

**Young Thinkers Without Borders:
Critical Consciousness, Social Justice and Resistance – the Experiences of Young
Street Children in Mumbai, India**

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Abstract

It is theorised that power snakes its way through the veins of every society, imposing restrictions and freedoms in unequal measures upon those privileged and “othered”. Freire (1970) critiques “banking” systems of education which recycle power inequities in society, thereby raising the importance of oppressed groups resisting “naturalised” injustices and taken-for-granted assumptions through critical consciousness and a motivation for social justice. Early childhood development (ECD) is particularly relevant to this endeavour, given that institutionalisation and enculturation to ideologies have been shown to develop in the early years of life. Meanwhile, it is now widely accepted that experiences in the early years have lifelong effects on individuals and societies. Several analysts therefore suggest that ECD is a promising entry-point for social justice – particularly in low and middle-income (LAMI) contexts and with vulnerable or disadvantaged communities (Campbell et al., 2014; Heckman, Moon, Pinto, Savelyev, & Yavitz, 2010).

This research investigates the lived experiences of critical consciousness and social justice in a cohort of young street children living in Mumbai, India. The study applies a critical pedagogy lens. Through this lens, critical consciousness and social justice are viewed as theoretical, pedagogical, cultural and ideological ways of thinking, being and doing. Critical consciousness in this study is defined as a process or way of thinking, which interrupts dominant or exclusive social and political powers, in order to achieve social justice. Social justice is defined as the struggle for transformation against unfairness, marginalisation, discrimination and oppression.

The study was conducted over a six-month period with a group of ten street children, aged 3-8 years who attended a drop-in centre run by a non-government organisation (NGO). The study was informed by phenomenology and used the Mosaic approach to collect data with the young children. Data included observations, field notes, drawings, photographs and informal conversations. In this thesis, analyses based on resistance theory, and critical pedagogy focus on critical consciousness and social justice arising from children's experiences of political and social oppression across several (micro and macro) contexts.

The study shows that when children are motivated by social justice, but not critically conscious, their thoughts and behaviours assimilate to dominant ideologies (conformist resistance). However, when children are critically conscious and motivated by social justice, they show resistance to authoritarian figures in educational sites and on the streets. This resistance opens possibilities for transformation as children find alternative ways of solving problems, which reveals the emergence of a sense of social justice through dissent (transformative resistance).

This thesis unpacks the ethical and political power relations underpinning resistance by highlighting how child participants demonstrated understandings of critical consciousness. It is argued that educators can support the emergence of socially just praxis in early childhood systems by building on children's (resistant) agency. Particular attention is given to implications for research, pedagogy and educational praxis.

Statement of Candidate

I certify that the research in this thesis entitled “Young Thinkers Without Borders: Critical Consciousness, Social Justice and Resistance – the Experiences of Young Street Children in Mumbai, India” is my original work and it has not been previously submitted as part of the requirements for a degree to any university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. All the help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information, resources and literature used are identified in this thesis. The Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee approved this research on 12th September 2012 (reference no. 5201200396).

.....

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Date: 23.09.2015

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Prologue

Why is it that the very first version of a story that is heard – is the most powerful one encountered? That even before you can start to ask yourself, what the full story is, you inevitably start to make judgements – to feel and think and want and divide in your mind; what is right, what is wrong, who you like, who you don't, what you'll believe and what you won't. That first version becomes the basis from which you think of and hear all the “other”¹ versions of a story. It is the looking glass from which you see the world of the story through – and by that very virtue, certain ‘ways of doing’, ‘ways of being’ and ‘ways of thinking’ imbibed in that version come to be sub-consciously taken as the ways of doing, being and thinking. Over time, as the first version becomes the most told (and heard), it so happens that its ways seem to seep internally to an understanding of what is natural – and it comes to tell us what we know (or think we know) about the whole story and of everything and everyone in it.

Even if these ways are rigid, irrelevant, de-contextualised, unfair, exclusionary, and oppressive... we begin to pass them on through the simple act of telling and re-telling, from one person to the next – without so much as realising the power hidden in the folds of this unquestioning rote. If a different version of the same story is told, it is judged by the preconceived understandings of the first – either to fit with or to be set aside, because it makes uncertain the credibility of what has now come to be taken-for-granted. As time

¹ The term “other” is used throughout this thesis to signify binaries pertaining to what is considered (that is, socially constructed) to be “normal” and “other”. Mac Naughton (2005) identifies that “othering” inadvertently discriminates, or renders inferior, that which is not dominant in discourse or practice.

passes, because the re-telling of this one version has become the re-telling of the whole story, the question of why comes to be lost against itself – and the answer comes to be: because that is the way it is – as though the act of telling and re-telling has absolved our thoughts of thought-filled words and put our whole consciousness and mindfulness to sleep in its place.

Recognising the power of a version as a version that is lived and living, by thinking and listening, questioning and creating, in order to un-know and re-know the known is the “waking up”, or in other words, critical consciousness, that begins to change the power of a version and a story, by transforming not only words, but also, the role of those telling, as well as those being told. The listening becomes reciprocal as the participation becomes full. The power of “truth” becomes subject to socio-historical critique, as understandings become angled. Previously unknown and untold versions slowly emanate – and small, resistant cracks appear in the oppressive and all-encompassing “dome” of dominant discourses, offering a ray of critical sunlit hope. As this happens, social justice becomes the process by which people chisel their “othered” versions and voices to claw against the restrictions that punish them for refusing to conform to the status quo’s neat boxes and lines. Working against the diktats of socio-educational bureaucracies, social justice educators surmise; that democracy will breathe, if, and when, conformity is no longer the myth to which equality strives.

If, and when, educational systems stop viewing “others” as blank slates, waiting to be turned into the “same”. If, and when, equality, freedom, inclusion, justice and fairness are educational, as well as, societal, political and economic aims. Equality. Inclusion.

Freedom. Justice. Aren't these what education is supposed to be for? Is this not why education is so important? Important enough to be invaluable? Important enough to be dangerous? Important enough that people have died for it? Important enough, that it is a kind of irrevocable power that changes who you are and leaves you with an incalculable view of the world and of yourself; that takes you to a place of mind that you could never before have fathomed, and that you can now never return from again – no matter how much you try, because you can never in your life un-know and un-think what you now know and think.

Critical educators write lovingly of the possibilities – of the ways in which education can (and should) be premised in creating political and ethical entry points through which we can actively struggle for social justice, that is, transformation against all forms of discrimination and oppression. And yet! Critical educators fight the prostitution of education systems to neoliberalism, cultural imperialism, and “depoliticised” technical rationalities that standardise and normalise children, de-skill the teaching profession, and in turn, “educate” the citizenry into internalising and naturalising injustices and inequities that oppress and dehumanise. How is it possible to teach for social justice, in a “democracy” that anesthetizes learning into a process of obedience, silence and uncritical acceptance?

With this in mind, it seems, the real question for critical educators is – what kind of social justice education can work within unequal and unfair systems, to capture the complexity of critical consciousness, as it unfolds in praxis, whilst simultaneously opening avenues for the transformation of immediate and broader forms of political, social,

historical and cultural oppression? It is not possible to easily answer such a question. And yet! What is possible is to find (sometimes unexpectedly) those that work with such questions, and those that do not obey, that do not silence, that do not accept.

This thesis did not start out as a search for these “resisters” - game changers or rebels, radicals or revolutionaries. It began by seeking to explore the ways in which young protagonists react to (or absorb) notions of power, privilege and oppression. This research was originally developed to investigate how this oppression might be interrupted and how a notion of social justice is, or can be, formed. The early childhood years were deemed to be an appropriate arena for this investigation as these years have been identified as laying the foundation for enculturation and transformation – that is, where taken-for-granted ways of being, doing, and thinking are learnt, or can be learnt to be challenged. It was the process of research, which led to listening, understanding and questioning. The process of ‘waking up’, which led to the ‘re-seeing’ of those that interrupt universal truths, of those that voice their own versions, of those that change it, play with it, laugh at it, and of those – motivated by social justice and armed with critical consciousness – that resist, in order to change their worlds and their lives for the better.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis describes the lived experiences and demonstrated understandings of young children in oppressive and/or marginalised situations. The study reported on in this thesis explores young street children's experiences and understandings of social justice and critical consciousness. In particular, the study focuses on the views of street children, and the importance of truly listening to children's lived experiences and understandings. The thesis addresses pertinent gaps in the literature, such as the lack of children's voices regarding social justice, oppression and critical consciousness, the lack of research on marginalised younger children in ongoing situations of injustice, and the lack of research with young street children on these concepts.

In this Introduction Chapter the guiding questions for this research are identified and the research aims are presented. The chapter begins by reviewing dominant and critical discourses surrounding the purposes of education in order to provide a rationale for investigating notions of social justice and critical consciousness. The chapter then canvasses arguments about the potentially transformative nature of education and the significance of the early years to endeavours for critical consciousness and social justice. A justification for the current research is subsequently provided alongside an overview of the literature and the gaps in the literature that guide this research. The theoretical framework and an overview of the research methods and context are also presented (these items are unpacked in more depth in later chapters). The chapter concludes by outlining the structure of this thesis.

1.2 The Purpose of Education in a Crisis-ridden World

Several decades ago bell hooks identified a world in crisis. She wrote:

We live in a world in crisis – a world governed by politics of domination, one in which the belief in a notion of superior and inferior, and its concomitant ideology – that the superior should rule over the inferior – effects the lives of all people everywhere, whether poor or privileged, literate or illiterate. Systematic dehumanisation, worldwide famine, ecological devastation, industrial contamination, and the possibility of nuclear destruction are realities which remind us daily that we are in crisis (hooks, 1989, p. 19).

Over 25 years later several analysts suggest that humanity continues to find itself in increasingly dangerous and uncertain times. Critics write of the corrosive effects of prevailing economic, political and social zeitgeists, highlighting the ways in which exploitation, cultural imperialism, and inequality have come to be justified as parts of “democratic” or “meritocratic” systems (Darder, 2002; Kincheloe, 2008; McLaren, 2005; Robertson & Hill, 2014). Within such frames of reality, Biesta (2015) and Fielding and Moss (2012) urge educators, policy makers, researchers, and the public to critically consider the purpose of education², asking; “what is education for?” (Fielding & Moss, 2012, p. 28), and, what is the role of education in preparing students to meet the dangers and uncertainties that are, or will be, faced by humankind? In response, Biesta (2015) suggests that educational intentions rest in three overlapping aims, the first; to acquire

² Whilst the term ‘education’ itself has had many historical debates with regard to its meaning (Moss & Urban, 2010), this thesis follows Fielding and Moss’s (2012, p. 46) conceptualisation of “education in its broadest sense”. In doing so, this thesis situates the term ‘early childhood education’ within the broader understanding of education as the process of participatory research (Horton & Freire, 1990) that fosters and supports “the general well-being and development of children and young people, and their ability to interact effectively with their environment and to live a good life” (Fielding & Moss, 2012, p. 46).

knowledge, skills and attitudes, the second; to socialise children into cultural, political, social and economic ways of doing, being and thinking, and the third, to develop subjectivities³, personhood or agency.

Extending on these aims, critical educators and theorists argue that the fundamental purpose of education is emancipation from oppressive social relations and the betterment of living (human and environmental) ecologies. Thus, rather than processes of socialisation, which orient learners to socio-historically devised “correct” and “incorrect” ways of thinking, being and doing, these thinkers postulate that what is needed is a *problem-posing education* – one which struggles for critical consciousness and social justice (Shor, 2012). As Freire (1970, 1998) explains, a problem-posing approach to education works to de-familiarise, question and critique ideologies, taken-for-granted “truths” and ways of thinking, being and doing, thereby inventing, re-inventing, and socially co-constructing knowledge together with learners and teachers, through dialogue. Ideology critique or challenging the “natural” process of socialising learners into the existing status quo is therefore fundamental to the pillars of a socially just education (Mac Naughton, 2005). Thus, the relationship between ideology and social justice is canvassed below.

1.2.1 Ideology vs. Social Justice

The role of ideology in education has long been recognised (Robertson & Hill, 2014). Freire (1970, 2005) contends that all educators, wittingly or unwittingly, play a part

³ The notion of developing subjectivities refers to the development of personhood, self (or selves), and “the way[s] in which children... come to exist as subjects of initiative and responsibility” (Biesta, 2015, p. 77).

in embedding or challenging the ideologies and values of the existing system, through the course of everyday learning and teaching moments. As Tesar (2014, p. 362) states “ideology bridges the gap between the system and the *Child*. It provides a purpose to the way the *Child* behaves, acts and lives, no matter how false or true that reasoning is” (see also Chapter 2, section 2.4.1.3 for a discussion of ideology).

Mac Naughton (2005) similarly contends that to teach according to apparently “objective”, “neutral”, or positivist lines of thought is, in fact, the means by which children are encouraged to internalise dominant ideologies and ways of thinking, being and doing. In this way, institutionalised education becomes the perpetuator of caste and class divisions, or a way in which to adopt the values and attitudes of the dominant, oppressor or the elite (hooks, 1989, 2014). Thus for the oppressed or “othered”, to succeed in education, means they need to separate or disembody themselves from the identity and experience of their underprivileged or underclass selves, and the ubiquitous reality of their everyday lives (hooks, 2014). As Tesar (2014) concludes, educational sites can contribute to the internalisation of oppressive discourses and shape individuals subjectivities into maintaining (and therefore perpetuating) the status quo.

To counter this potentially insidious role of education, critical theorists advocate the value of education for social justice. That is, an education geared for collective and/or internal transformation against all forms of discrimination and oppression (Apple, 2010;

Griffiths, 2003; Sleeter, 2015). In opposition to a “banking⁴” approach to education, social justice education involves learners engaging as ethical and political protagonists that combat oppression and act as “citizens of the world⁵” to support the inclusion, participation and equality of all persons, and the betterment of the planet (Adams, Brigham, Whitlock, & Johnson, 2009; Rix, Nind, Sheehy, Simmons, & Walsh, 2010). In turn, theorists suggest that educational institutions are socio-political mechanisms that work to either reproduce or to challenge the status quo (Au & Apple, 2009; Darder, 2002; Giroux, 2001b; Malott, Hill, & Banfield, 2013; Sher & King, 2015). Thus, Freire (1973) argues that the attainment of social justice is inextricably linked to the development of conscientização, that is, critical consciousness and education.

1.2.2 Education and the Development of Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness has been defined as “the ability to perceive social, political, and economic oppression and to take action against the oppressive elements of society” (A. D. Williams, 2008, p. 79). Freire (1973) argues that critical consciousness requires not only awareness but also praxis, that is, informed action and reflection upon the ethical, political, socio-historical, cultural, gendered and economic features of power and domination, in order to change situations of injustice and oppression. Thus, the

⁴ The banking approach to education views learners as blank slates awaiting “deposits” of learning and knowledge from the authoritarian teacher who is the holder of all knowledge (Freire, 1970). In the banking approach to education, learners are required to uncritically rote learn and then regurgitate facts, and information (see also Chapter 2, section 2.4.12).

⁵ To clarify, the notion of children as “citizens of the world” does not refer to “the idea of a new global citizen – cobbled together from a production line of critically-minded consumers who have been educated [to] make good purchasing choices” (McLaren, 2015, p. 2), but rather to critically conscious citizens. These persons recognise their role as citizens as extending beyond the hedges of “patriotism” and affinity to nationalistic goals and groups, to valuing their connectedness, interdependency and belonging on a broader scale. In turn, citizens of the world support the inclusion, participation and equality of all through movements that are local and global.

transformative power of education is predicated on critical consciousness since informed critique of oppression is necessary to cultivating social transformations (Diemer & Li, 2011; Hatcher et al., 2011; McDonough, 2009; Rondini, 2015; Straubhaar, 2015; Zamudio, Bridgeman, Caskey, & Rios, 2009). As Kincheloe (2004) connotes, critical awareness of the multi-layered and interconnected nature of domination forms the basis for holistically understanding what shapes situations of oppression, and how opportunities for resistance might emerge from within.

Critical consciousness thus implies that to vie for social justice is to resist the mass-produced rhetoric of cultural imperialism and capitalism, and to instead identify viable social, political and educational alternatives (Fielding & Moss, 2012; McLaren, 2015). These alternatives, in turn, highlight that the dominant is but one way of thinking, being and doing – and that “other” hidden or silenced ways are equally possible (Mac Naughton, 2005). In this way, education becomes an ethical and political endeavour for social justice, rather than a technical and bureaucratic mechanism for conformity (Giroux, 2014; Moss & Urban, 2010). Education for critical consciousness and social justice are thus seen to be crucial if education is to mobilise learners to address the “real” ethical, political, social, cultural, and historical complexities, that characterise the ever growing global context of calamities.

This section has discussed the importance of critical consciousness to achieving the transformative purpose of education. Extending on this, the subsequent section highlights the role of education, care and development in aiming for social justice and transformative education in/through the early years.

1.3 Early Childhood Development as a Bridge to Social Justice Education

The purpose, function and benefits of education have continued to inform the methods, approaches, practices and structures of educational institutions, from the early years into adulthood. Since the 1960s the role of early childhood education⁶ programs – that is, formal educational programs for children below the age of compulsory schooling – have been flaunted as precursors of school retention and academic success (Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2012). Meanwhile, a host of (neurological, social, economic) disciplines have supported the contention that investments in early childhood development (ECD)⁷ programs for young children provide significant returns to individuals and society (Campbell et al., 2014; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007; Heckman et al., 2010; Kagan & Fox, 2015). ECD has thereby been positioned as a critical period for “investment”, that can pre-emptively address certain symptoms of inequality, caused by economically, socially and politically unjust systems – particularly in low-and-middle-income (LAMI) contexts⁸ and with vulnerable or disadvantaged communities (Grantham-McGregor, 2009; Grantham-McGregor et al., 2007; Heckman et al., 2010; Penn, 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Woodhead, 2009).

⁶ The terms early childhood education and early childhood development are explained below (see Footnote 7). The differences and similarities between these terms are also highlighted.

⁷ The early childhood sector makes use of several terms including ECD (Early Childhood Development), ECCD (Early Childhood Care and Development), ECED (Early Childhood Education and Development) and ECCED (Early Childhood Care, Education and Development). In this thesis, the term ECD is used to refer to an amalgamation of these terms for brevity's sake. The term ECD is taken to reflect the holistic nature of education, care and development that involves young children aged 0-8 years. It is also recognised here, in accordance with Fielding and Moss (2012), that ECD is encompassed under “education in its broadest sense” (p. 46).

⁸ The World Bank (2015a) classifies low-and-middle-income (LAMI) economies as those that have a Gross National Index (GNI) per capita of \$1,045 or less as of 2014. Lower-middle-income economies are those that have a GNI per capita of \$1,046 to \$4,125. According to the World Bank (2015a), India is a lower-middle-income economy. Thus, this thesis uses the term LAMI to refer to the Indian context and, where applicable, to other low-, and lower-middle-income economies.

Whilst recognising the potential impact of early childhood programs on development, critical theorists illuminate the irony of pedestaling institutionalised early childhood education and schooling, when these sites contribute to the division and marginalisation of children in ways that cause (at least in part) these same inequalities (Apple, Au, & Gandin, 2009; Fielding & Moss, 2012; Giroux, 2001b; McLaren, 2003a; Robertson & Hill, 2014) (see also Chapter 2). Key theorists in early childhood emphasise the importance of focussing on notions of quality (and equality) in mobilising ECD spaces for democratic practices (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; D. Hill, 2015; Moss, 2009, 2007). These theorists also attest to the importance of positioning ECD within broader social, political, cultural, economic, social and historical frames of reference. As Dahlberg et al. (2007, p. 10) express:

It seems to us that too much discussion of early childhood occurs in a social, political, economic and philosophical vacuum, as if young children exist apart from the world, as if concepts like quality and child development are ahistorical and free of value and context, and as if the needs and problems that early childhood institutions are so often asked to address (inequality, exclusion, dislocation) have fallen out of a clear blue sky.

Fielding and Moss (2012) further indicate that positioning ECD as an ethical and political endeavour requires critical understanding of social, political, cultural, economic and historical oppressors. They argue that the comprehension of these elements facilitates the development of avenues for resistance, and/or feasible socio-educational alternatives that are relevant to the current state of the world.

This section has provided a background and overview of notions of critical consciousness and social justice, highlighting the role and interplay of these constructs to education and social transformation. Unpacking these key terms within the context of the current research, the following segment outlines the rationale and aims underscoring this study.

1.4 Rationale for the Current Research

Contrary to the broad recognition of existing or immanent crises and injustices, and the value afforded to ECD and educational institutions as being “equalising” sites of innovation and social justice, Fielding and Moss (2012) note that the majority of education systems around the world remain fastidiously unequal and “irrelevant to the enormous dangers facing humankind” (p. 28). As Darder (2002, p. 2) states:

Despite a blatant concentration of wealth and its harsh impact on subordinate populations, schools continue to view social conflicts and conditions of inequality as if their primary causes were the intellectual deficiencies or psychological problems of individual students... by so doing, they ignore the structural conditions of social injustice and economic inequality at work in the process of schooling.

Consequently, marginalised and oppressed groups in LAMI contexts, such as street children⁹, are particularly prey to being “socially excluded or at risk of failure in various systems or contexts, including education, future employment, and access to ‘the good life,’ or middle-class opportunities” (Swadener, 2010, p. 7). Research suggests that such groups are also the most likely to bear the cost of the dangers and uncertainties faced by

⁹ A definition of street children is provided in section 1.8.3.

humankind¹⁰ (Fielding & Moss, 2012). Yet political, economic, social and cultural research, policy and practice recognise that public education is fundamental to the development of human, social and economic capital in an increasingly globalised world (Kamens & McNeely, 2010). Congruently, social and educational thinkers suggest that education holds vast potential for the introduction or amelioration of citizenship, social justice, equality and humanisation (Freire, 1976, 2004; Freire & Araújo Freire, 1994; D. Hill, 2012; McLaren, 2015).

In recognition of the Dr.-Jekyll-and-Mr.-Hyde-like moral character of education, Giroux notes, there is a need to “combine a discourse of critique and resistance with discourse of possibility and hope” (as cited in Fielding & Moss, 2012, p. 17). Consequently, in opposition to an irrelevant, conformist, crisis producing and status quo system of education, Freire (1973, 1976) writes of the importance of developing educational understandings of social justice, and critical consciousness, particularly with marginalised and oppressed groups – these assertions form the basis of this research.

This part of the chapter has provided a rationale for the current study; the following segment outlines the aims underpinning this research.

1.5 Research Aims

This research is underscored by several overlapping aims. These aims are derived from gaps in the literature, the importance of participatory methods in researching with

¹⁰ An overview of the challenges faced by street children in the Indian context is provided in Chapter 5, section 5.9.5.

young children, and the rationale for investigating with young children in marginalised contexts. These also emerge as a result of the recognised importance of social justice and critical consciousness in the literature (see Chapter 3), and to the researcher¹¹.

Accordingly, the current research was informed by the following aims:

1. To investigate the ways in which social, cultural, historical and political contexts shape young children's experiences and understandings of social justice and critical consciousness in the early years.
2. To investigate the ways in which young children identify, and address the social injustices that they encounter through their own lived experiences.
3. To investigate how young children are critically conscious of the social injustices that they encounter through their lived experiences.
4. To investigate the ways in which children are motivated by social justice to act on the injustices they encounter through their lives.
5. To investigate the ways in which children use critical consciousness to inform their actions for/against the injustices they face through their own lived experiences.

In order to address these aims, the research is spliced into one primary research question, and two sub-research questions.

1.6 Research Questions

Addressing the aims of this research, the gaps in literature and the rationale for this research, the primary research question asks:

¹¹ The researcher's motivation for conducting the current study is discussed under section 1.10.1.1.

1. How do young children demonstrate their understandings and lived experiences of social justice and critical consciousness?

In order to address the overarching research question, two sub-questions were considered, these are:

- a. What are young street children's demonstrated understandings and lived experiences of social justice?
- b. What are young street children's demonstrated understandings and lived experiences of critical consciousness?

This section has identified the key research question and sub-questions guiding this study. The next part of this chapter outlines gaps in the literature in order to showcase how the current research addresses these existing gaps.

1.7 Gaps in Literature

Literature suggests that the research on social justice and critical consciousness is increasingly diverse and cross-disciplinary (Watts, Diemer, & Voight, 2011). Crests of research waves have focussed on social justice and critical consciousness across many sectors. These include 1) civic engagement for social change (Grabe, Dutt, & Dworkin, 2014; Nic a Bháird, 2013; Windsor, Jemal, & Benoit, 2014), 2) social work (Bransford, 2011; Nicotera & Kang, 2009), 3) youth development and activism (Diemer, 2012; Foster-Fishman, Law, Lichty, & Aoun, 2010; Hope, Skoog, & Jagers, 2015; Shin et al., 2010), 4) health (Hatcher et al., 2011), and, most predominantly, 5) education (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Han, 2013; Hope et al., 2015; R. Kohli, 2012; Nishida & Fine, 2014; Winans-Solis,

2014). However, despite the growing attention afforded to social justice, and critical consciousness, in educational literature, some gaps remain. Gaps specifically within the parameters of education and ECD are explored in this chapter¹² and the concomitant significance of this research is discussed.

