitha 2005) citizens we must look beyond traditional representations of democracy and citizenship. As previously discussed in Chapters One and Two, more inclusive (and feminist) perspectives about citizenship recognise that informal social and cultural activities (not just political) also affect citizens' lives. This feminist-led perspective frames my exploration of how children 'do' citizenship as *citizen-peers* of their peer groups at school. For instance, Olsson (2017) writes about children's 'claim for physical and symbolic space' which she argues can be 'understood as actions of lived citizenship' (p.545). She uses her concept the 'action zone' to explore children's daily lived citizenship practices (ibid). Correspondingly, Larkins (2014) ideas about children's 'acts of citizenship' call for great recognition of children's social practices which she argues constitute forms of citizenship. My research builds on these ideas because I examined children's lived

citizenship on two levels; group-interviews and focus groups allowed me to explore children's subjective understandings of 'citizenship' and, participant observations facilitated my examination of children's citizenship practices within their peer-to-peer interactions at school.

8.1 The importance of peer group relationships for young school-citizens

Peers are the most important feature of a child's school experience... (Lomax in Jones 1995: 164).

Children's 'lived' citizenship practices are highly influenced by their peer group relationships at school (and elsewhere). My framework *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* identifies schools as 'public' spaces wherein children could have more opportunity to more fully participate as citizens [See Fig. 4. Page 124]. Within the school environment, I found that children as *citizen-peers* of their peer groups have the most opportunity to 'do' citizenship on their terms. Therefore, I see children's peer group is a key social space wherein *citizen-peers* enact *their* citizenship practices within the adult- led school environment.

Jones' (1995) *Child-School Interface*, also explores how the school environment impacts on children's developmental behaviours. She notes, it is 'remarkable' that almost half of children's references to their peer relations were associated with 'good, happy and liked schools' (p.166). My findings also reflect this as throughout my case studies children reaffirmed the importance of their peers and their playtime with friends during their school day. When I asked children, what was the best thing about going to school *all* of them responded; 'Friends'. Socialising with friends makes school fun and, in some cases more bearable. Sharon suggested this when she said the best thing about school was; 'When the bell rings!' [Mary Immaculate, group 2b]. Children's responses to my question; What's the best thing about school? illustrates the importance of friendships in children's school lives;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 2b]

Avril (11): I like seeing my friends.

Sharon (11) [Adds]: Talking to your friends.

This view is reflected in Bryan's (11) comment; 'I make friends in school and if you didn't go to school you wouldn't really have a lot of friends' [group 3b]. Likewise, Patrick (11) said the best thing about school for him is; 'Fun...like in the yard and stuff [pauses] friends' [group 4b]. A similar sentiment was expressed by Cian (12); 'It's good to meet them [friends at school] but you also have a chance to make new friends, there's other classes like 5th class and 4th class... so it's social' [group 5b]. When I asked children; What is a good day at school for you? they frequently related this to their friendships at school and having little or no homework to do;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 5b]

Eddie (11): Someday when you learn, when you get a little homework, but you learn, like you kind of nearly do your homework at school. And, if no one was sick and all your friends were in.

Cian (12) [Adds]: Like again no homework and learning stuff and if the teacher was nice and wasn't grumpy or anything, if they praise you or something and if none of your friends are sick.

These comments clearly demonstrate how friendships can offer some counter-balance to the chores of school-life. Many studies have been conducted in response to the important role peer-to-peer interactions plays in children's lives (Corsaro 1987,1992, 2000, 2006; Corsaro and Ayt 2003; Pollard 1985; Corsaro and Eder 1990; Thorne 1993; Jones 1995; Alder and Alder 1998; Devine 2002,2003, 2009). For instance, Corsaro and Eder (1990) have identified and articulated children's peer cultures which frame their social worlds as being ... 'a stable set of activities or routines, artefacts, values and concerns that children produce and share', which come from interactions whereby children both appropriate and transform adult culture (p.197). This echoes Fine's (1985) description of peer cultures as consisting of ... 'a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours, and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and that serve as the basis of further interaction' (in Alder and Alder 1998: 4). Children's peer groups also give them the basis for 'connecting' to their peer culture; a culture which is recognised by peer group members who share experiences that continuously shape and dictate the boundaries of their interactions and relationships with each other (Alder et al 1998; Devine 2009^{cx}). Correspondingly, children's social status as *citizen-peers* (members) of their peer group is also dependent upon their ability to negotiate the social criterion as defined by their peer culture.

8.1.2 Children's *Citizenship Polis* at school

Throughout my research, I observed that children's lived realities as *citizen-peers* were played out daily in their interactions and negotiations between each other at school. Children's peer-to-peer interactions offers them significant opportunities for informal learning about how they need to behave to flourish as *citizen-peers* in their peer group and in the wider school environment. Given this, I locate children's peer group as a prime locus for citizenship learning during childhood. Within the peer group; children develop their social skills, they learn and share things about their peer culture and the wider adult world, they get social support and, they learn how to form healthy social relationships (Jones 1995).

On this basis, my conceptualisation of children's peer group as a form of *Citizenship Polis*, suggests that children enact their citizenship practice as *citizen-peers*. I conceptualise this *polis* as representing children's 'public' realm, where through their peer cultures, they re-form adult-centric ideas about social concepts (such as citizenship) and social practice(s) informed by wider social norms about culture, gender and class. Intergenerational knowledge about social concepts and practices is re-appropriated and transmitted between children and is observable through their daily peer group interactions. I assert, children's experiences as *citizen-peers* of their peer groups' is perhaps *the* most important form and locus of citizenship participation for them during childhood because it is more applicable in comparison to unattainable (and formal) notions of citizenship practice which they believe is reserved for adulthood [See Fig. 8. Page 190 for an illustration of my conceptualisation of children's *Citizenship Polis*].

8.2 Social hierarchies and peer criterion - 1st and 2nd class *citizen-peers*

I observed that *citizen-peers*' level of inclusion or exclusion from group activities and decisions is largely dictated by their social status within the peer group. Children's social hierarchies within their peer group plays a significant role in the level of citizenship 'rights' *citizen-peers* have access to. For instance, I saw that children who were peer leaders (high social standing) had more input and control over the group dynamic. Children who were on the fringes of the peer group had diminished opportunities to participate in peer-led activities and they had less chance to influence and/or exert power over other peer members. I conceptualise children's social position and status akin to a form of citizenship status. Meaning, children as *citizen-peers* are granted full, partial or even (in some incidences) no citizenship participatory rights.

With status comes rights and with rights comes a voice and with a voice comes the opportunity to create change. Children who are peer leaders enjoy *full* citizenship rights within their group. I observed that they had an opinion which was listened to and they had the power to create change within the group. Contrary to this, children who occupied an insecure social position in the peer group were not privy to ‘in’ jokes or insider knowledge and, they were intermittently excluded from group games during playtime. To be accepted by other *citizen-peers*, children need to learn how to behave according to the social rules of their *Citizenship Polis* (peer group). For instance, I observed how new and existing peers were disciplined/socialised by more established *citizen-peers* into behaving/performing in ways accepted by the wider *Citizenship Polis*, otherwise, they faced being excluded^{cxci} or isolated by established group members.

Peer group social criterion generally adhere to the majority peer group view. I found that children who fulfil the social criterion set by their peer group citizenry are eligible and entitled to *certain* rights within their peer group. This social system is somewhat demonstrated by previous studies which have observed the social hierarchies within children’s peer groups (Pollard 1985; Jones 1995; Corsaro 1985,1997; Alder et al 1998; Devine 2009). From this perspective, group member’s rights are largely dictated by group leaders who have the power to grant and/or take away members’ rights, which are dictated by their hierarchical position within the peer group structure (ibid). These social circumstances impact on individual peer group members’ social status, which also affects their sense of belonging and agency to actively participate in group activities. I conceptualise alternating social positions occupied by children within their *Citizenship Polis* as akin to *1st* or *2nd* class *citizen-peers*. Based on my findings^{cxcii}, I contend that children’s sense of identity, belonging, membership, participation, agency and status^{cxciiii} are strongly connected to their community/network of peer group relationships at school. Children’s connection/isolation from their peers has significant influence over their sense of wellbeing at school.

The forms of internal social stratifications in children’s social worlds are generally based upon different social criterion than adults’, however, they also appropriate adult-centric ideas which inform their understandings of social protocol (Corsaro1987,1992, 2000, 2006). To explore this dynamic in the context of children’s citizenship practice at school, I observed^{cxciiv} their social interactions between each other in the classroom and outside in the schoolyard. My observations infer that these children regard the following personal attributes as indicating someone who is; ‘friend material’ and/or a peer leader. Children were drawn towards

individuals who were socially powerful and were able to navigate between and within different social contexts. I observed; peer leaders/popular children followed orders but mucked about when their teacher was not looking, they followed the group's social rules of engagement and the rules of the game and played fair, they cooperated (i.e. they did not tell tales to teacher) and, they were team players (they did their fair share of group work in class). In addition, children gravitated towards individuals who had good personal hygiene, who looked physically good (i.e. they were tall, or they looked older), had cool stuff (social capital), were self-assured, funny and had insider knowledge about things younger children knew they were not allowed to know.

Therefore, I conceptualise *1st class citizen-peers* as akin to socially skilled peer group leaders. *1st class citizen-peers* (both genders) are socially astute children with more of a say and more agency to exert power within their peer group. Female and male *1st class citizen-peers* also demonstrated *savoir faire*^{cxcv}. These children had a high level of 'sophistication in social and interpersonal skills' (Adler et al 1998: 42) which helped smooth their way through social practices at school. *1st class citizen-peers* (both genders) were popular. Gender differences between peers' social strategies explored in Chapter Seven, highlight female peer leaders tended to emulate behaviours favoured by adults and they used this to exert influence over their counterparts. Whereas boys, did not outwardly adopt praised behaviours as this was contra to male centric social protocol. This aligns with Karen Gallas' (1997,1998) findings which identified that 'bad' boys (deemed so because of their attempts to be in power in the classroom) are often seen as 'cool' boys who are usually 'white, attractive and socially skilled' (in Blakemore et al 2009: 369).

Children faced more challenges if they were less socially astute and less influential in their peer group. I observed some children withdrew from the wider group and they did not appear to actively cooperate during group work activities which meant they were perceived not to be a good team member by their peers. I noticed that children who did not appear to have a close friend were particularly vulnerable. Without enough peer allegiances/support some children faced isolation from the peer group. These children occupied an insecure or what I conceptualise as akin to a *2nd class citizen-peer* status in the peer group. *2nd class citizen-peers* did not appear to have the same level of awareness of what was going on in their social networks - this could have been compounded by their exclusion from peer group activities^{cxcvi}.

This social ‘class’ distinction is also suggested by comments made by Rina and Tania (9) during a focus group at St. Finbarr’s;

[Excerpt focus group 2, St. Finbarr’s]

Rina: I’m not going to say who, but some people were saying that they were the leaders of the group...like it’s nobody here but, they were saying that oh, you are me are just the leaders...other people are just like weak people...

Tania [Adds]: The rats.

Rina’s comment implies she understands ‘weak people’ are not powerful people, and they are dependent on others. The opposite of weak, evokes notions of people who are strong, independent, assured, powerful, useful, important; someone who has a high social status - someone who matters. Tania’s comment ‘The rats’, infers weak people are undesirable, dirty, untrustworthy, the lowest of the low - useless. These children’s comments imply they are being socialised through their experiences to see that non-leaders embody a diminished social status and have no real power which you need to be on top of the social hierarchy.

8.3 *Citizen-peers* – Who is ‘Normal’?

To examine why certain children are perceived to be ‘weak people’ by their peers, in subsequent group-interviews I introduced the question; ‘Who makes a good friend’? During my analysis, I identified the word ‘normal’ as a recurrent word used by children when they spoke about the characteristics/attributes they associated with a ‘good’ friend or when they described who they would like to sit beside in class. ‘Normal’ was a word used by several children^{cxvii} attending schools with different patronage. For instance, a good friend is; ‘someone who’s normal’. I infer children used this word to delineate between behaviours which were good/bad, desirable/undesirable and appropriate/inappropriate. Children’s repeated use of this word suggests that being normal is an important social criterion for peer group members; abnormal people stand out from the rest of the peer group. What constitutes ‘normal’ for children? What is abnormal? And, how are perceived abnormalities in peers behaviours treated within the peer group?

My participant observations revealed that ‘normal’ children did not behave contra to social group norms and rules. For example, children who laughed at the wrong time, acted in a manner which was contra to the majority view or who said things out of context were not following

the social rules of the group. I also inferred from my conversations with children that ‘normal’ meant you did not stand out from the majority for the wrong reasons such as looking/behaving differently. Findings discussed in Chapter Six, highlight how ‘new’ peer members were disciplined/socialised by established peers into behaving in ways which were ‘normal’ to that particular peer group. For example, Finn’s (10, ethnic heritage unknown) attempts to enter the peer group at St. Joseph’s were hampered when he sometimes said things and acted outside of this groups approved social protocol(s). I observed that ‘containing’ peer group information was a strict social protocol of this peer group. Therefore, established peer members could have interpreted Finn’s behaviour as proof that he could not be trusted to divulge peer information to adults’ in authority.

Any ‘peculiarities’ can be zoned in on by other children and used as a weapon or a means of control over children who do not fit into the approved social category (Jones 1995). I observed some *2nd class citizen-peers* either spent a lot of their time trying to gain access into the group (by adopting or trying to adopt similar behaviours as peer leaders or popular children) or, they withdrew further from the wider peer group. I also observed it was not looked favourably upon if peers were ‘openly’ socially aligned to someone who was not accepted by the larger peer group. This is a vulnerable position for a child. Without peer backup, they are at risk of being excluded and victimised. For instance, Jones (1995) writes about the psychological impacts that bullied, isolated and excluded children suffer. She refers to Childline which recorded that victims of bullying speak of themselves to blame for being bullied. Likewise, I observed *2nd class citizen-peers*’ citizenship status was on wobbly ground. I suggest this precarious social position could influence *2nd class citizen-peers*’ sense of membership and belonging as valued citizens of their peer group. It also impacted their agency and their right to participate as full *citizen-peers* in their *Citizenship Polis*.

8.4 Peer group dynamics - friend or foe?

My observations revealed children are adept at picking up on subtle social cues from each other. Some children are better at communicating than others (as is the case for adults). This is a valuable form of social capital children use to gain access and to secure their social position within their *Citizenship Polis* at school. For example, I observed incidences which illustrated how children’s perceived level of social status affected their social position in their peer group. This hierarchical social system had both positive and negative impacts on children’s status and

was dependent upon whether they were regarded as a 1st or 2nd class citizen-peer. The following fieldnote excerpt provides an illustration of children's different treatment of each other, based upon their social hierarchy within their *Citizenship Polis* at school;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

[9.05am] - At the school gates, Molly (9), Emer, Tania, and Janine (10) come over to greet me. [This has become a regular occurrence; generally, the same two or three girls meet me when I come into the school yard (my informants).] We chat about what's happened since I was last with them. As we walk over to their classroom Molly tells me they were; 'put into groups' by Fiona (teacher). She made sure to tell me they; 'didn't get to decide' who they could sit with and she complained to me about the boys she was put sitting beside. Michael's (10) name was mentioned. Molly complained; 'he's crying all the time!'.

I previously noted that Michael was not a popular boy in the class. He frequently got into disagreements with classmates, he sometimes went against what Fiona asked him to do, he seemed to find it difficult to manage his peer relationships, and he often involved Fiona whenever there was a disagreement between himself and a classmate. These behaviours were looked upon unfavourably by most of the class, which was implied by how they interacted with Michael. Nevertheless, Michael spent a lot of his time trying to gain access into the boy's peer group. However, I noted he mainly remained on the periphery and he did not secure a high social position as a *citizen-peer* of the group;

[Continuation of fieldnote excerpt above]

I asked Molly if she's spoken to Fiona about this. She ignores my question and instead recounts an incident which occurred between Michael and some of other boys in the class about a bottle of 'Mountain Dew' sports drink^{cxviii}. She told me the other boys teased him and said it was 'probably just water' and that it 'wasn't really Mountain Dew'. It appears the boys did not give Michael any respect for bringing the drink in to class and he was ridiculed by them for trying to pretend he had a 'real bottle' of it. Molly told me that Michael got upset about this – not surprisingly^{cxci}. However, neither she nor the other girls expressed any sympathy for his plight, rather they thought he deserved the ridicule for what he had done.

This incident suggests that Michael's inappropriate use of peer cultural capital - the bottle of Mountain Dew – diminished his status and social rights as a *citizen-peer* within the boy's peer group. His male peer's behaviour towards him and their treatment of him reflected this and he was excluded from the boys' inner-circle. This also impacted on Michael's citizenship status

within the wider peer group who regarded his behaviour as inappropriate. I noted the girls offered no sympathies towards Michael. He did not fit into *their* social criteria befitting a *1st class citizen-peer* in this group and as such, he largely occupied the position of *2nd class citizen-peer*. Furthermore, the wider peer groups' treatment of Michael infers they saw his behaviour was 'weak' because he could not stand up for himself. I refer to Rina and Tania's comments (p. 251), which described non-leaders as 'weak people' and 'The rats'. Their comments imply this group do not tolerate weakness/ vulnerability in peer group members because it is not a desired characteristic. Where did these children learn to view weakness and vulnerability and the inability to look after ones' self as such an undesirable trait? Have they appropriated adults' views about wider (neoliberal) ideologies which support individualism over collectively and solidarity?

Social concepts such as 'community' and 'citizenship' embody notions of inclusion and exclusion. People's social practices demonstrate how individuals are either included or excluded from certain communities and thus they are denied certain civic, political and social rights. These rights are based upon formal nation-state criteria which determine which individuals are full, partial or non-citizens. Michael's treatment at the hands of his fellow *citizen-peers*, demonstrates children's less favourable citizenship behaviours, which highlights children's 'citizenship' embodies inclusionary and exclusionary practices. Literatures discussed in Chapter One highlight that Civic Republican approaches to citizenship have a propensity to draw stark lines of inclusion and exclusion between citizens who do/do not fulfill their citizen obligations (Abowitz and Harnish 2006). In Chapter Two, Irish-based literatures assert citizenship education at primary level draws on similar philosophies to Civic Republican citizenship ideologies (Waldron 2014). I add to this and assert my findings highlight the need for further sociological analysis to interrogate how and where children are appropriating information about social practices which could clarify their reasonings for their sometimes-harsh exclusionary treatment of each other at school.

8.5 The places and spaces where children 'do' citizenship at school

Larkins (2014) identifies children's activities such as, setting the criterion for their social rules of engagement, enacting their own social rights and contributing towards social good as representing 'acts of citizenship'. I add that children's citizenship actions at school centred around their peers. Breaktimes are extremely important fixtures in children's school lives. For

children, breaktimes allowed them valuable playtime to socialise with their friends at school and, I observed they spent most of their breaktimes enforcing and reinforcing the social pecking order and rules of engagement between each other.

The schoolyard was the place where most of this activity occurred. I identify it as a primary space in the school environment where children (as *citizen-peers*) can more freely enact *their* citizenship practice(s). I noted, children's social roles, status and rights as *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis* were clearly visible when they were interacting with each other in the schoolyard. For instance, I observed during games children's social position as peer members is demonstrated by their behaviours towards each other. Furthermore, game-playing is an important aspect of how children can learn *democratic competencies*. During games children frequently must negotiate their social position, resolve conflicts over game rules (agreed upon by the peer group) or access to play space and, they also need to be able to effectively communicate their intent and to pick up on valuable social cues from each other. These skills link with what I identify as DC (discussed in Chapter Five), which could make game-playing more enjoyable if they are well-developed in children;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, Oakfields MD]

[Little break] – I strolled around the yard, some kids were playing 'Chase' and 'Hide-and-peek'. Others were reading books, chatting in groups, and practicing dance moves. Coloured lines are painted on the tarmac which the children use when playing games. There are two sets of four large squares painted on the ground. Two separate groups of children were playing the same game in different areas of the yard, I decided to focus in on the 4th and 5th class children I am working with. I stood and watched the game from a distance, the kids didn't seem to be overly distracted by my presence. Yet, the more I observe kids I'm realising that even when you don't think they're paying attention, they are. I noted that at least five children were needed to start this game, and as the game progressed, new participants were instructed by the other children to form a queue if they wanted to play. A child was stationed at each corner of the square. Another child was in the middle of the square, whose aim was to get (in whatever way possible) any one of the four children out of their corner so they could claim it for themselves. When a child lost their corner, they jumped over to the next corner and the child in that corner rotated to the next one. If they missed their spot they had to go to the back of the end of the queue and start again. The child in the middle of the square then moved to the corner they had succeeded in capturing. The tactic of the game changed as more children joined in and I noted they became more competitive with each other. I saw it was beneficial if your friend was also playing this game as some kids used this to their advantage by working with their friend to keep both of their squares safe from capture.

During the game, Tom (10, peer leader) managed to dupe Sharon (10) out of her corner. Sharon was not fast enough to get into the next corner and she had to relinquish. She walked back to the end of the line without any protest. At the same time Darren (10) and Tom both tried to move into Sharon's corner. They reached the corner at the same time. They tussled with each other and tried to nudge each other out of the space. Tom shouted at Darren; 'Get out Darren! I got here first!'. Darren didn't respond but he managed to hold his position for a few moments, then he gave way to Tom who's physically (and socially) more robust. Tom was too much for Darren to handle and he gave up his spot to him. Darren didn't protest, instead he walked out of the game. None of the others came to his defense and the game continued without him.

This incident demonstrates how children's social position as *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis* is dependent upon their status and hierarchy within their group. Darren was not very popular in the peer group. Yet, Tom moved more freely within the peer group. Both boys closely followed the rules of this game, regardless of their social standing. From my observations and interviews I found that children across my case studies put significant importance on rules. They enforced their social rules within their *Citizenship Polis* whenever possible. It was the duty of each *citizen-peer* to obey the rules and to remind others when they were not. I noted children were often unforgiving towards anyone who broke the rules, and they employed a zero-tolerance policy. For instance, a common rule for children, is to play fairly during games. Given this, I observed that schoolyard games functioned on two levels; firstly, they were a source of fun and children enjoyed the physicality of group games. Secondly, they were a way for children to uphold their duty as *citizen-peers* by enforcing agreed social rules/norms whilst reasserting their social hierarchy and associated citizenship rights within their *polis*.

In addition, children contributed to their *Citizenship Polis* by comforting each other and providing solidarity. Breaktimes also offered children the space and opportunity to chat and tell each other about things which were going on in their lives when adults (and other children) were not within listening distance. These activities solidified their position as valued *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis*. Some children told me they often chatted when they were in the schoolyard about personal and wider social issues or topics they found interesting. For instance, Nadene and Kiera (5th class) gave me an example of the kinds of things they talked about during their walkabouts at breaktime in their schoolyard;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 1b]

Nadene: We don't talk about it [stuff at home] in the classroom but I talk a lot about it in the yard.

Me: So, what kinds of stuff do you talk about in the yard, could you give me an example?

Nadene: Em.... [Looks uncertain]

Kiera responds: Em... there's a girl in our class and she was saying that she heard on the news that there was a boy who got trapped in a tumble dryer and his dog saved him. We talk about stuff like that. If we hear something on like the news maybe, that gets our attention.

Me: What was it about that story that got your attention?

Kiera: It was sad, and it shows how lucky you are.

Nadene: And that dogs are much more intelligent than you think.

Kiera: They always say that a dog is man's best friend and without the dog the boy would have died. [These girls both had a pet dog which played an important part in their lives].

Later in this interview when I asked Nadene what the best thing about school was, she got upset and started to cry when she told me; 'Sometimes I get in trouble a lot at home and it's nice to get away'^{cc}. Earlier in this interview [See line 1 of excerpt above], Nadene eluded that she confided in her girlfriends about issues at home during breaktimes. These girls saw the schoolyard as a safe space for them to chat outside of the confines of the classroom. This suggests that breaktimes are a significant aspect of children's school lives as it allows them some time and space to reinforce friendship bonds and to actively contribute towards their *Citizenship Polis* unimpeded by adults' authority. It also helps them to process information about the wider world through their dissemination of knowledge/information to each other through their peer culture.

8.5.1 Children's citizen roles enacted in the schoolyard

Jones (1995) notes the fact that children are confined to a 'defined area' (schoolyard) means their behaviours can be 'easily observed' (p.175). She also points out 'children are left very much to their activities' in this space which presents a valuable opportunity to observe children doing their own thing (ibid). Games and children's play - within the schoolyards I observed -

were keenly monitored and managed by supervising adults (i.e. teachers/support staff on yard duty). Children equally policed the activities and whereabouts of their fellow *citizen-peers*.

In the schoolyard children are confined to their age (and gender) segregated play zones; a rule which is collectively enforced by children. However, I saw that the schoolyard represented a dynamic zone of social interaction between children, who's behaviours are otherwise more strictly curtailed in the classroom. During breaktimes the schoolyard became a zone of social and political activity as children played, plotted, challenged and negotiated their way through their peer groups. These social interactions represent key ways children enact their citizenship practice at school as *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis*. In addition, I observed some children took on certain social roles during breaktimes which I see as demonstrating an aspect of the duties and responsibilities associated with *their* citizenship practice(s). For example, I identified three citizen roles: (i) The Scout/Informant, (ii) The Boundary Police and, (iii) The Gatekeepers. Younger children took up a scouting role to figure out why I was in their schoolyard. The policing role was mainly enacted by older children when they asserted themselves against my presence in their schoolyard. The gatekeepers were children who included me in their activities as a way of gaining immunity from the school rules. I also suspect they were scouting for information which they disseminated back to the wider peer group.