Hawkins (2014b), Glover (2001) and Mac Naughton (2003a, 2003b) indicate that although an ample body of literature explores children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development, little research seems to have focused on developments of social justice and critical consciousness in young children. For example, whilst there is empirical research to indicate that children's experiences and understandings of diversity and difference develop during the early years of life (Connolly, 1998, 2011; Connolly & Hayden, 2007; Keenan, Connolly, & Stevenson, 2015), only a handful of studies consider children's development of critical consciousness (Butler, 1998; Silva & Langhout, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2009). When the literature does incorporate a focus on social justice in ECD, this focus has tended to be on teachers' or pre-service teachers' perspectives about teaching for social justice (Bentley & Reppucci, 2013; Christman, 2010; Hyland, 2010; R. Kohli, 2012; Picower, 2011; Schoorman, 2011). Of the literature in this area, several publications suggest that practitioners, and pre-service teachers consider social justice issues of race, class and sexuality to be "irrelevant" to children in the early years (Boutte, Lopez-Robertson, & Powers-Costello, 2011; Han, 2013).

Thus, whilst numerous researchers have engaged youth, adolescents and adults in participatory investigations to unpack notions of social justice and critical consciousness

¹² A more comprehensive review of the literature is provided in Chapter 3.

(Cruz, 2013; Foster-Fishman et al., 2010; Shin et al., 2010; L. Smith, Bratini, & Appio, 2012), young children have been largely “othered” in this body of research (Hawkins, 2010). Recognising this gap in the literature, several advocates have called for the use of participatory approaches in truly listening to, and valuing children’s lived experiences of critical consciousness and social justice (Bentley, 2012; Bentley & Reppucci, 2013; Boute et al., 2011; Hawkins, 2014a; Kinash & Hoffman, 2008). Innovative methods, such as the *Mosaic approach*¹³ for investigating with young children, have recently come to be widely adopted to fill this void in the literature (Clark & Moss, 2005, 2011). However, the majority of research using participatory approaches to investigate young children’s understandings and experiences of social justice and critical consciousness, has tended to emerge from Western contexts (Hyland, 2010).

Goodman and West-Olatunji (2009) argue that it is vital for research relating to critical pedagogy to engage with the marginalised and oppressed groups who are most likely to experience situations of injustice. Beyond the scarcity of research which incorporates the views of children below the age of eight, even less research has been conducted with cohorts of young children in marginalised contexts (Harcourt & Einarsdottir, 2011). Street children have been identified as particularly likely to experience compounded and concentrated effects of social, political, economic, and cultural injustice (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014; Glauser, 2015) (see also Chapter 5, section 5.9). Street children and families have also been identified as a growing population, increasingly

¹³ The Mosaic approach describes an inclusive way of listening to young children in research. It involves multiple tools (for example, such as photography, drawings, and conversations) for collecting data and provides young children authentic, relevant and respectful avenues to be heard (Clark, 2005b, 2007; Clark & Moss, 2011) (further information on the Mosaic approach can also be found in Chapter 4, section 4.5).

visible in public spaces, yet excluded from public services (Thomas de Benítes, 2011). Despite this, few studies could be found which focus on street children's experiences of social in/justice during their early years. This is particularly significant given that manifold interventions for supporting the physical, social, economic, and political developments of marginalised children, families and communities target ECD programs and practices (Hayden & Wai, 2013).

There is a substantial body of literature which positions ECD spaces as “community hubs” that support the holistic development of children (through affording access to integrated health and community services, and parental supports) (Dickinson, Lothian, & Jonz, 2007; Spies, 2011; Whalley, 2006). There is also a body of research (mostly from high-income contexts), which highlights the importance of ECD sites being loci of democratic, ethical and political praxis (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Moss, 2014, 2015b). However empirical research which addresses the potential of ECD settings as ethical and political “community hubs” for social justice and social change in LAMI contexts is less evident.

Informed by the philosophical, theoretical and ideological underpinnings of critical pedagogy, the current research attends to the gaps in the literature by investigating how young street children's lived experiences and understandings of social justice (and/or injustice), and critical consciousness emerge through the course of children's everyday lives in the context of Mumbai, India. These understandings are premised on the notion that children are active social and political protagonists who are experts in relation to their lives (Thapliyal, 2015a).

This section has addressed the gaps in the literature that this thesis addresses. The subsequent segment provides an overview of the context in which this research was conducted.

1.8 Research Context

Analysts who investigate critical consciousness and social justice tend to advocate for the importance of research with oppressed and marginalised groups in diverse contexts (Kincheloe, 2008). In light of this, the current research focuses on young street children in the context of urban Mumbai, India. An in-depth overview of the research context is provided in Chapter 5, however, an orientation to the research context, including the definition of street children is presented here.

1.8.1 India

In the Indian context, substantial social injustices have arisen from unequal power relations, and the influences of history, society, culture, religion, class and politics¹⁴ (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Recognisably, India is a diverse country full of rich history and culture. Subsequent to achieving independence from the British in 1947, India has grown in both the literal, economic, and technological sense, as well as in its experiences of the “crises” demarcated by hooks (1989). India is frequently depicted as a land of many parallels – spiritual tourism and Bollywood, an increasingly modern site with diverse and traditional cultures, the birthplace of yoga and the scene of a hyper-pressurised workforce,

¹⁴ The information in this section relies on secondary sources, and is primarily gleaned from the work of historians such as Kulke and Rothermund (2004), Metcalf and Metcalf (2006), and Stein (1998), who provide multiple perspectives of Indian history.

the site of vast rural tea plantations as well as urban overcrowding, a caste based yet sectarian society, and a site of the powerful, privileged and wealthy, who live above the streets occupied by the poor (A. Kohli, 2012; Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Since the focus of this research is on understanding young children's experiences of social in/justice and critical consciousness, a brief overview of the Indian context is offered here. This section focuses on key macro factors influencing social in/justices for oppressed groups in this context, such as on globalisation and discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, and class.

In recent times, India, with a population of 1.252 billion people (World Bank, 2013), has often been cited as a growing economic power (N. Singh, 2015; Thapliyal, 2015b). Yet analysts note that globalisation and capitalism in India have contributed to acute poverty, and seen entire communities of families and children/individuals living on the street (Moeller, 2015). This poverty, worsened by neoliberal, globalised and unequal economic realities, and the lack of public investment (Thapliyal, 2015b), has been accompanied by the exploitation, theft and abuse of children, particularly from marginalised groups (Ganesan & Gossman, 1996; Mathur, Rathore, & Mathur, 2009; Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2007). Pertinently, authority figures, such as the police – tasked with protecting and supporting the public – are known as the perpetrators of violence, who mistreat oppressed groups, such as street children (Ganesan & Gossman, 1996; Human Rights Watch, 1996). Accumulatively, India's socio-political system is rife with bribery and corruption that further limits public investment in education, health and social welfare (Batta, 2015; Dreze & Sen, 1999). At the same time, increasing numbers of grassroots movements have sprung up, with several NGOs and civil

society organisations pouring themselves into gaps in public services – thereby supporting the health, education and social welfare of marginalised and oppressed groups (R. Thara, 2015).

Simultaneously, the cultural history of patriarchy in the Indian context sees female infanticide and the pervasive ill treatment of women justified along religious, cultural and social lines, leading to other situations such as slavery, child marriage and the continuation of the dowry system, despite legal sanctions (National Crime Records Bureau, 2013; Shukla, 2015). Compounding this, despite the introduction of the seminal *Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009*, Bhushan Malik (2015) and Thapliyal (2012, 2015b) argue that the actualisation of rights ‘to’ and ‘in’ education are still developing, and that “contrary to the neoliberal argument, the right to education is not fulfilled by providing access to education for all children. Nor can quality education be measured solely through quantification and testing which reduces teachers to substitutable service-delivery personnel” (Thapliyal, 2012, p. 88). A range of research also identifies that, despite high rates of enrolment in the early years of schooling, gender differences in access to education increase as children grow older (Azam & Kingdon, 2013; Barcellos, Carvalho, & Lleras-Muney, 2014). Analysts also argue that educational inequality is proliferated through perceived discrepancies between the quality of public and private schooling in India, which further perpetuate social hierarchies and stratifications (Rhines Cheney, Brown Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2006; Woodhead, Frost, & James, 2013).

Caste and class hierarchies created by socio-historical, religious and cultural practices have further contributed to the juggernaut of socio-cultural, economic and

political injustices experienced by marginalised groups, such as the Dalits – that is, the oppressed castes in Indian society (Lamsal, 2012; Ovichegan, 2015) (see also Chapter 5, section 5.4.1 for a discussion of the caste system). Despite the implementation of various positive discrimination policies, and “education for all” strategies; numerous reports suggest that experiences of discrimination, dehumanisation and oppression are still of critical concern (Nambissan & Sedwal, 2002). The caste system is also seen to affect poverty (Rao, 2010), inequality, social exclusion (Ovichegan, 2015), stigma (Gandhi, 1954), experiences of social injustice (Ovichegan, 2015) and overlapping access to resources such as health, education, power and prestige.

Given that India is a vastly diverse nation, the experiences of its people in terms of history, society, politics, economics, culture, gender, religion and education vary significantly across state and city boundaries. In light of this, as the context of Mumbai and the experiences of street children are particularly relevant to this research, these elements have been unpacked below.

1.8.2 Mumbai

Analysts have described Mumbai as a crucible of contradictions (Moeller, 2015). Mumbai is India’s business and financial capital, and has the highest GDP of any city in India (Bhagat & Jones, 2013). It also is a major port for foreign trade and sees a wealth of international visitors. As the financial capital, Mumbai sees an estimated 100 to 300 families arrive daily from other parts of the country (UNICEF, 2012).

Consequently, Mumbai has been identified as the most unequal and least homogenous city in India (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013). Mumbai has the poorest distribution of wealth and has been riddled with violence erupting from religious and ethnic tensions (Pacione, 2006). Many families who come to Mumbai in search of employment end up in slums due to lack of economic opportunities (UNICEF, 2012). Mumbai is home to Bollywood, which is the largest film industry in the world (Dewey, 2012). Notably, Bollywood is said to be one of the reasons children run away from their homes to Mumbai (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013). Over 60% of Mumbai's population are squatters (Pacione, 2006), and one third of all households in Mumbai do not have adequate access to safe drinking water – leading to the increased prevalence of disease due to inadequate sewerage facilities (Pacione, 2006). Seasonal flooding due to monsoons present further problems for families and children living on the street, and raise the prevalence of water borne diseases such as malaria (Kale & Joshi, 2012). However, Mumbai has an active civil society, with a range of NGOs operating to support oppressed and marginalised groups across the city (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013).

In the subsequent section, definitions and information on street children and an overview of the Indian context is presented (a more detailed analysis of the context and the conditions faced by street children is provided in Chapter 5, section 5.9).

1.8.3 Street Children

This section unpacks definitions of street children, and outlines the prevalence of street children across the world. Some common characteristics of street children are also

discussed before a rationale for engaging with young street children in this research is provided.

1.8.3.1 Definition of street children.

Several researchers indicate that street children are a difficult group to define or quantify (Aptekar, 2014; Naterer & Lavrič, 2015; Thomas de Benítes, 2011). Thomas de Benítes (2011) gives two reasons for this, noting firstly, “that street children do not in reality form a clearly defined, homogeneous population but instead constitute a subject constructed through discourses in the literature” (p. 8) and secondly, that children are agents and social protagonists with diverse lived experiences. Thomas de Benítes (2011) also suggests that part of the difficulties associated with defining street children has been due to the tensions between “policy/intervention planning and social researchers’ increasing focus on children’s perspectives” (Thomas de Benítes, 2011, p. 8). Given that there are many diverse definitions for street children available in the literature, this thesis outlines the three waves of definitions of street children before providing an understanding of what the concept of “street children” is taken to mean in the context of this research.

Pervasive definitions of street children have built on UNICEF’s definition of children as being children “on” the street, “of” the street, and, children from street families. Glauser (2015) draws on UNICEF’s definition to differentiate children “on” and “of” the street – noting that children “of” the street tend to refer to children who live on the streets, as opposed to children “on” the street, who are employed on the streets but return to their homes on a regular basis. In contrast, children from street families are children who live on the streets with their families (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014; Kombarakaran, 2004). The

majority of children in this research fell into this final category. This definition of street children has been critiqued for its propensity to over-simplify the multidimensional nature of children's street-based lives (Thomas de Benítez, 2011), however, these categorical definitions have also been used to argue for children's inclusion in legal categories for child protection, and in programs differentiating the needs and experiences of different street populations (Swadener, 2010).

A second wave of research has viewed the concept of street children as being socially constructed, thereby defining street children as social actors in street situations. As Aptekar (2014) notes, the social construction of street children implies that children experience situations of vulnerability, rather than being themselves inherently vulnerable. Therefore, in defining the construct of "street children", Aptekar (2014, p. 9) suggests:

Instead of a typology of "street children", it would be better to elaborate a typology of "street situations", which included the subjective relationship a child may develop within a given setting. This approach obliges the researcher to understand the meaning attached by specific children to street life; the emphasis is on the interactions the child builds with other people. Thus the child is a social actor which is in line with the child-rights approach. This means that we should not be so concerned about the number of children found in the street but the quality of their life in and off the street.

The third wave of definitions of street children have moved away from deficit views of children on the street, problematizing existing definitions as stigmatising children that use the streets (Thomas de Benítez, 2011). Definitions from the third wave focus on

children as mobile citizens and political actors that hold distinct rights as children.

However, Thomas de Benítez (2011) argues that a “full focus on child rights risks missing individual children’s mix of experiences and needs through universal or broad-based policy-making” (p. 10).

In accordance with the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogy framing this research, the construct of street children is understood in this research to be a socio-politically constructed notion. Street children are thus defined here as; active and mobile young social and political protagonists, who (either living with their families or by themselves) experience the ways of thinking, being and doing of the streets, through living and working on the streets, or by sharing a sense of belonging to its people and/or environments.

This section has reviewed key definitions of street children from the literature and provided an overarching understanding of what the construct of “street children” refers to in the context of this research. The subsequent section draws on research literature to delineate the prevalence and characteristics of street children around the world.

1.8.3.2 Prevalence and characteristics.

This section provides a short overview of the prevalence and experiences of street children. Specifically, the common characteristics and challenges faced by street children are elucidated here in order to discuss assumptions and understandings of street children evident within the literature.

Researchers suggest that little is known about the prevalence of street children across the world, since street children are generally a mobile group, and it is therefore difficult to estimate or count overall numbers (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014; Thomas de Benites, 2011; UNICEF, 2006). Recent estimates from UNICEF (2006) suggest that the number of street children “runs into tens of millions across the world” (p. 40). As a range of research indicates that street children are not a homogenous group, a body of literature has contributed to understanding the dynamic experiences of young children living on the streets. This research indicates that whilst poverty remains a significant influencing factor in the prevalence of street children, other circumstances also play a part. Thomas de Benites (2011) highlights that worldwide, the role of natural disasters, parental deaths, family dysfunction, social violence, exclusion and social-political factors have been pertinent contributors. Notably, other research indicates that characteristics of street life vary according to context (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2014).

Research in the Indian context indicates that street children experience abuse, exploitation, harm, drug abuse or violence (Kombarakaran, 2004; Mathur et al., 2009; A. Singh & Purohit, 2011). Gurumurthy (2000) and A. Singh and Purohit (2011) have also reported on the prevalence of public health issues experienced by Indian street children, such as HIV/AIDS, and drug abuse. This is similar to international research by Thomas de Benites (2011), who suggests that street children tend to experience various forms of anxiety and depression. Contrary to such depictions of street children as vulnerable and ‘at risk’, a number of studies have also presented children on the street as being highly resilient and independent agents (Kombarakaran, 2004; L. Young & Barrett, 2001b). Thus, whilst several researchers have conducted research “on” street children, many analysts

now call for further research to be completed “with” street children (Van Beers, 1996; L. Young & Barrett, 2001a, 2001b). This research addresses this gap by adopting participatory methods in eliciting the views of young street children.

This segment has reviewed common characteristics, challenges and attributes ascribed to street children by researchers. Extending on understandings of the strengths of street children, the subsequent section provides a rationale for researching with young street children.

1.8.3.3 Rationale for researching with young street children.

Researchers highlight the importance of engaging marginalised groups in projects that focus on self-determination, emancipation, social change and critical consciousness (Hope et al., 2015; Winans-Solis, 2014; Windsor et al., 2014). In the context of education, Butler (1998) writes of the importance of exploring young children’s lived experiences and views of social justice through personalised and contextualised learning experiences. This is particularly relevant to oppressed groups, such as street children, whose experiences of social injustice indicatively form a significant feature of their lives (Thomas de Benítez, 2011).

Correspondingly, this research engages street children in an effort to authenticate the experiences of those existing at the margins of society. The research is founded on understanding how children’s experiences and understandings of critical consciousness and social justice can challenge existing systemic inequities and taken-for-granted assumptions – in turn capitalising on children’s political agency, experiences and understandings to

inform broader praxis and policy. The final element informing the rationale for focussing on street children lies in the aim of this research to engage children's expertise in understanding, and problematizing their daily experiences of inequality and social justice, so that avenues for considering possible "social alternatives" can emerge (Fielding & Moss, 2012).

This portion of the chapter has drawn on a range of literature to justify the importance of researching with young street children. The sequential segment outlines the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This research is informed and positioned by critical pedagogy. Popkewitz and Fendler (1999) write that critical pedagogy addresses the "relations among schooling, education, culture, society, economy, and governance... [it] proceeds from the assumption that pedagogical practices are related to social practices, and that it is the task of the critical intellectual to identify and address injustices in these practices" (p. xiii). In the context of education, critical theory is concerned with the relationship between pedagogies and socio-political situations, and the ways in which educational sites can perpetuate or challenge the reproduction of inequities.

This section has outlined the theoretical framework supporting this research. The theoretical, political, philosophical and ideological tenets of this research and its alignment with critical pedagogy are further addressed in the Chapter 2. The following section discusses the methodologies and tools adopted for this research.

1.10 Methodology

The current study used a qualitative case study approach to investigate young children's lived experiences and understandings of social justice and critical consciousness in the context of urban Mumbai, India. The case study approach was informed by phenomenology and the Mosaic approach for researching with children (see Chapter 4, section 4.5 for a discussion of the Mosaic approach). Data was collected over a period of six months. As the Mosaic approach advocates the use of multiple methods to support multi-layered understandings for truly listening to young children, several data collection strategies were used for this investigation (Clark & Moss, 2011). This included observations, conversations, dialogues, photographs, drawings, and child-led tours. The continued process of data collection over the duration of six months enabled the researcher to interpret data with children before coding data into themes. Children's interpretations offered additional layers of insights or angles into their perspectives, experiences and understandings – these were used to supplement and inform data analysis procedures. After the completion of fieldwork, data were transcribed in verbatim and/or scanned before being imported into a computer assisted data analysis software program for analysis. Data analysis was inductively and thematically conducted, with key themes emerging from multiple data sources (see Chapter 4).

1.10.1 Bracketing

As phenomenological research seeks to elucidate meanings and understandings of phenomena as they are experienced, the process of bracketing invites the researcher to set aside, or to be conscious of, one's own preconceived understandings – or, the influences of

the many social, historical and political selves within the self¹⁵. McMillan (2004) has suggested that bracketing strengthens the internal validity of a research, as it enables the researcher to make oneself holographic (visible and yet transparent) in the research, such that both the reader and researcher can see through the existing “predilections, prejudices, predispositions, [thereby] allowing things, events, and other people to enter anew into consciousness, and to look and see them again, as if for the first time” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). Freire (1970) suggests that it is necessary for researchers to be conscious of the productions of knowledge and culture that constantly become and unfold as ‘reality’. The purpose of this bracketing section, therefore, is first to bring to the surface, the apparent taken-for-granted assumptions and biases underlying the score upon which the researcher’s reality has been lived, and upon which this research has taken place. The second aim of bracketing is to question the power that brews particular ways of being, doing, thinking and living and the influences of these upon the research/er.

1.10.1.1 Researcher’s version of a story

Borrowing from the prologue, I¹⁶ reiterate here, that “the very first version of a story encountered – is the most powerful” (see prologue, p. 1). In recognition of this, I begin with a prelude acknowledgement of three points: firstly, the story told here is incomplete because it is written without the voices and perspectives of the others with whom it was lived. Secondly, I echo the sentiment forwarded by Smith (as cited in Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 19), that since no truth is neutral, “it is with political intent that I should choose my truths.” Every endeavour has therefore been made here to portray the

¹⁵ Further explanations of phenomenology and the phenomenological process of bracketing are provided in Chapter 4 under section 4.4.

¹⁶ As this is the researcher’s recount or “bracket” it is written in the first person.

links to influences upon my thinking. Third, I acknowledge that this study has focussed on a cultural group to which I do not belong. Nor have I ever, in the course of my life, had any real knowledge of what it is like to be a child living on the street. I therefore write from a position of socio-economic, racial and class privilege – the ethics and politics of which I have sought to foreclose and contemplate through this bracketing process. Broadly, this bracketing section covers my early experiences, education, teaching, researching and continually developing ideas about social justice, critical consciousness, education and power.

I am a Parsi, Indian and an Australian. I was born and lived in Bombay (now Mumbai) during my early years in a building clustered with apartments looking out across the infinite assignment of balcony after balcony and street after street – I did not then think about the ironic parallels of what people called home. Although I always knew the streets were filled with many people, we never left the confines of our building gates to encounter children ‘out there’. After the brutality of the (Hindu-Muslim) riots¹⁷, and the uncensored violence we saw through the media and in real life, my older sister was careful to obey the instructions given to her for protecting our safety and wellbeing. When we did venture out, (with an adult), we were implicitly taught to be silent, to ignore the beggars, street sellers, eunuchs and other approaching strangers. Silence, I think now, is the in(di)visible barrier fuming the contempt of “others”, reproducing the divide of “us” against “them” (Foucault, 2002). The recognition of this imbalance of power and privilege lends me now to consider a question posed by hooks (1989): do I have a right, to write about the experiences of the

¹⁷ This refers to the “Mumbai riots”, which occurred from December 1992 to January 1993, and in which approximately 900 persons were killed (Menon, 2012).

children in this study? Perhaps? Perhaps not? I move forward however with the conviction that the core principles of this research have sought to bring forward and value these children's voices, viewing them as "subjects" as opposed to "objects" (Freire, 1970) and, in struggling with them, I have sought, through this research to challenge the ideas, practices and structures of domination that I was once uncritically and mindlessly a part of myself.

With considerable chance and luck, my immediate family migrated to Sydney, Australia when I was seven years old. To my youthful displeasure and later gratitude, my family valued education above everything else. We were (and still are) often reminded, that it is education that affords opportunities, securities and enables the wellbeing of family and self. I started some form of "school" when I was two-and-a-half years old and have been studying almost continuously ever since. My grandparents and parents fought for (and sometimes with) us to study as much and as hard as we possibly could – perhaps because they did not always have the chance to do so themselves.

Following the interval of a few years, as our identities became increasingly 'Australian' (among other things), when we went back to India to visit our extended family, I noticed the constellation of cultural contradictions, idiosyncrasies and fallacies evident in our experience of cultural ways of being that I had not seen before. I became increasingly wary of what I perceived was "the misogynic need to regulate women" (Cannella, 2002, p. 158) because of what it was appropriate to wear, how it was appropriate to behave, what we were allowed to do and where we were (and were not) allowed to go. I remember vocalising how unfair it was that my male cousins were free

from having to understand these rules and behavioural guides. The more I began to perceive these, the more I became trapped in the space between the two identities (Australian and Indian) that made me both an insider and an outsider, at the same time.

My family never asked “if” we were going to go to university, we were taught to assume that a university degree was a necessary minimum requirement in life, and as such, we were expected to go, no matter what we chose to study – or how they needed to support us to get through. When I ask myself now why it was so important to have a degree, I think of the role of ‘academic inflation’ (Robinson, 2001), and the use of a degree as a form of currency in a world increasingly led by globalisation, privatisation and market-based values (Kamens & McNeely, 2010). My understanding of what I thought the purpose of education was then (to get a job) to what it is now (social transformation) reminds me how certain ways of *thinking* and *doing* education, have come to be *the* ways, and how we unquestioningly pass on these particular ideas and their actualisations (such as the importance of standardised testing, rote learning, intelligence as being testable usually based on logico-mathematical and literary proficiencies, and the linear, compartmentalised and subject-based structure of schooling), without recognising the ideologies within (of a ‘neutral’ education, lead by individualistic assumptions, to reproduce the status quo) (Fielding & Moss, 2012; Freire, 1970). Though I know not all education systems and practices are homogenous, it was not until after I started my degree, and later my doctorate in early childhood that I really began to understand the impact of these lingering dominant discourses and regimes of truth (Foucault, 2002; Mac Naughton, 2005), and the counter importance of criticality in our thinking about, and acting for, social justice through education in the early years.

It was not until four days before the deadline closed for putting in university admission preferences that I chose to become an early childhood teacher. As the first person in my immediate and extended family to choose this profession, I faced some initial reservations, presumably due to our “Indian ways” of privileging “prestigious” occupations and the less-than-favourable ideologies underlying early childhood’s professionalism, power, remuneration and prestige (Smulyan, 2004). I encountered this subtle undercurrent throughout my degree and work experience as both an unqualified, and then qualified, teacher. It was this irony that led me to investigate the power of education versus that of educators in my honours project, which focussed on the role of educators’ advocacies in raising the professional status. Regardless of these perceptions, I still held a firm belief that the early years were key to supporting broader social changes.

When I graduated from Macquarie University in 2010 I was working as a teacher in a long day care setting, where I had worked throughout my degree. However, after graduation, I left Sydney and went back to Mumbai, to volunteer for three months with another graduate teacher and close friend. We worked together with young street children at the same drop in centre¹⁸ where this research was conducted, and it was during this time that we spoke broadly about ideas concerning social justice, educational opportunity and how power through ‘governance’ (Foucault, 2002; Mac Naughton, 2005) flowed through this system, and who’s interests the current education system served. Freire’s (1970, p. 53) symptomatic description of “the ‘banking’ concept of education” began to take life here, as

¹⁸ In the interests of brevity, the term “the centre” is used throughout this thesis to refer to the NGO site where this research was conducted.

our work and contextual understandings developed further. Coming from an early childhood background, it seemed only natural to us (though perhaps not culturally appropriate) to reflect on questions about what Fielding and Moss (2012) call ‘social alternatives’. We wondered how to work with(in) the system, in order to “gnaw off the arm of the system a little bit” (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 229), quietly questioning the ‘myth’ of education being an entry-point for social mobility, in a heavily marketised system, that seemed to work on the basis of decontextualized learning, linearity, obedience, rote learning and fearful silence (anti-dialogue).

This criticality also brought with it a glimmer of understanding of other things – such as; ideas about resilience, humour, resistance, hope, strengths, human connectedness and human (as opposed to material) resources. Even though, at the time we engaged as much as possible in facilitating play-based learning, I think now that it was shallow, as embedding these “other” ways of being and learning into pedagogy and praxis were perhaps sub-consciously anchored by our need to *survive* the teaching day in the way the system, language, culture and context required. As I reflect on this, it brings back questions of power and authenticity – how can educators recognise, and then move beyond, the surface of tokenistic and inauthentic learning to powerful and truly emancipatory praxis with students?

After returning from Mumbai, I was able to get a job as a research assistant on another international project in Cambodia through Professor Hayden (who later became my PhD supervisor). This afforded me the opportunity to understand the broader politic of policy-based educational implications and how things looked and worked – the

accountability, structure and inner workings of educational systems – from the other side of the divide.

I began my doctoral studies after returning to Sydney that same year and became increasingly aware of the importance of both critical thinking, and critical consciousness, regardless of context. Readjusting to “Australian” life challenged my ideas about what I had previously taken for granted as being available, accessible and “normal”. For my colleague and I, it was hard to convert our ideas back like currency (one dollar, that’s two whole meals!), and we made countless sarcastic jokes of people’s first world complaints using the idiom ‘dear sponsor child’ in order to deal with the injustice and inequality that we knew constituted just another reality, another ‘way of being’. ‘Dear sponsor child, there’s just too much food that won’t fit in our fridge, it’s so stressful’, ‘dear sponsor child, I can’t believe I dropped my ice cream’. Not that we were immune from having our own ‘dear sponsor child’ moments, but these slightly odd ways of recognising inequality formed the basis for continued and sustained research and reflection – and also led me to meet with the impassioned work of more writers in the field of critical pedagogy (such as Apple, Freire, Giroux, hooks, Kincheloe, McClaren, Steinberg, and others).

As my studies progressed, what had always been in the background slowly emerged to the fore – education came back to critical consciousness and social justice. I returned to India halfway through the candidature to collect data. In my absence, Mumbai had undergone some significant and turbulent times, with a massive ‘clean up’ initiative to remove rubbish from the streets, various literacy and social change movements, continuous increases in state and political wealth (and in inequality), increased ‘Bollywoodisation’,

along with scattered terrorist attacks and bombings, and various ongoing sagas from the never-ending story of corruption. I wondered what impact this would have on children's sense of justice, violence, and resilience. When I returned, having a stronger philosophical and theoretical underpinning to my understandings, I was more sensitive to the deeper complexity and interconnectedness of participation, inclusion, discrimination and oppression – for example, those of gender, social and economic class, and religion that permeated this society. Throughout my time collecting data, these underpinning provocations provided the groundwork for my continued and active bracketing with the use of reflective field notes.

After returning from data collection, through the process of analysis and by conversing with my supervisors over the nature and content of the data, patterns of children's resistance began to emerge. No doubt, the influence of my supervisors as well as the bracketed experiences aforementioned (and the process of analysis itself) have affected the paradigm or worldview of this emergence – for what might have previously been disregarded as “misbehaviour” opened up to being resistance as a possibility for the praxis of educational transformation.

I acknowledge that many thoughts and experiences have no doubt affected the overall nature, scope and intention of this research. However, as human research requires relational, shared, open, tacit, interactive and intimate ways of knowing, no research can be neutral or without ideology. As a researcher, I have sought, in the above section, to recognise the philosophical, theoretical and practical nooks and crannies of myself as a

human instrument in this research. The following section outlines the findings emerging from this research.

1.11 Findings and Significance

Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) matrix was used to map children's experiences and understandings of social justice and critical consciousness (see Chapter 6). The matrix developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) uses a horizontal and vertical axis to explore resistance. The horizontal axis maps students' motivation for social justice, whilst the vertical axis considers the extent to which individuals are critically conscious (see also Chapter 6). As this matrix addresses the intersection of the two sub-questions underpinning this research (critical consciousness and social justice), this matrix was considered to be a useful tool for mapping the findings from the current research.

Similar to the study by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001), the current study revealed that when children were motivated by social justice, but not critically conscious, their thoughts and behaviours assimilated to dominant ideologies (conformist resistance). However, when children were critically conscious and motivated by social justice they showed resistance to authoritarian figures in schools and on the streets. This resistance, at times opened possibilities for transformation, as children were able to find alternative ways of solving problems and behaving that helped support the emergence of social justice through dissent (transformative resistance). Thus, the current study provides evidence that young, marginalised children display resistance as a form of democratic citizenship. It highlights that children are capable social actors, able to contest and interrupt power and domination in and through lived experiences. This research also shows that young children

are able to demonstrate critical consciousness from a young age, and are able to use critique as a tool to challenge domination and oppression. The findings from this study make clear that young children are aware of power and are capable of taking active roles as agents in domination as well as in resistance. This research is significant as it highlights the importance of educators providing oppositional worldviews that build on the existing power, agency and criticality of young children. The research argues for engaging children in revolutionary pedagogy by weaving lived experiences into educational spaces for critical examination and praxis.

This section has highlighted the findings and significance of the current research. The subsequent segment provides an overview of the structure and content of chapters within this thesis.

1.12 Outline of Thesis

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters.

Chapter One has introduced the concepts of social justice and critical consciousness, providing a rationale and overview of the current research. The research questions have been considered alongside the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy, and research methods. The rationale for focusing on young street children in the Indian context has been described, the researcher's story has been unpacked, and the significance of the current research has been addressed alongside gaps in the literature.

Chapter Two presents the theoretical framework for the current research, reviewing the key elements of critical pedagogy, and the ways in which critical pedagogy has been adapted to early childhood research and educational practice. Critiques levelled at critical pedagogy are considered alongside the applicability of critical pedagogy to the current research

Chapter Three provides a critical review of the literature, outlining the parameters of research, the gaps in the literature, and the position of the current research within the context of broader literature on critical consciousness and social justice in ECD. Focussing on research conducted within educational contexts, the literature review provides an understanding of the contradictions in research findings. The literature review also considers the main methods used by researchers to investigate social justice and critical consciousness, particularly with young children below the age of 8, thereby providing a systematic basis for the research.

Chapter Four reviews the methods used for the current study. Critical qualitative research methods and phenomenological lines of inquiry are explicated and an overview of the Mosaic approach is provided. Following a justification for the use of the Mosaic approach in researching with young children; ethical considerations pertaining to this research are unpacked. The chapter also considers participant selection and recruitment methods, data collection processes and approaches to data analysis. Subsequently, the rigour and credibility of data are considered before the limitations of the current research are identified.

Chapter Five supplies a detailed and thematic analysis of socio-historical, political, ideological, religious, economic and cultural factors framing the research context. This research context chapter outlines the influences of these factors on the taken-for-granted ways of ‘thinking, being, and doing’ in the current research context. Existing ‘regimes of truth’ and the power afforded to certain groups, ideologies, and systems are problematized, and the residual effects of these upon the lives of street children are highlighted. The role and effects of educational systems, local and wider governments, civil society organisations, and family/community welfare systems are also considered.

Chapter Six addresses the research questions and presents the findings. The chapter begins with an overview of the resistance theory lens used to analyse and organise findings (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Subsequently, the principal findings from this research are discussed and exemplified. The three main findings of this research include: self-defeating resistance, conformist resistance, and transformative resistance.

Chapter Seven discusses the findings in the context of the existing literature and outlines the significance of the research, unpacking how social justice and critical consciousness emerge through resistance, how neoliberal and developmental discourses play an ideological role in oppressing young street children, and ways in which findings from this research depict resistance in ECD as political and powerful acts. The chapter also identifies implications for research and practice, as well as possibilities emerging from children’s resistant acts.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a background and overview of the current thesis. The role and importance of critical consciousness to social justice education and research was also emphasised. A rationale for investigating these two constructs with street children in Mumbai, India was presented and the purpose of the current research was discussed. In this chapter, critical pedagogy is unpacked and presented as the theoretical framework for the current study. Critical pedagogy has been closely affiliated with notions of critical consciousness and social justice in the educational literature. The aim of this chapter is to canvas the theory of critical pedagogy, and to provide a rationale for its application to the current study. The chapter begins by providing a definition and historical overview of critical pedagogy, before it considers the ways in which this theory is applicable to the current thesis. As this research revolves around an investigation of social justice and critical consciousness in early childhood contexts, this chapter is subsequently grounded in two main contentions. These are; first, that critical consciousness involves “knowing the system”, that is, an understanding of the ways in which systematic injustices and social oppressions manifest. The second, that critical consciousness and social justice are focused on “changing the system”, that is, ways in which situations of discrimination, justice, and oppression can be transformed.

Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two parts – the first segment focuses on “knowing the system”, that is, using critical pedagogy to unpack the theory behind how social oppression is produced and proliferated – for example, through a focus on regimes of truth, hegemony, and ideology. The second part of the chapter concentrates on

“changing the system”, that is, using critical pedagogy to identify possibilities for the emergence of social justice – for example, through ideology critique, counter-hegemonic discourses, resistance, and a focus on ethical and political praxis. The chapter also includes critiques regarding the “praxis” of critical pedagogy in educational institutions.

2.2 Overview of Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is characterised as the encounter of many diverse and multidimensional critical educational theories in praxis (Giroux, 2011; McLaren, 2003a). It has been defined as educational processes that “seek to expose how relations of power and inequality, (social, cultural, economic), in their myriad forms, combinations, and complexities... manifest and are challenged in the formal and informal education of children and adults” (Apple et al., 2009, p. 3). Darder, Baltodano, and Torres (2003) connote that critical pedagogy shares an amalgam of common features that have been broadly inspired by critical theories, progressive educators and activists from a range of socio-historical, political, cultural and economic contexts. In order to define critical pedagogy, this section first provides a historical overview of the concept of critical pedagogy.

2.2.1 Historical Overview and Definition of Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is a socio-political theory of education that is made up of many critical discourses that promote democracy and social justice (Kirylo, 2011). Critical pedagogy finds one of its sources in critical theory (discussed later) (Getahun, 2014;

Kincheloe, 2004). Primarily associated with the Frankfurt School¹⁹ or the Institute of Social Research at the University of Frankfurt, critical theorists such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm and Leo Löwenthal have provided critiques of capitalism and society; highlighting the need for socialist transformation (Darder et al., 2003; Getahun, 2014). Critical theories take on many forms, and are therefore difficult to define as a) there are many theories, b) critical theory is emergent and complex, and c) “critical theory attempts to avoid too much specificity, as there is room for disagreement amongst critical theorists” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 48). Researchers have suggested that whilst there is no single or universal critical theory, there are commonalities amongst critical theories – namely, that these theories attempt to examine the many ever-changing faces of capitalism and domination (Giroux, 2003).

Although critical theories have informed critical pedagogy, the Brazilian educator and activist Paulo Freire is widely known as critical pedagogy’s “inaugural protagonist” (McLaren, 2000). Freire’s (1970) seminal theory of transformative and emancipatory pedagogy (more commonly known as *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*) emerged through his involvement in (critical) literacy projects with oppressed and illiterate groups in Brazil. Freire focused on the ways in which structures, pedagogies and the praxis of education could facilitate social change and self-determination for oppressed groups. Influenced by the work of critical theorists from the Frankfurt School, Freire also drew on other key thinkers such as Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, Ivan Illich, Frantz Fanon and Louis

¹⁹ As this chapter focuses on critical pedagogy, it is not within the scope of this chapter to go into detail regarding critical theory. Seminal writers in critical pedagogy such as Kincheloe (2004) and Giroux (2001b) provide in-depth insights into the foundations of critical pedagogy and its links to critical theory and the Frankfurt School.

Althusser (Freire, 1970, 1972) to develop several concepts (such as critical consciousness, praxis, problem-posing and dialogue), that now form the basis of much theory and practice in critical pedagogy.

However, it was not until the work of Henry Giroux in the 1970s and 1980s that the concept of critical pedagogy emerged in the form in which it is understood today (Darder et al., 2003). Giroux drew on the works of Freire, as well as Pierre Bourdieu, Stanley Aronowitz and critical theorists to showcase how educational institutions such as schools can be sites of reproduction and resistance (Giroux, 1983, 2001b). Focusing on Freire's notion of critical consciousness, Giroux forwarded the importance of critiquing society, positivism, neoliberalism and technical rationalities, as well as implanting hope through educational sites. Thus, Giroux argued that critical pedagogy can and should support the discourse of educational possibility and the practice of democracy (within and outside of educational institutions) (Giroux & McLaren, 1991; Kincheloe, 2004). This developing perspective of critical pedagogy enabled analysts at the time to "see the school not simply as an area of indoctrination or socialization or a site of instruction, but also as a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment and self-transformation" (McLaren, 2003a, p. 70).

Adding to this, writers such as bell hooks have engaged with the critical movement – extending critical pedagogy to investigations of multiple forms of oppression, such as those pertaining to gender, sexual orientation and White supremacy (hooks, 2003, 2013, 2014). Similarly, educators, theorists and activists such as Peter McLaren, Joe L. Kincheloe, Shirley Steinberg and Antonia Darder have enriched the body of literature on

critical pedagogy by considering the interplay of political, cultural, economic, racial, religious, cultural and ability-related forms of oppression and exploitation. These thinkers also reinforce the importance of theory in shaping critical actions that directly address the lived experiences and needs of oppressed groups (Kincheloe, 2004).

Peter McLaren has also extended critical pedagogy along Marxist humanist lines of thought to develop the notion of revolutionary critical pedagogy. Alongside writers such as Nathalia Jaramillo, Ramin Farahmandpur, Mike Cole, Dave Hill, Glenn Rikowski and others, McLaren's revolutionary critical pedagogy raises the importance of education in analysing the effects and workings of capital in society, and "sets its goal as the reclamation of public life under the assault of corporatization and privatization" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 86).

As these key intellectuals (amongst many others²⁰) inform the diverse theoretical perspectives shaping current understandings of critical pedagogy, this chapter draws on these foundational theorists and writers to unpack the theory of critical pedagogy. Informed by these key theorists, critical pedagogy can be defined as an elastic and diverse construct with many constituents. It is primarily concerned with the relationship between educational institutions, pedagogies and micro/macro socio-political, economic, gendered, racial and cultural situations that are positioned within contextual and historical frames of reference (McFadyen Christensen & Aldridge, 2013). Thus, critical pedagogy does not

²⁰ A number of writers not listed here have contributed to the field of critical pedagogy. However, it is not within the scope of this thesis to highlight the array of contributors, thus only those the literature highlights as seminal figures have been noted here. Others have provided an extended profile of key contributors, for example: Kincheloe (2004, 2008) and Kirylo (2013b).

“constitute a homogeneous set of ideas” (McLaren, 1998, p. 163), rather, as an ever-evolving bricolage of theories, critical pedagogy involves analysis of the ways in which dominant discourses and relations of power/knowledge – that cause socio-political injustices and oppression – are mirrored, recycled or resisted through educational ideologies, structures, pedagogies and practices (Giroux, 2014; Ricci & Pritscher, 2015). Accordingly, critical pedagogy concentrates on social injustice, power, domination, oppression and resistance, in an effort to promote transformative practices and social relations – particularly through educational spaces (Darder, 2015b; Keesing-Styles, 2003).

As many definitions for critical pedagogy exist within the broader literature, certain advocates have argued that it is philosophical underpinnings that consolidate this theory through an unwavering commitment to the struggle for social justice with oppressed populations (Darder et al., 2003). This section has provided an overview of the history of critical pedagogy, highlighting the key theorists that this chapter will draw on. The section also provided a set of definitions for the term ‘critical pedagogy’. Extending on this definition, key philosophical elements embedded within critical pedagogy are considered in the following section. The ways in which these philosophical components frame and position the current research is consequently addressed.

2.2.2 Philosophical Underpinnings of Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy grew “out of a yearning to give some shape and coherence to the theoretical landscape of radical principles, beliefs, and practices that contributed to an emancipatory ideal of democratic schooling” (Darder et al., 2003, p. 2). Whilst diverse

philosophies underpinning critical pedagogy have been listed in the literature, some (of many) common values include, a focus on:

- a. Individual's strengths, rights, and capabilities
- b. Emancipation and freedom (collective and individual)
- c. Social justice
- d. Equality and equity of opportunity and outcome
- e. Participation of the oppressed in self-determination, against discrimination
- f. Inclusion and repositioning²¹
- g. Ethical, political and relational praxis
- h. Contextually relevant and specific praxis
- i. Co-constructed and inter-subjective knowledge

Sacadura (2014) indicates that these philosophical underpinnings influence pedagogy through particular views of the purpose of education. Thus, theorists argue for the importance of contextualising philosophies and values within the context of education. The subsequent section therefore elucidates the (perceived and actualised) purpose(s) of education, and the ways in which philosophies manifest in contemporary educational practices (see also Chapter 1, section 1.2).

2.2.3 Critical Pedagogy and the Purpose of Education

Writers in critical pedagogy have juxtaposed the philosophical “purpose of education” and the current state of educational systems – highlighting the oppressive,

²¹ See section 2.5.3 for a definition of repositioning.

unequal, and exclusionary nature of ‘mainstream’ educational institutions (Apple, 2010; Elliott, 2015). These analysts depict how the current state of institutionalised education, and its overarching focus on technical practice and pre-determined outcomes supports the commodification of curricula and the perpetuation of inequalities (Britt & Rudolph, 2013; D. Hill, 2014; Malott et al., 2013). Overall, whilst several different perspectives prevail, many critical theorists contend that the purpose of education is to equip learners with the knowledge they need to “recognise and confront injustice and to resist oppressive ways of becoming” (Mac Naughton, 2003b, p. 183). This section considers some of the literature surrounding the purpose of education from a critical pedagogy perspective.

Many critical theorists contend that the aim of critical pedagogy is to “engage critically with the impact of capitalism and gendered, racialised relations upon the lives of students from historically disenfranchised populations” (Darder et al., 2003, p. 2). Kincheloe (2004, p. 6) conceptualises that this broad vision of education for justice and equality requires an axiomatic rethinking of the purpose of education, with an intentional focus on:

- what human beings are capable of achieving
- the role of the social, cultural, and political in shaping human identity
- the relationship between community and schooling
- ways that power operates to create purposes for schooling that are not necessarily in the best interests of the children that attend them
- how teachers and students might relate to knowledge
- the ways schooling affects the lives of students from marginalised groups

- the organisation of schooling and the relationship between teachers and learners (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 6).

Research conducted by Smyth (2012) suggests that the manifestation of critical pedagogy into socially just educational practice involves certain common features. Smyth's (2012) research concludes that socially just practices emerge when educators, educational leaders, students, families and the school community have a strong philosophy, enact political agency as activists, view "*disadvantage as being socially constructed*" (p. 12, original emphasis), and enforce a "*personal rather than institutional relationship*" (p. 12, original emphasis) with members of its community. Giroux (2011) similarly suggests that the manifestation of critical pedagogy in educational practice involves the process of students, families and the community continuously acting, reflecting and transforming into ethical, political and intellectual agents that proliferate possibilities for social justice.

From this overview of the purpose of education, according to critical pedagogy, it is evident that this theory hinges on the understanding that education has a fundamental role to play in social change (or social reproduction). Critical pedagogy thus recognises that all forms, mediums and acts of education are political (Freire, 1970, 1985a, 1998), and that it is necessary to understand the nature of society, injustice and oppression in order to change it (Horton & Freire, 1990).

This section has discussed the educational philosophies underlying critical pedagogy. The subsequent section justifies the applicability of critical pedagogy to the current study.

2.3 Justifying the Applicability of Critical Pedagogy to the Current Research

Critical pedagogy offers pertinent possibilities for research and practice with marginalised and oppressed groups. The theory of critical pedagogy addresses the role of education in the context of society, and highlights the importance of notions such as social justice and critical consciousness (see also section 2.2). As this research focuses on notions such as critical consciousness and social justice – which have emerged directly from literature in the field of critical pedagogy – this section unpacks and justifies the applicability of critical pedagogy to the current research.

Critical pedagogy recognises the interplay of power relations, history and society (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011). Thus, insights offered by critical pedagogy elucidate the influence of socio-historical relations of knowledge and power – upon existing experiences of gender, culture, religion, caste, and class for oppressed groups, such as the children in this study. In turn, critical pedagogy provides avenues for recognising “regimes of truth” or socio-historical taken-for-granted assumptions, and understanding how these influence children’s lived experiences of social justice and critical consciousness. As this research is principally concerned with participants’ experiences of social in/justice, recognition of the political and interconnected nature of these constituents also provides a lens for analysing and countering the systematic dehumanisation and domination experienced by participants in this research. Similarly, applying insights from revolutionary critical pedagogy, this study concentrates on the capitalist nature of production, exploitation, and the politico-economic nature of injustice

faced by young children in order to highlight educational and social alternatives for equity and inclusion.

As one of the central rationales of this research is to focus on the voices of young children from marginalized contexts, critical pedagogy provides a framework for valuing and justifying the importance of listening to silenced and oppressed groups. Alongside the image of children as active protagonists and co-constructors of meaning, critical pedagogy offers an entry point for genuinely listening to young children, and recognising the (real and symbolic) violence of everyday realities through educational and research praxis. Moreover, as critical pedagogy forwards the importance of liberatory praxis, it repositions voice and privilege to those in situations of oppression, thus reconstituting relations of power and knowledge. In accordance with the philosophical standpoints of theorists in early childhood and critical pedagogy, this thesis adopts tools (such as photography, drawing, play) to engage in dialogue and to truly listen to young children (see Chapter 4, section 4.5 and 4.12). Thus, critical pedagogy enables this investigation to position children as “subjects” as opposed to “objects” within research.

Given that the main focus of this research is to investigate notions of critical consciousness and social justice, core concepts from critical pedagogy, such as problem posing and dialogue also support the methodological architecture of this research. That is, practices of dialogue and problem posing facilitate the involvement of child participants in questioning, critiquing and challenging “truths” or taken-for-granted assumptions, which in turn, support the development critical consciousness. Concomitantly, this study’s research questions and design are qualitative and emergent, such that, multiple social constructions,

and understandings of what “social justice” and “critical consciousness” mean and entail for participants can be considered (see also Chapter 4, section 4.2 for the research design). In this sense, critical pedagogy also provides a framework for critiquing the application of Western or high-income research methods, findings and “norms” into low-income contexts, raising the importance of considering the many influences of ideologies and hegemonic discourses (see also section 2.4.13 and 2.4.1.4 for a discussion of notions of ideology and hegemony).

As critical pedagogy supports the contention that facts are never value-free or removed from ideological inscription (Kincheloe et al., 2011), investigations of the role of capitalist production on the exploitation of children, and the politics of class oppression also inform the analysis of children’s lived experiences of in/justice within society and educational contexts. Simultaneously, consideration of the impacts of cultural imperialism and colonisation further support the rationale for investigating children’s experiences of critical consciousness, and social justice against imperialism and oppression. Understanding the educational site as one for reproduction and/or resistance further identifies how certain forms of knowledge have been legitimised and privileged, thereby resulting in the perpetuation of certain inequalities for the participants in this research.

Methodologically, this research questions children’s understandings of social oppression, viewing privilege and oppression dialectically, as complex elements that interact to create cultural modes of reproduction or resistance. The analysis of the everyday violence lived by children further provides insight into the idiosyncrasies of “life” as it is experienced in its immediacy by participants, rather than in objectively rationalised or

numerical terms of policy “rhetoric”. Critical pedagogy thus opens possibilities for oppressed groups to analyse their own lived experiences of oppression, and to resist injustices through educational or research praxis that is authentic and emancipatory (Freire, 1970, 2000).

This section has justified why critical pedagogy is applicable to the current research. The next section portrays the central components of critical pedagogy – by considering the core elements of critical pedagogy, and how they contribute to a) knowing the system, and b) changing the system.

2.4 Knowing the System

Reflecting on his experiences as an educator, intellectual and activist for social change, Myles Horton shares, in his conversation with Paulo Freire, “I found that it was absolutely necessary to understand the nature of the society. If I was going to change it, going to try to do anything about it, I had to understand it” (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 232). This understanding forms the basis of the structure for the current chapter. Thus, this section uses theoretical insights offered by critical pedagogy in order to truly “know” the system – that is to form analytical understandings of the role of ideology, power, hegemony, and regimes of truth in forwarding situations of domination, and in opening spaces for resistance. The subsequent section moves from understanding oppressive systems, to an exploration of the ways in which society can be changed to be more just and equitable.