(i) The Citizen Scout - 'Why are you here?', 'Who are you?'

I observed that younger children appeared not to see me as a threat and they used more direct means to find out about me and why I was in their schoolyard. Younger children (junior and senior infants, 1st class) directly approached me and asked me; 'Who are you?', 'Are you the new teacher?', 'Are you an Inspector?', 'What are you doing?', 'Why are you here?'. After all, I was a stranger in their schoolyard. Younger children were monitoring their space in a more direct and overt way. As citizens, they were finding out important information; did I have a right to be there? Did I have permission? Why was I there? Did they need to be concerned in any way?^{cci} Out in the schoolyard this type of direct interaction with me was more possible. If children chose to, they could come to me more freely to chat to me or to find out information which they could disseminate back to their peer groups. Therefore, I see that some younger children were acting as citizen 'scouts'.

Likewise, whenever I was in conversation with another adult in the schoolyard/corridor, younger children (junior and senior infants, 1st class) would come up and interrupt our conversation to either tell the teacher/principal about something, to show them something or to complain about an issue. They were not fazed by my presence. It appears that younger children have not yet ‘learned’ the social protocol between children and adults such as asking adults’ direct and unfiltered questions. This notion was confirmed when in passing I told Fiona (teacher, St. Finbarr’s), how a senior infant interrupted a conversation between myself and the school principal. She responded by saying; ‘Younger kids just don’t get it’, which infers there was an accepted and appropriate way children were supposed to interact with adults at this school. On this basis, I posit that very young *citizen-peers* are freer to enact their citizenship practice, without being overly constrained by the norms of social protocol reinforced to them by adults at school. They can be openly curious and proactive in ways which older *citizen-peers* have learned is no longer acceptable for them to behave. Younger children appear to be less concerned about how their behaviours are interpreted by others and as such they can operate in a way which is less inhibited by others’ expectations of them. I suspect, some older children were also curious about my presence, but they have ‘learned’ not to be so direct in finding out more about me or why I was at their school. This could be because they were either too shy to approach me directly, or this kind of behaviour would not have been seen to be ‘cool’ by their peers?

(ii) The Boundary Police

In the schoolyard a different form of social protocol was employed by older children. For example, older children (6th class) tended to observe me from afar. Whenever they directly acknowledged my presence it was subtler, yet their message was clear; they were patrolling *their* space and keeping an eye on me. For instance, during my second day of observations at St. Finbarr’s, a girl and boy (6th class) walked very close to me, one on either side of me as I strolled around their schoolyard. This was only for a moment, but they made their point; *we are watching you too*. These children’s behaviour was a subtle challenge against my unwelcome adult gaze. Their actions also suggest they saw me as an intruder in *their* space which they were monitoring for any potential threats to their privacy. A similar incident occurred at Oakfield’s MD when I chose to conduct our interviews outside at a bench in the schoolyard^{ccii}. Our interviews were paused during breaktime and the children went back to

class to eat their snacks. I stayed on the bench to write up some fieldnotes. Shortly afterwards, a group of 6th class children strode over to me. Some sat close beside me, and others sat atop the table connected to the bench. They crowded me but did not speak to me. I found this behaviour intimidating and I quickly realised that I had crossed the border into *their* space and I was not welcome. I gathered my belongings and moved to another spot. This suggests that some older children were less positive about my presence in their schoolyard and they collectively asserted themselves in a more direct way against me. I posit they were more direct in this incidence as they knew they were more powerful as a group and they used their protest-based CSA to move me out of their space. I suspect this type of behaviour would not have been tolerated by their teacher in the classroom.

(iii) The Gatekeepers

In two schools, children (mainly girls) invited me to play with them during breaktime. They had decided I was okay, and I suspect they also realised playing with me offered them some immunity from the school rules. During a game of ‘kickie-uppies’ with a group of girls from St. Finbarr’s, Molly (9) said; ‘We are not supposed to be playing ball in this area’. The girls explained that Mr. P. said he did not want ball games to be played outside his classroom window. When I made no attempt to move the game to another area Susan (10) said; ‘Caitríona is with us and she’s an adult’. A similar incident occurred at St. Assumpta’s where children understood that my adulthood provided automatic immunity from school rules;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Assumpta’s]

Gene and Kathryn (4th class) are playing pool. Two other girls from 5th/6th class are playing on the other table. I watch them for a few moments and then try to strike up a conversation. I ask if the boys play pool too? and they say ‘Yeah’, but that it’s a race and whoever gets there first can play. Evan (4th class) strolls over to where the girls are playing. Gene says; ‘Evan you’re not allowed in here, there’s supposed to be only four’. She adds; ‘Evan you’re in trouble!’. Evan responds defensively: ‘I’m not in trouble!’ and he stays put. The girls explain to me that only four people can be at the two pool tables at any one time. I ask them if I’ll get in trouble for being there, if there’s supposed to be only four? Kathryn replies: ‘No, because you’re a... [she stops and doesn’t finish her sentence]. I say: ‘A human, are children not humans too?’ The girls giggle. I confirm what Kathryn was thinking and say: ‘I’m a big person’ and she says; ‘Yeah’.

The social roles which I identified shows how some children are acutely aware of social power and how to use it to their advantage. For instance, my observations identified this in three ways; firstly, (**Scouts/Informants**) younger children who are less encumbered by social norms are freer to be openly curious and to directly seek out information from the source (e.g. adults). Older children capitalise on this and mine younger children for information they will not directly seek out themselves. Secondly, (**Police**) children *know* they are more powerful as a collective and they can use their collective power to assert themselves in ways they could not do individually. Thirdly, (**Gate Keepers**) some children included adults in their activities and used their adulthood as a shield against other adult authority which allowed them to engage in activities that challenge school rules. I see this demonstrates how children adapted their behaviours to suit the social context and situation which I also see as representations of how some children enacted their citizenship practice at school.

8.5.2 The schoolyard - a zone of social and political action

Age separation was also reinforced by the status hierarchy inherent in the peer subculture children looked up to and gained status from playing with the older people, while they derided and lost position for playing down (Alder et al 1998: 117).

Chronological age and gender play a significant part in how younger and older children interacted in the school setting. In this incidence, I focus on the role chronological age played in children's interactions in the schoolyard. Older children generally had more of a say and access to resources at school. I observed several classrooms where children from 4th, 5th and in some cases 6th class occupied the same classroom. I noted older children (5th/6th class) during group work sessions favoured working with children from their own class (age) group and only mixed with 4th class when instructed by their teacher. Older children also regarded themselves as having more authority in class and they sometimes asserted their power over younger children. For instance, if resources (art supplies/footballs) were limited older children generally got the best pick, or if their teacher wanted them to do a task, older children generally got selected over the younger ones. These practices also show that age-hierarchy was equally enforced by adults. However, the social pecking order between these age groups was most visible during breaktimes and in the schoolyard where children congregated and socialised in class (year) related peer groups (I also noted there was not much (if any) mixing between age groups at play).

All children had designated play areas. Areas which were unsuitable^{cciii} were deemed out-of-bounds by adults who spent most of their time surveying children's whereabouts and enforcing this rule. Children were very aware of their respective schoolyard rules and of the repercussions of going against them. For example, Amy (9, Mary Immaculate) told me; 'We get into trouble for going there' (group 6a). The following excerpt also shows what happens when children venture into no-go-areas at school;

[Except, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 4a]

Anne-Marie (9): We have to play in certain places.

I ask: What happens if you go into a place where you're not supposed to be?

Anne-Marie and Avril (9) [Respond together]: The teacher will tell you to move.

I probe further: How does that make you feel?

Anne-Marie: A bit embarrassed.

Avril [Adds]: Annoyed.

A child's access into a play zone was age specific and corresponded with their class year; this rule was reinforced by children and adults. This type of age-restriction/segregation rule was set down by wider school policy^{cciv} and was common to all the schools I observed. Yet, it was largely reinforced by children who actively policed and maintained the borders between age-segregated play zones. Children enforced stricter controls on play zones where their yard space was small and if resources were limited. For instance, during group interviews I asked children 'What would you change about school?'. For some children, issues about play space was top of their agenda for change; Adam (10, Hillcrest ET): Well our school is so absolutely tiny and so cramped...I'd like to change the school to be a bit bigger and we have no playground space at all. Adam's classmates expressed similar issues regarding their inclusion in decision making which affects their play space at school:

[Excerpt, group interview, Hillcrest ET, group 1]

Conor (10): They don't ask us, and they don't ask us our opinion. But if we did get our opinion we would say what we wouldn't want them to do.

Graham (10) [Adds]: I'd say the school would be different if we were given an option.

I ask: How does it make you feel when you don't get the chance to make decisions?

Graham: When the school changes so much it's depressing, because when we got a new extension we always had our yard...and now we have a tiny yard and we don't even get a yard anymore, we have just got the parking lot. Personally, I'm not comfortable with playing out in the parking lot.

Certainly, lack of play space was an issue cited by children from across my case studies;

[Excerpt, group interview, Oakfield's MD, group 1]

I ask: If you could change something about school, what would that be?

Darren (10): Emmm...more play area; that kind of thing.

Denise (10) [Adds]: Make the ground be grass.

These children's comments reveal the tension between children's and adults' competing agendas in the primary school setting. They also highlight the negative consequences wider school decisions have on children's *citizenship-esteem* as school-citizens who are not included in decision-making processes which impact on the things that matter most to them at school (i.e. play space).

8.5.3 Turf warfare - 'They keep coming into our area!'

Age-restricted play zones tended to be the spaces where most conflicts broke out between older and younger children in the schoolyard. Maintaining the social hierarchy between peers often provoked competition and conflicts around space and resources in the schoolyard. A lot of children told me about issues about unfair access to play zones in their schoolyard which was a source of constant strife for some of them during breaktimes. However, this appeared to pose most problems for boys who played games (soccer and rugby) where players need physical space to play 'properly'. This could partly explain why boys are more concerned about access to play spaces and as a result they are more openly territorial about their space at school. Consequently, they spent more time asserting themselves about these matters and they relied more on age-segregation as a method to enforce restricted access into coveted play spaces such as green areas.

I also witnessed these types of conflicts between children due to insufficient play space. For instance, at St. Joseph's, I noted that the older boys frequently got into disputes with the younger boys from 3rd class over play space and the use of play resources (namely soccer balls). The younger boys play space was sandwiched between the older classes and the Junior and Senior infants. They were very constrained and had little space to play in which heightened their aggravation towards anyone (who was not allowed i.e. younger or older children) that encroached on their space. This resulted in these boys constantly having to assert themselves against the older groups who often intruded on their patch. I refer to an excerpt from my fieldnotes to demonstrate this;

[Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Joseph's]

Today I observed an altercation over a football between Keiron (a peer leader from 6th) and Joe, from 3rd class. I saw that the younger group's ball was accidentally kicked out into the road and that Joe spied a football which had rolled loose from the older group's game of 'Rounders'. Joe went over to claim the ball but was spotted by Keiron who marched over to him to get 'their' ball back. Although Joe is smaller in stature he's not in spirit and he squared up to Keiron. They jostled and pulled at each other's sleeves to get each other away from the ball. The teacher on yard duty was otherwise engaged with another group of children and did not see this. I noted that the scuffle was minor, and no hitting took place, so I made the decision to continue to observe and not to intervene. The boys became aware of my presence and looked at me for my reaction to their pulling and jostling. When I did not make any attempt to intervene a flash of hesitation crossed their faces; but they continued with their battle for the ball. Shortly afterwards, Joe gave up and went back to his group (without the ball). He did not appear upset by this altercation and was puffed up with bravado. He was welcomed back into the group, the other boys clapped him on the back and seemed to appreciate and admire his bravery. The younger boys then called over the teacher on yard duty to tell her about the injustice. They huddled around her to make their case, however she told them to sort it out amongst themselves. [This isn't the first time I've noted a battle over play zones at this school – the boys spend a lot of their time asserting their pecking order.]

This issue was also highlighted in Chapter Seven, whereby my findings revealed boys engaged in more aggressive forms of hegemonic masculinity to assert their social position amongst their male peers. Furthermore, I note that children (both genders) who were schooled through more paternalistic and authoritarian approaches, tended to struggle more with resolving peer conflicts. They frequently defaulted to an adult to intervene on their behalf. I also noticed children who attended schools which fostered paternalistic and authoritarian approaches to

education, were not given regular opportunities to engage in democratic processes such as voting, debating, and collective decision-making.

To illustrate my point, I refer to two schools (Oakfield's MD and St. Joseph's NS) that had very small schoolyards. Lack of play space was a source of significant frustration for these cohorts. Yet, the children attending Oakfield's MD^{ccv} seemed to manage their play zones without too much strife even though their play space was equally as small at St. Joseph's. At Oakfield's MD, younger children appeared to accept that older children were allowed more privileges. Older children were less antagonistic towards the younger ones and as part of this school's policy they engaged in yard duty once a week. This meant they monitored the younger children's play to ensure they were playing fair and it was their job to intervene if things got out of hand^{ccvi}. In contrast, the children I observed at St. Joseph's (which had an equally small yard space) but had fewer (if any) opportunities to engage in collective decision making, tended to get into more conflicts with each other during breaktimes. I also noted this cohort frequently called upon adults to intervene whenever conflicts or disagreements broke out in their peer groups. This suggests that educational approach can influence the development of the types of skills children need to develop to help them to more effectively communicate and negotiate with each other to resolve peer-to-peer conflicts.

8.5.4 Age related peer power play - 'They'll tell you to get out!'

Children also told me about their schoolyard issues during my group interviews and focus groups with them. In theory, younger children (4th class) begrudgingly accepted that older children had more power and autonomy in the schoolyard. Yet, in practice, some felt a deep sense of injustice and powerlessness about the way they were sometimes treated because of restricted access to coveted play areas^{ccvii}. In all the schools I visited, children attributed age to social status and to social rights; it was a prime factor because it allowed older *citizen-peers* the most social power and rights. According to age, children reinforced their power by actively policing these coveted play areas which they did so by either restricting/preventing younger children's access into them;

[Excerpt, group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 1a]

Conor (9): I think if we were allowed in the basketball court every day, we are only allowed...[pauses] 4th class is only allowed in there on Wednesdays.

Tim (9) [Adds]: And also, on Wednesdays it's mostly raining.

I ask: Why are you only allowed in there on some days?

Tim: 5th class go in for the whole year.

I probe: What about 6th class?

Tim: 6th class play over there. [He points to a green area to the rear of the schoolyard]

A similar issue was discussed by another group of boys attending Hillcrest ET;

Craig (10): I would definitely say have more space. We should be able to use the pitch for soccer games cause the junior infants don't really use it [Hillcrest ET, group 1].

Craig's comment clearly demonstrates the injustice he felt about the lack of available space in his schoolyard. According to Craig, the coveted play area 'The Pitch' was wasted on the younger ones who toddled about on it and therefore did not use it to its full potential (i.e. playing soccer and/rugby). The oldest cohort of children (6th class) at Hillcrest ET tightly maintained and controlled 'their' space, just as was the case at Conor and Tim's school (Mary Immaculate). Conor and Tim told me what would happen anytime younger children (4th/5th class) deliberately entered or accidentally wandered into a restricted zone at their school;

[Continuation of group interview, Mary Immaculate, group 1a]

I ask: So, what happens if someone goes into the 5th class area? What would happen if one of you said, "I'm going in!"?

Conor: You'd get hit in the face with a ball!

I joke: Would they welcome you with open arms and say come in and play with us?

Tim: No, no, no! If we were supposed to be in one portion of the court, it's like "you're not supposed to be in this court!"

Graham (10, Hillcrest ET) reiterated a similar scenario when he told me about what happened to him when he went into the 'wrong' play area in his school;

I was pushed off the pitch by the older class. I asked if I could play and they said, "No get off our pitch!". They come in and basically take it even when we are using it [Group 1].

These children's comments demonstrate that play space and play facilities such as balls, soccer pitches and basketball courts are at a premium and dispensed in accordance with age. Their comments also reveal how children socialised/disciplined each other to 'learn' how and where to play properly at school. Even though younger children (4th class) appeared to be on the receiving end of the older groups enforcement of age-segregated zones, they also repeated the same type of treatment which they enforced on children who were younger than them (3rd class). However, I noticed that the youngest cohort in schools (Juniors Infants up to 2nd class) did not seem to get as involved in such matters. I also saw older children displayed more protective behaviours towards them and if a younger child toddled into an older peer space, they were gently rebuked and escorted out of the space. Also, older children generally regarded the youngest cohorts as cute and innocent and they often displayed parental-like behaviours towards them such as catching their hand/putting an arm over their shoulder.

8.6 Conclusions

My findings illuminated three key elements of children's citizenship practices at school. Firstly, I found the predominant way younger children could do *their* citizenship at school was as *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis*. As citizens of their *citizenship polis*, children must learn how to negotiate conflicts, mediate and build consensus (*democratic competencies*) with their fellow *citizen-peers*. This is how they learn about and enact the duties and rights associated with *their* citizenship practice. *Citizen-peers'* rights were also dependent upon their social position within their *Citizenship Polis*. Based on my observations, I conceptualised two social class' of *citizen-peers*; *1st class citizen-peers*, tended to be peer leaders and as such they enjoyed full citizenship rights. *2nd class citizen-peers* occupied a more precarious social position and sometimes they were excluded/placed on the margins of the *Polis* and, they were mainly afforded partial citizenship rights. Children's treatment of their fellow *citizen-peers* raises questions about their appropriation (and re-appropriation) of information about social concepts and practices and, how we can socialise them towards more inclusionary and egalitarian social practices between each other.

Secondly, my observations of the places and spaces^{ccviii} within the school environment revealed the schoolyard was *the* place where children had more freedom to congregate and socialise in their (age and gender segregated) peer groups. The schoolyard more readily facilitated children's citizenship practices in school and, it was where children's 'acts of citizenship'

(Larkin 2014) and their 'claims for physical and symbolic space' (Olsson 2017: 545) were most visible within the wider formal adult-led school environment. I recognise the schoolyard as a key social (public) space where younger children could assert themselves the most as *citizen-peers* within their *Citizenship Polis* at school.

Thirdly, playtime is more than just playtime, it is the work of children during childhood (Piaget and Inhelder 1972). During playtime children have the most opportunity at school to fully engage with and to develop social and democratic skills which they often do not get the chance to do so in the highly structured nature of the classroom. Above all else, my findings revealed that children from across my case studies spent most of their time at school maintaining their access to their peer groups and thus their ability to participate in peer-to-peer activities. Furthermore, the level of effort children put into their peer relationships at school supposes that their sense of belonging, attachment and membership to their peer groups takes precedence over other aspects of school life. Moreover, I infer that children's ability to participate and have a say in their own peer groups takes priority over their ability to influence the terms under which they are schooled. The worst fate for a child is not to be included in peer group activities as they are isolated and excluded from the people and the activities that matter most to them. My findings add to the literatures which have already identified the mechanisms of social stratifications and hierarchical structures in children's peer groups at school (Pollard 1985; Jones 1995; Alder et al 1998; Corsaro 1987, 1992, 2000, 2006; Corsaro and Eder 1990; Corsaro and Ayt 2003) and, I assert, children's interactions between each other as *citizen-peers* represent forms of *Collective Social Action(s)* within their *Citizenship Polis*, which is located within their social worlds and is defined and maintained by their peer culture, as well as being informed by wider social norms and values.

The final Chapter Nine provides a synopsis of key findings from Chapters One to Eight and offers recommendations based on these. I also highlight my theoretical contribution to existing research literatures.

Chapter Nine: conclusion and recommendations

9. Theoretical contribution

This research explores children's understandings about and their experiences of citizenship and participation. In doing so, I draw upon Feminist and rights-based perspectives to argue why children's citizenship participatory rights matter. The rights-based critique of children's citizenship participation informs my argument for the continued development of children's citizenship participatory rights. Feminist approaches towards citizenship create a conceptual space for children's modes of citizenship participation because they recognize informal modes of social action within different social contexts as acts of citizenship. This inclusive approach makes it more possible to recognise children's citizenship participation as differently-equal (Moosa-Mitha 2005) to that of adults. I acknowledge there is a tension between these two perspectives. Feminist notions are based upon collaborative social action, whereas a human rights perspective is founded on the development of individual rights. The tensions between upholding individual citizens' rights and balancing this against what is best for the collective good of society is ever present. Therefore, I assert that both Feminist and rights-based perspectives illuminate the contested nature of 'citizenship' as both a status and a practice which embodies both inclusionary and exclusionary notions about who is/who is not entitled to full/partial or no citizenship rights.

Therefore, my theoretical and conceptual frameworks are built upon both Feminist and rights-based approaches. I assert, my findings specifically inform and expand our understandings about children's peer-citizenship practices and how they are shaped by wider structural and social processes within the social context of the primary school in Ireland. For instance, my concept, *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* helps us to locate children's forms of 'public' citizenship participation in the spaces and places where they participate the most during childhood [See Fig. 4. Page 124]. This conceptual framework is informed by my empirical participant observations of children's peer-to-peer and child-adult interactions at school and, children's responses to my questions about citizenship and childhood. I applied *Children's Social Circles of Citizenship Participation* firstly, to scaffold my findings about children's understandings and experiences of citizenship and democratic practices and

secondly, to demonstrate how children's citizenship development is influenced by social interactions within different social contexts.

Findings discussed throughout this thesis highlight participating children's acute awareness of their subordinate position as social actors (citizens). However, based on my analysis of how children 'do' citizenship within their peer groups at school, I assert this belies that young children actively participate as *citizen-peers* everyday within their peer groups. Children develop their social skills in their peer groups, they learn and share information about their peer culture and the wider adult world, they get social support and, they learn how to form social relationships (Jones 1995). I add to this understanding and offer a re-imagining of children's citizenship practices which illuminates new sociological insights into how younger children 'do' citizenship within their peer groups, framed by the social context of the primary school.

I offer a unique theoretical model which specifically relates to children's peer-citizenship practices. I identify children's peer group as a form of *Citizenship Polis* which represents their 'public' realm wherein they appropriate - through their peer cultures - and reconstruct ideas about social concepts (citizenship) and social practice (democracy) informed by wider societal notions about social class, culture and gender. This re-appropriated intergenerational knowledge is transmitted between children and is observable through their daily peer group interactions at school. In addition, I identify children's *Citizenship Polis* as a prime locus for citizenship learning, which offers children a form of citizenship participation most applicable and available to them during middle-childhood [See Fig. 8. Page 190 for a visual representation of my conceptualisation of a children's *Citizenship Polis*]. My conceptualisation of a children's citizen peer group as a form of *Citizenship Polis* adds to our knowledge about children's peer cultures. It also provides a new focus of inquiry towards the sociological analysis of the way's children 'do' citizenship within their peer group. Furthermore, my 'citizenship' lens offers a useful explanatory power to examine and gain new insights into children's agency and autonomy as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens.

Above all else, my findings highlight that the level of effort children put into their peer relationships at school presupposes their sense of belonging, attachment and membership to their peer groups takes precedence over all other aspects of school life including their ability to influence the terms under which they are schooled. The worst fate for a child is not to be

included in peer group activities as they are isolated and excluded from the people and the activities that matter most to them. I suggest, my observations of children's interactions between each other as *citizen-peers* represent forms of *citizenship solidarity* which are manifest in their competitive/protest-based *Collective Social Action(s)*. My findings reveal children's modes of peer-citizenship participation and practices and thus add to research literatures which have already identified the mechanisms of social stratifications and hierarchical structures in children's peer groups at school (Pollard 1985; Jones 1995; Alder et al 1998; Corsaro 1987, 1992, 2000, 2006; Corsaro and Eder 1990; Corsaro and Aydt 2003).

9.1 Key Findings - Is citizenship created at school?

Literatures discussed in **Chapter One** highlight that conflicting ideas about children's citizenship still affect their ability to claim a recognised status, practice, identity, membership, belonging and agency as current citizens. Furthermore, no common ground has been reached to systematically develop and sustain children's participation as valued and recognised citizens in society. This is partly due to adult-centric notions of childhood and children's rights whilst remaining cognisant towards their protection from harm or undesirable influences.

In **Chapter Two**, literatures identify: (i) school ethos, (ii) pedagogical methodologies and (iii) the positioning of SPHE within the wider school curriculum as key factors which affect the integration of citizenship education into school policy and practices (Waldron 2004; Deegan et al 2004; Jeffers 2014; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016)^{ccix}. Several Irish scholars argue that policy rhetoric and practice are divorced because children's opinions about school issues are still not taken into consideration, nor is their participation in decision-making processes an integral element of school life (Waldron et al 2014; Horgan et al 2015; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Devine and Cockburn 2018)^{ccx}. In addition, literatures advocate for more research to address the tensions between children's participatory rights and school practices (Deegan et al 2004; Holden 2006; Gilleece and Cosgrove 2012; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016)^{ccxi}. Findings from this research addresses the deficit in empirical research and I suggest that they could provide 'lessons learned' (O' Leary 2010:39), which may be applicable when exploring larger population samples and case studies within similar contexts.

Chapter Three considers three key factors which I found influenced conducting research with children within formal educational settings: **(i) Adult power** - for example, I found that some adults felt the need to modify/control children's answers even when they were not present. This

illuminates broader issues about adults' necessity to control, which I assert can inadvertently undermine research data and impact on children's right to voice their opinions without adult interference. In addition, I found maintaining effective communication with adults in authority was challenging and was compounded by some adult gatekeepers who limited my access to children in some of my case studies. Adults' attitudes towards research also highlights a broader query in relation to schools' willingness to facilitate children's participation in research which could prove to be a worthwhile endeavour for everyone involved. This is indicated by the access issues I faced at schools, where some parents denied consent for their child's participation, which resulted in me being unable to conduct participant observations at some schools. **(ii) Social context** - I also found children's subordinate position was reflected in what they said and how they behaved towards me which varied depending upon the presence of other adults. I partly attribute this to the formal educational context which is imbued with adult authority and power. Children's ability to engage in more creative forms of participation was largely constrained due to the research setting, which was not predisposed to organic and unstructured activities. This had a direct impact on the how the children participated during the research process. **(iii) School structure** - It was a challenge to facilitate opportunities for children to participate in ways which meant they were not overly constrained by time. Furthermore, my opportunities to engage in other creative modes of data collection were constrained due to the tension between my research aims and the classroom schedule. Consequently, I did not have enough opportunities to decide how I could engage with children within the school environment.

My analysis of children's comments in **Chapter Four** highlights that children recognise themselves as citizens in theory and not in practice - they have learned through experience that citizenship is a status and a practice which is reserved for adulthood. Childhood represented a period of apprenticeship for children, which they accept they must go through before they can *become* responsible adult citizens. This viewpoint is reiterated and reproduced through adults' treatment of them as citizens in namesake only.

Furthermore, I found children changed their opinions about what they can/cannot do, and about what they should/should not do in accordance with the social context of the situation. This shows their nuanced understanding of the importance of social context as it dictates their level of agency and autonomy. Children are also aware that the parameters of control are negotiable

as is their own social position which shifts within a ‘continuum between childhood and adulthood’ (Kaukko and Wernesjö 2017). As such my findings expose a layer of tension and contradiction between children when they spoke about responsibility, duty and participatory rights in relation to their social role/position. Children believed adulthood was peppered with extra responsibilities and duties which they firmly placed in adults’ hands. They were also willing to forego more autonomy and agency if this released them from the constraints they associated with adulthood. Whereas, children still looked forward to adulthood because it represented; freedom (due to regular access to money), unencumbered mobility (the autonomy to go out without surveillance or adults’ gaze) and, autonomy (the discretion to make decisions to do/or not do things).

In addition, I found children believe ‘in theory’ they should not be exposed to certain types of knowledge. They recognise when something is known it cannot be made unknown. I found children largely obtained information about social concepts, practices and issues through informal sources of information from family members, peers, social media and the television. For instance, children’s comments reveal that they are inadvertently exposed to challenging information about social issues and familial concerns. I found this knowledge created a sense of insecurity and anxiety for children who were not equipped with the skills to process (sometimes) challenging/conflicting (mis)information. I assert that this raises broader questions about children’s wellbeing when they largely believe that they are unable to do anything about these concerns.

Findings addressed in **Chapter Five** reveal children’s disenfranchisement about their lack of opportunities to participate in democratic processes at school. Decision-making/voting and consultation on wider school issues were areas where they would like to have more influence. I posit that this unequal social dynamic could hinder children’s citizenship development on three levels: 1. it restricts and/or denies them the opportunity to voice their opinions and thus to exert their agency and autonomy as school-citizens. 2. This approach towards children’s participation could jeopardise their development of positive associations with participatory practices at school, which could also socialise children to recognise ‘citizenship’ as a passive rather than an active practice during childhood (and later in life). 3. I suggest children’s marginalised social position could inadvertently impact their *citizenship-esteem* as recognised and valued school-citizens. To counter this, I propose schools need to encourage and facilitate

children's development of what I term *democratic competencies* [See Fig. 5. Page 135 for a representation of this]. I propose that children's *DC* could be further developed through increased group-work and more regular opportunities for them to participate in decision-making processes at school. I also suggest better developed *DC* could help children to flourish as *citizen-peers* and as school-citizens, thus positively impacting on their *citizenship-esteem*.

In addition, I found that children from across my case studies represented citizens as law abiding, dutiful, responsible adults who respect and obey their country. This suggests children are being socialised toward Civic Republican-led ideas of citizenship which emphasises citizens' duty (responsibility) towards civic engagement whereas personal and private rights are minimised (Dagger 1997 in Lockyer 2008; Abowitz and Harnish 2006; Osler and Starkey 2005). I found children placed more emphasis on citizens' obligation to participate in the public sphere for the common good of their community and their country. They rarely mentioned citizens' rights in the context of what the state is obliged to do in return for citizens' upholding their civic duties.

Furthermore, a sense of nationalism and/or patriotism was evident in some children's responses about citizenship. For example, some children (Oakfields MD) told me that citizens; 'respect their country' and they 'stand up for their country'. Moreover, some children's responses (St. Finbarr's) clearly revealed discriminatory-based nationalistic undertones in their understandings about the facilitation of native citizens' and non-native citizens' rights. This suggests children are being introduced to adult bias about social issues such as immigration and homelessness. Children's comments also reveal wider societal concerns about these issues in Ireland which could originate from a fear of scarcity as opposed to the provision of universal human rights.

Overall, I found three key differences between children's participatory practices for the three school-types (NS, ET/MD) I observed: (i) responses from children attending ET/MD schools revealed they had a deeper sense of entitlement to participate in activities that involved 'bigger' decisions and more responsibility. (ii) Children's comments attending these school-types also suggest they have more nuanced understandings about citizenship and rights. Also, they identified as current citizens more readily than other groups. (iii) I observed that these cohorts (ET/MD) listened to each other more attentively during in-class debates, group work sessions and group-interviews in contrast to children attending NS schools which did not appear to

foster or encourage democratic participation the classroom. My findings imply that children who are engaging with democratic processes such as debating, voting and group work could be getting the opportunity to foster skills such as; ‘reasonable disagreement’ (group work and/or debating), ‘reasoned argument’ (group work and/debating) and learning about ‘procedural values’ (through voting and/ or collective decision making) (in Lockyer 2008: 23; See also Crick 2000).

Chapter Six considers findings which demonstrate children’s modes of covert and overt resistance, which I identify as *Collective Social Action(s)* and as a form of children’s *citizenship solidarity*. My findings also indicate children used their *CSA* to navigate adult-led norms and school protocols. For instance, I found *CSA* were largely conducted in covert ways when adults in authority were present. Contrastingly, I witnessed children’s more overt modes of *CSA* during activities led by adults’ in lesser authority. Findings also highlight the relationship between social bonding and children’s *citizenship solidarity*. I found children were more likely to engage in forms of *CSA* if they had strong social bonds. Although social bonds are often a precursor for solidarity, they can also have negative impacts. For instance, children’s *CSA* could also represent exclusionary forms of children’s *citizenship-solidarity* where children excluded peers who did not adhere to the social norms and values of the peer group (*Citizenship Polis*). This exclusionary treatment impacted on *citizen-peers*’ level of participatory rights within their peer group. This is concerning as it suggests children have learned that if they react as a collective they can exert their power by excluding and, thus, undermining individuals who are considered to pose a threat, who are different or who represent the ‘other’. My findings draw attention to the need for educators (and adults in general) to be vigilant towards an ‘us’ and ‘them’ dynamic *before* it becomes a common practice among young school-citizens.

In **Chapter Seven**, findings reveal that the common structure of Irish primary schools reinforces gendered socialisation practices such as, enforced gender segregation, language order, division of labour in school and hegemonic gendered representations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ behaviours. I identify this influences children’s behaviours and social strategies towards: (i) social protocol/school rules (ii) social position and dominance hierarchy and (iii) social action (forms of competition-based *CSA*). My findings indicate that children attending schools which actively promote gender segregation practices are more competitive about resources and adults’ attention. I assert this raises broader questions about the relationship between gendered

schooling practices and children's socialisation towards norms about appropriate/inappropriate social roles that girl and boy citizens enact during childhood and later in life. Moreover, my findings also suggest that wider societal changes relating to gender equality are not translating into children's peer social processes at school.

Findings discussed in **Chapter Eight** highlights the predominant way(s) younger children do *their* citizenship at school as *citizen-peers* of their *Citizenship Polis*. Based on my empirical observations, I conceptualised two social classes of *citizen-peers*. *1st class citizen-peers* tended to be peer leaders and as such they enjoyed full citizenship rights. *2nd class citizen-peers* occupied a more precarious social position and sometimes they were excluded/placed on the margins of the *Polis* and they were mainly afforded partial citizenship rights. I also found that the schoolyard more readily facilitated children's citizenship practices in school and, it was where children's 'acts of citizenship' (Larkin 2014) and their 'claims for physical and symbolic space' (Olsson 2017: 545) were most visible within the wider formal adult-led school environment. Therefore, I recognise the schoolyard as a key social (public) space where younger children could assert themselves the most as *citizen-peers* within their *Citizenship Polis* at school. Furthermore, my findings demonstrate the importance of playtime for children, during which, I observed children had the most opportunity at school to fully engage with and to develop social and democratic skills which is usually not possible they in the classroom.

Overall, I found the process of developing children's participatory citizenship practice(s) at primary school is influenced by three factors: 1. **Time constraints** – often squeeze democratic learning processes into an impossibly small time-space within the classroom dynamic which diminishes children's opportunities to practice their citizenship skills. 2. **Attitudes and beliefs** – could dispel or encourage negative, ambiguous and apathetic views children may already have been socialised to adopt about their (in)ability to contribute towards the development of school life as recognised and valued school-citizens. 3. **School ethos and management** – could hinder or promote the development of a more inclusive school culture and practices which readily facilitate children's age-appropriate participation at all levels within the wider school community.

9.2 Recommendations

I recommend the following practices be adopted to further the development of children's citizenship participatory rights at primary schools:

- (i) I argue children need to ‘cease to be just the temporary guests’ (McLoughlin 2004: 141) of their schools. Therefore, I recommend that schools promote and develop children’s participatory rights incrementally from the youngest to the oldest. To do this, schools need to engender a scholarly environment and pedagogical approach which fosters children’s collaboration and participation to encourage them to take part-ownership of their schools. This approach will help to relocate children’s social position as ‘insider’ as opposed to ‘outsider’ school-citizens. Furthermore, school patronage and management need to be cognisant of wider structural forces and agendas which could limit the extent to which educators can facilitate and develop children’s routine participation in democratic processes in the classroom and the wider school environment. Educators need to be fully supported (as much as practicable) in their endeavours to develop children’s participatory practices.
- (ii) I found that *democratic competencies*^{ccxii} and social bonding are interlinked. I observed when social bonding is high between children it enables them to apply their *DC* more readily. Therefore, I propose that schools increase the amount of group-work based activities to offer routine opportunities for children to develop their *DC* which could help children to cope better with the cut and thrust of school life as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens [See Fig.5. Page 135, for my representation of democratic competencies].
- (iii) My findings indicate children are often motivated by competition to participate at school. I found that children need to see tangible advantages of collaboration which motivates them to work collectively. Primary schools could harness children’s competitive tendencies by providing democratically-based incentives to encourage children to work as a group as opposed to individually. Children also need to experience the advantages of collaboration which can be a productive and worthwhile endeavour. This approach needs to start at primary level and continue at secondary level which is characterised by neo-liberal informed modes of individualised learning that culminate in the successful completion of the Leaving Certificate.
- (iv) ‘...adults don’t really listen to what kids say’ (Louise 10, Oakfields MD, group 6).
Based on my analysis of children’s responses, I found they ultimately believed adults neither listen to, nor do they take their opinions into consideration at school. This suggests children sometimes feel adults do not uphold their ‘best interests’. It is my assertion that adults will have a better chance of upholding children interests if they listen more closely when children tell them about what matters most to them.

- (v) Furthermore, some children's comments revealed overtly nationalistic ideas about the provision of Irish-national and foreign-national citizens' residency rights. This demonstrates children transmit adult-centric ideas and attitudes about social issues such as (but not exclusively about) immigration and homelessness. I recommend that adults are actively cognisant about their own prejudices regarding deserving and undeserving citizens, otherwise unchecked bias could inculcate inequitable ideas about citizens' rights.
- (vi) Children's exclusionary treatment of their *citizen-peers* raises questions about how we can socialise them towards more egalitarian social practices. Exclusion was a social issue which teachers often spoke to children about. I recommend in conjunction with verbal instruction, children should be actively guided and encouraged by adults to develop empathy and the ability to see others' worldviews. The SPHE curriculum offers educators many opportunities to engage with such issues in age-appropriate ways which should be introduced as part of everyday lesson plans and curriculum.
- (vii) My analysis also reveals children's citizenship actions in the schoolyard are integral aspects of their school lives. I recommend that schools promote practices which support children to monitor peer's treatment of each other in the schoolyard to help them to develop mediation, negotiation and conflict management skills. Furthermore, to challenge issues around social exculsion and bullying, I recommend that school curriculum and practices need to introduce children from Junior Infants onwards to concepts about empathy, inclusion and equality.
- (viii) Findings also demonstrate how gendered school policy and practices can influence children interpretation of what are appropriate/inappropriate behaviours and social roles for citizens to enact during childhood and later in life. My findings suggest that traditional gender order is being upheld – made visible in children's peer-to-peer interactions – and that broader societal changes in relation to gender equality are not translating into social practices between children. This is important as it indicates that gendered socialisation influences children's development of ideas about citizenship in terms of the social roles they assign to female and male citizens. Therefore, it is imperative that educators remain vigilant towards their own assumptions about gender and make concerted efforts to promote gender equality and anti-discriminatory practices at school.

9.3 Conclusion

When shall we realize that in every school-building in the land a struggle is...being waged against all that hems in and distorts human life? The struggle is not with arms and violence...But in its slow and imperceptible processes, the real battles for human freedom and for the pushing back of the boundaries that restrict human life are ultimately won (Dewey in Carr and Hartnet 1996: 183).

This empirical research makes an important contribution for the following reasons:

1. My research methodology and ability to build rapport with participating children generated the opportunity to gain a unique sociological insight into children's social worlds. The rich qualitative data I collected from six different primary schools reveals how children 'do' citizenship as *citizen-peers* and school-citizens. These new insights contribute to our understanding of children's peer social processes framed within the formal social context of the primary school.
2. My research experiences also draw attention to the challenges associated with sourcing schools willing to participate in this research. I see this is a significant limiting factor for conducting social research within the formal education sector. The issues I experienced in terms of gaining and maintaining longitudinal access into schools to work with children also raises important questions about schools' willingness and/or ability to facilitate and participate in empirical social research.
3. My findings shed new light on children's self-conceptualisation of their citizenship identity and practices. For instance, my findings reveal that children largely conceptualise themselves as a non-participating social group. This finding draws our attention to the wider implications children's treatment as non-participating citizens has on their development of positive associations about 'citizenship' as a status and a practice which equally applies to them during childhood. I also query the kinds of longitudinal impacts this could have on both micro and macro levels. On a micro level, what impact could children's childhood experiences of citizenship have on their individual *citizenship-esteem*? On a macro level, I question if children's childhood experiences of non-participation will affect their propensity to be engaged/disengaged adult citizens and the wider impact this could have on society.

4. This research demonstrates that primary school children in Ireland still do not have enough opportunities to participate as valued and recognised school-citizens. My findings concur with existing Irish-based research about children's participatory practices at school (GUI 2011; Horgan et al 2015; Waldron and Oberman 2016; Devine and Cockburn 2018)^{ccxiii} and finds that children's opportunities to participate in democratic processes at primary school remain under-developed in Ireland. Although I observed incidences of democratic schooling, I maintain that children's participatory rights remains constrained by the highly structured nature of the primary school. Furthermore, my findings indicate there appears to be little (if no) cultural commitment within some primary schools to address the issue of children's participatory rights as school-citizens and, to recognise children as active *citizen-peers* of their own peer groups.

5. My analysis of primary schooling practices demonstrates how social structures and processes within the school environment inform children's understandings of citizenship and their experiences of democratic participation. I found that schooling practices tend to socialise and encourage children more towards developing individualistic competitive dispositions as opposed to *democratic competencies*. I see this raises broader questions about schooling practices inclination towards neo-liberal ideologies that support individualism over collectivity. Furthermore, my analysis of children's gendered behaviours and attitudes suggests that children are being socialised towards more traditional understandings about gender and role division.

How can we address these issues? Firstly, children's meaningful participation needs to become firmly embedded within the culture and structures of primary schools where children and adults collaborate in everyday decision-making processes. This requires adults to broaden their perspectives to include children's ways of doing and understanding, which is necessary to change the prevailing top-down approach towards the development of children's citizenship participatory rights. Secondly, to integrate children's opinions/concerns into broader school policy and practice, adults need to employ a bottom-up approach which means we need to ask and listen to what matters most to children at school (and elsewhere). This could be facilitated by democratic classroom practices and the statutory introduction and implementation of student-led representative platforms (such as School Councils) at primary level. Thirdly,

schooling practices need to reward children for teamwork and to actively introduce them to the merits of working collectively as opposed to individually.

I have argued throughout that as well as facilitating younger children's participation at school (and elsewhere), their forms of citizenship participation must be recognised to further the development of children's citizenship participatory rights. I acknowledge that this collaborative approach requires a significant change in school policy and curricular approaches which are currently incongruent with time-hungry democratically-led pedagogical practices. However, without the opportunity to participate children have no real presence (Moosa-Mitha 2005) in child-adult relations at school. When children are not recognised they are denied a voice; without a voice they have no power or opportunity to contribute. Therefore, a paradigm shift is required in the way education systems are developed and sustained. Only then will children be recognised as differently-equal (Moosa-Mitha 2005) citizens who can incrementally contribute towards positive social change.

Appendices

[1] - Checklist for addressing ethical issues in research with younger children

- | | |
|---|---|
| (ix) Research purpose | Is the research in children's interests? |
| (x) Costs and benefits | What are the costs and risks for children of doing or not doing the research?

What are the benefits? |
| (xi) Privacy and confidentiality | What choices do children have about being contacted, agreement to take part, withdrawing, confidentiality? |
| (xii) Inclusion and exclusion | Who is included, who is excluded? Why?
What efforts are made to include disadvantaged groups? |
| (xiii) Funding | Are funds "tainted"? Are resources sufficient? In what circumstances should children be recompensed? |

(xiv) Involvement and accountability

To what extent can children or carers contribute to the research aim and design? What safeguards and checks are in place?

(xv) Information

Are the aims and implications clearly explained? Is written documentation available in other languages?

(xvi) Consent

Are the aims and implications clearly explained and respected? Are informal “pressures” used? What is the correct balance of parental and child consent?

(xvii) Dissemination

Do participants know about and comment on the findings? How side is the audiences for the research – academics, practitioners, policy makers, the public, research participants?

(xviii) Impact on children

How does the research affect children through its impact on thinking, policy and practice? Are children’s own perspectives accurately conveyed?

[Taken from, Green and Hill 2005: 66]

[2] - Checklist for verbal and/ written information of participating children

Have the participating children been informed about the following:

1. the aims of the research?
2. the time and commitment required from them during the research process?
3. Who will know about/see the findings?
4. Will they be given feedback/follow-up session about the research?
5. Is confidentiality promised?
6. On what grounds would the researcher be obliged to break her confidentiality pledge to them?

[This was discussed beforehand with both the school principal and the class teacher. To ensure this checklist was honoured, an informal information session or Q &A was held with the class PRIOR to any research taking place in the school. The children were also given an information sheet, which asked them to confirm their assent to take part in the research.]

[Taken from, Green and Hill 2005: 69]

[3] - Checklist for confidentiality, anonymity and data storage procedures

Neither the schools nor the participating children in this research are identifiable in the final research thesis. The following steps were taken to ensure participants' confidentiality and to ensure their subsequent anonymity is upheld:

1. This research was not involved in collecting identifiable information about specific individuals; rather it was more concerned with children as a social group. However, any quotations used, or references made to specific children in the thesis text, were anonymised via pseudonyms to protect these children's identities;
2. Each of the research participants were given a pseudonym. This was used when any quotes were taken directly from the data and referred to specifically in this research;
3. Any identifiable information about the schools or children taking part in the research was removed, or modified where appropriate;
4. Personal identifiers that can link the participants to their pseudonyms are stored separately to other research documentation. These files are stored on a laptop and backed up on an external hard drive, both of which are encrypted;
5. All computers and external hard drives used in this research are equipped with encryption software;
6. Upon the publication and dissemination of the research, any links between the participants and their pseudonyms will be destroyed in accordance with Maynooth University's ethics protocol;
7. All data collected was (and is) stored in compliance with data protection policy;
8. Physical data, such as drawings made by the children during the research process, or photographs taken by them, are stored in a secured cabinet, which only the researcher has access to this information. Research supervisors - upon their request - have access to anonymised files;
9. All audio recordings – with the consent of participant/guardians and the children's assent – were deleted from the mobile audio device and transferred to an encrypted file on the researcher's laptop. Only the researcher and research supervisors – upon their request - have access to anonymised audio data files. In addition, the limitations of confidentiality were communicated to the schools, the participants (in an age appropriated manner) and their parents/guardians. Child protection guidelines that further limit confidentiality was also referenced.

[4] – Excerpt from fieldnotes, Case Study - St. Finbarr's

Background context for observation recorded

As part of my participant observations with St. Finbarr's I asked the children if they would produce a proclamation for their class. This was about the Irish Easter Rising Centenary celebrations (March 2016). Each school in the country was given an Irish flag by the Irish Defense forces and asked by the State to put forth a 'Proclamation for the new generation'. Therefore, I asked the children at St. Finbarr's to design a proclamation. I brought in art supplies to the children to use in the designing their Proclamation. As part of this, I encouraged the children to participate in class debates to figure out what and why they wanted to put certain points into *their* proclamation. After the class had decided what points they wanted to have included in their proclamation, they were broken into smaller groups (eight groups with approx. five children per group) by the class teacher and each group was asked to design a proclamation per group. All the proclamations had the same information on them, but it was decided by the class teacher to ask the school principal in to the class to choose 'the best one'. I had no part in this decision.

The following section from field notes, demonstrates how the children modified the activity which was set for them and started to do things their own way. The art project gradually began to be hijacked by the children, in that, it was side-lined in favour of using the art supplies to have more fun, to be creative and to bond with other children in the class. This was one of the few moments I witnessed the children in this school taking some agency back to do things the way they wanted to do them. However, it was short lived, and they were soon corralled back into place by the class teacher. What follows are some excerpts from my conversations with the children and my observations of them as they interacted with each other during this art exercise.

[Excerpt, Fieldnotes, St. Finbarr's]

Some of the class have put sticky letters on their foreheads. They put the letter which corresponds to their first/second names. Gina comes over to me to ask 'Caitriona, do you spell you name with a C or a K?'

I tell her with a C, she then come over to me with a sickly letter C and sticks it onto my forehead.

Rex passes by and gives me a smile he says 'yes!'

I look around and notice that now nearly everyone in the class has put a sticky letter on their forehead. Even Morgan, who is normally very quiet and reserved. Aidan makes a point of not putting a letter on his forehead and gets quite agitated when one of his classmates tries to stick one on him. The only other person in the room who does not have a letter on is Fiona (class teacher). Susan comes up to me and says, 'you ask her!'. I reply, 'no you ask her' and she says back to me 'I did, and she said no'.

As the time goes on, more and more of the kids start to add more adornments to their faces. Some completely cover their face with the letter for their name. For instance, Fagan's face is covered with sticky 'F's'. Others dismantle the sticky letters and make funny eyebrows out of them. E.g. Neill and David. Others have added sticky jewels and more letters to their faces e.g. Rex, Molly, Rebecca and Gina.

Fiona does not try to stop the kids from putting the sticky things on their faces. However, she does not encourage it either. As the time goes on the kids are getting rowdier and are spending more time mucking about with the art supplies than doing their art project. Fiona gives them a warning that if she sees anyone walking around who is not either working on their art project or quietly reading, they will have to do extra class work. She holds up a sheet and says you will have to do one of these if you don't quieten down and get your work done.

Fagan comes over to the group I am with to get more 'F's' for his face and Tina says, 'Fagan you can't be taking all of our stuff!'

Rebecca comes over to me to ask me to stick another sticky 'R' onto her forehead. I smile and say to her; 'You now have a double-r on your head!'

Rebecca shouts over to Susan to get her attention and says to her; 'Susan I now have a double-r on my head!'

Eoin asks if there's anyone at the table not using an E...

Molly notices that the teacher is not there and asks me where she has gone, I tell her she's gone over to the photocopier and will be back soon.

I go over to Carol's, group and Susan's asks me; 'Do you want another C?' I say 'no' and that 'I'll leave it in case someone else what to use it for their art work'.

I leave the audio recorder with this group, Susan starts messing into the recorder. Carol says, 'Hello Darling, and does kissy sounds into the recorder and then says, 'single file!' ...

I joke with them and say; 'I'm gonna play that back next week!' They don't seem bothered. They want me to play it back to the class.

Hayden tells Neill to show me what he has done to his eyebrows. He has fashioned the black sticky letters into a pair of funny looking eyebrows. Then the others tell him to show me, he gets shy and self-conscious and won't show me.

Lisa, Holly and Karen show off the letters on their forehead to me. I laugh at them. Cian asks me; 'Caitriona, are we going to listen to this next week?' I tell him it might be difficult to hear as everyone is so noisy, but that we'll try if he likes.

Lisa - 'Hello, this is Lisa',

Holly - 'David has weird stuff on his eyebrows. Molly has lots of M's and Jewels all over her face'.

Kelly asks; 'Emer will they come off?' and she looks slightly worried, in case they don't.

The kids are messing into the recorder again.

Molly asks me; 'Is this recording?'... she then says into the recorder 'Molly the reporter is back'...

They all shout 'Bye!!!' into the recorder when they see me coming over to their table.