2.4.1 Characteristics of Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy is comprised of several characteristics that meld theory, philosophy, ideology and praxis. As the underlying characteristics of critical pedagogy are as infinite as they are heterogeneous, “all descriptions of critical pedagogy... are shaped by those who devise them” (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 5). This section presents several characteristics of critical pedagogy including a) the view that education is political, b) the role of ideology and hegemony in shaping oppression and injustice, c) the influence of regimes of truth and the historicity of knowledge, and d) the role of capital, the political economy, race, class, and culture in privileging and oppressing different groups in society. Before these selected characteristics of critical pedagogy are discussed, a justification for presenting particular features over others is presented.

2.4.1.1 Justification for presenting selected characteristics.

In line with the assertions of Kincheloe (2004, p. 5), it is recognised here that “as a political animal, I hold particular perspectives about the purpose of schooling and the nature of a just society [and] these viewpoints shape what follows” in this thesis²². Recognisably, as critical pedagogy involves vast and ever-evolving theories in praxis, it is not within the scope or intention of this chapter, to portray a comprehensive review of the varied manifestations or components of critical pedagogy, as others have already done²³. Rather, on the assumption that “it is with political intent that I should choose my truths”

²² The researcher’s worldview and perspectives are delineated in Chapter 1, under section 1.10.1.1.

²³ This thesis discusses key characteristics of critical pedagogy that are relevant to the thesis. Others have considered the significance and contribution of the vast range of key figures, and key concepts in critical pedagogy, such as – Darder, Baltodano, and Torres (2009), Kincheloe (2004, 2008) and Kyrlo (2013b).

(Smith, as cited in Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 19), this chapter presents some brief and relevant aspects of critical pedagogy that are most applicable to the current research.

This section provides an overview of particular characteristics of critical pedagogy that emphasise the theoretical and ideological underpinnings influencing the micro, and macro practices, systems, politics, and pedagogies of education (with oppressed and/or dominant groups). The aim of this section is to highlight the ways in which educational systems perpetuate inequalities and justices, as well as, the ways in which educational socio-political praxis for change can emerge. The characteristics presented here therefore centre around “knowing the system” through unpacking a) the idea that education is political, b) the wide-reaching influences of ideology and hegemony, c) the complex and multifaceted nature of (cultural, social, political, economic, historical) oppression, d) the relationships between knowledge/power and socio-historical influences, e) the relationships between educational sites and the environment, families and communities, and, f) the ways in which politics, culture, economics, gender, and race influence oppressed groups, and societal hierarchies.

In order to “know the system” within the context of this research, theoretical and ideological influences upon the experiences of children in early childhood contexts are also considered through analysis of prevailing early childhood discourses and practices, such as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP), high-stakes testing and micropractices of power. The section starts by discussing the fundamental notion embedded within critical pedagogy that education is political.

2.4.1.2 Education is political.

As proponents of critical pedagogy assert, irrespective of the (oppressive or socially just) nature of education, or the complementary methods educators use to teach, all education is political (Freire, 1970, 1976; hooks, 2014; McLaren & Jandric, 2014). In positioning education as a socio-political endeavour, critical pedagogy aligns with theories that are dialectical, that is, complex and emergent “theories which recognise the problems of society as more than simply isolated events of individuals [or] of deficiencies in the social structure. Rather, these problems are part of the *interactive context* between individual and society” (McLaren, 2003a, p. 69). Dialectical theories challenge notions of conformity, certainty, reductionism and technical control, by focusing instead on the context of relationships, and inter-subjective connections between micro/macro contexts, culture, knowledge, power and human relations. In the context of education, the dialectical nature of critical pedagogy highlights the power and capacities of human activities and knowledge as mechanisms that influence the perpetuations of injustice, or transformation of domination for liberation – thereby making education political (Darder et al., 2003).

Kincheloe (2004) explicates that education is political, in part, because of “power and how it is distributed and engaged in the world of education and life in schools” (p. 8). In contrast to the possibilities offered by socially just schools, several theorists write of the escalating pervasiveness of bureaucratic “banking” approaches to education (Brown, 2015; Giroux, 2011; Ortiz, 2015). Freire (1970) defines the banking approach as one that “becomes an act of depositing, in which... the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat” (p. 53). The banking approach continues to be critiqued by public intellectuals that highlight the ways in which

such education serves the interests of the oppressors, through the dehumanization, massification and domestication of the oppressed (Freire, 1970, 2004). That is, critics address the ways in which banking approaches engineer educational institutions as “cookie cutters” (Kirylo, 2011), which seek to make the “other” into the same, and train learners to find and maintain their place in the social hierarchy by internalising and accepting as “natural” existing inequities and the status quo (hooks, 2014). Adding to this critique, Giroux (2001b) offers three pertinent insights that he argues are fundamental to “knowing” socio-educational structures and processes:

1. Schools cannot be analysed as institutions removed from the socio-economic context in which they’re situated
2. Schools are political sites involved in the construction and control of discourse, meaning, and subjectivities.
3. The commonsense [*sic*] values and beliefs that guide and structure classroom practice are not *a priori* universals, but social constructions based on specific normative and political assumptions (Giroux, 2001b, p. 46).

Building on these insights, critical theorists have analysed the many ways in which banking approaches to education propagate the acceptance of existing inequalities, and thereby perpetuate them. This understanding is particularly relevant to the current thesis and its focus on critical consciousness, as these theorists highlight the ways in which the banking approach aligns with certain ideologies, or socio-historically specific ways of thinking, being and doing that, have become totalising and accepted as “common sense” or “unquestionable truths” (Giroux, 2011, 2014; Mac Naughton, 2005). Drawing on the work

of Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci, analysts have proposed that such “banking” education reinforces overt and subtle forms of injustice, through ideologies, that perpetuate “regimes of truth” and hegemonic discourses. Hence, the central concepts of ideology, and related notions of hegemony and “regimes of truth” informing critical pedagogy are unpacked below.

2.4.1.3 Ideology.

Ideology refers to the “shared ideas or beliefs which serve to justify the interests of dominant groups” (Giddens, 1997, p. 583). It is the process by which certain ways of thinking, being and doing, come to be regarded as common sense, taken-for-granted or self-evident truths, in turn, (re)producing relations of power, partly by sidelining “other” attitudes, beliefs and versions of common sense (D. Hill, 2013a). Giroux (2001b, p. 143) adds that:

Ideology can be viewed as a set of representations produced and inscribed in human consciousness and behaviour, in discourse, and in lived experiences. On the other hand, ideology affects, and is concretized in, “texts”, material practices, and material forms. Hence the character of ideology is mental, but its effectivity [*sic*] is both psychological and behavioural; its effects are not only rooted in human action but also inscribed in material culture. Ideology as a construct includes a notion of mediation that does not limit it to an ideal form.

Moreover, as ideologies are inconsistent, subjective and dynamic, they emerge through multiple interacting (individual and collective) lived experiences of “social class... sexuality, disability, ‘race’, gender, ‘nation’, [and] religion” (D. Hill, 2013a, p. 9). Thus, in

order to understand the influence of ideologies on diverse educational and social systems, the social, cultural, economic, and political context necessitate consideration (see also section 2.5.2 for an overview of the role and importance of ideological critique). The notion of ideology is critical to this research as understandings of ideology and ideology critique are central to the development of critical consciousness (Darder, 2015a).

Analysts have identified two sides to the ideological coin – true consciousness and false consciousness (Robertson & Hill, 2014). False consciousness refers to the distortion of consciousness, such that it aligns with hegemonic or dominant discourses (Giroux, 2001b). False consciousness hides, garbles or naturalises conflicts and contradictions, in order to serve the interests of the dominant class (Robertson & Hill, 2014). For example, the meritocratic ideology that wealth is accessible to all through enough concerted effort, hides the imbalance of power and privilege afforded to dominant groups, and lends “people to believe that social success and failure are the result of individual responsibility, rather than the result of a class-based society” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 8). This is particularly relevant to the current research as false consciousness can render injustice “natural” and, in turn, discourage individuals from being motivated by social justice (hooks, 2003, 2010).

On the other hand, true consciousness, emerging through ideology critique, provides a basis for reflexivity, critical consciousness and social action. True consciousness involves systematic recognition and resistance of implicit or internalised injustices, inequities, and oppressions – thereby opening avenues for critical consciousness

and social justice (Giroux, 2001b; Robertson & Hill, 2014) (see also section 2.5.2 for an overview of the notion of ideological critique).

Whilst ideologies contribute to “knowing the system”, essentially the notion of hegemony is central to understanding how ideologies relate to, and influence, power/knowledge and experiences of social injustice and oppression. The notion of hegemony is unpacked below.

2.4.1.4 Hegemony.

Hegemony refers to the dominance of a particular ideology (Robertson & Hill, 2014). It involves the acceptance of ideology, not through physical force, but through ever-present socialisation to intellectual and value-based persuasions of “truth” that support dominant ways of thinking, being and doing (McFadyen Christensen & Aldridge, 2013). Gramsci suggests that this occurs through superstructures and cultural modes of production, such as mass media, religious institutions, and educational contexts. It has been suggested that in educational contexts, a process alike conditioning occurs, whereby trivial uses of institutional and personal rewards create an implicit alignment to oppressive systems, that in turn, persuade individuals to act in the interests of the dominant class, under a “contradictory consciousness” (Darder et al., 2003). As educational sites are open sub-systems within the broader systems of society, theorists argue that cultural, economic and social hegemonies within broader society invariably influence (and are influenced by) hegemonies in educational contexts (Apple, 2010; Smyth, 2012). Additionally, as domination is not simply a top-down imposition of oppression, but rather a complex

process, understanding the workings of hegemony may also provide insights for seeing the ways in which seeds for resistance might be sown (Darder et al., 2003, p. 7).

Hegemony is pertinent to the current research, since, as Darder (2015b) argues, critical consciousness is concerned with the ongoing political struggle of educators and learners against hegemony and its associated impacts – such as cultural marginalisation, and totalisation of particular discourses. Addressing the socio-historically specific nature of knowledge, critical theorists highlight the importance of ‘historicising’ knowledge. The residue of historical factors is thus considered to be central to understanding the ways current systems operate and impose oppressions. The notion of ‘historicity of knowledge’ is portrayed in the subsequent section.

2.4.1.5 Historicity of knowledge.

While critical pedagogy supports the notion that all knowledge is created within a historical context, Foucault (2002) argues that the past and present are politically connected. Thus, understanding the past is pertinent to understanding the present (Darder et al., 2003; Foucault, 2002). A number of theorists have highlighted the importance of ‘historicising’ knowledge and present ways of thinking, being and doing, in order to uncover the “ruptures”, untold histories or contradictions which enable individuals in the present to “re-meet” history in order to act against present situations of oppression and discrimination (Mac Naughton, 2005). Freire (1970, p. 125) similarly contends that “there is no historical reality which is not human”, therefore, since human beings produce history, humans can also alter it. This perspective also problematizes the single, linear, chronological understanding of history as an “innocent discipline”, portraying instead the

view that history is made through discourse, and that there are multiple histories – each with their own relations of power, influencing what is legitimised as “knowledge” and “truth” (Mac Naughton, 2005).

Thus, understanding the historicity of knowledge is relevant to the current research as Kyrlo (2013a) suggests that critical consciousness is contextually (socio-historically, culturally, economically, politically and socially) shaped. Darder et al. (2003) agrees and further suggests that this view enables educators and learners to contextualise themselves as historical subjects that can employ collective and individual agency to support self-determination. In this thesis, an overview of the socio-historical influences on the experiences of young children is considered in light of ‘regimes of truth’ and their effects on children’s lived experiences and understandings of social justice and critical consciousness (see Chapter 5).

2.4.1.6 Regimes of truth.

Extending on the historicity of knowledge, through his investigations of history, Foucault (1980) devised the existence of certain “regimes of truth” that connect power and knowledge through certain socio-historically specific discourses. As regimes of truth influence the practices that are considered “natural” within any given societal system or sub-system, unpacking this construct is pertinent to understanding how ideology and hegemony influence practice – thus, this notion is discussed below.

The term ‘regimes of truth’ refers to truths that, having been legitimised, are perceived to be “unquestionable” and therefore have oppressive effects (Foucault, 2014).

Foucault (1980) argues that the “truth” is an expression of knowledge/power relations, which naturalises existing arrangements in the status quo. Highlighting that all truths emerge from a particular socio-historical origin, and questioning the authority afforded to objective or positivist facts, Foucault suggests that “no knowledge is ‘true’ knowledge free from ideology. Instead, all knowledge is ‘culturally prejudiced’ ... and is, therefore partial, situated and local” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 23).

Analysis of regimes of truth are particularly salient to the current research, as theorists suggest that questioning the totalisation of contextually specific discourses is necessary to the development of critical consciousness. Considerations of regimes of truth are also salient to the current research, as “understanding how truths naturalise discrimination and oppression... helps us combat them” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 20) through resisting and challenging the legitimisation and authority afforded to political and institutional productions and sanctions (Foucault, 1983, 2002; Gallagher, 2008).

2.4.1.6.1 Regimes of truth in early childhood.

In the early childhood context, critical theorists have argued that a ‘regime of truth’ based on dominant (Western oriented) discourses has shaped the knowledge base that is used to institutionalise and regulate early childhood practice. Thus, the field of early childhood education reflects minority-world understandings and literature. As *Reconceptual Theorists*²⁴ have pointed out, this creates an the image of the child that is

²⁴ Reconceptualists or Reconceptual Theorists are “critics who interrogate dominant knowledges, discourses and practices for the purposes of transforming power relations that privilege some and marginalise others” (Fenech & Sumsion, 2007, p. 109). These theorists are primarily concerned with the dominance of psychological, developmental and normative discourses, and the effects that these discourses have on children, families, educators, and communities.

decontextualized, divisive, and exclusive (Cannella, 2002; Fielding & Moss, 2012), in turn creating regimes of truth that perpetuate market-based accountability, pre-packaged curricula, and discourses which seek to normalise or exclude children through the broad applicability of an Anglo-centric notion of *developmentally appropriate practice* (DAP).

In order to examine the ways in which ideologies, hegemonic discourses and regimes of truth manifest and influence children in the immediacy of early childhood experiences and contexts, early childhood theorists consider the systematic influences of micropractices of power, and DAP on children's oppression and exclusion. As micropractices of power and DAP shape the educational context and experiences of young children (from both marginalised and mainstream groups), these constructs are considered below.

2.4.1.6.2 Micropractices of power.

Alongside the authority afforded by regimes of truth are the "micropractices of power" (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 30) which act as "technologies of governing" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 16) to perpetuate existing dominance – these are mechanisms that forward the acceptance of existing power relations by directly or indirectly organising social control, adhering to institutionalisation, and influencing everyday rules and interactions. For example, the ranking, division and marginalisation of students on the basis of standardised tests, which tend to examine particular views of intelligence (related to logic and rationality), uses of language and assumptions of (decontextualized, totalising and universal) 'common' knowledge. Mac Naughton (2005) citing Gore identifies eight

‘micropractices of power’; showcasing how daily educational practices bring to life particular ‘regimes of truth’. These include:

1. Surveillance: being – or expected to be – closely observed and supervised in and through reference to particular truths
2. Normalisation: comparing, invoking, or conforming to a standard that expresses particular truths about, for example, the developing child
3. Exclusion: using truths to establish boundaries of what is normal, to include or exclude particular ways of being as desirable or undesirable and, in doing so, to define pathology
4. Classification: using truths to differentiate between groups or individuals
5. Distribution: using specific truths to decide how to arrange and rank people in space
6. Individualisation: using truths to separate individuals
7. Totalisation: using truths to produce a will to conform
8. Regulation: using specific truths to control ways of thinking and being by invoking rules and limiting behaviours (Mac Naughton, 2005, pp. 30-31).

Denzin (2007) argues that such technical, bureaucratic, exclusionary, divisive and competitive practices, directly contrast against the more collaborative, ethical and political nature of transformative education for social justice. Analysts argue that the use of micropractices of power in education shape ideas of what constitutes “good” students (those who are quiet and obedient), and punishes or “others” those who learn by moving, challenging or questioning authority and the status quo (Freire, 2000; hooks, 2003; Rossatto, Rivas, Heiman, & Esparza, 2015). With similar conviction, analysts contend that

the use of micropractices of power stem from (and inform) a view of education that is purposed on grooming learners' subjectivities to fit with the status quo, as opposed to problematizing it (hooks, 2014). Critical theorists point to three further implications arising from the use of micropractices of power. Firstly, that micropractices of power attribute to the racial, gendered and class-based discrimination faced by marginalised groups, since the educational values, understandings, and beliefs of these groups, may contradict that of the status quo (hooks, 2014). Secondly, as these practices are intentioned on maintaining the conformity of individuals to existing regimes of truth and ideologies, such practices narrow the spaces for learners and teachers to engage in critical consciousness and broader social transformations (Darder, 2015b; Mac Naughton, 2003b). Thirdly, as micropractices of power tend to disregard the socio-historically specific nature of "truths", they govern individuals (educators and learners) on the basis of decontextualized and totalising knowledge/power discourses – for example, those of child development or DAP (Cannella, 2002; Mac Naughton, 2005). The influence of DAP on the exclusion and marginalisation of children is considered in the subsequent section.

2.4.1.6.3 Developmentally appropriate practices.

Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) is a method for teaching that focuses on ages and stages of children's developments. Derived predominantly through positivist research, many argue that DAP has been characterised as a regime of truth in early childhood (Mac Naughton, 2005; Penn, 2005). DAP is based on the Anglo-American language of developmental psychology (a minority culture) that has come to be universally applied, creating a decontextualized, abstract and totalising understanding of 'normal' ages and stages of development. Cannella (2002) argues that it is an ethnocentric practice that

has become a legitimised and totalising discourse as it focuses on isolated compartments of (physical, social, emotional) developmental norms and milestones, and results in the “othering” of children that deviate from these prescriptive boxes and lines.

Importantly, Reconceptualists highlight that there is growing concern about the application of DAP in LAMI contexts, as DAP arises from a particular culture and does not account for context, situation or individual temperament (Dahlberg et al., 2007). This has significant implications upon educators’ expectations and interactions with children, given that DAP norms are used to legitimise the application of micropractices of power (such as surveillance and regulation of children’s behaviours) (Mac Naughton, 2005). From the perspective of critical pedagogy, the language of DAP is also, at times, the language of the oppressor, which is used to alienate children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. As Kincheloe (2011) notes, “by undermining an appreciation of the diversity and complexity of childhood, such viewpoints have often equated difference with deficiency and sociocultural construction with ‘the natural’” (p. 2). This is relevant to the current research, as this study focuses on street children who have been categorised as existing at the margins of developmental spectrums – particularly due to the influence of socio-economic status and stress (Dahlman, Bäckström, Bohlin, & Frans, 2012).

The positivist, linear and one-size-fits-all nature of this approach implies the reductionist view that fragmenting childhood and children into developmental domains can inform the construction of the whole child and/or childhoods. The decontextualized use of DAP also problematizes issues of equity and inclusion as “key international institutions,

such as the World Bank... link normal child development to effective economic development” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 20). Arguably, this linking together of “abnormal/normal” development with “effective/ineffective” economic development inadvertently propels policies for social assimilation whilst depoliticising ECD settings into sites for the mastery of technical (as opposed to ethical or political) practice (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Fielding & Moss, 2012). This has significant implications for the current research – which was conducted through an NGO (see also Chapter 4) – as theorists argue that the development of social justice values and critical consciousness has been sidelined due to the importance placed by governments and aid organisations on children attaining “employable” skills and labour that, in turn, supports existing social relations and workings of capitalism.

Critical pedagogy contends that knowledge of political, economic, cultural, gender, and race relations of power/knowledge are central to understanding and contextualising lived experiences of oppression and marginalisation. Accordingly, the subsequent segment discusses the role and influence of the political economy, and cultural, racial and gendered relations that influence micro and macro experiences and educational systems.

2.4.1.7 Political economy.

Critical pedagogy and revolutionary critical pedagogy challenge the rhetoric of meritocracy, and the myth that education offers “equalising” grounds that support social mobility (McLaren, 1998, 2015) (see also section 2.2.1). Proponents of this line of thinking highlight the detrimental effects of “kleptomaniac capitalism” (McLaren, 2003c) and neoliberalism, that result in exponential increases of wealth for the privileged elite, whilst

trapping the oppressed in poverty and violence (D. Hill, 2013b; McLaren, Martin, Farahmandpur, & Jaramillo, 2004). Recognising the interconnected nature of domination, revolutionary critical pedagogy addresses the pervasiveness of socio-political and economic impacts on relations of gender, race, ability, and class relations, however calls “for not only the critique of racism and sexism and homophobia and other forms of structural and widespread discrimination, but... [to] work towards *replacing* capitalism, rather than managing it more fairly; and replacing it with socialism” (Robertson & Hill, 2014, p. 170).

Critiquing the imperialism of globalisation, analysts express how the spread of privatisation and capitalism have infected public institutions such as schools and universities, leading these sites further away from the democratic purposes of education (McLaren et al., 2004; Moss, 2013; Thapliyal, 2015b). These increases in privatisation and corporatisation – from early childhood settings to universities – have positioned educational sites across the world, firmly within the vices of neoliberal thought (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2005; Thapliyal, 2015b). Relinquishing the public sector to the private, governments have laced neoliberal propaganda with the language of “consumer choice”, squaring responsibilities on schools to “lift their game” (that is, to increase student achievements on standardised tests) in order to persuade families to invest children and money into their respective services (Smyth, 2012).

Writers indicate how such paradigmatic policies have exacerbated inequalities – leaving marginalised settings with lesser access to resources, and thereby degrading the

quality of education for those who are unlikely to be able to afford alternatives²⁵ (Smyth, 2012; Thapliyal, 2012, 2015b). In turn, analysts contend that such neoliberal frames of reference intentionally problematize the use of educational settings as sites of public discourse and participation, since “destroying the quality of public-sector education is necessary for the full marketization of education” (Tabb, as cited in McLaren et al., 2004, p. 134). Smyth (2012) also addresses the wider ill effects of these propagations, emphasising that the surge in inequalities distorts social relations to focus on individual as opposed to collective betterment, whilst leading to increases in crime and social anxieties. Research from the Indian context suggests that the prioritisation of economic growth at the cost of social and collective investments has further alienated and dehumanised marginalised groups (such as street children), through the privatisation of services, thereby limiting the availability of publicly accessible resources (A. Kohli, 2012; Thapliyal, 2015b). From the perspective of critical pedagogy, these conditions have particular implications – whereby the poor are viewed disdainfully, and at times, with violent abhorrence, for resisting the stifling conditions of oppression, exclusion and silence that they face.

Coupled with these limitations, Marxist and critical revolutionary pedagogy writers also emphasise how the bureaucratic focus on “scientifically valid” discourses have restricted teacher autonomy through a focus on technical rationalities (D. Hill, 2004; McLaren et al., 2004). Theorists further contend that the influence of neoliberalism in the hidden curriculum, and pedagogies of competition have seen the internalisation of

²⁵ This is particularly evident in the Indian context, and for children from marginalised backgrounds – see Chapter 5, section 5.5 for a contextualised analysis for the implications of privatisation on children from marginalised backgrounds (such as street children).

inequality and the proliferation of de-politicised, de-racialised, de-classed and “objective” notions of academic “content” and “merit” that disregard the influence of dominant discourses (Giroux, 2001b). Darder et al. (2003) argue that little attention is paid to the role of educational sites in perpetuating inequities, however, revolutionary critical pedagogy calls for analysis, and resistance in/through educational contexts. Theorists suggest that critical educators adopt pedagogies that forward “socialist imaginations”, which resist or circumvent some of the violence of neoliberal practices (Wrigley, Lingard, & Thomson, 2012). Similarly, revolutionary critical pedagogues call for educational “citizenship as a pedagogy of resistance” (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2005, p. 192). Freire (2004) suggests that this is particularly applicable to those in situations of oppression, for whom violence is a daily reality. Freire (2004) argues that there is need for a pedagogy of indignation which supports (individual and collective) reflection upon inequalities and lived experiences of exploitation in order to fuel the development of critical consciousness, and social actions for justice (see Chapter 7, section 7.6 for a discussion of the pedagogy of indignation in the context of this research).

This section has presented insights offered by proponents of revolutionary critical pedagogy. These theorists have identified the oppressive effects of capitalism and neoliberalism, highlighting the influence of the political economy upon state institutionalised education. In the next section arguments regarding the influences of culture, race and gender on children, families and communities through educational settings are considered.

2.4.1.8 Culture, race and gender.

Recognising that education in its broadest sense involves not only what happens within an educational setting – but also in the mass media, religious institutions, customs and traditions, McLaren (2003a) highlights the importance of the concept of culture in shaping understandings critical pedagogy. He defines culture as:

The particular ways in which a social group lives out and makes sense of its “given” circumstances and conditions of life. In addition to defining culture as a set of practices, ideologies, and values from which different groups draw to make sense of the world, we need to recognise how cultural questions help us understand who has power and how it is reproduced and manifested in the social relations that link schooling to the wider social order (McLaren, 2003a, p. 74).