Fiona rings her bell (she keeps this on her desk and rings it to call order to the class and to get their attention). She says 'OK', she calls out the names of the kids that are messing about and out of their groups. Fiona uses threats of more class work to get the class to be quiet; I notice they start to quieten down after she says this.

[5] – Sample of group interview questions

My questions varied between interviews; depending upon children's responses, I tried to go with what they told me and tailored my sequence and type of questioning accordingly.

1. What are your hobbies? [I opened each interview with some small talk to put the children at ease]
2. What is a citizen? Are children citizens too?
3. If you were on holiday in another country; what would you be called?
4. What do good citizens do; Can you give an example of a good citizen?
5. What is the difference between children and adult citizens?
6. What can children do; can children do things that adults cannot do?
7. What makes a good friend?
8. When you have a bad day, what do you do to make yourself feel better?
9. Do you feel asking you questions about you and citizenship is worthwhile? Why? / Why not?
10. What do you most like doing in school?
11. Do you think it's important that you can have a say at school?
12. Do you think you can make a difference at school?
13. How do you feel when you make decisions at school?
14. Do you think children should have more responsibility at home/at school?
15. If you could change something in school what would that be?
16. Do you think you should be able to vote in the election? Why / Why not?
17. If I had a magic wand and I told you that with a wave of this wand you could do something for the rest of the children living in Ireland? What would that be? Why?

A Letter to Myself

Hi I'm [redacted] from 2016. My best friend is [redacted]. My favourite type of cake is chocolate biscuit cake and my favourite ice-cream is Ben and Jerry's Cookie dough ice-cream! It's the Best! I love playing Carnegie, I got a kit which had a skirt, socks, a jersey, a jumper which had E.R. on it and a bag which had so much space and also says E.R. on it. I hate school the only thing I like about it is the hurling and yard games. I love bonfire pie and Strawberry cheese cake.

Bucket List

- bunni jump
- roller coaster with 3 loops in a row
- Sky dive
- Shout out "anger issues" in the movies when a monster is destroying everything
- Take a selfie in the middle of class and put it on insta

[7] - Parent /guardian's consent form

Title of study: 'The Citizen Child at School: Mediating 21st Century Children's Citizenship Rights in Ireland'

Please sign this form if you are happy to confirm that;

- you have read and understood the information sheet attached about this research and what your child's participation will involve;
- you have been given a copy of this information sheet to keep;
- you have been given a copy of the questions which will be asked during the focus groups;
- you consent to your child's contribution to participant observations in their class;
- you consent to your child volunteering (if they wish) to participate in focus groups and a group interview which will be held in their school with another adult present;
- you consent to your child taking part in an art project in class / focus group;
- you consent to the audio recording of the focus groups.
- you understand that a summary of research findings can be provided upon request, but that only the researcher will have access to your child's interview transcripts.

If during your child's participation in this research you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact Maynooth University Ethics Committee at: research.ethics@nuim.ie or call 01-7086019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances Maynooth University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

Signature _____
(Parent/Guardian)

_____ **Print Name**

_____ **Date**

[8] – Information sheet (Assent form) given to children prior to research

Hi there!

My name is Caitríona. I will be visiting your school. I would like to talk to you about your school, your friends and your family and about your neighbourhood.

I would like to chat with you because I'm sure that you'll have really interesting things to say. I would like to hear all about what you have to say.

You can let me know if you'd like to take part in an art project or a group chat. Or, if you want, you can tell your teacher or a grown-up who lives with you at home instead.

If you change your mind you can drop out of the art project or group chat whenever you want, no one will mind.

I won't tell anyone else what we talk about at your school, unless I think you might not be safe.

Please put an 'X' on the face that shows how you feel about this.

Thanks!



[9] - Parent/guardian information sheet

[This information is available in your preferred language upon request]

TITLE OF STUDY ‘The Citizen Child at School: Mediating 21st Century Children’s Citizenship Rights in Ireland’

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Caitríona Fitzgerald. I am a 2nd year PhD candidate with the Department of Sociology in Maynooth University. I am researching children’s ideas and opinions about citizenship, their community and the wider world. I also aim to find out more about what children think about their role in society and about how they make sense of the world around them.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD’S VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

This study will involve **participant observations** and **focus groups**. These are ways of collecting information from research participants. I will conduct **participant observations** which will involve me (the researcher) looking at how the children go about their daily routine in class. I will record information about my observations in a notepad and keep this in a secure place. I will not influence the children’s behaviours; my role is to just observe and to blend into the background.

The **focus groups** are all about getting small groups together to discuss a common topic through answering direct questions about the topic. Children can also show how they understand the topic creatively through art. The focus groups will be audio recorded. In a focus group, the researcher leads the group and asks questions. This is not the case with participant observations where the researcher just observes. I will only have focus groups with children who volunteer to take part.

BENEFITS

This is an important piece of research as it has the potential to improve how future education and curriculum policy is developed and your child’s participation will contribute to this.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Please note, there are limits of confidentiality in terms of the mandatory reporting of child welfare concerns. However, no reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link your child to this study. All identifications will be retained in a secure location for a minimum of 10 years. All data will be anonymised and stored in a secure location for a minimum of 10 years from publication. This is in compliance with Maynooth University's Research Integrity Policy. I may reuse some of the data from this research in another research study. However, I will need your re-consent before I can do this.

[Parent's/Guardian's Information Sheet Continued]

YOUR CHILD'S RIGHTS

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. She/he and you as their parent/guardian have the right to withdraw them from the research at any time. Your child's contributions can be removed up until the publication of the research. Your child also has the right to be informed about child support agencies. They will be given information about *Childline* in class before this research begins

YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY

I have been Garda vetted and my research has received ethical approval from Maynooth University. If you have any questions please contact me at: caitriona.fitzgerald.2013@mumail.ie or my PhD Supervisors at: pauline.cullen@nuim.ie and rebecca.king-oriain@nuim.ie

If during your child's participation in this research you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact Maynooth University Ethics Committee at: research.ethics@nuim.ie or call 01-7086019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances Maynooth University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

[10] - School information sheet

TITLE OF STUDY ‘The Citizen Child at School: Mediating 21st Century Children’s Citizenship Rights in Ireland’

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Caitríona Fitzgerald. I am a 2nd year PhD candidate with the Department of Sociology in Maynooth University. I am researching children’s ideas and opinions about citizenship, their community and the wider world. This research also aims to find out more about what children think about their role in society and about how they make sense of the world around them.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

My research aims to answer a **key question**: *What do children think about citizenship?* The **rationale** for this research is to explore how primary school children understand, experience and enact citizenship in the classroom. This study will be primarily informed by the subjective experiences of 9 to 11-year-old primary school children in Ireland. I aim to do this through participant observations in the classroom and focus groups with children who volunteer to take part. The **core aims, and objectives** of my research are to identify and explore how primary school children understand notions of citizenship, and to explore how they understand their role in society. This research will also explore children’s experiences of democratic practices in relation to how they develop ideas about themselves, their culture and community, and the wider world.

BENEFITS

This research has the potential to improve how future education and curriculum policy is developed in Ireland and your schools’ participation will contribute to this.

CONFIDENTIALITY

No reference will be made in oral or written reports, which could link your school to this study. All identifications will be made anonymous and all data connected to this study will remain confidential within the limits of confidentiality and the mandatory reporting of child welfare concerns. All data collected will be anonymised and stored in a secure location for a maximum of 10 years.

YOUR SCHOOL’S RIGHTS

Your school’s participation in this study is voluntary. Your school has the right to withdraw them from the research at any time. Your school’s contributions can be removed up until the publication of the research.

[School Information Sheet Continued]

SAFETY

I have been Garda vetted and my research has received ethical approval from Maynooth University. If you have any questions please contact me at: caitriona.fitzgerald.2013@mumail.ie or my PhD Supervisors at: pauline.cullen@nuim.ie and rebecca.king-oriain@nuim.ie.

If during your school's participation in this research you feel the information and guidelines that you were given have been neglected or disregarded in any way, or if you are unhappy about the process, please contact Maynooth University Ethics Committee at: research.ethics@nuim.ie or call 01-7086019. Please be assured that your concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

It must be recognised that, in some circumstances, confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In such circumstances Maynooth University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.

[11] – Excerpt, fieldnotes, St. Finbarr’s

I was playing ‘hot potato’ with Kelly, Molly, Janine, and Tina during lunch break today. The ball we were tossing to each other went astray and brushed against a younger, smaller girl who was watching our game from the side-lines. She started to cry, Janine said; ‘She’s OK, it barely hit her!’ and we continued with the game. Even though I also could clearly see the girl was not genuinely injured, I nevertheless felt constrained by my ‘least adult’ position and I did not leave the game and go over to comfort her. My inaction posed a moral dilemma for me as I was the only adult around who could have offered the child comfort. My inaction was also noted by Molly, and I noticed her biting her lip when I retrieved the ball to continue the game without stopping to comfort the crying child. Molly had noted that I was not fulfilling my adult role and her body language suggested that she was somewhat uncomfortable by this too. I felt uncomfortable about this and I was concerned that this child would think that I was not nice and did not really care about children.

Who are good citizens in these pictures?

The worksheet contains the following images:

- Top-left: A cartoon illustration of an older man with a cane and a younger man.
- Top-middle: A photograph of a classroom with several students at desks.
- Top-right: A photograph of a group of children working together with a large net.
- Middle-left: A photograph of a young girl with a pencil in her mouth.
- Center: A large oval logo with two hands holding each other and the word "CITIZENSHIP" written below.
- Middle-right: A photograph of a boy in a classroom, possibly a teacher or older student, interacting with a student.
- Bottom-left: A photograph of a boy combing a girl's hair.
- Bottom-middle: A photograph of a group of children holding hands in a circle.
- Bottom-right: A photograph of a girl splashing water.



Children

Can Have Are

do what they stuff Terrific

want, eat phone's nice

and do some money! -cool
thing dst



Good Citizens



Can

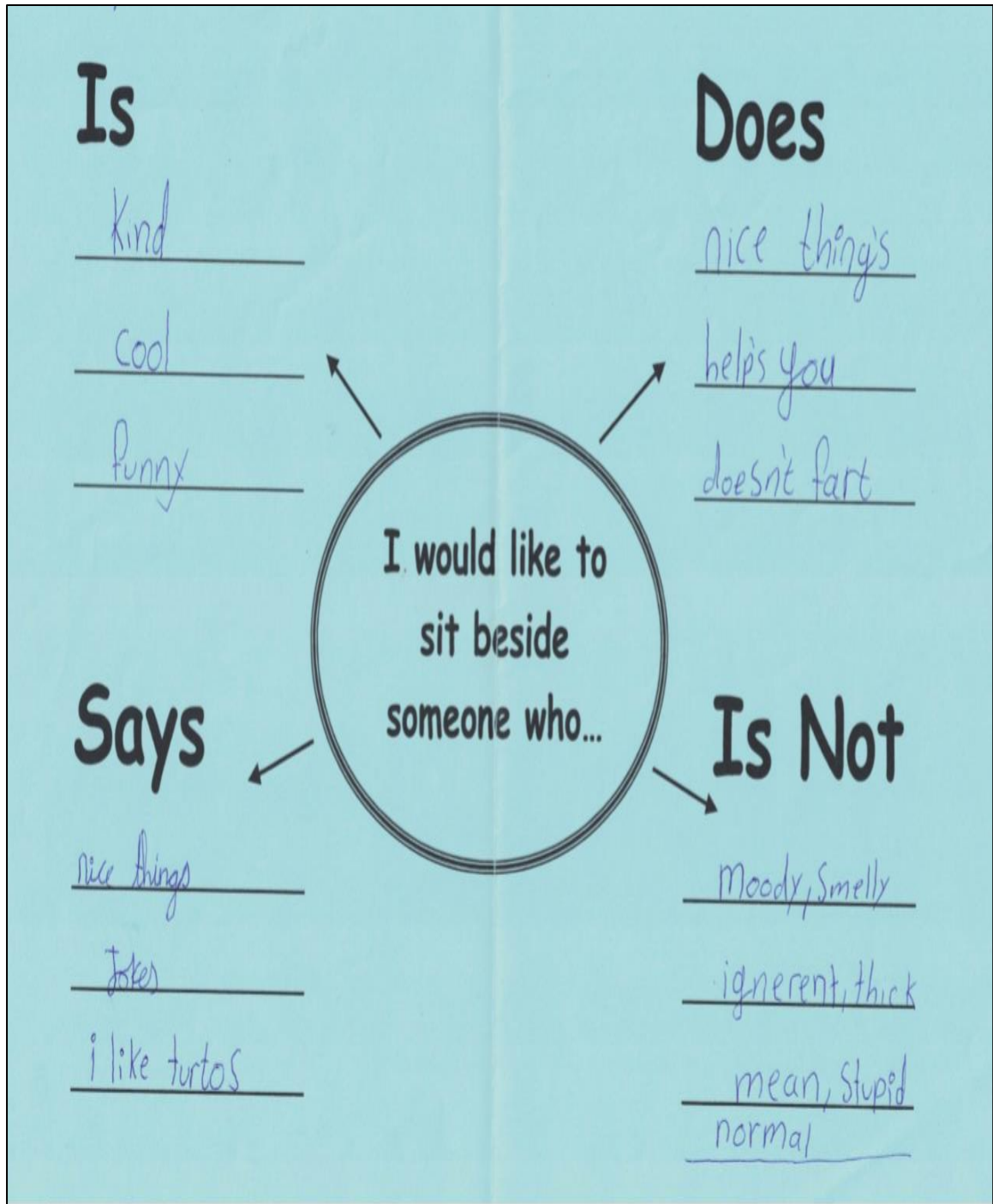
Have

Are

have friends *no enemies* *people*


_____ *a car* _____

_____ *a life* _____



[16] - Worksheet 5 - Copy of child's 'Reflection Time' sheet used as part of a group work session

Reflection Time



1. What I learned in class today

I learnt the rights children have

2. How I felt during the lesson

Fine

4. What I felt strongly about

Nothing

3. How well did I listen and was I listened to by others?

I listen to everyone and I was listened by others

5. What I could do to change things (either by myself or with others)

Help and Play with others

These questions have been adapted from the Reflection Sheet used in the Changing Perspectives resource for Civic, Social and Personal Education, 2002. Written and edited by Mary Gannon, (2002) CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit and NCCRI.

These questions have been adapted from the Reflection Sheet used in the Changing Perspectives resource for Civic, Social and Personal Education written by Mary Gannon (2002) CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit and NCCRI.

[17] - Outline of key ideas and outcomes for Civic Republicanism, Liberal, 'Critical'/Feminist and Cosmopolitan constructs of citizenship

	Core Ideas	Social Action Based Upon	Social Outcomes
Civic Republican	Civic participation and duty supersede individual rights.	Common good and solidarity through citizens' application and knowledge of their 'civic competencies'.	Creates sharp lines of inclusion and exclusion in expressions of political membership (Abowitz and Harnish 2006).
Liberal	Individual rights supersede social duties and participation. Citizenship construed as a possibility (Osler and Starkey 2005).	Citizens are free to pursue their own private needs and interests with little state interference.	Less relative social agreement on values, chosen identities, and forms of democratic participation. Produces tensions between individual civil rights and social rights.
'Critical'/Feminist	Social Justice and equality for all.	Reduce societal inequalities and seek justice through membership of collective movements	Social movements agitate citizens to challenge oppression, injustice and inequality.
Cosmopolitanism	Global citizenship is a multi-layered status that extends beyond nation-state boundaries.	Citizens are encouraged to contest 'the traditional citizenship template of cultural homogeneity' (Lister 2003: 51).	Citizenship identities and practices transgress the nation state. Tensions - supranational nation state identities and borders.

[18] - Gender breakdown of Focus group and group-interview participants

Child No.	Gender	Data collection method	Approx. duration	Case Study
1	Boy	Focus Group 1	45 mins	St. Finbarr's National School (Catholic Patronage)
2	Girl			
3	Boy			
4	Girl			
5	Girl			
6	Boy			
7	Girl			
8	Girl			
9	Boy			
10	Boy	Focus Group 2	45 mins	
11	Girl			
12	Boy			
13	Girl			
14	Boy			
15	Boy			
16	Girl			
17	Boy			
18	Boy			
19	Boy			
20	Girl	Focus Group 3	45 mins	
21	Girl			
22	Girl			
23	Girl			
24	Girl			
25	Boy			
26	Girl			
27	Boy			
28	Girl			
Child Number	Gender	Data collection method	Duration Approx.	Case Study
29	Boy	Group Interview 1	30mins	Oakfields MD Multidenominational school (Patronage Committee)
30	Boy			
31	Boy			
32	Girl	Group Interview 2	30mins	
33	Girl			
34	Boy			
35	Girl	Group Interview 3	30mins	
36	Boy			
37	Girl			
38	Girl			
39	Girl	Group Interview 4	30mins	
40	Girl			
41	Girl			

42	Girl	Group Interview 5	30mins	
43	Girl			
44	Girl			
45	Boy	Group Interview	30mins	
46	Girl			
47	Girl			
48	Boy	Group Interview 6	30mins	
49	Girl			
50	Girl			
51	Girl	Group Interview 7	30mins	
52	Girl			
53	Boy			
54	Boy	Group Interview 8	30mins	
55	Boy			
56	Boy			
Child Number	Gender	Data collection method	Duration Approx.	Case Study
57	Boy	Group Interview 1	30mins	Mary Immaculate
58	Boy			
59	Girl			National School (Catholic Patronage)
60	Girl	Group Interview 2	30mins	
61	Boy			
62	Boy			
63	Boy	Group Interview 3	30mins	
64	Boy			
65	Girl			
66	Boy	Group Interview 4	30mins	
67	Boy			
68	Girl			
69	Girl	Group Interview 5	30mins	
70	Girl			
71	Boy			
72	Boy			
73	Boy	Group Interview 6	30mins	
74	Girl			
75	Boy			
76	Girl	Group Interview 7	30mins	
77	Girl			
78	Girl			
79	Girl			
80	Girl			
81	Girl	Group Interview 8	30mins	
82	Girl			
83	Girl			
84	Girl			
85	Girl	Group Interview 9	30mins	
86	Girl			

87	Girl			
88	Girl			
89	Boy	Group Interview 10	30mins	
90	Boy			
91	Boy			
92	Boy	Group Interview 11	30mins	
93	Boy			
94	Boy			
95	Boy	Group Interview 12	30mins	
96	Boy			
97	Boy			
Child Number	Gender	Data collection method	Duration Approx.	Case Study
98	Boy	Group Interview 1	30 mins	Hillcrest ET
99	Boy			
100	Boy			
101	Girl	Group Interview 2	30 mins	Educate Together School (Patronage Educate Together)
102	Girl			
103	Boy			
104	Boy	Group Interview 3	30 mins	
105	Boy			
106	Boy			
107	Girl	Group Interview 4	30 mins	
108	Girl			
109	Girl			
110	Girl	Group Interview 5	30 mins	
111	Girl			
112	Girl			
113	Girl	Group Interview 6	30 mins	
114	Girl			
115	Girl			

* I did not conduct focus groups/ group-interviews with children from St. Assumpta and St. Josephs.

Bibliography

- Ainley, John, Wolfram Schulz and Tim Friedman, eds. 2013. *ICCS 2009 Encyclopedia Approaches to civic and citizenship education around the world*. The Netherlands: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.
- Alanen, Leena and Berry Mayall. 2001. *Conceptualizing Child-Adult Relations*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Aldenmyr, Irisdotter, Sara, Ulrika Jepson Wigg and Maria Olson. 2012. 'Worries and possibilities in active citizenship: Three Swedish educational contexts'. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*. 7(3):255 – 270.
- Alder, Patricia, A., and Peter Alder. 1998. *Peer Power Preadolescent Culture and Identity*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press.
- Alderson, Priscilla and Virginia Morrow. 2011. *The Ethics of Research with Children and Young People A Practical Handbook*. London and Los Angeles: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Arensmeier, Cecilia. 2010. 'The democratic common sense – Young Swede's understanding of democracy – theoretical features and educational incentives'. *Young Nordic Journal of Youth Research*. 18(2): 197-222.
- Ariès, Philippe. 1962. *Centuries of Childhood*. trans. Robert Baldick. New York: Random House.
- Árnadóttir Hervör Alma and Guðrún Kristinsdóttir. 2016. 'Gatekeepers and Children's participation in research'. Conference Paper presented at *Children and Young People in a Changing World*. Hope University, Liverpool.
- Annot, Madeleine. 2009. *Educating the Gendered Citizen – Sociological Engagements With National and Global Agendas*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Arthur, James, Ian Davies and Carole Hahn eds. 2008. *The Sage Handbook of Education For Citizenship and Democracy*. London, California, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Abowitz K., Kathleen and Jason Harnish. 2006. 'Contemporary Discourses of Citizenship' *American Educational Research Association*. 76 (4):653-690. Retrieved October 13, 2014 (<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4124417>).
- Austin, Sara, L. 2010. 'Children's participation in citizenship and governance'. Pp 246-253 in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation Perspectives from Theory and Practice*, edited by B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas. London and New York: Routledge.
- Baker, John, Kathleen Lynch, Sara Cantillon and Judy Walsh. 2006. 'Equality: Putting the Theory into Action'. *Res Publica*. 12. 411–433.
- Baker, John, Kathleen Lynch, Sara Cantillon and Judy Walsh 2009. *Equality: from theory to action*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Banks, James, A. and Cherry, A. McGee, Banks. eds. 2010. *Multicultural Education, Issues and Perspectives*. 7th ed. USA: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Banks, James. A. 2008. 'Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age' *Educational Researcher*. 37(3) :129-139.
- Barnes, Cliona. 2012. 'It's no laughing matter... boy's humour and the performance of defensive masculinities in the classroom' *Journal of Gender Studies*. 21 (3):239 – 251.
- Bath, Caroline. 2013. 'Conceptualising Listening to Young Children as an Ethic of Care in Early Childhood Education and Care' *Children and Society*. 27: 361-371.
- Bath, Caroline and Rauni Karlsson. 2016. 'The ignored citizen: Young children's subjectivities in Swedish and English early childhood education settings'. *Childhood*. 11 (1) :1 – 12.
- Ben-Arieh, Asher. 2005. 'Citizenship and Childhood the state of affairs in Israel'. *Sage Publications*. 12(1) :33-53.
- Ben-Arieh, Asher. 2005.'Where are all the children? Children's role in measuring and monitoring their well-being'. *Social Indicators Research*. 74(3) :573-595.
- Bernard-Powers, Jane. 2008. 'Feminism and Gender in Education for Citizenship and Democracy'. Pp 314-328 in *The Sage Handbook of Education For Citizenship and Democracy* edited by J. Arthur, I. Davies and C. Hahn. London, California, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Bessant, Judith, Rys Farthing, and Rob Watts. 2015. 'Co-designing a civics curriculum: young people, democratic deficit and political renewal in the EU'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. pp.1-19.
- Bhana, Deevia and Emmanuel Mayeza. 2016. 'We don't play with gays, they're not real boys ... they can't fight. Hegemonic masculinity and (homophobic) violence in the primary years of schooling'. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 51:36 – 42.
- Bianchi, Suzanne M. 2011. 'Family Change and Time Allocation in American Families.' *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 638 :21- 44.
- Bjerke, Havard. 2011. "'It's the way they do it": Expressions of Agency in Child-Adult Relations at Home and School'. *Children and Society*. 25: 93-103.
- Blakemore, Owen, Judith. E., Sheri A. Berenbaum and Lynn S. Liben. 2009. *Gender Development*. New York and London: Psychology Press.
- Bogdan, Robert, C and Sari Knopp Biklen. 2003. *Qualitative Research for Education An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. 4th ed. New York: Pearson Education Group.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1986. 'Forms of Capital'. Pp 46-58 in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* edited by John. G. Richardson. Westport CT: Greenwood Press.