Unpacking the notion of cultural reproduction, McLaren (2003a) suggests that it is “a function of class based differences in cultural capital” (p. 93). As a form of (re)production, culture can be understood as a site of struggle, that includes legitimisation and dispersion of dominant and subordinate ways of thinking, being and doing (Giroux & Shannon, 2013). The dominant culture is therefore perpetually emerging – as it is shaped and challenged by cultural as well as economic, political and social interactions at micro and macro levels (Giroux, 2001a, 2001b). Critical theorists emphasise the ways in which the dominant culture imposes “cultural imperialism” to privilege those who show affinity to the status quo, whilst “othering” those who resist, or do not align with cultural norms and guises (Lindsay, 2013; Rossatto et al., 2015). Accordingly, from a social justice perspective, forms of oppression – such as racism, sexism, ableism, and ageism (amongst others) overlap, and are learnt, produced and reproduced through overt and subtle

inflections of power, knowledge and discourse – as Hodge (as cited in hooks, 1989, p. 119) notes “the problem of racism is not prejudice but domination.”

Parallel to understandings of culture, class and race, notions of gender have also been centrally positioned within critical pedagogy (Nishida & Fine, 2014; Ortiz, 2015). Applying theories of reproduction, feminism and the social construction of female identities, writers have analysed gender against the backdrop of social, cultural, economic and political factors (Nishida & Fine, 2014). Writers in critical pedagogy highlight the internalisation of gendered inequities that contribute to patriarchal systems, such as systematic misogyny, sexism, stereotyping and other forms of gendered discrimination (Weiler, 2003). Edifying the impacts of gendered regimes of truth, Mac Naughton (2005) explains that “girls will always struggle to achieve ‘normal development’ in patriarchal discourses which establish the masculine as the standard of what is normal. In particular, they establish rationality (reason) and reasoners [*sic*] as normal and silence its role in power” (p. 49). This patriarchal perspective significantly influences the role and nature of service provision of the early years, with a sexual division of labour that “proletarianises” women’s roles through lower pay, increased governmentality and control (Mac Naughton, 2005).

Thinkers in critical pedagogy also address the impacts of cultural imperialism and patriarchy, focussing on relations of class, caste, race, gender and sexuality (amongst others). hooks (1989, 2013) articulates that patriarchy and cultural imperialism proliferate the internalisation of privileged subjectivities and socialise the “other” to assimilate with the norm. Since assimilation affords social legitimation, cultural imperialism works as a

form of hegemony to impose unequal power relations through the social fabric – that is through systems, public (or private) services, employment, religion, or educational institutions. In the context of education, cultural imperialism manifests as schools “affirm and reward students who exhibit... ‘middle class’ speech while disconfirming and devaluing students who use... ‘working-class’ coded speech” (McLaren, 2003a, p. 94). Similarly, the hidden curriculum superimposes certain social constructions of female identities, tying these to development, socialisation and “norms” that perpetuate unequal power relations between males and females (Mac Naughton, 2005; McLaren, 2003a).

Darder et al. (2003) extend upon this notion, signifying that schools and educational institutions systematically devalue students from certain racialised, gendered and class positions. Thus social relations are reproduced, and resistant learners are, at best, unappreciated, and at worst, punished (Lindsay, 2013; Rossatto et al., 2015). Thus, in relation to culture, “the end result is that the school’s academic credentials remain indissolubly linked to an unjust system of trading in cultural capital which is evidently transformed into *economic* capital, as working-class students become less likely to get high-paying jobs” (McLaren, 2003a, p. 94). Concomitantly, theorists have suggested that gendered ideologies and discourses reinforce patriarchy and misogyny as norms against which females are measured (and found to fall short) (Cannella, 2002).

This section has highlighted the political economic, cultural and gendered oppressions experienced by different groups in the social hierarchy. Through the lens afforded by critical pedagogy, this section has used theoretical and ideological components to showcase the oppressions, injustices and inequities evident in micro, and macro systems

in society. This is particularly relevant to the current study, which investigates children's critical consciousness of political, economic, cultural and gendered forms of oppression and discrimination experienced in their lives. Thus, this section has provided an overview of key features from critical pedagogy, which afford a theoretical lens for "knowing of the system". The subsequent piece of the chapter extends upon "knowing the system", to insights from critical pedagogy for "changing the system".

2.5 Changing the System

As Horton and Freire (1990) note, knowing the system is integral to changing it. The previous section outlines the ideological and theoretical underpinnings that explicate how exclusionary and unfair oppressions manifest and are proliferated through educational, social and political dimensions – thus providing a basis for "knowing the system". This section focuses on insights offered by critical pedagogy in order to "change the system". Thus, this section addresses the ways in which oppositional practices; counter-hegemonic discourses and ideological critiques can support transformations.

Critical pedagogues and theorists propel the possibilities of oppositional discourses and sub-cultures that afford transformation through resistance to culturally stifling relations of knowledge and power (Giroux, 2001b; hooks, 2014). Through an inbuilt focus on the perspectives of marginalised and disenfranchised groups, critical pedagogy views social justice as the practice of freedom that challenges economic, racial, cultural and patriarchal supremacies (Au & Apple, 2009). hooks (1989) also raises the importance of critical consciousness in addressing relations of race and culture, highlighting that "for our efforts to... be truly effective, individual struggle to change consciousness must be

fundamentally linked to collective effort to transform those structures that reinforce and perpetuate white supremacy” (p. 119), and cultural hegemony. Several theorists highlight the importance of resistance and counter-hegemonic discourses in exploring the possibilities of human agency for social transformations (Weiler, 2003). These notions are particularly relevant to the current research as critical consciousness and social justice are fundamentally aimed at “changing the systems” of oppression, marginalisation and dehumanisation. Thus, concepts of resistance, counter-hegemonic discourses, critical consciousness, dialogue and praxis provide a framework for the thesis by highlighting viable and actionable pedagogical tools for exacting micro and macro social change.

2.5.1 Resistance and Counter-hegemonic Discourses

A core element of critical pedagogy is a focus on the theories and praxis of resistance. An understanding of resistance theory and its critiques are central to this research as proponents of critical pedagogy suggest that resistance is fundamental to critical praxis and resistance theories offer avenues to perceive (that is, be critically conscious), and challenge the politics of domination (that is, act in the interests of social justice). Notably, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) indicate that resistance has transformational capacities if, and when, it is motivated by social justice and critically conscious of social oppressions. Thus, understandings of resistance theory are relevant to this research, as resistance offers an impetus for considering critical consciousness and social justice through liberatory pedagogies that rebel against oppression and discrimination (see also Chapter 6 and 7). Thus, this section provides a brief definition of resistance theory and an overview of critiques of resistance theory.

2.5.1.1 Resistance theory.

Resistance theory examines the culture of educational settings and the ways in which educators and students interact with/in these systems to reproduce or resist the status quo or dominant discourses. Under the auspices of critical pedagogy, literature surrounding resistance theory suggests that the failure of minority students to survive or thrive in educational institutions is due to the reproductive, exclusive and oppressive nature of educational systems and societies, rather than the failure of students to align with dominant ways of thinking, being and doing. Key theorists and researchers in this area – such as Henry Giroux, Paul Willis, John Ogbu, Signitha Fordham, Jean Anyon and Patrick Finn have explored student resistance – focusing particularly on clusters of minority or marginalised groups within mainstream educational settings (Giroux, 2001b). These key thinkers have found that resistance can emerge as a form of cultural critique (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001), as a result of defiance against the status quo (Ogbu, 2003), as acts against the imposition of dominant (class, caste, culture, race, and/or gender) identities (P. E. Willis, 1977), and as a form of opposition to authorities, curricula or hegemonic discourses (Anyon, 1980; P. E. Willis, 1977).

Critical pedagogy highlights the pervasiveness of social/cultural reproduction, ideologies, and the interconnected systems of domination arising from race, class, and gender identities, in order to problematize the “complex reasons why many students from subordinate groups consistently fail within the educational system” (Darder et al., 2003, p. 14). In turn researchers have examined the extent to which student resistance is linked with oppositional worldviews, and emancipatory interests (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Resistance theory advocates the importance of counter-hegemonic discourses, that is,

ethical and political alternatives to dominant ideologies, institutions, and cultures (Lauria & Mirón, 2005; Lindsay, 2013; Schutz, 2004). Critical theorists highlight the importance of resistance and counter-hegemonic discourses that challenge the legitimisation, and dominance of the status quo, with Giroux (2001b) writing that resistance must involve both critical consciousness and social justice in order to be emancipatory or transformative. However several critiques have also been levelled at resistance theory. As resistance is particularly salient to critical consciousness and social justice, some critiques of resistance theory are discussed below.

2.5.1.1.1 Critiques of resistance theory.

Several critiques have been fired at resistance theory. Critics suggests that oppositional behaviours categorised as ‘resistance’ may lack socio-political critique – that is, students may be ‘defiant for the sake of it’, rather than expressing a critique of educational or social systems – and, such behaviours offer little insight into ways to mobilise transformative change (Giroux, 2001b; Lindsay, 2013). Thus, critics highlight the importance of analysing the criteria used to classify ‘transformative resistance’ – that is, resistance that is critically conscious, and motivated by social justice (Giroux, 2001b; Ogbu, 2003; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Following on from this argument, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) indicate that much of the research on resistance has concentrated on self-defeating²⁶, rather than transformative resistance. Giroux (2001b) suggests that this is a significant weakness of resistance theory given the importance of developing “strategies that link a politics of the concrete, not just with questions of

²⁶ Definitions for self-defeating resistance, conformist resistance and transformative resistance have been provided in Chapter 6, under section 6.2.

reproduction, but also with the issue of social transformation” (p. 102). Thus, Giroux (2001b) calls for placing student resistance within contexts or frames of reference that recognise the ways in which schools repress, but also produce, student subjectivities. This critique, is particularly relevant to the current research, as it offers insights into the ways in which educators and institutions might be able to support the development of resistant critical consciousness and motivation for social justice (Giroux, 2001b). Finally, critics suggest that much of the literature on resistance in educational contexts depicts educators and students in a homogenous and divisive light (Giroux, 2001b). Writers have therefore called for an acknowledgement of the contradictory nature of resistance and a more complex understanding of the context of relationships in which resistance emerges.

2.5.2 Ideological Critique

Ideological critique has been defined as the process of “making explicit the implicit ideologies that dominate our society, their power effects and the interests they serve” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 8). In the context of critical pedagogy, ideological critiques have been used to analyse power relations through socio-historical, cultural, political and socio-economic frames, which recognise that “facts are never isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription” (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 164). Ideological critique thus provides a platform for considering, and making visible the relationship between knowledge and power, in turn problematizing the ways in which “particular ideas come to dominate our understandings of and actions in the social world and contribute to the inequities in it” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 8). Critical theorists therefore claim that ideological consciousness and critique can support emancipatory social relations and socially just practices (McLaren, 2000). Ideology critique is therefore

central to the current investigation, as Mac Naughton (2005) suggests that it is necessary to the development of critical consciousness, which involves making unseen oppressions visible. Moreover, this notion is relevant to the current study as analysts suggest that ideological critiques are necessary to the struggle for social justice since recognising the influences of ideologies can in turn, support the struggle for social justice and critical consciousness (D. Hill, 2013a; Mac Naughton, 2005). Alongside the importance and role of ideological critiques, critical pedagogy conveys the importance of critical consciousness in understanding the ethical, political, economic, socio-historical and cultural nature of oppression in educational and societal contexts. Thus, the subsequent section discusses critical consciousness, alongside connected notions of dialogue and praxis.

2.5.3 Critical Consciousness, Dialogue and Praxis

Freire's (1970, 1973) notion of conscientização or critical consciousness is considered integral to understandings of critical pedagogy. As defined in Chapter 1, critical consciousness refers to the process of developing critical awareness, or "waking up" to the ethics and politics of injustices and oppressions (Freire, 1973) (see also Chapter 3, section 3.2.1). Critical consciousness is guided by notions such as equity, inclusion, freedom and justice (Freire, 1972, 1976). Thus, critical consciousness in educational contexts is premised on a social justice vision of education (Freire, 1976; Kincheloe, 2008). Several researchers in diverse contexts have considered the interplay of socio-historical and political features alongside those of gender, race and class in considerations of the development of critical consciousness (Cruz, 2013; Hope et al., 2015; Straubhaar, 2015) (see also Chapter 3, section 3.3). Simultaneously, critical consciousness involves engagement in socio-political and ideological critique, whilst advocating for counter-

hegemonic and resistant discourses that value the “other” in the spirit of solidarity (Freire, 1998, 2004). Critical consciousness is therefore connected with several other features of critical pedagogy, such as dialogue, problem-posing education and praxis.

Central to the notion of critical consciousness is the understanding of the construct of praxis. Praxis is predicated on a dialectical understanding, that is, theory and practice are inextricably interconnected to individuals’ worldviews and social actions (Darder et al., 2003). Praxis has been defined as the “process of action-reflection-action that is central to development of a consciousness of power and how it operates” (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 114). Praxis therefore involves embodied political action for social change, alongside or through educational institutions and sites, as well as ethical and political endeavours as opposed to purely technical rationalities that generate the ongoing interaction of reflection, dialogue and action (Freire, 1970). Praxis is necessary to critical consciousness since “all human activity requires theory to illuminate it and provide a better understanding of the world as we find it and as it might be” (Darder et al., 2003, p. 15). Thus, praxis is central to the current investigation, which investigates children’s critical understandings and actions for social justice.

As Kincheloe (2008, p. 13) exerts, “critical consciousness involves the development of new forms of understanding that connect us more directly to understanding, empathizing with, and acting to alleviate suffering. Sophisticated understandings and engagement in the struggle against inequality characterize a critical consciousness.” In order to develop understandings, Freire (1970, 1973) has argued for the importance of dialogue and problem-posing education. Dialogue, that is, the genuine

dialectical listening, deciphering and sharing of self and thoughts, is also cited as central to the notion of critical consciousness, as it serves the basis for reflection and action.

Similarly, problem-posing education offers critical questions for students to consider as participatory citizens and “subjects” as opposed to “objects” in a society (Freire, 1970).

Problem-posing education highlights the ethical and political dimensions of education, by focussing on the social co-construction, or invention and reinvention of knowledge through dialogue and critical engagement.

Some of the roles of critical educators in supporting the development of critical consciousness have been to “seek out individuals, voices, texts, and perspectives that had been previously excluded” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 24) and focus on the margins of society – through the eyes of those that are oppressed or alienated. Theorists argue that the fundamental principle of critical pedagogy is *repositioning*, that is, to “see the world through the eyes of the dispossessed and act against the ideological and institutional processes and forms that reproduce oppressive conditions” (Apple et al., 2009, p. 3). Thus, “the struggle for change begins, then, at the moment when human beings become both critically aware and intolerant of the oppressive conditions in which they find themselves and push toward new ways of knowing and being in the world” (Darder, 2015b, p. 7). Kincheloe (2008) adds to this the importance of challenging taken-for-granted assumptions, and ideological critiques in order to support thinkers to denaturalise the implicit regimes of truth, which position appropriations of injustice and inequality as valid and indisputable. This is particularly applicable to the current research, which investigates the ways in which children internalise and/or challenge assumptions (and their concomitant inequalities) in the interests of social justice, and for critical consciousness.

As critical pedagogues view educational sites as those that can mirror or revolutionise existing conditions of injustice, inequality and oppression (Apple et al., 2009; Au & Apple, 2009; Darder et al., 2003; Giroux, 2001b, 2011), critical educators value the potential of educational institutions to support the emancipation of the human spirit, and the amelioration of values of democracy, citizenship and justice (Darder, 2002; Freire, 1976). This section highlights some mechanisms for “changing the system” through engagements with the theoretical and ideological components of critical pedagogy (particularly in educational contexts). The next part of this chapter focuses on critiques of critical pedagogy.

2.6 Critiques of Critical Pedagogy

The field of critical pedagogy is not without critique. For example, McFadyen Christensen and Aldridge (2013) highlight three salient critiques, these are: the language of critical pedagogy, the limited diversity of writings informing critical pedagogy, and the skewed ratio of criticisms to possibilities offered by critical pedagogy. Other critics also characterise critical pedagogy as an “overly political” endeavour, that is irrelevant to daily educational practice (Darder et al., 2003). This section addresses these critiques.

Critics highlight that the language and terms used within the writings of critical pedagogy are problematic since, “critical pedagogy is designed to eliminate inequity, but the language used by critical theorists was at one time esoteric, elitist, and exclusive” (McFadyen Christensen & Aldridge, 2013, p. 12). Whilst theorists suggest that the language and terms used have supported the conceptualization of difficult ideas, critiques

indicate that the use of jargon, and jargon-like language in critical pedagogy has at times resulted in a new form of oppression being thrown upon marginalised groups (Darder et al., 2003). Thus, the elitist nature of language has limited the accessibility of critical pedagogy, and continued to marginalise those whom it seeks to support. Recognition of this critique has led writers to diversify the manner in which language is used to address broader audiences, at times, through the use of glossaries of key terms to ensure meanings are communicated effectively (Kincheloe, 2008; McFadyen Christensen & Aldridge, 2013). At the same time, this critique highlights the role of language as a form of domination in the deeply interconnected struggle for pedagogy in terms of class, gender, culture, and power (Darder et al., 2003; hooks, 1989).

Another critique of critical pedagogy has been the dearth of writing from diverse scholars. As McFadyen Christensen and Aldridge (2013) connote, “critical pedagogy was designed to include the voices of individuals and groups with cultural, ethnic, gender, and economic differences, but the loudest voices of critical pedagogy in the past were white, Western men” (p. 12). Whilst the writings of feminist scholars such as Audre Lorde, bell hooks, Toni Morrison and others have influenced the broader discourses of critical pedagogy with a focus on gender, sexuality, race, culture, and class, critics suggest that “the work of these scholars [has] remained primarily linked to ethnic, cultural or feminist studies, except perhaps for the writings of bell hooks” (Darder et al., 2003, p. 17). As most other writers in critical pedagogy in the past have been from socio-historically privileged positions, this has caused several contentions and ruptures in efforts to work across cultural and gendered boundaries (Darder et al., 2003). Those committed to critical pedagogy recognize the significance of this critique, whilst forwarding the importance of including

diverse voices, and extending on the groundwork of critical pedagogy. Freire (1970, 1983) suggests that the integral aims of critical pedagogy are to work in solidarity with oppressed groups. The current investigation subscribes to this view, by employing participatory methods to elicit, and then share, the many “voices” of young street children (see also Chapter 4, section 4.5 and 4.6). Thus, the intent of critical pedagogy is to facilitate the inclusion of oppressed groups into educational initiatives for self-determination and social justice, such that more voices from the margins may emerge. Increasingly diverse thinkers, activists and scholars are also voicing ideas and links with critical pedagogy, such as: Lilla Bartolomé, Antonia Darder, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Jesus “Pato” Gomez, Aung San Suu Kyi and Cornel R. West (Kirylo, 2013b).

Critiques have also suggested that whilst critical pedagogy offers theoretical perspectives which may be useful for research, its frames are “overly political” for the reality of daily educational practices (Darder et al., 2003). This criticism has been contested on the grounds that education by its nature *is* political. As Kincheloe (2008, p. 5) states, “democracy is fragile... and embedded in education are the very issues that make or break it... questions of democracy and justice cannot be separated from the most fundamental features of teaching and learning.” Moreover, Darder et al. (2003) suggests that such critiques of critical pedagogy represent instruments of fear or subjugation that are proliferated in the interests of silencing the challenges, criticality and resistance that might emerge from engagements with critical pedagogy.

Amidst these critiques, critical pedagogy has also been judged for its turn into postmodernism and its emphasis on critiquing dominant structures and narratives without

highlighting educational possibilities for addressing issues²⁷. As McFadyen Christensen and Aldridge (2013, p. 12) state, “critical pedagogues are long on criticism but short on solutions.” However, advocates of critical pedagogy claim that critical pedagogy is “uninterested in any theory – no matter how fashionable – that does not directly address the needs of victims of oppression” (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 50). Thus, although critical pedagogy raises the importance of critique, its philosophical intent is to struggle for concrete social change. Further addressing this critique, several researchers have highlighted the importance of educators (pre-service and in-service) developing critical consciousness, and supporting children, families and the community to participate in collective movements for actualising social change (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012; Silva & Langhout, 2011).

Critics have argued that critical pedagogy has emerged from dominant and privileged groups in society, thus, the language of critical pedagogy is exclusive, and the praxis of this theory is limited. Others have suggested that critical pedagogy is overly political and thus, irrelevant to everyday practice. Countering these critiques, advocates of critical pedagogy have argued for de-jargoning or explaining terms used, and ensuring the inclusion of diverse or marginalised perspectives. Key scholars have also elucidated the political nature of education, and the dangers associated with depoliticising educational

²⁷ In critiquing postmodernism, and its effects, Darder et al. (2003) indicate that although postmodernism initially held potential for “serious theoretical engagement of questions of cultural hybridity, racialised subjects, sexualities, and the politics of difference, its intense fragmenting influence on formally effective organizing strategies across communities of difference led to systematic dismantling of former political visions” (p. 18). Cole, Hill, Rikowski, and McLaren (2001) further discuss the ways in which postmodernism has put the educational left in positions of disarray and confusion that have abstracted and deconsolidated concerted efforts for social change. Thus, a number of theorists in critical pedagogy have repositioned their work to fit within projects of Marxism and/or modernity (amongst other such frames) (see for example, McLaren, 2010).

discourses. This section has presented arguments and counter-arguments surrounding these prevalent critiques of critical pedagogy.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has depicted the central features of critical pedagogy that are relevant to the research study described in this thesis. The chapter has illuminated the inherently radical and emancipatory capacity of critical pedagogy, and has justified the applicability of critical pedagogy to the experiences of young street children in this study. Critiques of critical pedagogy, and responses to these critiques have also been presented, with a particular focus on the role of critical pedagogy in recognising, critiquing and challenging oppression in the interests freedom, justice, participation, inclusion and equality.

In the next chapter, the literature surrounding critical consciousness and social justice is reviewed. The next chapter also reviews research findings and contextualises these against the early childhood literature before considering and addressing gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The underlying aim of public education has been debated since the inception of compulsory education. Whilst some commentators caution that “the school has always been at risk of being a place of regulation and normalisation, tasked with producing subjects fit for the purposes of the nation state and the capitalist economy” (Fielding & Moss, 2012, p. 15) many educators, scholars and activists – particularly those aligned with critical pedagogy – remain adamant that striving for critical consciousness and social justice through education is vital to human flourishing, particularly in the face of conditions of marginalisation, oppression and dehumanisation (Freire, 2004; Giroux, 2001b, 2014). Despite this, little is known about young children’s lived experiences or understandings of critical consciousness and social justice (Hawkins, 2010), particularly in non-Western low and middle income (LAMI) contexts. This chapter provides a critical review of the literature on critical consciousness and critical social justice in education, honing in specifically on research conducted in the early childhood sector.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The purpose of this chapter is to:

1. Explore understandings of critical consciousness and social justice, and address how these constructs are connected,
2. Investigate how educational programs and initiatives have facilitated the development of critical consciousness and social justice, and
3. Provide an overview of the literature on children’s experiences and understandings of critical consciousness and social justice, including gaps in this literature.

Subsequent to addressing these aims, the chapter outlines the main research question and sub-questions underscoring the current study, highlighting how the current study contributes to the broader literature base on critical consciousness and social justice.

3.1.1 Search Methods and Inclusion Criteria used for the Literature Review

This literature review examines the current evidence on critical consciousness and social justice in the context of early childhood, education, care, and community development (see also section 3.2.3 for an overview of constructs sought out by the literature review). This section identifies the methods used to search for sources included in this review of the literature and also delineates the parameters and inclusion criteria used to conduct the review of literature.

Literature searches were conducted using Macquarie University's online search engine, which retrieves sources from range of peer-reviewed journals, open access journals, databases (for example, including but not limited to Academic Search Premier, Education Research Complete, ERIC, JSTOR, OECD iLibrary), dissertations and books. The primary search terms used were: 1) critical consciousness, 2) social justice and social justice education, 3) critical social justice, and 4) children, street children, and marginalised communities. Filters were subsequently used to narrow the inclusion criteria to include 1) peer-reviewed articles, 2) research conducted with children, 3) research reporting on educators and pre-service teachers, 4) research in marginalised contexts or communities, and 5) research that included a focus on critical consciousness and social justice. Thus, studies that investigated children's experiences of social justice but did not focus on children's experiences of critical consciousness were excluded from this review

(see also section 3.2.3 for a justification of this exclusion). The initial search produced several youth-focused studies, however, studies that involved children over the age of eight were excluded from this review of the literature, given the early childhood context of this research. Additionally, only sources written in English were used for this review. This is acknowledged as a limitation in this review of literature. In order to combat this limitation, access to research conducted with marginalised groups and non-English populations was sought, as were translated studies, and research from a wide berth of marginalised international contexts.

3.2 Understandings of Critical Consciousness and Social Justice

This section provides an overview of understandings about the concepts of critical consciousness and social justice. The socio-historical underpinnings of these constructs are considered, as well as an overview of the application of these constructs in the context of this research.

3.2.1 Unpacking Critical Consciousness

Originating from the writings of Paulo Freire (1970, 1972, 1973), critical consciousness “describes how oppressed or marginalized people learn to critically analyse their social conditions and act to change them” (Watts et al., 2011, p. 44) (see also Chapter 1 and 2). Freire developed the concept of critical consciousness after he began working with illiterate adults in 1947 (Freire Institute, 2015). His methods for developing critical consciousness emerged alongside his critique of, and indignation towards the “banking” approaches to education (Freire Institute, 2015; Freire, 1973). For Freire, educational aims and methods are political. The purpose of education is to struggle for emancipation from

oppression. This can only be achieved through the development of a critical consciousness. As a pedagogue, Freire used methods, such as; dialogue, problem posing, culture circles²⁸, research, and the notion of praxis, in order to support this development for communities of learners (Freire, 1973, 1982) (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.3).