- Brooks, Rachel and John A.K. Holford. 2009. 'Citizenship, learning and education: themes and issues' *Citizenship Studies*. 13 (5) :85-103.
- Bronfenbrenner, Urie. 1979. *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiment by Nature and Design*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, Urie and Pamela A. Morris. 2006. 'The Bioecological model of human development'. Pp 793-828 in *Handbook of Child Psychology, Volume 1, Theoretical Models of Human Development*. 6th Ed. edited by W. Damon and R.M. Lerner Hoboken N.J: Wiley.
- Brown, Babette. 1998. *Unlearning Discrimination in the Early Years*. Staffordshire: Trentham Books Limited.
- Bryne, Delma. 2016. 'Determinants and Effects of School Age Childcare on Children's Cognitive and Socio-Emotional Outcomes at Age 13'. *The Economic and Social Review*. 47(4): pp. 543-575.
- Caluya, Gilbert. 2010. 'The post-panoptic society? Reassessing Foucault in surveillance studies'. *Social Identities*. 16 (5): 621 – 633.
- Carr, Wilfred and Anthony Hartnet.1996. *Education and the struggle for democracy. The politics of educational ideas*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Central Statistics Office. 2018. *Men and Women in Ireland 2016 Education*. Retrieved February 25, 2018 (<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2016/education/>).
- Cekaite, Asta, Shoshana Blum-Kulka, Vibeke Grøver, and Eva Teubal. eds. 2014. *Children's Peer Talk: Learning from Each Other*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit. 2012. *Tackling Controversial Issues in the Citizenship Education Classroom: A Resource for Citizenship Education*.
- Chambers School Dictionary*. 1990. Edinburgh: W & R Chambers Ltd.
- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Christensen, Pia and Allison James. Eds. 2008. *Research with Children, Perspectives and Practices*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Cockburn, Tom. 2010. 'Children and deliberative democracy in England'. Pp 306-317 in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation Perspectives from Theory and Practice* edited by B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas. London and New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, Elizabeth. 2005. 'Neither Seen nor Heard: Children's Citizenship in Contemporary Democracies'. *Citizenship Studies*. 9 (2) :221 - 240.
- Collin, Philippa. 2015. *Young citizens and political participation in a digital society: addressing the democratic disconnect (studies in childhood and youth)*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

- Collins, Bernie. 2013a. 'Empowering children through circle time: an illumination of practice'. *Education Doctorate*. Faculty of Social Sciences National University of Ireland Maynooth.
- Collins, Bernie. 2013b. 'Empowerment of children through circle time: myth or reality?' *Irish Educational Studies*. 32 (4) :421-436.
- Cook, Andrea, Carolyn Whitzman and Paul Tranter. 2015. 'Is "Citizen Kid" an Independent Kid? The Relationship between Children's Independent Mobility and Active Citizenship'. *Journal of Urban Design*. 20(4) :526 – 544.
- Cook, Daniel. 2004. *The Commodification of Childhood*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Coolahan, John.1981. *Irish Education history and structure*. Dublin: Institute of Dublin Administration.
- Coolahan, J., C. Hussey and F. Kilfeather. 2012. *The Forum on Patronage and Pluralism in the Primary School. Report of the Forum's Advisory Group*. Dublin: Department of Education and Skills.
- Connell, R., W. 1995. *Masculinities*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Connell, Raewyn. 2012. Viewpoint: Just education. *Journal of Education Policy*. 27(5): 681-683.
- Connell, Raewyn. 2013. 'The neoliberal cascade and education: an essay on the market agenda and its consequences'. *Critical Studies in Education*. 54(2): 99 -112.
- Considine, Mairead and Fiona Dukelow. 2009. *Irish Social Policy: A Critical Introduction*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.
- Corsaro, William., A. 1987. 'Friendships and peer culture in the early years'. *American Journal of Play*. 4(4) :488 – 504.
- Corsaro, William., A. and Donna Eder. 1990. 'Children's Peer Cultures'. *Annual Review Sociology*. 16: 197 – 220.
- Corsaro, William., A. 1992. 'Interpretive Reproduction in Children's Peer Cultures'. *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 55 (2): 160 – 177.
- Corsaro, William., A. 2000. 'Early childhood education, children's peer cultures, and the future of childhood'. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*. 8 (2) :89 – 102.
- Corsaro, William., A. and Hilary Aydt. 2003. 'Differences in Children's Construction of Gender Across Culture: An Interpretive Approach'. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 46(10):1306-1325.
- Corsaro, William., A. 2006. *The Sociology of Childhood*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.
- Corsaro William., A. 2009. Pp 301-315 in *The Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies* edited by J. Qvortrup, W.A. Corsaro and M. S. Honig. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Cosgrove, Jude and Lorraine Gilleece. 2012. 'An international perspective on civic participation in Irish post-primary schools: Results from ICCS'. *Irish Educational Studies*. 31(4) :377-395.

Cosgrove, Jude and Lorraine Gilleece. 2012. 'Student civic participation in school: What makes a difference in Ireland?'. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*. 7(3) :225-239.

Crick, Bernard. 1998. *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools: final report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship*. London: Qualifications Curriculum Authority.

Croll, Paul. 1986. *Systematic Classroom Observation*. London and Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.

Curriculum Committee for Social, Personal and Health Education, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, & Ireland Department of Education and Science. 1999. *Social, personal and health education: Teacher guidelines*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Curtin, Clare. 2000. 'Eliciting children's voices in qualitative research'. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 55(3): 295-302.

Davies, Ian, Vanita Sundaram, Gillian Hampden-Thompson, Maria Tsouroufli, George Bramley, Tony Breslin and Tony Thorpe. 2014. *Creating Citizenship Communities Education, young people and the role of schools*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

de Róiste, Aingeal, Colette Kelly, Michal Molcho, Aoife Gavin and Saoirse Nic Gabhainn. 2012. 'Is school participation good for children? Associations with health and wellbeing'. *Health Education*. 112(2): 88 - 104.

Deegan, Jim, Dympna Devine and Anne Lodge. Eds. 2004. *Primary Voices Equality, Diversity and Childhood in Irish Primary Schools*. Dublin: IPA.

Delamont, Sara. 2nd ed. 2002. *Fieldwork in Educational Settings Methods, pitfalls and perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2012a. *Growing up in Ireland – Influences on 9-Year-Old's Learning: Home, School and Community*. Retrieved December 20, 2014 (http://www.growingup.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Second_Child_Cohort_Reports/Growing_Up_in_Ireland_-_Influences_on_9-Year-Olds_Learning.pdf).

Department of Education and Skills. 2015. *Blue Star Programme*. Retrieved March 31, 2015(<http://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/Blue-Star-Programme.html>).

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2012b. *The State of the Nation's Children in Ireland*. Retrieved December 20, 2014 (<http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/research/StateoftheNationsChildren2012.pdf>).

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2012c. *Life as a Child and Young Person in Ireland*. Retrieved October 10, 2015 (http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/childyouthparticipation/life_a_child_in_ireland/Life-as-a-child-in-ireland.pdf).

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2013. 'Young Voices: Have Your Say'. *Department of Children and Youth Affairs*. Available at (www.dcyia.ie).

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2009. *Growing up in Ireland - The lives of 9-Year-Olds Child Cohort*. Retrieved December 20, 2014 ([http://www.growingup.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/1st_Report/Barcode_Growing_Up_in_Ireland - The Lives of 9-Year-Olds Exec Summary.pdf](http://www.growingup.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/1st_Report/Barcode_Growing_Up_in_Ireland_-_The_Lives_of_9-Year-Olds_Exec_Summary.pdf)).

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2011. *Growing up in Ireland - The lives of 9-Year-Olds Child Cohort Qualitative Study*. Retrieved February 6, 2018 (<http://www.esri.ie/growing-up-in-ireland/growing-up-in-ireland-official-publications-from-the-child-cohort/>)

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2015b. *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2105 - 2020*. Retrieved October 10, 2015 (www.dcyia.gov.ie).

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2014a. *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: The national policy framework for children & young people 2014 – 2020*. Retrieved December 20, 2015 (http://www.dcyia.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf).

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2015. *Young people's views on having their voices heard: Report of the workshop discussions at the Comhairle na nÓg Showcase 2014*. Retrieved November 7, 2015 (www.dcyia.gov.ie).

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. 2015c. *A report on the involvement of children and young people in the recruitment of the Ombudsman for Children*. Retrieved November 7, 2015. (www.dcyia.gov.ie).

Department of Education and Science. 1999. *Primary School Curriculum: SPHE Teacher Guidelines*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science. 1999. *Primary School Curriculum*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Science. 2009. *Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) in the Primary School. Inspectorate Evaluation Studies*. Retrieved September 26, 2015 (http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports/Publications/Evaluation-Reports/Guidelines/insp_sphe_in_the_primary_school_09_pdf.pdf).

Department of Education and Skills. 2015. *Diversity of Patronage*. Retrieved December 14, 2015 (<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Diversity-of-Patronage/Diversity-of-Patronage-Survey-of-Parents.html>).

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2018. *Passport Statistics*. Retrieved May 9, 2018 (<https://www.dfa.ie/passporttracking/passportstatistics/>).

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 2018. *Annual Totals 2007/2016 - Passports issued by Passport Types*. Retrieved May 9, 2018 (<https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/alldfawebsitemedia/passportcitizenship/statistics/Annual-Totals---by-Passport-Types.xml>).

- Devine, Dympna. 1999. 'Children: Rights and Status in Education – a socio historical Perspective'. *Irish Educational Studies*. 18 :14-29.
- Devine, Dympna. 2002a. 'Children's Citizenship and the Structuring of Adult-child Relations in the Primary School'. *Childhood*. 9 (3): 303-320.
- Devine, Dympna. 2004. 'School matters – listening to what children have to say'. Pp 109 – 127 in *Primary Voices Equality, Diversity and Childhood in Irish Primary Schools* edited by J. Deegan, D. Devine and A. Lodge. Dublin: IPA.
- Devine, Dympna. 2003. *Children, Power and Schooling – How Childhood is Structured in School*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.
- Devine, Dympna. 2008. 'Children at the Margins? Changing Constructions of Childhood in Contemporary Ireland'. Pp 82-104 in *European Childhoods, Cultures, Politics and Childhoods in Europe* edited by A. James and A. L. James. UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Devine, Dympna. 2009. 'Dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in children's social world in school'. Pp 57-72 in *Education in Ireland: Challenge and Change* edited by S. Drudy. Gill and Macmillan: Dublin.
- Devine, Dympna, Fahie, Declan and Deirdre, McGillicuddy. 2013. 'What is 'good' teaching? Teacher beliefs and practices about their teaching'. *Irish Educational Studies*. 32 (1) :83-108.
- Devine, Dympna and Tom Cockburn. 2018. 'Theorizing children's social citizenship: New welfare states and inter-generational justice'. *Childhood*. 25(2): 142 –157.
- Dewey, John. 1963. *Democracy and Education*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Dewey, John. 1990. *The school and society; and, the child and the curriculum*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.
- Di Masi, Diego and Marina Santi. 2015. 'Learning democratic thinking: a curriculum to philosophy for children as citizens'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. Pp1-15. Retrieved February 1, 2016 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2015.1088064>).
- Doek, Jaap, E. 2008. 'Citizen Child: A Struggle for Recognition'. Pp. xii – xvi in *Children and Citizenship*, edited by Antonella Invernizzi and Jane Williams. London and California: Sage.
- Donnelly, Katherine. 2016. 'Varadkar and Bruton at odds over non-religious ethos for primary school'. *The Irish Independent*, June 18. Retrieved July 4, 2016 (<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/varadkar-and-bruton-at-odds-over-nonreligious-ethos-for-primary-schools-34812089.html>).
- Drakeford, Mark, Jonathan Scourfield, Sally Holland and Andrew Davies. 2009. 'Welsh Children's Views on Government and Participation'. *Childhood*. 16(2) :247-264.
- Drudy, Sheelagh. Ed. 2009. *Education in Ireland: Challenge and Change*. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd.

Drudy, Sheelagh. 2009. 'Education and the knowledge economy: A challenge for Ireland in changing times'. Pp 35-53 in *Education in Ireland: Challenge and Change* edited by S. Drudy. Gill and Macmillan: Dublin.

Drudy, Sheelagh and Kathleen Lynch. 1993. *Schools and Society in Ireland*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

Dunn, Jill. 2015. 'Insiders' perspectives: a children's rights approach to involving children in advising on adult-initiated research'. *International Journal of Early Years Education*. 23(4):394-408.

Durkheim, Émile. 1961. *Moral education: a study in the theory and application of the sociology of education*. New York: Free Press.

Emond, Ruth. 2005. 'Ethnographic Research Methods with Children and Young People'. Pp 123-156 in *Researching Children's Experiences*, edited by Shelia Green and Diane Hogan. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Educate Together. 2014. *About Us*. Retrieved November 21, 2014 (<http://www.educatetogether.ie/about/what-is-educate-together>).

Educate Together. 2014. 'School Patronage Reconfiguration FAQs'. *Educate Together Blog*. September 24. Retrieved July 12, 2016 (<https://www.educatetogether.ie/blog/reassignment-faqs>).

Einarsdottir, Johanna. 2013. 'Children's experiences of the first year of primary school'. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*. 18(2):163-180.

Einarsdottir, Johanna, Anna-Maija Purola, Eva Marianne Johansson, Stig Broström and Anette Emilson. 2015. 'Democracy, caring and competence: values perspectives in ECEC curricula in the Nordic countries'. *International Journal of Early Years Education*. 23(1): 97-114.

Englund, Tomas. 2016. 'On moral education through deliberative communication'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 48(1): 1 – 19.

Englund, Tomas. 1994. 'Education as a citizenship right – a concept in transition: Sweden related to other Western democracies and political philosophy'. *Journal Curriculum Studies*. 26(4):383-399.

Englund, Tomas, Ann Quennerstedt, and Ninni Wahlström. 2009. 'Education as a Human and Citizenship Right – Parent's Rights, Children's Rights, or ...? The Necessity of Historical Contextualization'. *Journal of Human Rights*. 8 :133-138.

Erickson, Rebecca. 2005. 'Why Emotion Work Matters: Sex, Gender, and the Division of Household Labor'. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 67: 337–351.

Eurydice. 2012. *Citizenship Education in Europe*. Retrieved January 10, 2014 (<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/citizenship-education-in-europe-pbEC3112690/?CatalogCategoryID=QN4KABste0YAAAEjFZEY4e5L>).

Faas, Daniel and Wendy Ross. 2012. 'Identity, diversity and citizenship: A critical analysis of textbooks and curricula in Irish schools' *International Sociology*. 27(4) :574–591.

- Fleming, Jennie. 2013. 'Young People's Participation – Where Next?'. *Children and Society*. 27:484-495.
- Frønes, Ivar. 2009. Pp 273 - 286 in *The Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies* edited by J. Qvortrup, W. A. Corsaro and M. S. Honig. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Fortin, Jane. 2008. 'Children as Rights Holders: Awareness and Scepticism', pp 55 – 65 in *Children and Citizenship*, edited by Antonella Invernizzi and Jane Williams, London: Sage.
- Fowler, Angela, Elizabeth Tertell, Tyler Flynn-Rambo and Jill Peterson. 2016. 'Supporting Children's Understanding and Articulation of Rights: Helping Children Find Their Voice'. *Childhood Education*. 92(3) :184-188.
- Frazer, Elizabeth. 2008. Chapter 21. Pp 282-291 in *The Sage Handbook of Education for Citizenship and Democracy*, edited by J. Arthur, I. Davies and C. Hahn. London, California and New Delhi: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Fitzgerald, Robyn, Anne Graham, Anne Smith and Nicola Taylor. 2010. 'Children's participation as a struggle over recognition: exploring the promise of dialogue'. Pp 293 – 305 in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation* edited by B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas. London and New York: Routledge.
- Frykedal, Forslund, Karin and Marcus Samuelsson. 2016. "“What's in it for Me?” A Study on Students' Accommodation or Resistance during Group Work". *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*. 60 (5):500–514.
- Garret, Dean and Heather Piper. 2011. 'Citizenship education and philosophical enquiry: Putting thinking back into practice'. *Education Citizenship and Social Justice*. 7 (1) :71-84.
- Gaynor, Niamh. 2009. 'In-Active citizenship and the depoliticization of community development in Ireland'. *Community Development Journal*. 46(1) :27-41. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gearon, Liam. 2003. *How do we learn to be good Citizens? A Professional user Review of UK Research*. London: British Research Association.
- Gearon, Liam. 2008. 'Freedom from repression: some thoughts on totalitarianism for religious, spiritual and citizenship/ human rights education'. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*. 31(1) :5-14.
- Geboers Ellen, Femke Geijsel, Wilfried Admiraal and Geert ten Dam. 2014. 'Typology of Student Citizenship'. *European Journal of Education*. 49(4): 514-528.
- Gibbs, Sara, Gillian Mann and Nicola Mathers. 2002. *Child-to-Child: A Practical Guide Empowering Children as Active Citizens*. South London: C+C Copyright Free.
- Giddens, Anthony. 2009. *Sociology* 6th ed. UK: Polity Press.
- Gilleece, Lorraine and Jude Cosgrove. 2012. 'Student civic participation in school: What makes a difference in Ireland?'. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*. 7(3) :225-239.

- Gilligan, Carol.1982. *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Gilligan, Carol and Grant Wiggins. 1987. 'The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships'. Pp 277 – 305 in *The Emergence of Morality in Young Children* edited by Jerome Kagen and Sharon Lamb. Chicago University Press: Chicago and London.
- Glaser, Barney, G.1965. 'The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis'. *Social Problems*. 12 (4): 436 – 445.
- Gleeson, Jim.2008. 'The influence of school and policy contexts on the implementation of CSPE'. Pp 74 - 95 in *Education for Citizenship and Diversity the Irish Context* edited by G. Jeffers and U. O' Connor. Dublin: Institute for Public Administration.
- Goffman, Erving. 1977. "Arrangement between the Sexes" in *Theory and Society* 4 (3): 301 – 331.
- Golombek, Silvia, Blitzer. 2006. 'Children as Citizens'. *Journal of Community Practice*. 14(1-2): 11-30.
- Granville, Gary. 2004. 'Politics and Partnership in Curriculum Planning in Ireland'. Pp 67-99 in *Curriculum and Ideology Irish Experiences International Perspectives* edited by C. Sugrue Dublin: The Liffey Valley Press.
- Green, Sheila and Diane Hogan. Editors. 2005. *Researching Children's Experiences*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Greene, Sheila. 2016. 'Changing Perceptions and Experiences of Childhood, 1916 – 2016. Pp 16 – 36 in *Cherishing All Our Children Equally? Ireland 100 Years on From the Easter Rising*, edited by J. Williams, E. Nixon, E. Smyth and D. Watson. Cork: Oak Tree Press.
- Green, Sheila and Malcom Hill. 2005.'Researching Children's Experiences Methods and Methodological Issues'. Pp 1-21 in *Researching Children's Experiences*, edited by S. Green and D. Hogan. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Gruber, Sabine and Annika Rabo. 2014. 'Multiculturalism Swedish Style: shifts and sediments in educational policies and textbooks'. *Policy Futures in Education*. 12 (1): 56-66.
- Heater, Derek. 2002. 'The History of Citizenship Education: A Comparative Outline'. *Parliamentary Affairs*. 55 :457 – 474.
- Hansen, Thomas, Blom. 2015. 'Citizenship as horizon'. *Citizenship Studies*. 19(2):229-232.
- Haste, Helen. 2010. 'Citizenship Education: A Critical Look at a Contested Field'. Pp. 161 – 188 in *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth* Sherrod edited by L.R. Torney-Purta, J. and C.A. Flanagan. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Hahn, Carol. 1998. *Becoming Political: Comparative Perspectives on Citizenship Education*. USA: Suny Press.

- Harding, Sandra. 1987. "Is there a Feminist Method?". Pp 1- 14 in *Feminism and Methodology* edited by S. Harding. Indiana and Milton Keynes: Indiana University Press and the Open University Press.
- Hart, A. 1992. *Children's Participation – From Tokenism to Citizenship*. Innocenti Essays, No. 4. Florence: Unicef.
- Haavind, Hanne, Barrie Thorne, Wendy Holloway and Eva Magnusson. 2015. "Because nobody likes Chinese girls": Intersecting identities and emotional experiences of subordination and resistance in school life'. *Childhood*. 22(3) :300 –315.
- Hill, Malcolm. 2006. 'Children's voices on ways of having a voice: Children's and young people's perspectives on methods used in research and consultation'. *Childhood*. 13(1) :69-89.
- Hill, Malcolm and Kay Tisdall. 1997. *Children and Society*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Hochschild, Arlie R. 1989. *The Second Shift*. New York, NY: Avon Books.
- Holden, Cathie. 2006. 'Concerned Citizens Children and the Future'. *Education, citizenship and social justice*. 1 (3) :231-247.
- Holmes, Mark. 2001. 'Education and Citizenship in an Age of Pluralism'. Pp 187-211. In *Making Good Citizens Education and Civil Society* edited by D. Ravitch and J.P. Virteritti. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Horgan, Deirdre. 2017. 'Child participatory research methods: Attempts to go 'deeper''. *Childhood*. Pp 1 – 15.
- Horgan, Deirdre, Catherine Forde, Aisling Parkes, and Shirley Martin. 2015a. *Children and young people's experiences of participation in decision-making at home, in schools and in their communities*. Dublin: Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Retrieved September 28, 2015 (www.dcy.gov.ie).
- Horgan, Deirdre, Catherine Forde, Aisling Parkes, and Shirley Martin. 2015b. *Research Development Initiative Research Briefing Note 3: Children and young people's experiences of participation in decision-making at home, in schools and in their communities*. Retrieved September 28, 2015 (www.dcy.gov.ie).
- Hoskins, Bryony and Béatrice D'Hombres. 2008. 'Does Formal Education Have an Impact on Active Citizenship Behaviour?'. *European Educational Research Journal* 7 (3): 386-399.
- Hoskins, Bryony. 2012. 'What Does Democracy Need From its Citizens?'. Pp .25-35 in *Civic Education and Competences for Engaging Citizens in Democracies* edited by J. Hall Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
- Hirschi, Travis. 1969. *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hyland, Áine. 1989. 'The multi-denominational experience in the national school system in Ireland' *Irish Educational Studies*. 8(1). pp.89-114.

Hyland, Aine. 2012. 'Minister Has Turned the Page on School Patronage' *The Irish Times*.
Irish Statue Book. 2013. *Constitution of Ireland*. Retrieved March 6, 2015
(<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/en/constitution/>).

Intercultural Ireland CSPE Support Services. 1999. *Exploring Cultural Values in the Community, A Module on Community & Culture for Civic, Social & Political Education*. Dublin.

Isin, F. Engine and Bryan S. Turner. 2007. 'Investigating Citizenship: An Agenda for Citizenship Studies'. *Citizenship Studies*. 11(1) :5-17.

Isin, F. Engine and Greg M. Nielson. Eds. 2008. *Acts of Citizenship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Invernizzi, Antonella and Jane Williams. Eds. 2008. *Children and Citizenship*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Jackson, C. & Bisset, M. 2005. Gender and school choice: factors influencing parents when choosing single-sex or co-educational independent schools for their children. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 35 (2): 195 – 211.

Janmaat, Germen, Jan. 2012. 'Civic Competences'. Pp 51-63 in *Civic Education and Competences for Engaging Citizens in Democracies* edited by J. Hall. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

James, Allison and Alan Prout. 1997. *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*. London: Falmer Press.

James, Allison, Chris Jenkins and Alan Prout. 1998. *Theorizing Childhood*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

James, Allison. 1993. *Childhood Identities: self and social relationships in the experience of the child*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

James, Allison and Adrian L. James. Eds. 2008. *Children as New Citizens*. UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

James, Allison. 2011. 'To Be (Come) or Not to Be (Come): Understanding Children's Citizenship'. *The Annals of the American Academy*. 633 :167-179.

Jamieson, Lynn. 2002. 'Theorising identity, nationality and citizenship: implications for European citizenship identity'. *Sociología*. 34 (6) :507-532.

Jans, Marc. 2004. Children as citizens: Towards a contemporary notion of child participation. *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research*. 11 :27-44.

Jeffers, Gerry. 2008. 'Some challenges for citizenship education in the Republic of Ireland'. Pp 11 – 23 in *Education for Citizenship and Diversity in Irish Contexts* edited by G. Jeffers and U. O' Connor. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Jeffers, Gerry. 2014. 'Lessons in Citizenship must be compulsory'. *The Sunday Times*. February 2. Retrieved November 21, 2014 (<http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/ireland/article1370787.ece>).

Jeffers, Gerry, and Una O'Connor. eds. 2008. *Education for Citizenship and Diversity in Irish Contexts*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Jerome, Lee. 2012. *England's Citizenship Education Experiment: State, School and Student Perspectives*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

John, Mary. 2003. *Children's Rights and Powers in a Changing World*. Philadelphia, PA, USA: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Johnson, Laura and Paul Morris. 2010. 'Towards a framework for critical citizenship education' *The Curriculum Journal*. 21 (1): 77-96.

Jones, Raya, A. 1995. *The Child-School Interface Environment and Behaviour*. London and New York: Cassell.

Kagen, Jerome and Sharon Lamb. Eds. 1987. *The Emergence of Morality in Young Children*. Chicago University Press: Chicago and London.

Kaukko, Mervi and Ulrika Wernesjö. 2017. 'Belonging and participation in liminality: Unaccompanied children in Finland and Sweden'. *Childhood*. 24(1): 7 –20.

Kallio, Kirsi Pauliina, Jouni Häkli and Pia Bäcklund. 2015. 'Lived citizenship as the locus of political agency in participatory policy'. *Citizenship Studies*. 19(1) :101-119.

Keating, Avril. 2009. 'Nationalizing the post-national: reframing European citizenship for the civics curriculum in Ireland'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 41(2): 159-178.

Keating, Avril. 2014. *Education for Citizenship in the European Union: European Policies, National Adaptations and Young People's Attitudes*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kelleher, Cathy, Mairead Seymour and Ann Marie Halpenny. 2014. *Promoting the Participation of Seldom Heard Young People: A Review of the Literature on Best Practice Principles*. Dublin: Centre for Social and Educational Research, D.I.T.

Keogh, Anna, Fiona and Jean Whyte. 2005. *Second Level School Councils in Ireland: A Study of Enablers, Barriers and Supports*. Dublin: National Children's Office.

Keogh, Anna, Fiona and Jean Whyte. 2008. *What is Smart? An In-depth study of children's concepts of intelligence*. Trinity College Dublin: Children's Research Centre.

Keohan, Kieran. 2008. 'Moral Education and Cosmopolitanism Meeting Kant and Durkheim in Joyce' *Journal of Classical Sociology*. 8(2): 262–282.

Kerr, David. 1999. *Citizenship Education: an international comparison*. UK: National Foundation for Educational Research.

Kerr, David, Eleanor Ireland, Joana Lopes, Rachel Craig with Elizabeth Cleaver. 2004. *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study: Second Annual Report: First Longitudinal Survey Making Citizenship Education Real*. UK: National Foundation for Educational Research.

- Kerr, David, Stephen McCarthy and Alan Smith. 2002. 'Citizenship Education in England, Ireland and Northern Ireland' *European Journal of Education*. 37 (2) :179-191. Retrieved April 25, 2014 (<http://esj.sagepub.com/content/5/1/73.refs>).
- Keser Filiz, Hanife Akar and Ali Yildirim. 2011. 'The role of extracurricular activities in active citizenship education' *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 43(6) :809-837.
- Kiilakoski, Tomi and Anu Gretschel. 2014. 'Challenging structured participation opportunities'. Pp 99-118 in *Perspectives on youth M.E.P.*
- Kitching, Karl and Yafa Shanneik. 2015. *Children's Beliefs and Belonging A Schools and Families Report from the 'Making Communion' study*.
- Kjørholt, Anne, Trine. 2008. 'Children as New Citizens: In the Best Interests of the Child?'. Pp 15-37 in *European Childhoods, Cultures, Politics and Childhoods in Europe* edited by A. James and A. L. James. UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Kränzl-Nagel, Renate and Ulrike Zartler. 2010. 'Children's participation in school and community'. Pp 165-173 in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation Perspectives from Theory and Practice*, edited by B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kulynych, Jessica. 2001. 'No Playing in the Public Sphere: Democratic Theory and the Exclusion of Children' *Social Theory and Practice*. 27: 231-264.
- Kustatscher, Marlies. 2016. 'The emotional geographies of belonging: children's intersectional identities in primary school'. *Children's Geographies*. Pp. 1 – 15.
- Lansdown, G. 2005. *The evolving capacities of children*. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- Larkins, Cath. 2014. 'Enacting children's citizenship: Developing understandings of how children enact themselves as citizenship through actions and Acts of citizenship'. *Childhood*. 21(1) :7-21.
- Larsson, Anna. 2013. 'A Children's place? The School playground debate in postwar Sweden'. *Journal of the History of Education Society*. 42(1) :115-130.
- Lewis, Jane. 2008. 'Chapter 13'. Pp.99-105 in *The Student's Companion to Social Policy* edited by P. Alcock, M. May, and K. Rowlingson. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Leonard, Madeline. 2016. *The Sociology of children, childhood and generation*. London: Sage.
- Leonard, Madeline. 2007. 'With a capital 'G': Gatekeepers and gatekeeping in research with children'. Pp 133-156 in *Representing Youth: Methodological Issues in Critical Youth Studies*, edited by A. Best. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Leonard, Madeline. 2005. 'Children, Childhood and Social Capital: Exploring the Links' *Sociology*. 39(4): 605-622.
- Lister, Ruth. 2003. *Citizenship Feminist Perspectives*, 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

- Lister, Ruth., Noel Smith, Sue Middleton and Lynne Cox. 2003. 'Young People Talk about Citizenship: Empirical Perspectives on Theoretical and Political Debates'. *Citizenship Studies* 7 (2): 235-253.
- Lister, Ruth. 2005. 'Being Feminist'. *Government and Opposition*. 40(3) :442-463.
- Lister, Ruth. 2006. 'Investing in the Citizen-Workers of the Future'. Pp 455-472 in *The Welfare State Reader*, edited by C. Pierson and F. Castles. Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press.
- Lister, Ruth. 2007. 'Why Citizenship: Where, When and How Children?'. *Theoretical Inquiries in Law*. 8(2) :693 – 718.
- Lister, Ruth. 2008. 'Unpacking Children's Citizenship'. Pp 9 – 19 in *Children and Citizenship*, edited by A. Invernizzi and J. Williams. London and California: Sage.
- Lister, Ruth. 2009. 'A Nordic Nirvana? Gender, Citizenship, and Social Justice in the Nordic Welfare States'. *Oxford Journals*. *Oxford University Press*. Pp.242-278.
- Lister, Ruth. 2010. *Understanding Theories and Conceptions in Social Policy*. Bristol: The Polity Press.
- Lister, Ruth. 2011. 'From Intimate to the Global Reflections on Gendered Citizenship'. Pp. 27 – 41 in *The Limits of Gendered Citizenship Contexts and Complexities*, edited by E. H. Oleksy, J. Hearn and D. Golańska. London and New York: Routledge.
- Lizzio, Alf, Neil Dempster and Regan Neumann. 2011. 'Pathways to formal and informal student leadership: the influence of peer and teacher–student relationships and level of school identification on students' motivations'. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*. 14 (1): 85-102
- Lockyer, Andrew. 2008. 'Education for Citizenship: Children as Citizens and Political Literacy'. Pp. 20-31 in *Children and Citizenship*, edited by A. Invernizzi and J. Williams. London and California: Sage.
- Lodge, Ann and Kathleen Lynch. 2004. Eds. *Diversity at School*. Dublin: IPA in Association with the Equality Authority.
- Lombardo, Emanuela and Mieke Verloo. 2011. 'Towards Feminist Citizenship Contentious Practices and European Challenges'. Pp 42 – 61 in *The Limits of Gendered Citizenship Contexts and Complexities*, edited by E. H. Oleksy, J. Hearn and D. Golańska. New York and London: Routledge.
- Lopes, Joanna, Thomas Benton and Elizabeth Cleaver. 2009. 'Young people's intended civic and political participation: does education matter?' *Journal of Youth Studies*. 12 (1) :1 – 20.
- Lundy, Laura. 2007. 'Voice is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC'. *British Educational Research Journal*. 33(6) :927-942.
- Lundy, Laura. 2018. 'In defence of tokenism? Implementing children's right to participate in collective decision-making'. *Childhood*. 00 (0): 1 – 15.
- Lynch, Kathleen. 1989. *The Hidden Curriculum*. London: Falmer Press.

- Lynch, Kathleen and Anne Lodge. 2004. *Equality and Power in Schools Redistribution, Recognition and Representation*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Lynch, Kathleen and John Baker. 2005. 'Equality in education: An equality of condition perspective'. *Theory and Research in Education*. 3 (2): 131-164.
- McMahon, Aine. 2018. 'Should homework be scrapped for primary school students?'. *Irish Times*. Retrieved January 23, 2018 (<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/should-homework-be-scrapped-for-primary-school-students-1.3363917#ampshare=https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/should-homework-be-scrapped-for-primary-school-students-1.3363917>).
- MacNaughton, Glenda, Patrick Hughes and Kylie Smith. 2007. 'Young Children's Rights and Public Policy: Practices and Possibilities for Citizenship in the Early Years'. *Children and Society*. 21 :458-469.
- Martyna, Wendy. 1983. 'Beyond the He/Man Approach: The Case for Nonsexist Language'. Pp 25-37 in *Language, Gender and Society* edited by B. Thorne, C. Kramarae and N. Henley. Rowly, London and Tokyo: Newbury House Publishers.
- Henry, Maitles and Isabel Gilchirst. 2004. '*We're not citizens in waiting, we're citizens now! a case study of a democratic approach to learning in an RME secondary class in the West of Scotland*'. Conference Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University of Crete. Retrieved June 10, 2016 (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003765.htm>).
- Maitles, Henry and Ross Deuchar. 2006. 'We don't learn democracy, we live it! Consulting the pupil voice in Scottish schools'. *Education Citizenship and Social Justice* 1 (3): 249-266.
- Malone, Karen and Catherine Hartung. 2010. 'Challenges of participatory practice with children'. Pp 24-38 in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation*. Edited by B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mannion Greg. 2007. 'Going spatial, going relational: Why 'listening to children' and children's participation needs reframing'. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. 28(3): 405-420.
- Margareta Sandström Kjellin, Jonas Stier, Tanja Einarson, Trevor Davies & Tuula Asunta. 2010. 'Pupils' voices about citizenship education: comparative case studies in Finland, Sweden and England'. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. 33(2): 201-218.
- Marshall, Thomas, Humphrey. 1950. *Citizenship and Social Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Martin, Shirley, Catherine Forde, A. Galvin Dunn and A. O'Connell. 2015. *An examination of children and young people's views on the impact of their participation in decision-making*. Retrieved September 28, 2015 (http://www.dcy.gov.ie/docs/17.06.2015_An_examination_of_children_and_young_peoples_view/3465.htm).
- Marx, T. Gary and Valarie Steeves. 2010. 'From the Beginning: Children as Subjects and Agents of Surveillance'. *Surveillance and Society*. 7(3/4): 192-230.

- Mason, Jan and Natalie Bolzan et al. 2010. 'Questioning Understandings of children's participation'. Pp 126-132 in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation Perspectives from Theory and Practice*, edited by B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas. London and New York: Routledge.
- May, Tim. 2001. *Social Research Issues, Methods and Process*. 3rd ed. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Mayall, Berry. 2008. 'Conversations with Children Working with Generational Issues'. Pp.109-123 in *Research with Children Perspectives and Practices* edited by P. Christensen and A. James. New York and London: Routledge.
- McCarthy, Kevin, Robert Kirkpatrick, Jude Cosgrove and Lorraine Gilleece. 2013. 'Republic of Ireland'. Pp 195-209 in *ICCS 2009 Encyclopedia Approaches to civic and citizenship education around the world* edited by J. Ainley, W. Schulz and T.
- McCoy, Selina, Delma Byrne and Joanne Banks. 2011. 'Too Much of a Good Thing? Gender, 'Concerted Cultivation' and Unequal Achievement in Primary Education'. *Child Ind Res* 5:155–178.
- McCowan, Tristan. 2009. *Rethinking Citizenship Education. A Curriculum for Participatory Democracy*. London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- McLaughlin, Terence. 1992. 'Citizenship, diversity and education: A philosophical perspective'. *Journal of Moral Education* 21 (3): 235- 255.
- McLoughlin, Owen. 2004. 'Citizen child – the experience of a student council in a primary school'. Pp.128-143 in *Primary Voices Equality, Diversity and Childhood in Irish Primary Schools* edited by J. Deegan, D. Devine and A. Lodge. Dublin: IPA.
- McSharry, Majella. 2008. 'Living with contradictions: teenagers' experiences of active citizenship and competitive individualism'. In *Education for Citizenship and Diversity in Irish Contexts* edited by G. Jeffers and U. O'Connor. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.
- Melton, B. Garry. 2005. 'Building humane communities respectful of children: The significance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child'. *American Psychologist*. 60(8): 918-926.
- Melton, B. Garry, Asher Ben-Arieh, Judith Cashmore, Gail S. Goodman and Natalie K. Worley. Eds. 2014. *The Sage Handbook of Child Research*. Sage: London.
- Mills, Sarah. 2013. 'An instruction in good citizenship': scouting and historical geographies of citizenship education' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 38 :120-134.
- Minow, Martha. 1990. *Making All the Difference: Inclusion, Exclusion and American Law*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Millei, Zsuzsa and Robert Imre. 2009. 'The Problems with Using the Concept of "Citizenship" in Early Years Policy'. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*. 10 (3) :280 – 290.
- Mosely, Jane. 1996. *Quality Circle Time in the Primary Classroom*. Wisbech, Learning Development Aids.

- Moskal, Marta. 2016. 'Spaces of Not Belonging: Inclusive Nationalism and Education in Scotland' *Scottish Geographical Journal*. 132 (1) :85–102.
- Moosa-Mitha, Mehmoona. 2005. 'A Difference-Centred Alternative to Theorization of Children's Citizenship Rights'. *Citizenship Studies*. 9(4) :69-388.
- Moss, P. 2002. 'From children's services to children's spaces', paper presented at *ESCR seminar Challenging Social Inclusion: Perspectives for and from children and young people*. Scotland: University of Stirling.
- Murphy, Brian. 2004. 'Practice in Irish infant classrooms in the context of the Irish Primary School Curriculum (1999): insights from a study of curriculum implementation'. *International Journal of Early Years Education* 12(3): 245-257.
- Musgrave, P.W. 1972. *The Sociology of Education*. 2nd ed. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd.
- National Children's Strategy. 2000. *Our Children – Their Lives*. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- National Curriculum Council Assessment. 1999. *Primary School Curriculum Social Personal and Health Education*. Retrieved March 10, 2015 (http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/Curriculum/SPHE_Curr.pdf).
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. 2010. *Curriculum Overload in Primary Schools: An overview of national and international experiences*. Dublin: NCCA. Retrieved December 14, 2015 (http://www.ncca.ie/en/Publications/Reports/Curriculum_overload_in_Primary_Schools_An_overview_of_national_and_international_experiences.pdf).
- National Parents Council. 2014. *Your lunchtime in School*. Retrieved February 4, 2015 (<http://www.npc.ie/news-post.aspx?contentid=5423>).
- National Youth Council. 2001. *Youth Participation, Citizenship, Democracy – learning the skills of active democratic participation*. Dublin: NYCI.
- Nelson, Katherine. 2014. 'What, when, and how do children learn from talking with peers?'. Pp. 237 – 252 in *Children's Peer Talk: Learning from Each Other* edited by C. Asta, S. Blum-Kulka, V. Grøver, and E. Teuba. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nesdale, Drew, Kevin Durkin, Anne Maass, Jeff Kiesner, Judith Griffiths, Josh Daly and David McKenzie. 2009. 'Peer group rejection and children's outgroup prejudice'. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*. 31 :134 – 144.
- Nichols, Sue.2007. 'Children as citizens: literacies for social participation'. *Early Years: An International Research Journal*. 27(2):119-130.
- Niens, Ulrike and Lorraine McIlrath. 2010. 'Understandings of Citizenship Education Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland Public Discourses among stakeholders in the public and private sectors'. *Education Citizenship and Social Justice*. 5 (1) :73-87.
- Niens, Ulrike and Lorraine McIlrath. 2005. *Understandings of Citizenship Education Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland*. Retrieved November 6, 2014 (http://www.unm.edu/~unmsc/Documents/Resources/CDU_report.pdf).

- Nutbrown, Cathy and Peter Clough. 2009. 'Citizenship and inclusion in the early years: understanding and responding to children's perspectives on 'belonging''. *International Journal of Early Years Education*. 17(3):191-206.
- O'Brien, Maeve. 2003. 'Girls and Transition to Second-level Schooling in Ireland: 'moving on' and 'moving out''. *Gender and Education*. 15(3):249 – 267.
- O' Brien, Maeve. 2008. 'Gendered Capital: Emotional Capital and Mother's Care Work in Education'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. 29 (2): 137 – 148.
- O'Connor, Muiris.2014. 'Investment in edification: reflections on Irish education policy since independence'. *Irish Educational Studies*. 33(2): 193-212.
- O' Connor, Pat. 2009. 'Irish young people's narratives: the existence of gender differentiated cultures?'. *Irish Journal of Sociology*. 17(1): 95-115.
- O'Connor, Una. 2012. 'Schools together: enhancing the citizenship curriculum through a non-formal education programme'. *Journal of Peace Education*. 9 (1) :31-48.
- O' Kane, Claire. 2008. 'The Development of Participatory Techniques'. Pp.125-155 in *Research with Children Perspectives and Practices* edited by P. Christensen and A. James. New York and London: Routledge.
- O' Keeffe, Brendan and Alanna O' Beirne. 2012. *Children's Independent Mobility on the Island of Ireland*. Retrieved September 1, 2015 (<http://www.mic.ul.ie/childmobility/Documents/Child%20Mobility%20Report.pdf>).
- O' Kelly, Emma. 2018. *School enrolment changes should be in place next year – Bruton*. RTE News. Retrieved June 9, 2018 (<https://www.rte.ie/news/education/2018/0509/961152-school-admissions/>).
- O' Leary, Zina. 2010. *The Essential Guide to Doing your Research Project*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC: Sage Publications.
- O'Toole, Barbara. 2015. '1831–2014: an opportunity to get it right this time? Some thoughts on the current debate on patronage and religious education in Irish primary schools'. *Irish Educational Studies*. 34(1): 89-102.
- Oakley, Ann.1974. *The sociology of housework*. Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Oleksy, H. Elżbieta, Jeff Hearn and Dorota Golańska. Eds. 2011. *The Limits of Gendered Citizenship Contexts and Complexities*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Olson, Maria. 2008. *From Nation-building to Nomadic Life in a Global Market: On citizenship in Swedish Education Policy in the 1990s*. Linköping: LiuPress.
- Olson, Maria. 2012. 'The European "We": From Citizenship Policy to the Role of Education'. *Philosophy Studies Education*. 31(77): 77-89.
- Olsson, Åsa, 2017. 'Children's lived citizenship: A study on children's everyday knowledge of injury risks and safety'. *Childhood*. 24(4) :545 – 558.

- Ombudsman for Children's Office. 2012. *Small Places: Exploring Children's Rights in Children's Everyday Lives*. Retrieved October 11, 2016 (<https://www.oco.ie/education-and-human-rights/education-materials/small-places/>).
- Osler, Audrey and Hugh Starkey. 1998. 'Children's rights and citizenship: some implications for the management of schools'. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*. 6: 313–33.
- Osler, Audrey and Hugh Starkey. 2005. *Changing Citizenship Democracy and Inclusion in Education*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Osler, Audrey and Hugh Starkey. 2006. 'Education for democratic citizenship: a review of research, policy and practice 1995 – 2005' *Research Papers in Education*. 21 (4) :433 – 466.
- Osler, Audrey. 2008. 'Human Rights Education: The Foundation of Education for Democratic Citizenship in our Global Age'. Pp. 455-467 in *The Sage Handbook of Education For Citizenship and Democracy* edited by J. Arthur, I. Davies and C. Hahn. London, California, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Osler, Audrey. 2011. 'Teacher interpretations of citizenship education: national identity cosmopolitan ideals, and political realities' *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 43 (1) :1-24.
- Pascall, Gillian. Ed. 2012. *Gender Equality in the Welfare State?* Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Percy-Smith, Barry and Nigel Thomas. Eds. 2010. *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Philippou, Stavroula, Avril Keating and Debora Hinderliter Ortloff. 2009. 'Conclusion: Citizenship education curricula: comparing the multiple meanings of supra-national citizenship in Europe and beyond' *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 41 (2) :291-299.
- Piattoeva, Nelli. 2009. 'Citizenship and nationality in changing Europe: a comparative study of the aims of citizenship education in Russian and Finnish national education policy texts'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 41 (6) :723-744.
- Piaget, Jean and Bärbel Inhelder. 1972. *The Psychology of the Child*. New York: Basic Books Inc.
- Pollard, Andrew. 1985. *The Social World of the Primary School*. U.K., Kent: Holt Education.
- Putnam, Robert. 1995. 'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital'. *Journal of Democracy*. 6(1): 65–78.
- Quennerstedt, Ann and Mikael Quennerstedt. 2014. 'Researching children's rights in education: sociology of childhood encountering educational theory'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. 35(1) :115-132.
- Quinn, Ruairi. 2012. 'The Future Development of Education in Ireland'. *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*. 101(402) :123-138.
- Quinn, Sarah and Susanne Owen. 2014. 'Freedom to Grow: Children's Perspectives of Student Voice'. *Childhood Education*. 90(3): 192-201.

- Qvortrup, Jans. 1994. 'Childhood Matters: An Introduction'. Pp 4-14 in *Childhood Matters: Social Theory, Practice and Politics* edited by J. Qvortrup, M. Barely, G. Sgritta and H. Wintersberger. Vienna: Avebury.
- Qvortrup, Jans. 1999. 'The meaning of child's standard of living', in *Research with Children Perspectives and Practices* edited by A.B. Andrews and N. H. Kafuman. Westport: CT: Prager.
- Qvortrup, Jans. 2008. 'Childhood in the Welfare State'. Pp 216-233 in *European Childhoods, Cultures, Politics and Childhoods in Europe* edited by A. James and A. L. James. UK: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Qvortrup, Jans, William A. Corsaro and Michael-Sebastian Honig. eds. 2009. *The Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies*. Palgrave MacMillan: Hampshire and New York.
- RAPCAN. 2010. 'A Brief Review of Issues Emerging from Recent Studies on Children's Citizenship and Participation'. Retrieved September 1, 2015 (<http://rapcan.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/RAPCAN-Research-Literature-Review-Citizenship-March-2010.pdf>).
- Rami, J. and J. Lalor. 2006. 'Citizenship and Identity Education in Ireland in the Post-Celtic Tiger era: impacts and possibilities'. Pp 512 - 520 in *Citizenship Education: Europe and the World: Proceedings of the eighth Conference of the Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network* edited by A. Ross. London: CiCe.
- Ravitch, Diane and Joseph P. Viteritti. Eds. 2001. *Making Good Citizens Education and Civil Society*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Rehfeld, Andrew. 2011. 'The Child as Democratic Citizen'. *The Annals of the American Academy*. 633: 141-166.
- Revi, Ben. 2014. 'T.H. Marshall and his critics: reappraising "social citizenship" in the twenty-first century'. *Citizenship Studies*. 18 (3) :452-464.
- Richardson, Norman.2008. 'Laying the foundations: citizenship in the primary school'. Pp 56-73 in *Education for Citizenship and Diversity the Irish Context* edited by G. Jeffers and U.O' Connor. Dublin: Institute for Public Administration.
- Ritchie, Jane and Jane Lewis. Eds. 2003. *Qualitative Research Practice, A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Roche, Jeremy. 1999. 'Children: Rights, Participation and Citizenship'. Pp. 475-493 in *Childhood*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Robinson, Ken and Lou Aronica. 2015. *Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education*. New York: Viking Penguin, Penguin Publishing Group.
- Rooney, Tonya. 2010. 'Trusting children: How do surveillance technologies alter a child's experience of trust, risk and responsibility? *Surveillance and Society*. 7(3/4): 344-355.
- Ross, Alistair. 2008. 'Organizing a Curriculum for Active Citizenship Education'. Pp. 493-505 in *The Sage Handbook of Education For Citizenship and Democracy* edited by J. Arthur, I. Davies and C. Hahn. London, California, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications Ltd.

- Ruane, B., Kavanagh, A., Waldron, F., Dillion, S., Casey, M., Maunsell, C., and Prunty, A., 2010. *Young Children's Engagement with Issues of Social Justice*. Dublin: The Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra and Trócaire.
- Ryan, Anne B. 2006. 'Methodology: Analysing Qualitative Data and Writing up your Findings'. Pp 92 – 108 in *Researching and Writing your thesis: a guide for postgraduate students*. Mace: Maynooth Adult and Community Education.
- Sandström, Mikael and Christian Fernández. 2013. 'Citizenship education and diversity in liberal societies: Theory and policy in a comparative perspective'. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*. 8 (2) :103-117.
- Sandström, Kjellin., Margareta, Jonas Stier, Tanja Einarson, Trevor Davies & Tuula Asunta. 2010. 'Pupils' voices about citizenship education: comparative case studies in Finland, Sweden and England'. *European Journal of Teacher Education*. 33(2): 201-218.
- Sayer, Liana C. 2005. 'Gender, Time, and Inequality: Trends in Women's and Men's Paid Work, Unpaid Work, and Free Time.' *Social Forces*. 84 :285-303.
- Saywitz, J. Karen and Lorinda B. Camparo. 2014. 'Interviewing Children: A Primer'. Pp 371-390 in *The Sage Handbook of Child Research*, edited by Gary B. Melton, Asher Ben-Arieh, Judith Cashmore, Gail, S. Goodman and Natalie, K. Worley. Los Angeles, London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Schutt, Russell, K. 2012. *Investigating the social world: the process and practice of research*. 7th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Share, Perry, Hilary Tovey and Mary P. Corcoran .2007. *A Sociology of Ireland*. 3rd ed. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd.
- Sherrod, Lonnie, R. 2008. 'Adolescents' perceptions of rights as reflected in their views of citizenship'. *Journal of Social Issues*. 64: 771-790.
- Sherrod, R., Lonnie, Judith Torney-Purta and Constance A., Flanagan. 2010. *Handbook of Research on Civic Engagement in Youth*. London: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Shier, Harry. 2010. 'Children as Public Actors: Navigating the Tensions'. *Children and Society*. 24 :24-37.
- Silverman, David. 2014. *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. 5th ed. London and Los Angeles: Sage.
- Skogen, Rochelle. 2010. 'The Missing Element to Achieving a Citizenship-as-Practice: Balancing Freedom and Responsibility in Schools Today' *Interchange*. 41 (1) :17-43.
- Smith, Karen. 2007. *Governing Young Citizens: Discourses of Childhood in Irish Social Policy*. Dublin: Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Retrieved September 28, 2015 (http://www.dcy.gov.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/Publications/scholarship_bn/K_Smith_Briefing_Note_No9.pdf).

Smyth, Emer. 2009. *Religious Education in a Multicultural Society: School and Home in Comparative Context* (REMC) Final Report. Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute. Retrieved October 8, 2014 (<http://www.tara.tcd.ie/xmlui/bitstream/handle/2262/66961/BKMNEXT214.pdf?sequence=1>).

Smyth, Emer, Merike Darmody, Frances McGinnity and Delma Byrne. 2009. *Adapting to Diversity: Irish Schools and Newcomer Students*. Dublin: The Economic and Social Research Institute.

Smyth, Emer. 2015. *Learning in Focus Wellbeing and School Experiences among 9 and 13year olds: Insights from the Growing up in Ireland Study*. Dublin: The Economic and Social Institute.

Smyth, John, Barry Down and Peter McInerney. 2014. *The Socially Just School Making Space for Youth to Speak Back*. Heidelberg, London and New York: Springer.

Smyth, John. 2011. *Critical Pedagogy for Social Justice*. London and New York: Continuum.

Smyth, John. 2012. 'The socially just school and critical pedagogies in communities put at a disadvantage'. *Critical Studies in Education*. 53(1): 9-18.

Snape, Dawn and Liz Spencer. 2003. 'The Foundations of Qualitative Research'. Pp 1-23 in *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, edited by Helen Richie and Jane Lewis. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Soffer, Michal and Asher Ben-Arieh. 2014. 'School-Aged Children as Sources of Information about Their Lives'. Pp 555-574 in *The Sage Handbook of Child Research*. Sage edited by G. B. Melton, A. Ben-Arieh, J. Cashmore, G. S. Goodman and N. K. Worley. London: Sage.