Rather than traditional approaches to literacy education that built on the technical mastery of reading and writing skills, Freire used the culture circle to teach literacy through visual provocations (Freire, 1973). He used images that were socio-culturally relevant to the participants of the group, and would ask participants (problem-posing) questions in order to support them to identify and critique the subjects that influenced their daily lives – that is, the (social, historical, cultural, political, and economic) factors that contributed to their oppression, alienation, and marginalization (Freire, 1970, 1973). In turn, Freire engaged participants in dialogue – which required participants to reflect upon actions they could engage in to support self-determination or transformation (praxis) (A. D. Williams, 2008). Freire (1973) thus conceived critical consciousness as developing in three stages, 1) semi-intransitive consciousness, 2) naïve transitivity or naïve consciousness, and 3) critical transitivity or critical consciousness²⁹. Freire understood

²⁸ Critical of the “banking” approach to education, Freire created “culture circles” which involved learners co-constructing and sharing knowledge that emerges from participants’ contexts and lived experiences. Learning in culture circles is a collective and emergent process that occurs through authentic dialogue and reflection. As with any other form of learning, Freire (1970) highlights the relationship between culture circles and praxis – noting the importance of transformative practices emerging from culture circles.

²⁹ The first stage, semi-transitive consciousness is characterised by a pre-occupation with survival. The second stage, naïve transitivity, involves an oversimplification of political and social problems. The final stage, critical transitivity or critical consciousness involves “waking up” or critical awareness, and in-depth analysis of social, political, economic, cultural, gendered and historically constructed problems. This in-depth analysis is accompanied by increased socio-political efficacy and agency.

critical consciousness as an ongoing and dynamic process, since human beings are forever in the process of becoming (Freire, 1976, 1983).

Other analysts have expanded on Freire's concepts. For example, A. D. Williams (2008) contends that since educational sites form but one part of a larger constellation of systems, it is not enough for educational sites to be transformative if communities of learners are still embedded within broader systems of oppression. It is now understood that education is necessary for transformation, but is, in and of itself, insufficient for reversing the gravitational pull of deeply ingrained oppressive systems (Fielding & Moss, 2012). Similarly, as Stokes (as cited in A. D. Williams, 2008, p. 79) writes, "consciousness of oppression, alone, does not create freedom." Thus, Fielding and Moss (2012) call for revolutionary and radical reform at all levels of society – including the social, political and economic.

Watts et al. (2011) suggest that the literature on critical consciousness is comprised of three core elements: critical reflection, political efficacy, and critical action. Critical reflection refers to socio-political analysis of multiple forms of oppression and systematic inequities, whilst political efficacy is "the perceived capacity to effect social and political change by individual and/or collective activism" (Watts et al., 2011, p. 46). Finally, critical action combines reflection and political efficacy to perform (individual or collective) changes against micro or macro injustices, stemming from oppressive ways of thinking, being and doing (Watts et al., 2011). Notably, as A. Willis et al. (2008) articulate, "there is not one state of consciousness, but multiple interlaced consciousnesses [*sic*] that form a matrix of understandings influenced by the contexts of our internal and external worlds"

(p. 5). Based on these understandings, the term critical consciousness for the purposes of this thesis refers to the multiple and continuous processes of becoming critically aware of the ideological, political, social, cultural, racial, gendered, historical, and economic conditions of oppression, whilst reflecting and acting in the interests of social justice and freedom. This section has discussed definitions of critical consciousness; the next section unpacks the notion of social justice, highlighting the relationship between critical consciousness and social justice.

3.2.2 Unpacking Social Justice

Social justice is an amalgam that is known by many names – it encompasses ideas and values surrounding equity, human rights, democracy, inclusion, freedom, and fairness (to name but a few). Traditionally attributed to philosophers including Plato, Socrates and Aristotle (Griffiths, 2003), the term was used to refer to the common interests of the public or ‘the greater good’. Seminal work by Rawls (1971) later reconceptualised this understanding to reflect the distribution of economic goods with a focus on just social institutions that saw ‘justice as fairness’ in a social and legal sense. This construction was later challenged by Sen (2008) who strengthened the links between ethics and economics to humanise the economic conception of social justice by focussing on notions of well-being and capability. Simultaneously, several theorists and researchers have argued that social justice is a complicated interplay of historical, social, political, economic and cultural constituents (Nussbaum, 2006; I. M. Young, 1990). Contemporary understandings of social justice vary according to the paradigms under which they have been subsumed. Critical theorists, postmodernists and feminists have each contributed to the conversation by highlighting the different ways in which power, knowledge, politics, reason, language,

discourse, ideology and cultural hegemonies have been used to shape subjectivities, recycle oppression or pave opportunities for transformative social justice (see also chapter 2, section 2.4.1.3 and 2.4.1.4 for an overview of notions of ideology and hegemony).

Definitions and understandings of social justice are, to varying degrees, relative, spatial and temporal (Hawkins, 2010; Rizvi, 1998). Meanings of social justice are ascribed in accordance with context and the emergent nature of socio-historical constructions. As such, there can be no one single trajectory for the development and achievement of social justice, as it is an emergent construct. It is a local, relational, political, ethical, socio-historical construction, which is capable of meaning many different things to many different people (even within seemingly homogenous groups). Accordingly, writers have considered the diversity of paradigms and theories underpinning social justice (Rizvi, 1998; Trikić, 2003). As this research adopts a critical pedagogy lens, the ways in which this lens frames understandings of social justice are detailed below³⁰.

3.2.2.1 Critical social justice.

Critical pedagogy encompasses theoretical insights, in turn portraying a kaleidoscopic view of social justice, which recognises philosophical, ideological and theoretical undercurrents, as well as practical manifestations (see also Chapter 2 for an overview of critical pedagogy and key components of this theory). Drawing on theorists such as Foucault (2002), critical pedagogy sheds light on the impacts of ideological

³⁰ In shaping diverse understandings of social justice, others have considered paradigms and perspectives such as those devised by Marx, Rawls, Young, Nussbaum, Sen and other trains of thought, such as post-structuralism, post-colonialism, postmodernism, and feminism. In the interests of relevance, as this thesis falls under the paradigm of critical pedagogy – only this theoretical lens is considered here.

influences, such as those arising from regimes of truth (see also section 2.4.1.6 for a discussion of regimes of truth). Analysts argue that if regimes of truth legitimise and sanction authority for one particular truth, then oppression is proliferated by the uncritical acceptance of the “assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules” (I. M. Young, 1990, p. 41). Mac Naughton (2005) further argues that these accepted ways of thinking, being and doing, serve to reinforce unequal power relations prevalent in the systems, reasons, language, social interactions and controls in society. Derrida extends upon the argument, suggesting that such symmetries of knowledge and power give unequal weight to relations that privilege the dominant whilst excluding the Other (Eg  a-Kuehne & Biesta, 2001).

Adapting this thinking to socio-educational contexts, Gramsci contends that the acceptance of taken-for-granted forms of knowledge and the dominance of certain truths are further reincarnated through superstructures (churches, schools, the media) and relations (families, teachers, peers), that in turn, perpetuate the “normality” of exclusionary practices, inequalities and injustices (Freire, 1970; Mayo, 1995). Accordingly, critical pedagogy highlights the importance of critiquing and challenging power relations as a form of abetting social justice. Critical pedagogy also highlights the importance of capitalising on educational sites as breeding grounds for resistance to counter social injustices and inequities (Giroux, 2001b).

Accordingly, under the auspice of critical pedagogy (see Chapter 2); this thesis defines social justice as the active (ethical, political, social, cultural, economic, axiological) and critically conscious struggle for transformation (that is, access,

participation, inclusion, equity for all persons), against all forms of discrimination, exclusion, inequality, unfairness, marginalisation and oppression (Mevawalla, 2013; Rix et al., 2010). The overlap between critical consciousness and social justice, and the relevance of this to the thesis, is explored below.

3.2.3 Interconnected Understandings: Social Justice and Critical Consciousness

Critical paradigms suggest that critical consciousness and social justice are integrally interconnected (Kincheloe, 2008). From this standpoint, critical consciousness involves awareness that is geared to positive social change – therefore, critical awareness of oppression used to impose or ignore oppression cannot be considered ‘critical consciousness’. Similarly, social justice, from this characterisation, moves beyond rhetorical understandings of fairness and equality to critical contemplations of micro and macro oppressions and plausible avenues for exacting changes. Therefore, “social justice requires critical thought” (Zamudio et al., 2009, p. 459). As such, critical theorists posit the importance of ideological critique, counter-hegemonic discourses, critical consciousness and resistance as acts of social justice. As Freire (1970, 1972, 1973, 1976, 2000) suggests, social justice and critical consciousness are inseparable for the following reasons:

- a) The principles underlying critical consciousness and social justice are emancipatory,
- b) The two constructs share a philosophical vision of transformation that encompasses access, participation, inclusion and equity for all,
- c) Each requires critical thought, action and reflection,

- d) Each is critical of ideological, theoretical and socio-historical, undercurrents influencing existing practices, pedagogies, policies and politics,
- e) Each seeks viable alternatives and calls for repositioning, and
- f) Each of these constructs incorporates socio-political, ethical, and ontological endeavours for change.

The current review of literature focuses on research that converges both critical consciousness and social justice, particularly in educational contexts. The review will reveal a lack of primary research literature surrounding both critical consciousness and social justice in the early years³¹. This gap has been identified by a number of researchers (Glover, 2001; Hawkins, 2010; Mac Naughton, 2003a, 2003b). This section has described the interconnectedness of social justice and critical consciousness. The following segment investigates the research that investigates the link between education and the development of critical consciousness.

3.3 Education for Critical Consciousness

As noted earlier (see section 3.2.1), critical consciousness invokes the “waking up” of individuals to taken-for-granted situations of oppression and injustice. Thus, the majority of the literature on critical consciousness has investigated ways to develop critical

³¹ There is a body of early childhood literature which addresses strategies for the promotion of tolerance, anti-bias and fairness in early childhood settings – see for example: Dau (2001) and Pelo (2008). However these reports do not invoke critical consciousness as an integral component of social justice. For this reason these studies have not been included in the current review of the literature.

consciousness through educative programs and teacher-research (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013; Diemer, 2012; Diemer & Li, 2011; Garcia, Kosutic, McDowell, & Anderson, 2009).

The literature on programs aimed at fostering critical consciousness has investigated a range of issues, including those associated with race, class, gender, sexual orientation and culture (amongst many others). Overall, much of the research on critical consciousness programs is cross-disciplinary in nature, and diverse in content – focussing on youth engagement, community development, education and social work (amongst others). In the context of primary, secondary, tertiary and pre-service education, critical consciousness has been catapulted by diverse pedagogies, practices and programs, such as critical peace education (Bajaj, 2014; Hantzopoulos, 2011), critical multicultural education (Schoorman, 2011), equity pedagogy (Hyland, 2010), critical pedagogy (Camangian, 2015) and many others. This section critically considers research on education for critical consciousness and is divided into three sections, beginning with research and programs conducted with a) communities, b) adults, and c) children.

3.3.1 Community Approaches for Critical Consciousness

The importance of community involvement in developing critical consciousness for local and broader transformations has been well documented (Horton & Freire, 1990; Ledwith, 2011; Yosso, 2005). Whilst some researchers have investigated the importance of building the consciousness of learners in high-income contexts (Choules, 2007; Han, 2013; Han, Madhuri, & Scull, 2015); the vast majority of critical consciousness research has concentrated on those experiencing marginalisation, oppression or alienation in unequal or low income contexts (Botros, 2008; Cann, 2012). Theorists such as Freire, who highlight

the importance of raising the consciousness of oppressed groups, have justified this perspective, noting that the oppressed must take the lead in humanising themselves and their oppressors (Freire, 1970). Accordingly, NGOs and civil society organisations working with oppressed groups have pioneered programs for community consciousness (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012; Ledwith, 2011). As this study investigates young children in marginalised situations, the role of NGOs in facilitating critical consciousness and social justice for children and communities with these groups is important to examine. Thus, this section concentrates on NGOs with an educational focus in order to understand common factors and challenges faced in the development of community consciousness. Gaps in the literature are also considered – such as, the invisibility of children as community participants and members.

Community based programs for critical consciousness have investigated multiple and interconnected systems of oppression across diverse communities and international contexts. Seminal research conducted by Brodsky, Portnoy, et al. (2012) has examined the experiences of members of an underground Afghan organisation – the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). Brodsky, Portnoy, et al. (2012) highlight that in the last few decades, the people of Afghanistan have experienced multiple and repeated forms of oppression – including war, terrorism from religious extremism, economic and social degradation, and repeated threats to community, health, safety and wellbeing. RAWA, an organisation founded by a core group of predominantly high school and college-educated Afghan women in 1977, aims to develop community critical consciousness, and strives for women’s emancipation. Struggling “against illiteracy, ignorance, [and] reactionary and misogynic culture,” (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012, p.

160) the organization purposefully engages critical consciousness to teach for peace and democracy.

Adopting a qualitative, strengths-based approach, Brodsky, Portnoy, et al. (2012) interviewed over 100 RAWA members, finding that critical consciousness emerged through RAWA's formal and non-formal education programs as well as the lived experiences of its members. The authors highlight how in patriarchal, oppressive and resource-poor communities, education for critical consciousness provides a powerful facilitator of people-to-people change and community development (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012). Moreover, they report that the development of critical consciousness enabled female RAWA members to challenge their victimization and the deprivation of cultural capital, in turn, subversively resisting oppression, facilitating community participation and developing feminist identities (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012).

Escueta and Butterwick (2012) also raise the importance of ideology critique and critical consciousness in challenging the characterisation of victims or oppressed groups being one-dimensional and powerless in the context of mental health research in Canada. In their investigation of the role of critical pedagogy in supporting trauma recovery and reconstruction, Escueta and Butterwick (2012) found that the development of critical consciousness enabled participants to become aware of their capabilities as well as understanding "how the delivery of mental health services... [act] as systems of exclusion organized around gender, race and class" (p. 325). This critical consciousness, in turn, contributed to participants' awareness of factors influencing their (re)traumatization. Similar to Brodsky, Portnoy, et al. (2012), Escueta and Butterwick (2012) found that

investigation of the socio-political, economic and cultural factors involved in oppression provided opportunities for collective recovery and advocacy.

As Escueta and Butterwick (2012) have undertaken research in a clinical context, it could be argued that the accessibility of the program is limited to individuals with medically recognised experiences of trauma - as the project is limited to addressing only certain realities of trauma. Counterfactually, whilst RAWA is theoretically an 'open access' program, aiming to flame the consciousness of all Afghan citizens – the necessity of this initiative being “off the grid” highlights several risks as well as limitations to broader accessibility (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012). Accordingly, research into expanding the accessibility of organisations such as RAWA is pertinent. However, given the political climate, pragmatics and safety risks associated with the conduct of the organization and the nature of this research, to my knowledge, few other studies have been able to document critical consciousness in such underground organisations.

Critics suggest that programs for the development of critical consciousness have concentrated heavily on raising critical awareness, whilst narrowing the focus on praxis and action. Whilst Escueta and Butterwick (2012) emphasise the importance of critical awareness, RAWA's consciousness raising efforts are strongly connected to praxis (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012). As such, RAWA's critiques of systematic oppression are also challenged through socio-political projects. For example, RAWA members engage in the dangerous act of illegally selling the organisation's magazine – *Payam-e Zan*, to the broader community via street markets or bazaars to build awareness and social networks (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012). At the same time, RAWA's educators use the magazine's

content to teach for consciousness through critical literacy. Thus, the community project for consciousness is heavily interconnected, and its members infiltrate diverse pockets of the community to gradually raise community consciousness.

In contrast to underground organisations and social networks for critical consciousness, Hatcher et al. (2011) examine a structural intervention aiming at developing critical consciousness for members of a South African community. Specifically, the study investigates how critical consciousness can be used to prevent intimate partner violence and HIV infection. Similar to the research by Brodsky, Portnoy, et al. (2012), the study centres predominantly around female participants, due to the patriarchal nature of sexual oppression experienced by females in South Africa. Hatcher et al. (2011) justify this focus, noting that “gender inequalities and women’s social and economic dependency can increase risk by reducing bargaining power around decisions like sexual debut, frequency of sexual encounters and condom use” (pp. 542-543).

Hatcher et al. (2011) report on the work of an NGO funded by international bodies that “combines microfinance with participatory education and community mobilization” (p. 543). Conducting in-depth interviews with NGO staff and community participants, the study found that critical consciousness supported the mobilization of community members where participants made individual and collective efforts for change. This is similar to research reported by Amaro and Raj (2000), who found that a government (health department) run project for critical consciousness promoted dialogue surrounding race, class and gender amongst drug users in Massachusetts, USA. Amaro and Raj (2000) indicate that the development of critical consciousness provided opportunities to

investigate HIV risks associated with drug abuse, thereby opening spaces for change. In Amaro and Raj's (2000) research, the development of critical consciousness was accompanied by community-based actions that were designed and led by participants themselves – thereby offering participants leadership roles within the local community.

Similarly, in one longitudinal study conducted in Nigeria, sex workers connected through an NGO, collectively organised to change working conditions with brothel owners, such that prices were raised and workers could decline clients who refused to wear condoms (E. Williams, 1994). The project also involved the development of a literacy and vocational program to support women's understandings of HIV/AIDS. In this way, education for community consciousness highlights the importance of systematically analysing multiple oppressors (emerging through lived experiences of gender, race, religion, and class). It also documents the importance of challenging the cause and manifestations of injustice beyond micro levels through education for critical consciousness (E. Williams, 1994). This is particularly significant in light of the fact that – not unlike many LAMI contexts – Nigeria's policy context affords little protection for women against exploitation, abuse, police intimidation, corruption and health risks (Otutubikey Izugbara, 2005). Addressing the possibilities for collective critical consciousness and macro changes in LAMI contexts, Friedman and Mottiar (2005) show how community movements can stimulate collective action with influences reaching to policy levels. Reporting on research conducted in South Africa, Friedman and Mottiar (2005) emphasise how:

A group of demonstrators were able to pressure international pharmaceutical firms... to abandon court action which sought to prevent the South African

government importing cheaper generic medicines... [later] the South African government sanctioned a plan to distribute anti-retroviral medication (ARVs) to people living with HIV/AIDS, a course of action it had resisted until then (p. 511).

As community based organisations and NGOs have pioneered research and programs for collective consciousness, few such programs have been mainstream or national government run projects embedded within public institutions such as schools. Thus, many projects for critical consciousness exist at the fringes of society, or as an underlife³² (as is the case with RAWA), despite (or at times, because of) the clear need for critical consciousness initiatives at the community level. Thus, critics have questioned the accessibility and sustainability of critical consciousness programs, particularly, of those reliant on funding determined by agency agendas (Hatcher et al., 2011; E. Williams, 1994). Further research into organic people-to-people programs for critical consciousness (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012), could provide insights into ways to maintain the sustainability of community critical consciousness programs.

A review of the literature on community programs for critical consciousness also reveals certain gaps in the literature in relation to children. Whilst community programs for critical consciousness have, at times, mentioned the role of children (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012) – a seismic gap in the literature is noticeable as young children are, for the most part, rendered invisible or seen as inactive members of communities. Thus, further research

³² 'Underlife' is a term used by Schutz (2004) to describe resistant behaviours that exist beneath the norm, or go unnoticed by those in positions of authority (for example, a teacher not noticing cheating or copying). These are undercurrent behaviours that are resistant.

on the role of children, and further involvement of children and their perspectives in research on critical consciousness in oppressed and marginalised communities is needed.

This section has discussed evidence pertaining to community approaches to critical consciousness. The subsequent section unpacks critical consciousness programs in adult education – specifically examining the research on pre-service teachers and pre-service teacher educators in the early childhood and education sector.

3.3.2 Adult Education for Critical Consciousness

Extending on Freire's (1970, 1973) original work in critical literacy with adults, much of the literature in critical pedagogy and on critical consciousness has centred around adults and youth. Several researchers have continued to investigate critical literacy and the development of critical consciousness in diverse contexts, for example; Iran (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013; Ghahremani-Ghajar & Mirhosseini, 2005), Colombia (Mora, 2014), Australia (Comber, 2015; Thwaite, 2015), and the United States of America (McDaniel, 2004; Morrell, 2002; Yosso, 2002). Outside of these frames of reference, research on critical consciousness with adults explores many dissimilar subject areas, for example a) hip-hop (Petchauer, 2011; A. D. Williams, 2008), b) social work (Bransford, 2011), c) family therapy (Garcia et al., 2009), d) disaster risk reduction (Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2009), e) disability (Liasidou, 2012; Nishida & Fine, 2014) and e) gendered smoking pressures (Zucker, Stewart, Pomerleau, & Boyd, 2005).

The perspectives of teachers are particularly salient to this study, as educators and educational sites play central roles in the development of critical attitudes for young

learners and citizens. As this thesis investigates critical consciousness in the context of education for young children, this section concentrates on critical consciousness programs and research conducted on, with and by teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher-educators, particularly within the early childhood and primary school sector. This section first addresses research on critical consciousness and critical social justice conducted with pre-service teachers.

3.3.2.1 Critical consciousness and critical social justice: Research with pre-service teachers.

Increasingly, whilst pre-service teacher education programs have “begun to place greater emphasis on standards and accountability, there has been less focus on working with the community, and especially on working on important social justice issues” (Winterbottom, Lake, Ethridge, Kelly, & Stubblefield, 2013, p. 35). In response, researchers have called for “placing equity front and centre” (Nieto & McDonough, 2011, p. 363) of teacher preparation programs (Nieto & McDonough, 2011; Ramirez Wiedeman, 2002; Winterbottom et al., 2013) and raising the critical consciousness of pre-service teachers (Gay & Kirkland, 2003). Nieto and McDonough (2011) highlight the importance of making social justice ubiquitous in teacher education, such that discrimination, oppression and bias can be challenged by ever-growing communities of critical learners (including teachers, children, families and communities). Ramirez Wiedeman (2002) similarly explains that a critical social justice perspective is necessary if pre-service teachers are to learn how to treat diversity as a valued educational resource, and to afford genuine equity for learners from multiple backgrounds and lifeworlds.

An array of literature focuses on supporting pre-service teachers to teach for social justice. Han (2013) experiments with the use of critical multicultural literature whilst investigating pre-service teachers' dispositions to diversity education in a small town university in the American context. Han (2013) found that a cohort of less than 20 European American pre-service teachers from a remote mountain region in western United States were unwilling to explore multicultural literature, or to engage critically with issues pertaining to race. Han (2013) notes that the study's pre-service teachers perceived multiculturalism to be irrelevant as they planned to teach in small town areas that were homogenously White. Similar to earlier research, Han's research appears to emphasise the importance of critical awareness, whilst sidelining praxis. In a more recent study, Han et al. (2015) investigated students in this same rural population, as well as an urban cohort of students. Han et al. (2015) found that the two groups of students had dramatically different dispositions and attitudes towards critical pedagogy and social justice education. This could suggest that increased exposure to diversity amongst urban students affects capacities for developing critical racial consciousness (Han et al., 2015). However, further comparative research is needed to substantiate this link.

Similarly, highlighting the importance of the early years in disrupting racism and discrimination, Boutte et al. (2011) advocate that "once teachers recognize that silence on these issues contributes to the problem, then they may be more likely to interrupt racism rather than ignore it" (p. 335). Kidd, Sánchez, and Thorp (2008) investigate pre-service teachers' perceptions of teacher preparation program experiences that contribute to shifts in culturally responsive dispositions and teaching practices. Examining the experiences of students from a university in metropolitan United States, Kidd et al. (2008) found that

students' critical engagements with readings surrounding issues of race, culture, poverty and social justice enabled them to begin developing critical consciousness of the institutionalised and cultural nature of racism and discrimination. However, it could be argued that this method privileges students that with stronger affinity to White privilege or the English language (as opposed to international students for example), particularly as critics have argued that readings within critical pedagogy are at times, inaccessible for the oppressed and "othered" (McFadyen Christensen & Aldridge, 2013) (see also Chapter 2, section 2.6 for a discussion of this critique of critical pedagogy). Nonetheless, international research affirms that where programs are specifically geared to English as Additional Language (EAL) students, critical literacy for additional language learning can ignite or support EAL learners' critical consciousness (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013).

The pre-service students in the research by Kidd et al. (2008) also indicated that alongside critical reflection, dialogue and discussion, practical internships in diverse and multicultural classrooms afforded experiential opportunities to challenge their beliefs and attitudes pertaining to diversity (Kidd et al., 2008). Similarly, Gay and Kirkland (2003) reflect on the use of diverse teaching strategies such as poetry, reflection, and role playing in developing pre-service students' critical consciousness, and find that the overlapping use of these strategies are effective pedagogical tools for addressing the strengths of diverse learners. Notably, Kidd et al. (2008) report that it was the interactions between experiences (reflection, practicum, dialogue, critical reading and family engagement) that facilitated shifts in pre-service teachers thinking – thus implying that, the sum of these experiences is greater than (and qualitatively different from) its parts.