Stasiulis, D. 2002. 'The active child citizen: lessons from Canadian policy and the children's movement'. *Citizenship Studies*. 6 (4) :507-538.

Smith, Anne, B. 2012. 'Recognizing children as citizens: Can this enhance solidarity?'. Pp 15 – 32 in *Spaces for Solidarity and Individualism in Educational Contexts*. Gothenburg studies in educational sciences 318 edited by E. Johansson and D. Berthelson. Gothenburg: Göteborgs Universitets, Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis.

Smyth, Emer. 2016. *Well-being and school experiences among 9 and 13-year olds: Insights from the Growing Up in Ireland Study*. Dublin: ESRI.

Spyrou, Spyros. 2011. 'The limits of children's voices: From authenticity to critical, reflexive representation'. *Childhood*. 18 (2) :151-165.

Such, Elizabeth and Robert Walker. 2005. 'Young Citizens or Policy Objects? Children in the "Rights and Responsibilities" Debate'. *Journal of Social Policy*. 34 (1):39-57.

Sugrue, Ciaran. 2004. 'Whose Curriculum is it anyway? Power, Politics and Possibilities in the Construction of the Revised Primary Curriculum'. Pp 167-208 in *Curriculum and Ideology Irish Experiences International Perspectives* edited by C. Sugrue. Dublin: The Liffey Valley Press.

- Sugrue, Ciaran. 2004. *Curriculum and Ideology Irish Experiences International Perspectives*. Dublin: The Liffey Press Limited.
- Swain, Jon. 2000. 'The Money's Good, The Fame's Good, The Girls are Good: The role of playground football in the construction of young boys' masculinity in a junior school'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*. 21 (1) :95-105.
- Swain, Jon. 2003. 'Needing to be 'in the know': strategies of subordination used by 10–11-year-old schoolboys'. *Inclusive Education*. 7(4) :305-324.
- Taskforce on Active Citizenship. 2007. *Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship*. Dublin: Taskforce on Active Citizenship.
- Taylor, McLean, Jill, Carol Gilligan and Amy M. Sullivan. 1996. *Between Voice and Silence Women and Girls, Race and Relationship*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Theis, Joachim. 2010. 'Children as active citizens; An agenda for children's civil rights and civic engagement'. Pp 343 – 355 in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation Perspectives from Theory and Practice* edited by B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas. London and New York: Routledge.
- Thompson, Shine, Mary. 2003. *Republicanism and Childhood in Twentieth-Century Ireland*. Dublin: The Republic. Retrieved October 12, 2015 (<http://theirelandinstitute.com/republic/03/contents003.html>).
- Thorne, Barrie. 1993. *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School*. Rutgers University Press.
- Thorne, Barrie. 1997. 'Children and gender: constructions of difference'. Pp 185 – 202 in *Towards a New Psychology of Gender* edited by M. M. Gergen and S. N. Davies. New York: Routledge.
- Tisdall, E. Kay M, and Samantha Punch. 2012. 'Not so "new"? Looking critically at childhood studies'. *Children's Geographies*. 19(3): 249-264.
- Tisdall, E. Kay M. 2010. 'Governance and participation'. Pp 318-329 in *A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation Perspectives from Theory and Practice* edited by B. Percy-Smith and N. Thomas. London and New York: Routledge.
- Tonge, Jon, Andrew Mycock and Bob Jeffery. 2012. 'Does Citizenship Education Make Young People Better-Engaged Citizens?' *Political Studies Association*. 60 (3) :578 – 602.
- Trafford, Bernard. 2008. 'Democratic Schools: Towards a Definition'. Pp. 410-423 in *The Sage Handbook of Education For Citizenship and Democracy* edited by J. Arthur, I. Davies and C. Hahn. London, California, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Tröhler, David, S. Popkewitz, and David. F. Labaree. Eds. 2011. *Schooling and the Making of Citizens in the Long Nineteenth Century*. New York and Oxon: Routledge.
- Tusla - Child and Family Agency. 2015. *Toward the development of a Participation Strategy for Children and Young People National Guidance & Local Implementation*. Retrieved November 7, 2015 (www.tusla.ie).

Tussing, A.D. 1978. *Irish Educational Expenditures – Past, Present and Future*. ERSI paper No. 92. Dublin: Economic and Social Research Institute.

UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre. 2012. *The permanent tsb Foróige Youth Citizenship Programme Evaluation Report*. Retrieved November 7, 2015 (http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/sites/www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/files/citizenship_evaluation_report_25.06.2013.pdf).

UNESCO Children and Youth Programme. 2013. *Education For Civic Engagement in Post-Primary Schools in Ireland and Northern Ireland: A Rights Perspective*. Retrieved November 7, 2015 (http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/sites/www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/files/cyp_book_5_full_report.pdf).

UNICEF. 2009. *The Participation of Children and Young People in UNICEF Country Programme and National Committee Activities*. New York: UNICEF.

United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child. 1989. New York: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved April 10, 2015 (<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>).

Waldron, Fionnuala. 2004. 'Making the Irish: Identity and Citizenship in the Primary Curriculum'. Pp. 209-237 in *Curriculum and Ideology Irish Experiences International Perspectives* edited by C. Sugrue. Dublin: The Liffey Valley Press.

Waldron, Fionnuala, Brian Ruane and Rowan Oberman. 2014. 'Practice as Prize: Citizenship Education in two Primary Classrooms in Ireland'. *Journal of Social Science Education*. 13(1) :34-45.

Waldron, Fionnuala and Rowan Oberman. 2016. 'Responsible citizens? How children are conceptualised as rights holders in Irish primary schools'. *The International Journal of Human Rights*. 20 (6): 744–760.

Wall, John. 2008. 'Human Rights in Light of Childhood'. *International Journal of Children's Rights*. 16: 523 – 543.

Wall, John. 2011. 'Can democracy represent children? Toward a politics of difference'. *Childhood*. 19 (1) :86-100.

Walsh, Thomas. 2005. 'Constructions of Childhood in Ireland in the Twentieth Century: A View from the Primary School Curriculum 1900-1999'. *Child Care in Practice*. 11(2) :253 – 269.

Ward, N. and T. Dooney, Eds. 1999. *Irish Education for the Twenty-first Century*. Dublin: Oak Tree Press.

Warming, Hanne. 2011. 'Getting under their skins? Accessing young children's perspectives through ethnographic fieldwork'. *Childhood*. 18(1): 39-53.

Watson, Annette and Karen E., Till. 2009. 'Ethnography and Participant Observation'. pp.233-294 in *Handbook of Qualitative Geography* edited by S. Aitken, D. DeLyser, D. Herbert, S. Crang, M. and L. McDowell. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Weller, Drika, Sue. D. Hobbs and Gail. S. Goodman. 2014. 'Challenges and Innovations in Research on Childhood'. Pp 363-370 in *The Sage Handbook of Child Research*, edited by Garry B. Melton, Asher Ben-Arieh, Judith Cashmore, Gail, S. Goodman and Natalie, K. Worley. Los Angeles, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

West, Candice. 1996. "Goffman in Feminist Perspective" in *Sociological Perspectives*. 39 (3): 353 – 369.

Werbner, Pnina and Nira Yuval-Davis .1999. 'Introduction: Women and the New Discourse of Citizenship'. Pp 1 – 38 in *Women, Citizenship and Difference* edited by P. Werbner and N. Yuval-Davis. London and New York: Zed Books.

World Economic Forum. 2012. *Gender Gap Report 2012*. Retrieved February 27, 2015 (<http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2012>).

Widmaier, Benedikt. 2014 'Active citizenship 3.0/2020 – Youth participation and social capital after post-democracy' in *Perspectives on Youth 2020 What do you See?.2014*. EU: Council of Europe Publishing. Retrieved September 11, 2015 (<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/7110731/PoY1-full.pdf/0da8d1d9-2886-4f13-a42b-ad5ad4ff6e69>).

Williams Jane and Rhian Croke. 2008. 'Institutional Support for the UNCRC's "Citizen Child"'. Pp 182 – 192 in *Children and Citizenship* edited by A. Invernizzi and J. Williams. London and California: Sage.

Williams, Jane and Invernizzi, Antonella, eds. 2008. *Children and Citizenship*. London and California: Sage.

Williams, James, Elisabeth Nixon, Emer Smith and Dorothy Watson. Eds. 2016. *Cherishing All the Children Equally? Ireland 100 Years on From the Easter Rising*. Cork: Oak Tree Press.

Woodhead, Martin and Heather Montgomery. 2003. *Understanding childhood an interdisciplinary approach*. Milton Keynes and Chichester: The Open University Press and John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Wujec, Tom. 2015. 'Marshmallow Challenge, Build the Tallest Freestanding Structure'. *Design Projects*. Retrieved June 10, 2016 (<https://www.tomwujec.com/design-projects/marshmallow-challenge/>).

Wyness, Michael, Lisa Harrison and Ian Buchanan. 2004. 'Childhood, Politics and Ambiguity: Towards and Agenda for Children's Political Inclusion'. *Sociology*. 38 (1): 81-99.

Wyness, Michael. 2001. 'Children, childhood and political participation: Case studies of young people's councils'. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*. 9:193-212.

Wyness, Michael. 2009. 'Adult's involvement in children's participation: Juggling children's places and spaces'. *Children & Society*. 22: 395-406.

- Wyness, Michael. 2013. 'Children's participation and intergenerational dialogue: Bringing adults back into the analysis'. *Childhood*. 20(4): 429-422.
- Young, Iris. Marion. 1990. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yetunde, Olufisayo, John-Akinola, Aoife Gavin, Siobhan, Elizabeth O' Higgins, and Saoirse Nic Gabhainn. 2013. 'Taking part in school life: views of children'. *Health Education*. 144(1): 20 – 42.
- Yin, Robert. 2009. *Case study research: design and method*. 4th ed. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2006. 'Belonging and the Politics of Belonging'. *Patterns of Prejudice*. 40(3):197–214.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira. 2011. *The Politics of Belonging: Intersectional Contestations*. London: Sage.
- Zubia Vernita and Beth Doll. 2002. 'Redefining School Culture: Creating New Traditions for Bicultural Students'. Pp. 30-46 in *Rethinking Multicultural Education: Case Studies in Cultural Transition* edited by C. Korn and A. Bursztyn. Westport, Connecticut and London: Bergin and Garvey.

End Notes

- ⁱ See also: Moosa-Mitha 2005; Golombek 2006; Lister 2006, 2007, 2008; Pascall 2012.
- ⁱⁱ See also: Corsaro and Eder 1990; Qvortrup 1994; James and Prout 1997; Roche 1999; Woodhead and Montgomery 2003; Mayall 2008.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See also: Corsaro and Eder 1990; Jones 1995; Alder and Alder 1998; Roche 1999, Qvortrup 1994; James and Prout 1997; James et al 1998; Woodhead et al 2003; Mayall 2008.
- ^{iv} See also: Wyness 2001, 2009, 2013; Fleming 2013; Tisdall 2008, 2012; James and James 2008; James 2011; Wall 2011; Shier 2010; Fitzgerald et al 2010; Theis 2010; Austin 2010; Cockburn 2010; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Malone and Hartung 2010; James 2011; Nutbrown and Clough 2009; Devine, 2002, 2004, 2008, 2009; Mannion 2007; Kjørholt 2008; Lister 2003, 2007, 2008; Lundy 2007, 2018; Golombek 2006; Cohen 2005; Moosa-Mitha 2005; Jans 2004; Wyness et al 2004; Jamieson 2002; Kulynych 2001; Roche 1999.
- ^v See also: Moosa-Mitha 2005; Ben Arieh 2005; Osler and Starkey 1998, 2005, 2006; Lister 2007.
- ^{vi} See also: John 2003; Devine 2004, Osler and Starkey 2005; Ben-Arieh 2005; Lister 2007; Hughes and Smith 2007.
- ^{vii} See also: Moosa-Mitha 2005; Isin and Nielsen 2008; Kjørholt 2008; Larkins 2014; Kallio et al 2015.
- ^{viii} See also: Minow 1990; Roche 1999; Lister 2007, 2010,2011; Moosa-Mitha 2005.
- ^{ix} See also: Swain 2000,2003; Leonard 2005; O' Connor 2009; Barnes 2012.
- ^x See also: Wyness et al 2004; Such and Walker 2005; Cohen 2005.
- ^{xi} See also: Minow 1990; Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Jamieson 2002; Bernard-Powers 2008; Lombardo and Verloo 2011; Pascall 2012.
- ^{xii} See also: Smyth et al 2009; Cockburn 2010; de Róiste et al 2012; Yetunde et al 2013; Nelson 2014; Devine and Cockburn 2018.
- ^{xiii} See also: Pollard 1985; Corsaro and Eder 1990; Jones 1995; Roche 1999; Jans 2004; Moosa-Mitha 2005; Golombek 2006; Lister 2007.
- ^{xiv} See also: Bjerke 2011; Qvortrup, Corsaro and Honig 2009; Mannion 2007; Qvortrup 1994.
- ^{xv} See also: Devine 2009; Lister 2003, 2007; Cohen 2005; Lansdowne 2005 in RAPCAN 2010; Kiilakoski and Gretschel 2014; Fowler et al 2016.
- ^{xvi} Findings from my research also highlight children's frustration with their lack of opportunities to participate in decision making processes about 'bigger' issues at school.
- ^{xvii} Similar experiences and attitudes about differing experiences of decision making at home and at school are also reflected in findings from my research.
- ^{xviii} See also: Fleming 2013; Wyness 2013; Kelleher et al 2014.
- ^{xix} See also: Lynch and Lodge 2002; Waldron 2004; McLoughlin, 2004; McSharry 2008; Cockburn 2010; Osler 2008; Kjørholt 2008; Nutbrown and Clough 2009; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Tisdall 2010; Thornberg and Elvstrand 2012; de Róiste et al 2012; Yetunde et al 2013; Fowler et al 2016.

^{xx} I define *citizenship-esteem* in relation to citizens' feelings of self-worth as recognised and valued members (social actors) who can contribute towards issues which matter most to them in their everyday lives within different social contexts.

^{xxi} See also: Smyth (2016) who draws on data from the GUI Study to examine 9 – 13-year-olds children's well-being and school experiences in Ireland.

^{xxii} See also: Theis (2010) and Rehfeld (2011) who respectively argue for children's participation in small-scale participatory initiatives as a way of developing their political participation in an age appropriate manner at school.

^{xxiii} Kränzl-Nagel and Zartler's (2010) interpretation of data compiled from an EU study (*Children, Democracy and Participation in Society* (2003) was a cross-EU led project commissioned by the Council of Europe's Forum for Children and Families) reports that Norwegian children were 'offended' by adults' lack of communication with them about the study's results.

^{xxiv} Arensmeier's (2010) Swedish-based research highlighted children's specific concerns about their political participation. She explored young students' understandings of democracy and found that under 18s felt they were not given the 'same credence' as older peers because they could not vote (p. 211). In addition, she noted this feeling of lower status was evident 'even among those who have turned 18 and are allowed to vote' (ibid).

^{xxv} Fleming's (2013) review of literatures relating to children and young people's participation from a U.K. context concludes that their participation is limited by: 'Normative barriers', 'Instrumental rationality' and an 'Iron cage of regulation' (p.491).

^{xxvi} In 2018 there are currently 82 primary schools operating under the patronage of ET in the Republic of Ireland [See www.educatetogehter.ie].

^{xxvii} I also noted feast days such as St. Patrick's Day and St. Bridgit's Day featured largely in NS calendars.

^{xxviii} In 2013 96% of primary schools were under the patronage of the Catholic Church. [See <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Diversity-of-Patronage/Diversity-of-Patronage-Survey-of-Parents.html>].

^{xxix} 'Irish nationality was the largest group, representing 89.6% of total enrollment', with the remaining 10.4% of primary school enrolments consisting of foreign national children (p.3). [For further details see: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Primary-Online-Database-POD-/POD-Interesting-Facts-First-Look-at-Data-from-POD-2016-2017.pdf>].

^{xxx} See also: Hahn 2010; Kerr et al 2002; Kerr 1999.

^{xxxi} 'Circle time was initially introduced into Ireland in the early 1990s by its main proponent in the UK, Ms. Jenny Mosley' (Collins 2013: 1).

^{xxxii} See also: Holden 2006; Gleeson 2008; Jeffers and O' Connor 2008.

^{xxxiii} See also: Devine 2004, 2003, 2002; Waldron 2004; McSharry 2008; Richardson 2008; O' Connor 2008; Jeffers 2008, 2012; Gleeson 2008; National Parents Council 2014.

^{xxxiv} Since the 2000s the Irish State's continued commitment towards the development of children's rights in Ireland has been demonstrated by the establishment of key advocacy and representative organisations - such as the Ombudsman for Children's Office (2004). Furthermore, the establishment of children and young people's representative platforms – such as Dáil na nÓg (2002) and Comhairle na nÓg (2003) and the development of state funded organisations such as Foróige, which offer children more opportunities to participate in democratic practices outside of the formal school setting.

^{xxxv} Please refer to endnote (xxxiv) above for further information.

^{xxxvi} The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) was established in 2011 on foot of the government's decision to create a department which is dedicated to children and youth affairs in Ireland. The DCYA oversees several key areas of policy and provision for children, young people and families.

^{xxxvii} This policy's goals are implemented under the structures established by the Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014-2020).

^{xxxviii} Subsequent consultations (in 2012 there was a national consultation with children called 'Life as a Child and Young Person in Ireland', followed in 2015 under the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making) suggest efforts made to address this deficit.

^{xxxix} See also: Kerr 1999; Kerr et al 2002; Waldron 2004; Deegan et al 2004.

^{xl} See also: Kerr et al 2004; Osler and Starkey 1998, 2005, 2006; Arthur et al 2008; Hoskins, D'hombres and Campbell 2008; McCowan 2009; Brooks and Holford 2009; Johnson and Morris 2010; Haste 2010; Kennelly and Llewellyn 2011; Janmaat 2012; Sundstrom and Fernandez 2013.

^{xli} See also: Roche 1999; Kulynych 2001; Wyness et al 2004; Jans 2004; Ben-Arieh 2005; Moosa-Mitha 2005; Such and Walker 2005; Cohen 2005; Osler and Starkey 2005; Lundy 2007; Lister 2003,2007; Nichols 2007; Kjörholt 2008; Malone and Hartung 2010; James 2011; Soffer and Ben-Arieh 2014.

^{xlii} See also Connell (2013) who writes from an Australian context, she argues as a result of neoliberal ideologies and approach to provision of education, '[s]chools are becoming more tied tightly into a system of *remote* control, operated by funding mechanisms, testing systems, certification, audit and surveillance mechanisms' (p.108).

^{xliii} Coolahan 1981; Walsh 1999; Devine 2008 p. 33 and Niens and McIlrath 2005, 2010; Jeffers and O' Connor 2008 p.37.

^{xliv} I define 'active forms of citizenship' as collaborative (individual) activities which aim to contribute towards positive social action, such as, volunteering in community or national/EU-led initiatives.

^{xlv} I conceptualise children's peer group as a form of '*citizenship polis*', wherein they enact their citizenship practice as members (citizens) of their peer group. I discuss my concept in greater detail in chapter nine.

^{xlvi} The GAA is an Irish national voluntary organisation which encourages children from primary school going age onwards to become involved in Gaelic sporting activities' such as Hurling and Football. It is a strong feature of most Irish primary schools. Indeed, it features largely in some children's lives who spend a significant amount of their free time at school and outside of school practising for games and competitions. This is strongly encouraged by adults working in primary schools. However, this varies from school to school and appears to be largely dependent upon the school principal and the presence of male teachers who are willing to encourage and volunteer their time in promoting GAA activities within their school.

^{xlvii} See also: Lansdown 2005; Ben-Arieh 2005; Osler and Starkey 1998, 2005, 2006; Lundy 2007; Percy-Smith and Thomas 2010; Cockburn 2010; Malone and Hartung 2010; Wyness 2013, 2009, 2001; James 2011.

^{xlviii} See Also: Croll 1986; Green and Hogan 2005; Mayall 2008; Christensen et al 2008; Spyrou 2011; Alderson and Morrow 2011; Melton et al 2014.

^{xliv} I conducted participant observations and spent more time in case studies; St. Finbarr's, Oakfields MD, St. Joseph's and St. Assumpta's. This point does not apply to cases Hillcrest ET and Mary Immaculate, as I did not conduct participant observations due to access issues.

¹ Pseudonyms are used to protect all quoted children's identities in this thesis.

^{li} It was mainly girls who confided in me and told me about things which had happened in my absences from their school.

^{lii} Other figures state this is now closer to 96%. [See: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Diversity-of-Patronage/Diversity-of-Patronage-Survey-of-Parents.html>].

^{liii} ET schools do not operate under the patronage of the Catholic Church.

^{liv} This was a research paper, ‘Gatekeepers and Children’s participation in research’ which was presented at the *Children and Young People in a Changing World* Conference, Hope University, Liverpool (2016).

^{lv} See Appendix [8] for a copy of the Information and Assent Form I gave to each child to complete prior to any fieldwork taking place. I collected these prior to any research taking place.

^{lvi} The aim of this project was to find out what things children valued the most at this stage in their lives. Please see copy of an anonymised child’s letter in Appendix [6].

^{lvii} I was cognisant of the possible influences the social and institutional context of this research could have had on the children’s answers and on their interactions with me.

^{lviii} St Finbarr’s is a coeducational rural National School (approx. 332 pupils). The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The class I observed was an amalgamation of 4th and 5th class pupils.

^{lix} This suggests it was important to these children to hear and understand my explanation about how their information would be used and kept safe.

^{lx} Since it commenced in 2006, the GUI has worked with up to 20,000 children and their families and has gathered invaluable data about what it is like for a child to grow up in 21st century Ireland (Williams, Nixon, Smyth and Watson 2016).

^{lxi} Mary Immaculate is a coeducational rural National School (approx. 288 pupils). The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The class’ I interviewed children from 4th, 5th and 6th class.

^{lxii} Oakfields MD is an urban coeducational school, which operates under the patronage of a Multi Denominational Patron Committee (approx. 254 pupils). The class I observed was an amalgamation of 4th and 5th class pupils.

^{lxiii} Hillcrest ET is a coeducational urban National School (approx. 224 pupils) which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. The class I interviewed was an amalgamation of 4th and 5th class pupils.

^{lxiv} Children did associate adults driving and drinking as an issue. They did not suggest that adults engaged in both activities at the same time.

^{lxv} In addition, the GUI study found a modest difference between rural and urban children’s perceptions of safety ‘97% and 93% respectively’ (ibid). Furthermore, ‘80%’ of urban children felt there were safe places for them to play near their home in comparison to ‘75%’ or rural children (2009: 137).

^{lxvi} O’ Keeffe et al (2012) and Cook et al (2015) respectively find that parental attitudes and opinions influenced children’s perceptions of independent mobility to go to places without adult supervision.

^{lxvii} Ireland ranked 12 out of 16 E.U. countries in this study conducted in 2011. Finland was the highest for CIM, followed closely by Germany. Ireland and southern EU states ‘tend to be characterised by lower levels of child mobility’ (O’ Keeffe and O’ Beirne 2012: ix).

^{lxxviii} O' Keeffe and O' Beirne (2012) suggest that children should be more involved/or included in consultations regarding planning processes which determine the layout of public spaces and the development of public services, such as public transport.

^{lxxix} O' Keeffe and O' Beirne (2012) assert that a combination of infrastructural development informed by children's needs in conjunction with community initiatives are required to address this issue.

^{lxxx} I noticed that girls tended to tell tales about other children's behaviour, more so than boys.

^{lxxxi} St Joseph's is a coeducational rural National School (approx. 60 pupils). The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The class I observed was an amalgamation of 4th, 5th and 6th class pupils.

^{lxxxii} 'The vast majority (96%) of primary schools in Ireland are owned and under the patronage of religious denominations and approximately 90% of these schools are owned and under the patronage of the Catholic Church' [See www.education.ie/information].

^{lxxxiii} I inferred some children's insecurity at school was revealed through their constant questioning and need for clarification from their teacher whenever instruction was given for the correct completion of tasks. Some children openly expressed anxiety about the 'correct' completion of homework and about possible reprisals for not behaving properly in class. Furthermore, I noted children's (girls) motivation to please adults and to behave well at school was displayed by some who put their fingers to their lips to indicate their obedience and good behaviour.

^{lxxxiv} Whilst I was working with this group, the 1916 Easter Rising Centenary celebrations were in preparation, as part of this, the Irish Government encourage school children nationwide to present their proclamation for their generation.

^{lxxxv} As part of the class project I facilitated two class-debates with this group to encourage them to talk about issues which mattered the most to them as children. These issues were then written into their 'Proclamation for a New Generation' as part of the *1916 Easter Rising Centenary* taking place at the time of my fieldwork at this NS.

^{lxxxvi} Not all children could offer suggestions as to what citizenship meant to them. Indeed, some children could not reply/would not reply to my question; 'Can you describe to me who/what a citizen is?'

^{lxxxvii} I noted that the population of National Schools (NS), which operated under the patronage of the Catholic Church patronage, had fewer children with different ethnic heritages to children with a longstanding Irish heritage.

^{lxxxviii} This applies to Educate Together (ET) and Multidenominational (MD) primary schools which had more notably diverse ethnicity in its populace.

^{lxxxix} The ones who had any (verbal, outward) understanding of the concept, a lot of children could not engage with the concept of citizenship and I suspect some of them had not thought about it or even heard the word before I directly asked them about it. This was certainly the case with younger participants (9 years old).