Addressing the importance of experiential learning, in the research conducted by Keengwe (2010), 28 students in a multicultural education semester-long course in an American University, were required to complete cross-cultural activities with students learning English as an additional language in order to learn pedagogical strategies to support them to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Keengwe (2010) found that although students were initially anxious of “doing or saying the wrong thing when interacting with students from different cultures” (p. 200), pre-service teachers engagements with cross-cultural learners supported them in diversifying their listening and communication strategies to be more inclusive and motivated to teach for social justice. Students in Keengwe’s (2010) research also reported learning the importance of personalising strategies to individual learners, as opposed to stereotyping individuals according to cultural clumps or groups, thereby students were beginning to question their assumptions about the “other”. However, whilst Keengwe’s (2010) research identifies strategies for pre-service teachers to be more inclusive, a more critical focus on the structural and social oppression experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse learners within classrooms (that is, a more concentrated focus on critical consciousness), could have supported pre-service teachers to critically question structures of oppression (within and outside of educational systems) and how they might genuinely teach for equity and inclusion in their own classroom contexts.

In a related discussion of pre-service teachers’ views of the use of gay and lesbian literature in early childhood classrooms in the United States, students voiced the view that “this really isn’t an issue in elementary classrooms” (Souto-Manning & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2008, p. 263). Similarly, pre-service elementary school teachers in Canada used

notions of “childhood innocence and developmental appropriateness” (Kelly & Brooks, 2009, p. 202) to inform what issues (of race, class, gender, sexual orientation and culture) were and were not addressed within their early childhood classrooms. Pre-service teachers have also been shown to adopt a “colour blind” stance, that is, where students express views such as: “I don’t care if they’re Black, White, or green with polka dots, I treat all children the same” (Boutte et al., 2011, p. 335). Although such views advocate “equality”, analysts argue that such “colour blind” views render issues of race, class, culture and identity to be irrelevant to young children. In doing so, pre-service teachers appear to regurgitate the rhetoric of an uncritical, silent and superficial equality (Boutte et al., 2011; Summer, 2014). This has prompted critical thinkers to contend that “racialised outcomes do not require racist actors” (Boutte et al., 2011, p. 335). The use of developmental norms and a colour blind stance to censor discussion is particularly noteworthy, given that large-scale research from Ireland shows how 3-4 year old children begin to internalise cultural dispositions and awareness of whom is considered the “other” (Connolly, 2011). Providing a counter-viewpoint, Summer (2014), a teacher-researcher presents the thought that “teachers are reluctant to discuss race, colour, and racism not because we do not want to but because we do not know how to” (p. 198). This aligns with findings from the research by Krings, Austic, Gutiérrez, and Dirksen (2015), who researched 653 college students in a Midwestern American university, and found that “participation in social justice education courses is associated with increases in political participation and multicultural activism” (p. 403).

Addressing the systematic constraints of accountability and one-size-fits all approaches to education, Schoorman (2011) provides a self-reflective analysis of her

teaching experiences with Guatemalan Maya immigrant families in the United States. She highlights the importance of teacher-preparation programs mobilising students to develop a critical consciousness, which enables educators to be creative and transformative. In this way, Schoorman (2011) calls for educators (and teacher-educators) to ‘think outside’ the ever-narrowing frames of accountability and standardisation – teaching (subversively and critically) whilst changing the system from the inside, by circumnavigating the checklist of curricular and accountability standards required of them. Schoorman (2011) suggests that social justice teacher education programs need to recognise the “role of the teacher as a social justice activist ...[and] public intellectual” (p. 344), and calls for teacher-preparation programs to involve multiple contexts of learning, including institutional sites, organisations, and community-based projects. Schoorman (2011) contends that this diverse engagement is necessary in order to expose students to the multifaceted identities and functionalities of teachers as cultural workers that play many roles in micro and macro contexts. Notably, although scattered case studies of teachers subverting or circumnavigating the system have been documented (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013; Picower, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2009), to my knowledge, there has been little research which supports pre-service teachers or teacher-educators to teach subversively for transformative resistance.

As an exhaustive review of varied forms and sites of oppression is not possible in this limited space, the above studies provide an example of the influence of some of the research on pre-service teachers’ engagements with social justice education, and critical consciousness. Overall, this literature highlights the importance of raising pre-service teachers critical consciousness and questioning the political rhetoric associated with

“objectivity”, “neutrality” and “developmentally appropriate practice” (Cannella, 2002). It could be argued that pre-service teachers’ unwillingness to engage in explorations of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation partly indicates that a complex power struggle emerges when pre-service teachers are asked to question White supremacy (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; Han, 2013). Notably, this phenomena is not exclusive to pre-service teachers, with Matias (2012) reporting analogous results from an urban high school context. The literature on programs for pre-service teachers’ development of critical consciousness also suggests that, at times, attempts to develop critical consciousness with a group of students results in some students discrediting the validity and legitimacy of “other” views, by intentionally adopting an ‘objective’, ‘neutral’ or ‘colour blind’ perspective that protects the power of Whiteness, heterosexuality and/or the dominant culture – which seeks to make this power invisible or normal (Boutte et al., 2011; Han, 2013; Souto-Manning & Hermann-Wilmarth, 2008). This has salient influences on the development of children’s critical consciousness, as Boutte et al. (2011) explain “if young children are not provided with opportunities to begin formulating and questioning their initial understandings, it is likely that they will develop the rudiments of racism” (p. 336).

Researchers clarify that pre-service teachers are capable of engaging (themselves and young children) consciously with social justice issues despite the pressures of accountability and standardisation. However, as Hyland (2010) notes, “there are few large-scale empirical studies that evaluate the use of pedagogical strategies in classrooms that work against... limiting messages and almost none in early childhood classrooms” (p. 83). Thus, further research into supporting pre-service teachers and teacher-educators in teaching for critical consciousness could contribute to this gap in the literature. Moreover,

whilst researchers have focussed on issues of race, gender and sexual orientation, research reporting on pre-service teachers' consciousness of the interconnectedness of oppression remains scarce. Added to this, whilst certain researchers have investigated preparing teachers for cultural diversity and critical consciousness (Keengwe, 2010; R. Kohli, 2012; Nicotera & Kang, 2009; Rodríguez, 2008), less research explores critical perspectives in preparing teachers for working with communities or children experiencing violence, injustice or inequality stemming from concentrated poverty.

Despite these gaps in the literature, it is evident that the importance of pre-service teachers and teachers' engagements with critical consciousness and critical social justice is paramount to critical education. This section has presented research on pre-service teachers engagements with critical consciousness and/or critical social justice, the subsequent section explores research conducted with teachers regarding critical consciousness and critical social justice.

3.3.2.2 Critical consciousness and critical social justice: Research with teachers.

Numerous researchers highlight the role of the teacher as a catalyst in opening up spaces for critical consciousness (Abednia & Izadinia, 2013; Freire, 1973; hooks, 2010, 2014). Thinkers also voice the importance of teachers themselves being critically conscious (R. Kohli, 2012; Ngai & Koehn, 2011; Shim, 2008). This section unpacks the perspectives of teachers, or teacher-researchers regarding the development of critical consciousness (of children or the self). This section focuses specifically on the views of teachers – including, teachers' reflections of the process of incorporating critical

consciousness, and teachers' views of the limitations, challenges and possibilities arising from the inclusion of critical consciousness in ECD contexts with young children.

Research that draws data from young children is addressed later in the chapter (see section 3.3.3.2).

Reflecting on her own experiences as a White, middle-class teacher in a kindergarten classroom in urban southeast United States, Summer (2014) describes the process of 'racialised awakening' that emerged from being called a racist by an African American mother who had been called into the researcher's classroom to discuss her child's bullying behaviours. Unpacking her story, Summer (2014) questions the normalisation of Whiteness, and the role of teachers in the institutionalisation of racism in educational and social systems, noting that "society embodies biases that we have been socialised to accept" (p. 195). Drawing on her experiences, Summer (2014) highlights that often unbeknownst to teachers, their everyday language and actions contribute to racism and discrimination within educational settings. Similarly, addressing the role of language, Marx (2006), McIntyre (1997) and McDonough (2009) found that teachers used patterns of "White talk" in order to "marginalize people of colour and avoid discussions of race" (McDonough, 2009, p. 528), in turn, hiding relations of power to privilege White ways of thinking, being and doing.

Extending on this critique, Summer (2014) provides strategies for countering "White talk", such as (subtly or overtly) challenging deficit perspectives, sharing critical views, and engaging with critical literacy. Contrary to the aforementioned examples of marginalization, in a seminal study, Ladson-Billings (1994) investigates the use of

culturally relevant pedagogies by eight early years teachers, teaching African American children from grades two to five. Ladson-Billings (1994) found that when teachers' consciousness of oppression and worldviews matched those of their community, teachers centred local and cultural African American knowledge into the curriculum and their work with children. Teachers were also able to align themselves as cultural workers for social justice and as political allies with members of their community (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Critical of the use of singular methods for raising consciousness and social justice, Hyland (2010) warns that "relying on books as the primary source of literacy instruction reinforces a curriculum rooted in White, middle-class values, because children whose home literacy practices are primarily oral or based on popular media are at a disadvantage" (p. 84). In turn, she calls for more large scale research to provide tactical insights into diverse pedagogical strategies to support children's critical consciousness and social justice learning (Hyland, 2010).

Researchers also highlight the complex and emotional nature of developing critical consciousness. McDonough (2009) conducted an ethnographic investigation in an inclusive fifth grade classroom located in an urban northeast setting in the United States. Using narratives from the "urban, learning disabled, and White" teacher (McDonough, 2009, p. 351), the researcher analysed the teacher's development of critical racial consciousness. Similar to Summer (2014), McDonough (2009) found that the teacher's development of critical racial consciousness was fraught with feelings of guilt, fear and anger that emerged as the teacher reflected on her own Whiteness, and became aware of the inequities present in society. Gay and Kirkland (2003) note that these feelings can render teachers silent and result in teachers refusing to analyse power relations.

McDonough (2009) argues that the “desire to be accepted by one’s racial peer group may result, in particular for Whites, in no longer questioning the status quo and thus relieving the sense of guilt” (p. 533). Whilst the majority of the literature on in-service teachers examines the perspectives of White teachers (thus presenting a central gap in the literature) (Summer, 2014), R. Kohli (2012) shares the perspectives of teachers from racial minorities. R. Kohli (2012) suggests that teachers of colour have “often-untapped insight and power to transform classrooms and schools” (p. 181). Thus, it is the responsibility of all teachers to hold cross-racial dialogues and develop collective strategies for change (hooks, 1989; R. Kohli, 2012). Whilst it has also been argued that multi-level dialogues (between children, families, teachers, community members) could support changes at the micro and macro levels (Arvind, 2009; Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012), further educational research in this area could better support this claim.

Noticeably, children’s resistant or perceived anti-social behaviours appear to be a springboard for teachers to consider social justice issues and children’s perspectives through a critical lens (Sánchez-Blanco, 2015; Summer, 2014). It could be argued that oppositional behaviours offer teachers spaces to question if students resist “schooling ideologies because its ‘official’ curricula silence the voices, sensibilities, and lived experiences of dispossessed youth” (Camangian, 2015, p. 425). For example, Summer’s (2014) catalyst for considering race emerged as a result of oppositional behaviours exhibited by a Black child in her classroom. Similarly, Sánchez-Blanco (2015) examines one teacher’s developing critical and reflective practice in a Spanish public school in the region of Galicia. The investigation emerged as the teacher; Lucía requested the researchers to assist her with the ‘problematic’ behaviours of two male children in her

classroom. Investigating the experiences of Lucía, a teacher of four year olds, through an action research project, Sánchez-Blanco (2015) found that when children's behaviours were listened to as a form of communication, the classroom became a place where daily injustices could be canvassed, and children's understandings of fairness and unfairness could grow deeper. Lucía, developing her own understandings of critical social justice, was able to co-construct understandings of fairness and unfairness that formed the inclusive culture of the classroom.

However, both Sánchez-Blanco (2015) and Summer (2014) note the challenges teachers face as they develop critical consciousness. Summer (2014) notes that “unfortunately, admitting that racism exists seems to be taboo in public schools” (p. 195). Similarly, Sánchez-Blanco (2015) shares, “we know that deluded or irresponsible masses can kill democracy by democratic means, as she [Lucía] thinks happens in this school” (p. 2). Bringing to light the systematic nature of racism, Summer (2014) deduces the limitations that arise when critical consciousness is taken upon as an individual (as opposed to collective) endeavour in an educational context, and advocates that the development of collective critical consciousness is necessary in order to change the cultural fabric of schools. Janis et al. (2014) also relay their frustrations of “teaching critical consciousness in the age of austerity where the students are schooled to order driven by common cores and high stake testing while race, gender, class, and power in the South [of the United States] are pushed to the side” (para 1). Moreover, teachers also document the resistance of families to their children participating in investigations of critical social justice issues (Silva & Langhout, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2009; Summer, 2014). Whether this unwillingness stems from academic, cultural, or socio-political

justifications remains unclear, however, this gap in the literature points to the importance of family and community involvement in facilitating complex and critical engagement with social justice issues.

Recognising these challenges, teachers and teacher-researchers such as Bentley (2012), Picower (2011), Silva and Langhout (2011) and Souto-Manning (2009) indicate how nurturing children as change agents can facilitate social and cultural change. These researchers explicate that the visibility of children's meaningful and in-depth engagements with critical social justice and critical consciousness can lead to the overthrowing of systematic condescension, whilst challenging leaders' inaction for change and disrupting the perception of young children as "cute" and "innocent" (children's engagements with critical consciousness are discussed in section 3.3.3 and 3.3.3.1). Extending on this, Picower (2011) investigates the strategies that beginning teachers use to teach for social justice in light of the challenges faced in school contexts. Examining a small sample of White, African American and Latina teachers working in urban elementary schools, Picower (2011) found that teachers' engagement in a research project provided camaraderie and shared protection for their vision, which upheld teachers' spirits to continue to teach for social justice. Highlighting the power of transformative (and subversive) resistance and counter-hegemonic ideologies, Picower (2011) also found that teachers "camouflaged their critical pedagogy by integrating it with the mandated curriculum, which allowed them to teach from a social justice perspective without rousing the concerns of their administration" (p. 1105). This is similar to the research by Souto-Manning (2009) who highlights that despite accountability and standardization requirements, she was able to germinate a critical social justice project with her class of

young children. Conducting a curriculum analysis of the three primary textbooks used in the United States, Gordon Fesperman (2013) shows the importance of resisting or navigating curriculum, highlighting that several types of racist bias were prevalent within all three of the most commonly used textbooks for second grade students.

Cultivating the importance of facilitating macro as well as micro change, Picower (2011) found that another strategy that teachers used was to go “public with their work by rejecting or speaking against policies that they felt were not in the best interests of their students” (p. 1105). Ohanian (2012) shares a personal experience of political activism, highlighting the importance of educators engaging in broader activism. Whilst researchers have investigated the strengths and stories of activists (Ollis, 2012) and educational activists throughout history (Smith Crocco, Munro, & Weiler, 1999), further attention to communities of teachers, researchers and activists, particularly in diverse international contexts could support understandings of ways to encourage broader social changes (McCrary & Ross, in press).

As the majority of research on pre-service teachers and teachers views of teaching critical consciousness and critical social justice to young children has been conducted in North American context, its generalizability to non-Western geo-political situations remains problematic, despite the breadth of diversity evident within the American context. The lack of literature from diverse non-Western contexts poses a notable gap in the literature since theorists such as Freire (1983, 2004) highlight the importance of developing critical consciousness with internationally marginalized and oppressed groups. In recognition of the importance of teachers in developing children’s critical consciousness

and critical social justice, Pittard (2015) offers the view that pre-service teachers and teachers are often characterized within the critical pedagogy literature as ‘reproducers’ of the status quo. These views are evident in a range of studies pertaining to teachers and pre-service teachers, and as such, research that positions teachers as capable protagonists that engage critically with social justice issues is missing from this research base. Moreover, as Summer (2014) and McDonough (2009) proclaim, whilst programs supporting pre-service teachers have been well documented, “there seems to be... deafening silencing when we look into similar opportunity for in-service teachers” (Summer, 2014, p. 199). Similarly, whilst much of the literature focuses on pre-service or in-service teachers in school settings, much less emphasis is placed on teachers and children in prior-to-school settings. Additionally, much of the research conducted has been conducted by or with White females, thus silencing the perspectives of minorities such as males, those with disability, and those with diverse racial, class, cultural, and sexual identities. Furthermore, whilst the majority of the literature presents qualitative perspectives offering perspectival understandings, Hyland (2010) calls for large-scale research into pedagogical strategies that teachers can use to develop the critical consciousness and social justice understandings of young children.

This section has discussed the literature pertaining to pre-service teachers and teachers’ engagements with critical consciousness and critical social justice. The next section canvasses literature on critical consciousness for education with young children.

3.3.3 Critical Consciousness for Education with Children

Reviewing the literature on children's engagements with critical consciousness, it is evident that the majority of the research concentrates on critical consciousness development for youth participants, particularly from marginalised or racially diverse backgrounds. Programs for youth engagement with critical consciousness range from a) youth involvement in critical peace education programs (Cann, 2012; Hantzopoulos, 2011), b) videography for canvassing LGBTQIA³³ issues experienced by youth of colour (Cruz, 2013) and youth activism (Parkhouse, 2015), c) a photovoice approach to documenting community issues (Foster-Fishman et al., 2010), to d) the use of transformative groups (Shin et al., 2010), and e) a whole school approach to the development of critical social justice (Hantzopoulos, 2011), amongst many other investigations (Diemer, 2012; Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; McInerney, 2009; Simmons, 2015; L. Smith et al., 2012). Whilst it could be argued that many of the approaches used to investigate critical consciousness with youth could be tailored to younger children, this section concentrates on primary research on critical consciousness and critical social justice conducted with young children, as the early years remain the focus of this thesis.

3.3.3.1 Early childhood contexts.

A plethora of literature recognises that children in the early years are philosophical and potentially capable of critical thought (Britt & Rudolph, 2013; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998; LeeKeenan & Nimmo, 1993; McLachlan & Britt, 2015). Despite this, Hawkins (2010) notes that only a handful of literature has investigated young children's

³³ LGBTQIA is an umbrella term used to refer to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual communities (Cruz, 2013).

engagements with critical consciousness and critical social justice. This section unpacks research in this area.

In her “students-as-researchers” approach study, Butler (1998) describes experiences with a classroom of predominantly African American second graders living in one of Chicago’s public housing projects. Butler (1998) documents children’s intense sense of agency, and the melding of children’s knowledge with a sense of purpose. Whilst Butler (1998) found that, at times, children’s imagination and stories of reality demonstrated false consistencies, the study nonetheless highlights that young children were conscious of racial, economic, political and social oppressions they encountered in their everyday lives. Butler (1998) also shares the ways in which children attempted to find hope in situations of injustice, and maintained a firm collective focus on power and justice:

If a student wanted to talk about ants or rocks or something interesting, but seemingly irrelevant to justice, the other students in the class would stop him or her. ‘What does this have to do with peace and power?’, ‘How you gonna help your Brothers and Sisters by talking about that?’ and ‘That’s nice, but what does it have to do with us and *our* People?’ were constant comments students made (Butler, 1998, p. 100).

This study was seminal as it showed how children “analysed contradictions between the rhetoric and reality in their lives, the social pressures that restrict individual agency, and how they can work for social justice, power, unity and community change” (Alderson, 2001, p. 146). Whilst Butler (1998) shows how children can be active and participatory researchers in educational projects, Bland (2012) indicates that such research

conducted with oppressed groups can, at times, be seen as romanticizing marginalization. However, Butler (1998) bases the premise of her research on a participatory worldview that explores the lived, and concrete realities of young children in oppressive or marginalised situations. Critics could also argue that Butler's (1998) reliance on verbal dialogue and conversational data might have 'silenced' children's "other" ways of knowing, thinking or being – such as children's artistic, kinaesthetic and other non-verbal forms of communication (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013).

In a more recent study in a rural agricultural community in California, United States, Silva and Langhout (2011) used ethnographic methods to examine how a first grade teacher engaged children in developing critical consciousness by integrating an artist-focused curriculum into her classroom. Eliciting the perspectives of the teacher as well as the children through interviews, observations and field notes, Silva and Langhout (2011) found that, similar to Butler's (1998) research, children participated in in-depth and insightful conversations about power and privilege. Initially children in the study spoke about the experiences of the "other", canvassing social justice issues through analysing the work of artists throughout history who had experienced oppression or expressed it through the many mediums of their art (poetry, painting, photography, dance, and many other such modes). Silva and Langhout (2011) discuss how the use of dialogue and problem-posing elicited children's reflections and the development of their own political and social agency, which later facilitated action and change. Silva and Langhout (2011) portray not only, how the use of an artist curriculum can propel the development of critical consciousness and young children's agency, but also how multiple interconnected topics such as racial

discrimination, dispossession, poverty and sexism can be explored through a critical curriculum with young children.

Investigating critical perspectives of social justice, Hawkins (2010, 2014b) conducted action research with 46 pre-schoolers in two settings over 21 weeks in an Australian study, finding that children engaged in deep reflective discussions about issues such as integrity and self-worth. Whilst children did not discuss issues of oppression or structural inequities, children demonstrated critical awareness of, and sensitivity towards, social justice issues. Similarly, in the American context, Bentley (2012) conducted a practitioner inquiry with one classroom of pre-school children. Bentley (2012) found that young children communicated complex, multi-perspectival understandings of social justice issues. However, whilst the children in this study were researched ‘on’, critics could argue that more participatory “students-as-researchers” approaches could further facilitate children’s critical awareness, praxis and understandings of micro, and macro social justice issues.

Demonstrating children’s critical consciousness capacities, Souto-Manning (2009) engaged 19 six and seven year old children over two academic years in a teacher-researcher critical literacy project that resulted in children problematizing the racial and socio-economic segregation of pull-out³⁴ programs in their classroom in the United States. Critically, Souto-Manning’s classroom was diverse – with some students living in

³⁴ Pull-out programs are those which “consist of pulling individual children or a small group of children (e.g. those that qualify for gifted or special education services) out of their regular classrooms for focused enrichment or targeted, remedial instruction” (Souto-Manning, 2009, p. 51).

government subsidised homes, whilst others lived in mansions (Souto-Manning, 2009). Similar to the research by Silva and Langhout (2011), Souto-Manning's inquiry began with a critical literacy project that supported children to see multiple perspectives through books. The project then escalated when children began challenging deficit perspectives and the exclusion of children partaking in pull-out programs. Children's critical consciousness through the critical literacy project led them to disrupt socio-historically constructed structures of domination – and further led to collective social action. Students called on the school principal to hear their views about the segregation occurring within the school, and petitioned parents about their desire to be in an inclusive classroom. This resulted in Souto-Manning (2009) coordinating an inclusive classroom that further facilitated participation, inclusion and equitable access to learning for all students. Similar to the research by Picower (2011), far from romanticising the process of developing critical consciousness, Souto-Manning (2009) discusses the difficulties of accountability and standardisation, offering experiences of ways to address these structural rigidities whilst teaching for critical social justice.

These studies address the strengths and capabilities of young children in developing critical consciousness, however some pertinent gaps in the literature also become evident from a review of these handful of studies. Notably, there has been limited research conducted into the development of critical consciousness with young children (Hawkins, 2010, 2014b), and there is a scarcity of research from non-Western contexts. Moreover, whilst many innovative methods have been used for developing critical consciousness with youth participants (Cann, 2012), investigations with young children have focused predominantly on the use of picture books. As a range of literature points to the importance

of listening to the ‘hundred languages’ of children (Clark, 2007; Edwards et al., 1998), the lack of diverse forms of communication presents a pertinent gap in the research on critical consciousness with young children. Hyland (2010) also warns of books being singular tools for consciousness-raising, highlighting how books can at times reinforce White, middle-class values. Moreover, whilst some of these studies highlight the importance of parent and community involvement, few document the overlaps between community consciousness and children’s consciousness through a shared project.

This section has reviewed the literature on young children’s engagements with critical consciousness and critical social justice research projects in early childhood contexts. Building on this, the following section considers the gaps in the literature, and contextualises the current study within the broader context of research on critical consciousness and critical social justice in the early years.

3.4 Gaps in the Literature and the Current Study

The current review of the literature provides insights into the research that has been conducted in the overlapping knowledge-realms of critical consciousness and critical social justice. Using this body of literature as a foundation for foregrounding the current research, this section critically considers the gaps prevalent within the literature reviewed. In doing so, this section highlights how the current investigation aims to address some of these gaps, before the subsequent part of the chapter details the research questions underlying this study.

The reviewed literature highlights that there are many varied programs for critical consciousness – most of which are aimed at developing the critical consciousness of adults and youth. Moreover, whilst many diverse and innovative programs have been developed for investigating critical consciousness with youth – research in the early years has concentrated on the use of verbal communication, critical literacy and/or visual texts to forward critical consciousness. Accordingly, there has been little investigation of the diverse methods available for raising the consciousness of young children. This study aims to address this gap by engaging children in research that involves multiple forms of communication and expression (see Chapter 4, section 4.5 and 4.12). Given the importance of listening to young children in a diverse and inclusive manner, this research uses multiple forms of “listening” (visual, verbal, kinaesthetic) in order to capture the many forms of communication used by young children to make meanings.

Moreover, a pertinent gap in the literature emerges as the majority of research on critical consciousness and critical social justice has been conducted primarily in the North American or Western context. This has meant that the bulk of the literature on critical consciousness with young children has examined social justice issues emerging from these contexts – such as those of race, Whiteness, and multiculturalism. Therefore, there is a lack of research on other forms of oppression, such as those emerging as a result of religion, caste and non-Western poverty. Accordingly, this research focuses on the diverse and idiosyncratic forms of oppression experienced by young children in a non-Western context.