^{lxxx} I only used this approach with children from St. Finbarr's. I often had to alter my research data collection methods to ensure they fit the different social dynamics of the six primary schools I worked with.

^{lxxxii} I gave the children from St. Finbarr's three separate information sheets (which I devised) to complete in class. The first worksheet had images of children participating in various activities and I asked the group to comment on what they thought represented the attributes of good citizens. The other two worksheets asked the children, 'What good citizens do, have, and, are'. The children were asked to fill in as many things as they could under each of these three headings. I asked the children to fill in the third information sheet which asked, 'What good children, do, have, and, are', which I asked the children to complete in the same manner as the previous one. See appendix 13 and 14 for a copy of a participant's response to these worksheets.

^{lxxxiii} The eight activities depicted children engaging in the following; a boy helping an elderly woman, children working individually in class, a boy balancing a pencil between his mouth and nose, a boy pulling a girl's hair,

children playing in a group, children working in a group in class, two girls messing with paint and, a boy trying to distract another boy from his work in class. See Appendix 12 for a copy of a participant's response to this worksheet.

^{lxxxiii} They also had the option not to comment or to say that they if they unsure about any of the images.

^{lxxxiv} Children from St. Finbarr's were more unified in their responses about the image which showed a boy pulling a girl's hair. Yet, five out of 26 of them responded that this as good, or said they were unsure; this suggests some ambiguity around what children see or know to represent good or bad behaviours. I also posit that some children said these images were good as a way of protesting against the activity.

^{lxxxv} For instance, they wrote that good citizens can; 'Have babies', 'Be nice', 'Be caring', 'Thoughtful', 'Kind', 'Share', 'Cheer up people', 'Go to parties' and 'Accept everybody'. See Appendix 14 for a copy of a participant's response to this worksheet.

^{lxxxvi} For instance, they wrote good children can; 'Run and jump', 'Play', 'Skip', 'Do the splits', 'Squat', 'Move', 'Dance', 'Skate', and 'Walk to the shop', 'Make jokes', 'Have fun', 'Mess', 'Be silly' and 'Be chatty'. They also described children as; 'Rude', 'Weird', 'Little adults', 'Fit', 'Awesome', 'Amazing', 'Happy', 'Fun', 'Crazy', 'Smart', 'Unique', 'A new generation' and 'Midgets'. See Appendix 13 for a copy of a participant's response to this worksheet.

^{lxxxvii} There were some similarities in these children's responses between what 'good' citizens and what 'good' children 'have'. For instance, both 'children' and 'citizens' *have*; money, friends, pets and a home. I interpret this to be what children see as being common between children's and adult's lives. In contrast, for what good 'citizens' *have*, these children's responses suggest that these are attributes and behaviours they associate with what 'good' adults have such as; 'A life', 'Trust', 'No enemies', 'A car', 'Good instincts', a 'Good heart', 'Good listening' and 'Courage'. They identified the following with what good 'children' *have* such as; 'Video games', 'Hair', 'Stuff', 'Phones', 'Too much', 'Imagination', 'Humour', 'Toys', 'Caring parents', 'Fun', 'Stylish cloths', 'Books', 'Outdoor stuff', 'Brains', 'Special talents', 'Working muscles', 'Reflexes', 'School', and 'Ideas'. This suggests that these children see that they have physicality, creativity, fun, style, and hobbies/activities in their lives which are largely absent from adult's lives. See Appendices 13 and 14 for a copy of participant's responses to these worksheets.

^{lxxxviii} These children identified 'good' citizens as adults who are; 'Helpful', 'Friendly', 'Good people', 'Kind', 'Committed', 'Not mean' and 'Real'. They used words such as 'Terrific', 'Nice', 'People' and 'Cool' to describe attributes for both children and citizens. Their responses suggest that there were less similarities between good children and good citizens. Some also gave examples of adults such as myself and their teacher who they saw as representing good citizens. See Appendix 14 for a copy of a participant's response to this worksheet.

^{lxxxix} Moosa-Mitha (2005) defines 'presence' as being 'the degree to which the voice, contribution and agency of the child is acknowledged in their many relationships' (p.381).

^{xc} Hillcrest ET is an urban school (approx. 224 pupils) which operates under the patronage of Educate Together.

^{xci} I do not include Irish children from traveler communities in this category of 'Irish ethnic heritage'.

^{xcii} Riya and Pranay are first cousins.

^{xciii} Findings from Smyth et al's (2009) research also show that 'schools are responding to the presence of newcomer students in adapting school policies' on interculturalism and/or anti-racism (p.89).

^{xciv} This relates more to children's responses from Mary Immaculate

^{xcv} Most children referred to their passport when they spoke about citizenship.

^{x cvi} Children from Oakfields MD and Hillcrest ET did not seem to attach the same level of social status to holding a passport as was the case with children from St. Finbarr's.

^{xcvii} At the time of my fieldwork, there were posters up outside these children's classroom, which showed children's manifestos to represent students in the Student Dáil in operation at Oakfields MD. This shows this cohort were introduced to forms of voting at this school. I posit, this is what Niall was referring to in his comment. However, I did not get the opportunity to speak to children directly about their level of input/participation in their Student Dáil, as such, I cannot infer what they felt about this initiative.

^{xcviii} Connor's implication here is that only young children would vote for someone like Donald Trump.

^{xcix} SPHE is the subject (as part of the primary school curriculum) which has been designed to introduced younger children to wider global issues. I found children do not get regular (if any) opportunities to do SPHE. More importance is placed on core curricula such as; English, Religion, Irish and Math's.

^c See also: Drudy and Lynch 1993; Lynch and Lodge 2004; Waldron et al 2014; Waldron and Oberman 2016.

^{ci} Children gave me this as an example of where they felt they could participate as citizens during childhood.

^{cii} I conducted participant observations at; St. Finbarr's National School (NS), Oakfields Multidenominational School (MD), St. Joseph's (NS) and St. Assumpta's (NS). See Table 1. Schools Information Index p.55 Chapter Three.

^{ciii} Oakfields MD is an urban coeducational school, which operates under the patronage of a Multi Denominational Patron Committee (approx. 254 pupils). The class I observed and interviewed was an amalgamation of 4th and 5th class pupils.

^{civ} The Mosely-Model (1996) informs the practice of Circle-Time in Irish Primary schools. Circle-Time is a democratic practice/method which was promoted in conjunction with the Revised Primary School Curriculum 1999. This practice has become more widely used since the 2000's; introduced as a method for teachers to create a safe and democratic space for children to speak about issues and concerns they are experiencing at school.

^{cv} St. Joseph's is a coeducational rural National School (approx. 60 pupils). The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The class I observed was an amalgamation of 4th, 5th and 6th class pupils.

^{cvi} This approach links with Lundy's (2007) model of participation; voice, space, audience and influence.

^{cvi} St Finbarr's is a coeducational rural National School (approx. 332 pupils). The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The class I observed was an amalgamation of 4th and 5th class pupils.

^{cviii} In March 2016, the Irish State had a nationwide celebration which marked the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising. As part of this celebration, every school in the country was asked to mark the occasion and to encourage school-going children to produce a 'Proclamation for the new generation'. During my time at this case study, the children who took part in my research, read out their proclamation as part of this school's 1916 centenary celebration.

^{cix} The class schedule was written on the whiteboard.

^{cx} This involved me (or another 'trusted' adult) to write down a number between 1 – 10 on a piece of paper. The paper was turned over, so no one could see what was written. Each child was then given the chance to guess the number. Whoever guessed the correct number got to do the task. These children saw this as a fair way of deciding who could do what.

^{cx} On my final day at the school, I held focus three group sessions with each of the three tables in the class; sessions were approximately 45mins long, with a maximum of 8 children per group.

^{cxii} Over the course of my visits to St. Finbarr's, I gave the children two information sheets to complete in class. One which asked; What good children, do, have, [worksheet 2] and are and What good citizens do, have, and, are

[worksheet 3]. The children were asked to fill in as many things as they could under each of these three headings. See Appendices 13 and 14 for a copy of a participant's answers for these worksheets.

cxiii The children in this classroom were seated in groups of 8/9 children at three separate group tables.

cxiv I should have given the group longer time to see if they could sort the matter out between themselves, in hindsight, I feel I stepped in too early to mediate on their behalf.

cxv Hillcrest ET is an urban coeducational National School (approx. 224 pupils) which operates under the patronage of Educate Together. I interviewed children from 4th and 5th class.

cxvi 'Sausage' is a reference to a game played by children at Mary Immaculate. I did not ask the children how they played this game and what it involved.

cxvii This tendency was more noticeable among children at St. Joseph's and St. Finbarr's. However, I spent more time conducting P.O.'s at these schools, and therefore, I cannot infer if the same could be said of the other schools which I did not have the same amount of time to work with.

cxviii For Janmaat (2012) civic competencies consist of; cognitive competencies ('political knowledge and skills') and, behavioural competencies ('cooperation, conventional and alternative forms of participation') (p.52).

cxix See also: Werbner and Yuval-Davis 1999; Lister et al 2003; Moosa-Mitha 2005.

cxx Mary Immaculate is a rural coeducational school, which operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church (approx. 288 pupils). I interviewed children from 4th, 5th and 6th class.

cxxi At Mary Immaculate, I conducted interviews with children in groups of 3/4 children per group. I spoke with children from, 4th, 5th and 6th class.

cxxii This cohort all gave the same example of of voting for what DVD to watch during lunch 'big break' on rainy days to demonstrate when/what they get to make decisions about at school.

cxxiii My girl 'gatekeepers' at St. Finbarr's frequently expressed a sense of injustice about their lack of autonomy at their school. However, most children in this cohort appeared to accept their level of input into class activities and in other wider school initiatives.

cxxiv Currently, there are no national statistics available for the number of student councils in operation in primary schools in Ireland.

cxxv Oakfields MD was the only school I observed which had a Student Dáil in operation. However, I did not directly observe student's participation as part of their Student Dáil, and as such I cannot comment on the level of participation, activity and ownership children were afforded in this democratic initiative.

cxxvi For instance, a group of girls from 5th class at Mary Immaculate told me about a reference their teacher made to them about Donald Trump during class.

cxxvii I observed an incidence where children were introduced to notions about human rights as part of a trainee teacher's lesson plan at St. Joseph's. I also observed a reading lesson at this school which also tried to introduce children to ideas about animal rights and ethics. Similarly, at Oakfields MD, I observed a class debate whereby children discussed issues relating to stereotypes portrayed on popular children's programmes and films.

cxxviii SPHE was introduced as part of the 1999 Revised Primary School Curriculum.

cxxix Sem recently moved to Ireland from Holland, during his interview if often referred to the differences he noticed between his new school life in Ireland and his previous experiences at school in Holland.

^{cxxx} During my observations at Oakfields MD, I noted that children were introduced to democratic initiatives such as; in-class debates. I also saw posters (made by the children) which outlined why their peers should vote for them to be their representative on the school's Junior Dáil.

^{cxxx} In general, I noted that children's responses from Oakfields MD suggest they have more of a grasp of the concept of human rights than children from St. Finbarr's, Hillcrest ET, Mary Immaculate and St. Joseph's.

^{cxxxii} I got an indication of the level and frequency of opportunity for children to participate in democratic practices in class through participant observations (St. Finbarr's, Oakfields MD, St. Joseph's and St. Assumpta's) and from what children expressed to me during group interviews/Focus groups (St. Finbarr's, Oakfields MD, Hillcrest ET, St. Joseph's and St. Assumpta's).

^{cxxxiii} The Crick Report (2000) was a report produced to address issues pertaining to the 'health of contemporary British democracy' and to develop a citizenship education programme which aimed to ameliorate 'worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life' (Lockyer 2008: 21).

^{cxxxiv} Children from Oakfields MD and Mary Immaculate were the only groups who directly referred to Jail, the Gardaí and the Police when they spoke about what good/bad citizens do.

^{cxxxv} This debate centred around children's opinions about what should and should not be included as part of their Proclamation for a New Generation. This initiative was part of the nationwide 1916 Easter Rising Centenary celebrations taking place at the time of my fieldwork at St. Finbarr's.

^{cxxxvi} School children were also encouraged to produce a Proclamation for a New Generation. The objective of this was to encompass the aspirations espoused within the original 1916 Proclamation with those of younger generation's.

^{cxxxvii} The children were working in groups at shared laptops and they were for searching for pictures on the internet relating to the 1916 Easter Rising to find inspiration for their class drama about the Easter Rising.

^{cxxxviii} I define *citizenship-esteem* as citizens' sense of self-worth and identity as recognised and valued members (social actors) with different social contexts.

^{cxxxix} I conceptualise children's peer group as a form of '*Citizenship Polis*', wherein they enact their citizenship practice as members (*citizen-peers*) of their peer group. Through their peer cultures, children re-form adult-centric ideas about social concepts (such as citizenship) and social practices (based on social hierarchy and social class), which they display through their citizenship practices within their peer group.

^{cxl} At St. Joseph's, children were very involved in the GAA and I noticed that this was an important aspect of their lives at school.

^{cxli} According to Corsaro (2000), '[a]n underlife is a set of behaviours or activities that contradict, challenge, or violate the official norms or rules of an organisation or institution' (p.93).

^{cxlii} The league table was on the school whiteboard; it looked like it was drawn by a child's hand. The table which came first in any classroom activity was awarded a star on the league table.

^{cxliii} There were 29 children in this classroom. Seating arrangements consisted of three tables with approx. 10 children per table. Children's seating arrangements were changed each month, this was a common practice I witnessed throughout my case studies.

^{cxliv} Table names were chosen by the children.

^{cxlv} This was evident at; St. Finbarr's, Oakfields MD, St. Joseph's and St. Assumpta's. I conducted participant observations at these schools.

^{cxlvi} I observed altering seating arrangements was common practice in the four schools I conducted P. O's in (St. Finbarr's, St. Joseph's, St. Assumpta's and Oakfields MD).

^{cxlvii} I asked children to participate in a ‘Marshmallow Challenge’ (See: <https://www.tomwujec.com/design-projects/marshmallow-challenge/>).

^{cxlviii} Children from St. Finbarr’s and Hillcrest ET, referred to these initiatives.

^{cxlix} This voucher exempts the holder from the homework assigned to one subject of their choosing for one night. Children attending Mary Immaculate spoke to me about a similar initiative called ‘Concessions’, which they were given if they did well in their tests in class.

^{cl} This is another example of how children applied certain principals for making decisions. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Five.

^{cli} ‘Golden time’ was given to children who had performed well in class. Whoever got ‘Golden Time’, had 15 - 30mins of ‘free’ time on Friday afternoons where they could choose to do what they wanted. This initiative was used by two respective schools. Children frequently gave this as an example of where they were allowed to make decisions in school. Yet, children could only choose to do certain things from a predefined list of activities approved by their teacher.

^{clii} I observed children would smile openly and they looked happy whenever their teacher praised them.

^{cliii} I introduced the children to the UNCRC and tried to encourage them to develop the notion of individual and collective identity as a way of discussing human rights. The aim of the lesson was to encourage children to conceptualise their classroom as community, where members of the community had individual and collective rights.

^{cliv} I noticed this at St. Finbarr’s and St. Joseph’s.

^{clv} I define *peer lingo* as words or phrases used specifically by children within different social contexts. It is also a form of social code which adults are not privy to.

^{clvi} *savour faire* – is a term which refers to an individual’s ability to act or speak appropriately in social situations.

^{clvii} When I directly asked Darren what ‘*I love Turtos*’ meant, he told me that it referred to a child in a YouTube video who when asked what he would like to have painted on his face exclaimed ‘*I like turtles!*’. This video was seen to be funny and cool, and the phrase was appropriated by the more popular children who regularly used it at random and in different social contexts at this school as a form of cultural capital.

^{clviii} I refer to these schools as *democratically aware*, which I define as schools that have introduced democratic practices as part of their wider school policy. As such, they appear to make more consistent efforts to provide opportunities for children to participate in democratic practices in the classroom and wider school environment. For instance, I observed at Oakfields MD that children had the opportunity to engage in classroom debates and to participate in a Student Dáil.

^{clix} I define ‘safe’ ways of protesting in the classroom as subtle and or covert behaviours which often go unnoticed by teachers.

^{clx} Behaviours which I identify as individual forms of covert resistance included; taking extra time to carry out teacher directed tasks, quietly mimicking what adults say in funny voices, not putting chairs back onto tables at the end of the day, speaking in a funny voice when asked to contribute in class, trying to encourage other children to participate in disruptive behaviours, whispering complaints under their breath, rolling their eyes upwards, sighing audibly, making faces behind their teacher’s back, not following through on instructions, repeating an action after they were told to stop, the continued covert use of books/pens when told not to do so.

^{clxi} As part of this exercise I asked the groups to reach a decision about three different options. I used this technique to observe their behaviours as they tried to reach a consensus in the short amount of time I allotted them. For instance, I asked them; ‘Would you rather stay for longer in school every day if it meant that you had no homework, or, less time at school and extra homework at home?’.

clxii In retrospect, I should have teased the tensions out more which could have given me more of an insight into the internal social dynamics of this group.

clxiii Suffice to say, I cannot infer that no one in this group ever helped Finn; I can only infer from what I saw during my observations.

clxiv I made the decision to speak with both Patricia and Sonia about Finn's unfair treatment. I had concerns for his welfare at this school because he looked withdrawn and unhappy. Fortunately, they had also spotted this and addressed it before I had the chance to say anything to them. Later that day, I told Sonia I also had concerns about Finn's exclusionary treatment by the others. She said they are '*keeping an eye on it*' and thanked me for watching out for this kind of behaviour.

clxv For instance, Finn was the only one who cheered when Sonia (class teacher) announced that Swimming was cancelled, much to the disapproval of the others.

clxvi I suspect this could be because this group did not trust my motives and they were suspicious of my observations of them; perhaps the thought I was divulging information about them to their teachers?

clxvii I used the lessons for primary school teachers outlined in Bernie Collins' (2016) Handbook *Looking outside the circle*, which was developed to fit in with the SPHE primary school curriculum.

clxviii Nelson (2014) refers to an 'underlife' in terms of a 'sub-culture' (p.246).

clxix My findings were generated from; participant observations, group interviews and focus groups.

clxx I conducted participant observations at; St. Finbarr's, Oakfields MD, St. Joseph's and St. Assumpta's.

clxxi St. Finbarr's actively implement a school policy which segregated children by gender.

clxxii St. Finbarr's is a rural coeducational primary school. It has approx. 220 pupils and operates under the patronage of the Catholic Church. The class I observed and conducted focus groups with was an amalgamation of 4th and 5th class pupils.

clxxiii Oakfields MD, St. Joseph's and St. Assumpta's.

clxxiv Oakfields MD, is an urban coeducational school, which operates under the patronage of a Multi Denominational School (approx. 254 pupils). The class I observed and interviewed was an amalgamation of 4th and 5th class pupils.

clxxv Emer asked (permission) to play a male part during their dramatisation of the 1916 Rising, yet, she did not take up the role.

clxxvi St. Finbarr's, in particular, yet, I also noticed some incidences of this at St. Assumpta's.

clxxvii I did not oblige because I did not want the girls to believe only they put their fingers to their lips and not boys too.

clxxviii I noticed that girls from St. Finbarr's and Oakfield's MD did this.

clxxix Female peer leaders were generally confident and vocal in class. They commanded the attention of their peer group members and had more power to influence peer members' behaviours.

clxxx I define *peer lingo* as words or phrases used specifically by children within different social contexts. It is also a form of code which adults are not privy to.

^{clxxx} The Marshmallow Challenge is a team building exercise. The aim of which is for teams to build the tallest free-standing structure (in 18 minutes) out of; 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one yard of string, and one marshmallow. The marshmallow needs to remain balanced on top of the structure for the team to win (Wujec 2015). [See <https://www.tomwujec.com/design-projects/marshmallow-challenge/>].

^{clxxxii} “Go-Go’s” is a colloquial term these girls used to describe an elastic hair band they use to tie their hair into a ‘pony-tail’ hairstyle.

^{clxxxiii} A reward (depending on the school) could be a homework voucher, a subject voucher, extra time during ‘Golden Time’ on Fridays’ or points which could be added to a team’s league table.

^{clxxxiv} As part of my participant observations I also facilitated classroom-based projects, debates and ‘circle-time’ sessions with children.

^{clxxxv} This classroom initiative was used to motivate the children to clean up quickly and to keep order on their work space. It was turned into a competition as whoever the teacher saw had tidied their table the first, was given a star. This star was written onto the league table, the scores for each table were tallied on the classroom whiteboard for all to see and keep track of. I discuss this in more detail in the context of social bonding and solidarity between children in Chapter Seven.

^{clxxxvi} I conducted group interviews on the last day of my visits to schools. This meant that I had no other direct (prolonged) contact with the children after interviews had taken place.

^{clxxxvii} St. Finbarr’s.

^{clxxxviii} Out of my six case studies; three schools had female Principals.

^{clxxxix} St. Finbarr’s and St. Assumpta’s.

^{cxc} See also, Jones 1995; Frønes 2009; Corsaro 1987, 1992, 2000, 2006; Nelson 2014.

^{cxci} I witnessed (at St. Finbarr’s and St. Joseph’s) how children used exclusion to exert pressure on peers who did not adhere to group norms and values, as a way of disciplining them into behaving in-line with wider group social protocol.

^{cxcii} My findings came from a mixture of participant observations and group-interviews, focus group and in-class work sessions with children from 6 different case studies.

^{cxci} I take this from broader conceptualisations of citizenship, for instance, Lister (2003, 2007, 2010), identifies belonging, self-identity, membership, participation, status and agency as core facets of an individuals’ citizenship.

^{cxci} In addition to my observations I asked some groups (St. Finbarr’s - I used different research methods depending upon the level of access and the amount of time I had to engage with children) to complete a worksheet in class called: ‘I would like to sit beside someone who is, who says and, who does’ [See appendix 15 for a copy of this]. In response, they wrote down attributes such as being; ‘kind’, ‘nice’, ‘friendly’, ‘funny’, ‘caring’, ‘thoughtful’ and ‘trustworthy’. These were common qualities valued by children across my case studies, which some also used to describe the attributes of a good citizen. This suggests that children identified similarities between the attributes good citizens (i.e. adults) and friends possess.

^{cxcv} This term refers to an individual’s ability to act or speak appropriately in social situations.

^{cxcvi} I brought it to the teacher’s attention anytime I noticed children being deliberately excluded from peer activities.

^{excvii} Children from St. Finbarr's, Oakfield's MD and Mary Immaculate used the word 'Normal' in their responses to my question during group-interviews; Who makes a good friend? (Oakfield's MD and Mary Immaculate) and, in their written responses to the worksheets about children and citizenship I asked them to complete (St. Finbarr's).

^{excviii} Mountain Dew was regarded by this peer group as having a certain amount of peer cultural capital attached. The younger children were not 'allowed' by adults to drink this beverage at school due to its high sugar content. Regardless, some of the older boys brought the drink in to school and, whoever engaged in this forbidden activity acquired some extra social standing in the younger boys (and some of the girls) peer groups. Furthermore, some of the more popular children - both boys and girls - in the class, often used the term 'Mountain Dew' in their conversations with one another and they frequently placed it within different social contexts. Yet, not all the children in the class were privy to the real social importance attached to this drink. For instance, during my conversation with this group of girls, Mary said to me ... 'like, it's just like 7-up?' and shrugged her shoulders.

^{excix} I spoke to the class' teacher about this incident as I was concerned that this treatment/teasing may be bordering on bullying. She told me that she was aware of Michael and his issues with the other boys and that she was monitoring it.

^{cc} I paused the interview at this stage and asked Nadene if it was OK if I told her teacher about how sad she was feeling about things at home. She agreed and seemed relieved about this. When our interview had finished I went directly to Nadene's teacher and told her of what had happened. She agreed to have a chat with Nadene to ensure she was OK and to see if she needed more support. I also told the school Principal about the incident.

^{cci} I posit if the older children approached them later to find out what I had said.

^{ccii} I choose to conduct interviews in the schoolyard because this bench was overlooked by several classrooms; it was a sunny day and I knew the children enjoyed being in the schoolyard.

^{cciii} Unsuitable play spaces were areas in the schoolyard which were seen to pose some risk to the children, or they were spaces where children were not clearly visible to teachers on yard duty.

^{cciv} I infer the rationale of such a policy was to protect younger children from getting injured in the crossfire between older children's play.

^{ccv} This school appeared to encourage children's collective participation in decision making in class.

^{ccvi} Adults on yard duty were always close by and intervened if the older children could not mediate disagreements between the younger groups.

^{ccvii} Coveted play areas included; green spaces, basketball courts or any other play resource which was in limited supply.

^{ccviii} Namely, these were the spaces and places outside of the classroom, such as school corridors, areas in front of the entrance to classrooms and, the schoolyard.

^{ccix} See also: Holden 2006; Gleeson 2008; Jeffers and O' Connor 2008.

^{ccx} See also: Devine 2004, 2003, 2002; Waldron 2004; McSharry 2008; Richardson 2008; O' Connor 2008; Jeffers 2008, 2012; Gleeson 2008; National Parents Council 2014.

^{ccxi} See also, Lister et al 2003; RAPCAN 2010; Ben-Arieh 2005; Kulynych 2001; Wyness et al 2004; Such and Walker 2005; Cohen 2005.

^{ccxii} I identify important DC to include negotiation, mediation, conflict resolution and decision-making competencies.

^{ccxiii} See also: Devine 2002, 2003, 2009; Deegan et al 2004; Lodge and Lynch 2002; McSharry 2008; de Róiste et al 2012; Yetunde et al 2013; National Parents Council 2014; Waldron et al 2014.