The lack of children's voices in the literature on critical consciousness and social justice also necessitates participatory and multi-medium inquiry. Accordingly, given the lack of research with children from oppressed, dispossessed or marginalised groups, this research aims to investigate the views of young children – namely, street children – who experience multiple forms of interlocking oppressions; such as inequality, caste discrimination, social stigma and other forms of violence and domination. Given that researchers have indicated that street children are likely to experience many forms of injustice, the aim of this investigation is to examine the lived experiences and demonstrated understandings of young street children in an organic manner – that is discussing realities that are relevant to children in their context (see Chapter 1, section 1.8.3.3 for a justification for focussing on street children in this study).

Moreover, whilst the literature on critical consciousness recognises the importance of community consciousness, little community-based research has investigated the role of children in the community as participatory protagonists that influence community consciousness. Furthermore, whilst the early childhood literature highlights the importance of ECD sites being potentially potent community hubs that work for ethical, political and democratic praxis – there are few researchers who investigate the interrelationship between critical consciousness and the manifestation of ethical, political and democratic praxis in early childhood settings. Accordingly, this investigation builds upon the rich literature from the field of critical consciousness and early childhood, whilst addressing some key gaps in the literature.

In order to address these gaps in the literature, the current research aims to contribute to the existing body of literature by addressing the following central research question:

1. How do marginalised young children demonstrate their understandings and lived experiences of social justice and critical consciousness?

This overarching research question is underscored by two sub-questions, these ask:

- a. What are young street children's demonstrated understandings and lived experiences of social justice?
- b. What are young street children's demonstrated understandings and lived experiences of critical consciousness?

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of the literature on critical consciousness programs and research, which encapsulates an inherent focus on critical social justice. Three core themes were considered, including: definitions and socio-historical underpinnings of social justice and critical consciousness, education for critical consciousness and critical social justice, and the gaps in the literature pertaining to young children, critical consciousness, social justice and marginalized contexts. The chapter identifies the gaps in the literature, and the concomitant research questions that have been developed to address these gaps. The following chapter presents the methods used for the current research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research is to investigate young street children's lived experiences and demonstrated understandings of social justice and critical consciousness. This aim is underscored by the intention of truly listening to the voices and perspectives of children from vulnerable and marginalised groups. To address this aim, a qualitative approach to inquiry has been used, guided by phenomenology and the Mosaic approach (Clark & Moss, 2011) for researching with young children who attended a drop-in centre for street children in Mumbai, India³⁵. In order to address the aims of this study, the overarching research question asks: How do young street children in Mumbai, India demonstrate their understandings and lived experiences of social justice and critical consciousness? Accordingly, sub-questions include:

1. What are young street children's demonstrated understandings and lived experiences of social justice?
2. What are young street children's demonstrated understandings and lived experiences of critical consciousness?

This chapter focuses on the research methods used to conduct this study, and outlines the instruments and processes employed for data collection and analysis. A justification and explanation of qualitative approaches, phenomenological theory and the Mosaic approach precedes a review of the procedures used for data collection, participant

³⁵ In order to maintain confidentiality and privacy, and in accordance with the ethical undertones of this research, pseudonyms have been used throughout this thesis when referring to children at the NGO drop-in centre where this research was conducted.

recruitment and data analysis. The credibility, accuracy and consistency³⁶ of this research are further discussed alongside methodological limitations. Ethical considerations pertaining to this research, including researching with vulnerable populations, and marginalised groups, are also described.

4.2 Research Design

Building on the identified gaps in the literature (see Chapter 3) and the theoretical components of critical pedagogy (see Chapter 2), this study raises the importance of investigating young street children's multiple realities and the idiosyncratic, socio-political and ethical nature of lived experiences. In recognition of Kincheloe's (2007, p. 16) assertion that "all educational spaces are unique and politically contested", this research adopts methodological tools arising from critical pedagogy in order to investigate questions of justice, power and praxis in the context of social, political, historical and educational spaces occupied by participants in this study. Synchronously, informed by early childhood philosophy and from pedagogical practices arising from Reggio Emilia³⁷, this research uses the Mosaic approach in order to truly and carefully listen to the "hundred

³⁶ Denzin and Lincoln (2003) write that in constructivist paradigm of qualitative research "terms such as *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity" (p. 35). These constructs are further discussed under section 4.14 of this chapter.

³⁷ Reggio Emilia is a whole city in a region of Northern Italy. Reggio Emilia encompasses a renowned educational project, which is supported by the city, for children below the age of compulsory schooling. As Fielding and Moss (2012, p. 15) write, Reggio Emilia's educational projects are examples of the community's "imaginative engagement with an agreed set of radical democratic educational principles... [that] place great importance on a pedagogy of relationships and listening, in which knowledge is the outcome of an educational process of co-construction" (p. 15). Pedagogues from Reggio Emilia have pioneered the use of 'pedagogical documentation'. Pedagogical documentation is a medium of communication with families and communities. It is also a tool for educational research and analysis, and a way of making children's knowledge visible. Pedagogical documentation enables the view of knowledge as socially constructed, and advocates multiple forms of knowing. Clark and Moss (2011) write that Reggio Emilia and pedagogical documentation have inspired elements of the Mosaic approach (see section 4.5).

languages³⁸” of children (Malaguzzi, 1993) and their understandings of social justice and critical consciousness (sub-research questions 1 and 2). The term “hundred languages” describes the diverse and varied range of expressive communications used by children to convey and make meanings of their own lived experiences. In valuing and respecting children as “experts and agents in their own lives” (Clark & Moss, 2011, p. 7), the Mosaic approach has been used in this study as the means of involving children in a continuously reflective process of engagement. In this study, children constructed their own interpretations of their lived experiences, including experiences of social justice and critical consciousness, alongside the researcher. Similar to methodologies used by Freire (1970, 1973, 1985a), the use of the Mosaic approach in this study positions children as “partners in the research processes” (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 164) by providing participants repeated opportunities to co-construct meanings and reflect upon their experiences, relationships, knowledge, values and beliefs across multiple contexts (inside and outside of the educational context provided by the NGO centre) over a period of six months. This section describes the research design underpinning this study and focuses on the stages of research. The research design for the current study is depicted in Figure 4.1.

³⁸ The notion of the “hundred languages” refers to the many ways in which children communicate with others, make meanings, and/or express themselves – be it through dance, drama, gesture, gaze or facial expression (Malaguzzi, 1993, 1996). Pedagogues from Reggio Emilia forward the importance of developing these “hundred languages” through teachable moments and play.



Figure 4.1. Research design for the current study

In light of Malaguzzi's (1993, 1996) contention that children's communications include diverse and varied forms of verbal and non-verbal expression, several researchers have highlighted the importance of building authentic relationships with children – see for instance Clark and Moss (2011) and Dockett and Perry (2011). Relationships support genuine understanding of the idiosyncratic ways in which children make and convey meanings. Relationship building can be seen as doubly important in the context of conducting research with street children, as L. Young and Barrett (2001a, p. 150) note, "lying is a part of a street child's culture and is necessary for their survival... within a few days of arrival on the streets, a newcomer learns the responses to give when asked personal questions. This is why it is essential to spend time with the children to develop a trusting relationship." Thus the initial stage of this research involved rapport building with children, families and NGO staff at the drop-in centre. During this stage, considerable time was spent in assimilating to the centre's daily activities, learning the cultures, routines and behaviours within the centre, building relationships with children, families and staff,

observing children's play and interactions, making detailed field notes and completing a situational analysis on the research context to understand the influence of micro and macro factors affecting children's lives.

Child participants were initially recruited through an NGO centre. This NGO formed the point of entry for building relationships with children, families and NGO staff. Accordingly, the first stages of data were collected from within the centre. During subsequent stages of fieldwork, data was collected from the perspectives of participants, inside and outside of the centre. During these 'out-of-centre' stages, children led the researcher on a photo-excursion through the streets to their homes and workplaces, at times, discussing their views or providing a running commentary of photographs taken. Several researchers have argued that photography is useful in rapport building or in situations where children's verbal skills are developing, and where English is an additional language, or in the case of this research, where Hindi (the primary medium of communication used) was the additional language of the researcher (Clark & Moss, 2011; Crivello, Camfield, & Woodhead, 2009; Dockett, Einarsdottir, & Perry, 2009).

To support the continuous process of reflection and analysis forwarded by the Mosaic approach, the photographs were revisited and analysed with children through semi-formal and informal conversations and, in keeping with the hundred languages approach to research and pedagogy, through relevant and opportune moments in play, drawing or story telling (Clark & Moss, 2011). Throughout this process, observations continued to be taken and children's drawings, stories and conversations continued to be collected to support the multilayered qualitative nature of this research project.

This section has provided an overview of the research design. The subsequent segment focuses on defining qualitative research and critical qualitative research, highlighting key features and identifying links between qualitative approaches and critical pedagogy (see also Chapter 2), in order to justify the use of critical qualitative research methods for the current study.

4.3 Qualitative Research

A qualitative research paradigm informed the methodological approaches used for the current study. Marshall and Rossman (2011, p. 3) define qualitative research as “a broad approach to the study of social phenomena. Its genres are naturalistic, interpretive, and increasingly critical, and they typically draw on multiple methods of inquiry.” Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 6) add that qualitative research is “a set of complex interpretive practices” that crosscut several theories and paradigms³⁹, subject matters, disciplines and methods. Kress (2011) further explains that qualitative research focuses on understanding “the ‘qualities’ of social action and meaning” (p. 53), rather than numerical translations or measurements that emphasise the quantity, intensity or frequency of phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Similarly, McMillan (2004, p. 256) contends that in contrast to quantitative studies which assume that “there is a single, objective reality that can be measured”, qualitative research emphasises the socially constructed nature of multiple realities, and the ways in which participants ascribe meaning to social experiences (Denzin

³⁹ Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 6) indicate that qualitative research “has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own... multiple theoretical paradigms claim use of qualitative research methods and strategies, from constructivism to cultural studies, feminism, Marxism, and ethnic models of study.”

& Lincoln, 2003). As such, qualitative research is framed by a “philosophy of knowledge” (McMillan, 2004, p. 256) that focuses on the complex, multifaceted and holistic nature of social phenomena, and the “value-laden nature of inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 13).

Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest that qualitative approaches are particularly adept at exploring human conditions as these approaches aim to understand “real-world” phenomena in their naturalistic complexity. Research indicates that qualitative approaches are therefore effective in investigating complex, dynamic and non-linear human experiences and social phenomena that make the world visible through multiple representations of reality, as opposed to de-contextualised, abstract and totalising representations of a single, apolitical “truth” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, 2011). Accordingly, qualitative researchers highlight the importance of soliciting local, contextual and organic understandings, in order to investigate phenomena holistically, rather than reducing social phenomena to the sum of its parts (Davis & Sumara, 2006; Fleener, 2008).

Qualitative approaches have thus been widely used in educational research across diverse contexts to support the understanding of relational, local, and socio-historically emergent phenomena through naturalistic investigations of student, family, community and educator perspectives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; McMillan, 2004). Denzin (2009) suggests that qualitative methods locate the impacts of intangible influences, such as the hidden curriculum, social norms or belief systems that shape ways of thinking, being and doing within and outside of educational contexts. This poses significant considerations for the current research as Kincheloe and McLaren (2003) argue that the underlying acceptance of

dominant worldviews, significantly influences participants' critical (or false) consciousness and their experiences of socio-political realities (see also Chapter 5). The use of qualitative approaches for the current study is therefore appropriate as research shows that young street children's behaviours, understandings and lived experiences are significantly influenced by the context in which they occur (Aptekar & Heinonen, 2003; Kombarakaran, 2004). This study therefore engaged in naturalistic research, where behaviours were observed in "real world" contexts, as and when they occurred (Kress, 2011; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This is particularly salient in light of the argument posed by Aptekar and Heinonen (2003), who contend that several methodological limitations arise from the use of quantitative research approaches (questionnaires and surveys) with street children who "make their living by manipulating audiences, of which the data collector and the NGO workers are examples" (p. 206) (see also section 4.4.3 for the construction of lived experiences).

Additionally, as social phenomena such as critical consciousness and social justice are complex, and unfold over time, this research was conducted over a sustained period of six months, during which relationships were built to support the qualitative understanding of participants lived experiences and constructions of reality (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This further enabled multiple layers of data (including intangible data such as thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and assumptions) to be collected, analysed, and interpreted by the participants and the researcher through ongoing dialogue and reflection. The use of qualitative approaches thus supported the interpretive processes of the research, and offered multidimensional and pluralistic representations of "emic, idiographic, [and] case-based position[s]" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 16) which showed the ways in which

reality is socially constructed and therefore amenable to social transformation (Kincheloe et al., 2011). This consideration is particularly salient to research in marginalised educational contexts, given Giroux's (2001b) contention that educational spaces offer opportunities for conformity as well as resistance to socio-cultural, political or capitalist hegemony and domination.

As the qualitative approaches utilised for this research were primarily informed by critical theories, pedagogies, praxis and methodologies; the critical qualitative research approaches and methods adopted by this study are identified and discussed below.

4.3.1 Critical Qualitative Research

As Kincheloe et al. (2011) note, critical qualitative research encompasses theoretical, methodological and philosophical practices that attempt to “disrupt and challenge the status quo” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, p. 433). Grounded in critical theories⁴⁰, critical qualitative research recognises that methods and evidence cannot be ethically or politically neutral (Christians, 2011; Denzin, 2009). Thus critical qualitative research is research that problematizes the political, socio-educational and systematic legitimisation of dominant “truths” and discourses, and the simultaneous “oppression of positivism, empiricism, and scientism” (Steinberg, 2012, p. ix). Challenging taken-for-granted assumptions through critical social theory, Kincheloe and McLaren (2011, p. 299)

⁴⁰ Kincheloe et al. (2011, p. 163) in their paper, note “there are many critical theories... the critical tradition is always changing and evolving... [and] critical theory attempts to avoid too much specificity as there is room for disagreement among critical theorists.” Kincheloe et al. (2011) thus provide an ‘idiosyncratic’ definition, based on lines of thinking from Marx, Kant, Hegel, Weber, the Frankfurt School, Foucault, Derrida and Freire, which has also been used here as these definitions are in accordance with the approaches to critical pedagogy used throughout this thesis (see also Chapter 2, section 2.2.1).

posit that critical researchers use their “work as a form of social or cultural criticism” in the interests of social justice and equity. This is particularly relevant to educational research, as Horton and Freire (1990) discuss that critical education encompasses process of participatory research that have the potential to support social transformation. As Kincheloe et al. (2011, p. 164) write:

Inquiry that aspires to the name “critical” must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or public sphere within the society. Research becomes a transformative endeavour unembarrassed by the label “political” and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness.

In the context of educational research, critical theory and critical pedagogy have been justified on the grounds of ontological research, which aim to examine the nature of being and becoming and the ways in which reality is “shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethic[al], and gender values crystallised over time” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 258). Additionally, participatory action research adopting dialogic or dialectic approaches to search for “value-mediated findings” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 258) have also been cited as useful. Thus, critical research provides support for historically situated research and “other” ways of knowing, which are “instrumentally valuable as a means to social emancipation” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 261). This is particularly relevant to the context of the current research, which views social critique and critical consciousness as foundational to issues of truth and knowledge (see also Chapter 2) (Foucault, 1980). Moreover, as critical qualitative research recognises that “objective reality can never be captured” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2), it is well suited to investigate the social and

constructive nature of subjective and inter-subjective knowledge and understandings. This is relevant to the current study, which focuses on the ways in which ‘social knowledge’ is produced and influenced by children’s critical consciousness and motivations for social justice (sub-question 1 and 2).

Additionally, critical qualitative research has gained prominence as a form of praxis critiquing interlocking systems of social, political, historical and cultural domination (hooks, 1989). In doing so, critical qualitative research has been positioned as a key facilitator of research for social change, as “critical theorists have always advocated varying degrees of social action, from the overturning of specific unjust practices to radical transformation of entire societies” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 268). This is particularly significant in the context of the current study, which focused on internal transformation, that is, critical consciousness, and possibilities for children to embrace social actions motivated by social justice in the context of several multilayered dimensions of oppression and domination (see also Chapter 5).

Furthermore, critical qualitative research has been found to be effective when conducting research in diverse contexts and with marginalised groups, as it provides avenues for decolonising methodologies, and forwarding multiple ways of knowing (Shields, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Kincheloe and Steinberg (2011) illustrate that critical qualitative research challenges hegemonic ways of knowing by focussing on subjugated or “other” ways of knowing “that have been traditionally excluded from the conversation of mainstream educators” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2011, p. 54). This is particularly relevant to the aims of this research to carefully listen to the “hundred

languages” of street children, and to co-construct meanings with children by reflecting on their lived experiences (Clark & Moss, 2011). The intention behind such listening was to inform ethical and political educational and research praxis by adopting “a humanistic research paradigm, which cannot be separated from the political” (Steinberg, 2012, p. ix).

Thus, critical qualitative approaches are particularly relevant to the study’s focus on social justice and critical consciousness, given that critical qualitative research is “a social theoretical act... headlined by socially just and equitable praxis” (Steinberg, 2012, p. ix). Critical qualitative research was therefore used in this research to investigate how street children problematized their understandings and experiences of dominant ways of thinking, being and doing, in order to partake in positive social actions for critical consciousness and social justice (see also Chapter 6). Supporting critical qualitative research, elements of phenomenology were used through this research to “study the world from the point of view of the interacting individual” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 247). Accordingly, an overview of phenomenology and the elements of phenomenological theory adopted for the current research are reviewed in the subsequent section.

4.4 Phenomenology

As Price explains, “phenomenology is the philosophy of experience. It attempts to understand how meaning is made in human experience, and it sees experiences of the world as the foundation of meaning” (as cited in Ollis, 2012, p. 23). LeVasseur (2003) suggests that phenomenology is a diverse construct, however McMillan (2004) indicates that some of the key features of phenomenology include: a focus on lived experiences and

multiple realities, interpretation, and meaning making⁴¹. Translated to methodological approaches, phenomenological inquiries⁴² attempt to understand the perceptions, perspectives and meanings ascribed to certain phenomena by ‘insiders’, that is, individuals with lived experiences of the phenomena under investigation (Van Manen, 2014). In light of this, Peters and Lankshear (1994) highlight the importance of investigating multiple perspectives, and focussing on human consciousness of experiences, in order to understand how reality is constructed by participants.

As phenomenological research rejects objectivism, and thus, lends itself to investigations of the socially constructed nature of reality and the centrality of the role of interpretation (Peters & Lankshear, 1994), the use of phenomenological theory in this research enabled the researcher and participants to legitimise “other” and shared experiences, practices, values and perceptions through the processes of co-constructive interpretation and inductive analyses (Kincheloe, 2008). Additionally, as the study sought to elicit understandings from participants’ perspectives, phenomenology offered a lens or “way of seeing” (Hadley, 2007, p. 74) constructions of children’s realities and the positioning of these within social and historical contexts (Kincheloe, 2004, 2008).

⁴¹ Phenomenological analysts contend that since there are many ways of interpreting the same experience, the meaning of the experience to each participant is what constitutes reality (Moustakas, 1994). The ways in which participants, co-investigators or subjects ‘make meanings’ is therefore integral to phenomenological inquiry. Similarly, Dahlberg et al. (2007, p. 87) explain that meaning making refers to “the idea of judgement – but understood... to be a discursive act, always made in relationship with others.”

⁴² Moustakas (1994) suggests that there are five prominent phenomenological designs and methods commonly referenced in the broader literature, these are, ethnography, grounded research theory, hermeneutics, Duquesne University’s phenomenology, and heuristics. The theoretical elements of hermeneutic phenomenology are discussed below, as these were of primary significance to the aims of this research (that is, to understand young children’s lived experiences of social justice and critical consciousness).

As this research focused on critical consciousness and lived experience, a hermeneutic approach to phenomenology informed the current research. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 16) define hermeneutics as “an approach to the analysis of texts that stresses how prior understandings and prejudices shape the interpretive process.” Thus, hermeneutics highlights the situated nature of human beings within social and historical contexts, and the importance of critical interpretation, given that “all experience is originally connected, and given validity, by our consciousness” (Dilthey, 1976, p. 161) (see also section 4.4.2 for an overview of critical hermeneutics). In order to elicit meaning authentically, the researcher spent sustained amounts of time over a period of six months with participants in order to better understand the social and historical situation of participants. This relationship and rapport building sought to enhance the hermeneutic “ability to avoid misunderstanding, because, as a matter of fact, that *is* the mystery of individuality. We can never be sure, and we have no proofs, of rightly understanding the individual utterance of another” (Gadamer, 1984, p. 57). Photographs, conversations, tours, storytelling and drawings by children were also used in order to elicit ‘insider’ perspectives and emic data (this is also discussed further under the Mosaic approach, section 4.5). The use of these multiple tools supported the crystallisation⁴³ of data and provided children with greater autonomy and control over the perspectives shared and silenced (Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010) (see also section 4.5 for the Mosaic approach, and section 4.14 for details of this study’s rigour and credibility).

⁴³ Problematizing the notion of triangulation as a reductive layering of “truths”, Richardson (1997) writes of the crystalline as a method of legitimising research, in lieu of “validity”. As Richardson suggests, “crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose... Crystallisation, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of “validity”... and crystallisation provides us with a deepened complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know” (Richardson, 1997, p. 92) (see also section 4.14.1 for further detail on crystallisation in this study).

This section has provided an overview of key elements of phenomenological theory. For methodological purposes, the three focal aspects of phenomenology that were adopted for this research, namely: bracketing, critical hermeneutics and construction of lived experiences, and the relevance of these constructs to the current research, are discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.4.1 Bracketing

Due to the interpretive nature of hermeneutic phenomenology, key thinkers in phenomenology such as Heidegger and Husserl “recognised the significance of the researcher’s past experiences and theoretical conceptions as a problem for interpretation” (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 409). As individuals are informed and influenced by social, historical, political and ethical constituents, a focal element of phenomenology is the process of bracketing or epoché (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Bracketing involves the researcher setting aside preconceived notions of phenomena, in order to enable them to “enter anew into one’s consciousness” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85) in a purer and unbiased form. Critical theorists problematize the ability to “silence the self” (Thomson, 2008, p. 6) in search of a “pure” or “objective” reality, by highlighting the contextual, historical, cultural, political and social nature of “truth” and discourse (Kincheloe, 2004; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). As Kincheloe (2008, p. 58) notes, “as creatures of the world, we are oriented to it in a way that prevents us from grounding our theories and perspectives outside of it.” Similarly, critical researchers question the use of reductive bracketing strategies to support “objective” interpretations, given that research in the human sciences fundamentally positions the researcher as an instrument in the research (LeVasseur, 2003). Thus, rather

than viewing the researcher's past and theoretical lens as a "problem" for interpretation, this research takes a critical approach by recognising that individuals are inextricably connected to the world. The researcher has therefore engaged in a process of "bracketing" that is rather a process of "self-consciousness", in which the relationship of the researcher to the constructs and persons researched is made visible, and issues of power, discourse and education as they relate to the history of the researcher are discussed in order to provide insights into the nature of interpretation engaged in throughout this research (the researcher story, lens and/or "bracket" has been canvassed in Chapter 1, under section 1.10.1.1).

4.4.2 Critical Hermeneutics

Kincheloe (2008, p. 57) writes that critical hermeneutics "holds that in knowledge work there is only interpretation, no matter how vociferously many analysts may argue that the facts speak for themselves." Critical hermeneutics is therefore an interpretive act, which involves making meanings from lived experiences or observed phenomena, in ways that communicate the essence or the authentic understanding of phenomena. From the standpoint of critical pedagogy, Kincheloe and McLaren (2011, p. 299) highlight the importance of critical hermeneutics by recognising that "all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constructed." Thus, "not only is all research merely an act of interpretation, but, hermeneutics contends, perception itself is an act of interpretation" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 57). Accordingly, proponents from critical hermeneutics problematize the purposes and processes of interpretation in order to challenge the status quo or socio-historically accepted interpretations.

According to Peters and Lankshear (1994, p. 189), “for Freire, critical consciousness *is* a critical hermeneutics.” Critical hermeneutics enables “critical researchers [to] discover the ways they and their subjects have been entangled in the ideological process” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011, p. 299) by providing a basis for decoding ideologies and discourses through interpretation. In keeping with the aims of critical qualitative research to problematize hegemonic discourses, critical hermeneutics contends that “no pristine interpretation exists” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 57). Writers in critical hermeneutics therefore suggest that although multifarious interpretations exist, certain interpretations have been privileged over others, to create or reinforce “regimes of truth” (Kincheloe, 2008; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2011) (see also Chapter 2, section 2.4.1.6). In recognition of this, critical hermeneutics promotes “other” ways of thinking, being and doing, opening counterfactual ways to make meaning, by de-familiarising the familiar, or challenging the political “neutrality” of totalising “truths” (Morrow & Torres, 2002). In this research, critical hermeneutics, was used alongside Freire’s (1970, 1973) problem-posing technique (for education and research) to enable the researcher and co-investigators to re-interpret and question issues of fairness and justice through shared social critique over a sustained period of time.

Critical hermeneutical analysis was therefore used as an element in this research “to develop a form of cultural criticism revealing power dynamics within social and cultural texts” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 58). Moustakas (1994) suggests that interpretation cannot be an isolated activity – thus, consideration of the context of lived experiences within which interpretations occur are paramount to the construction of reality and

participants' internal meaning making or critical consciousness. The phenomenological focus on lived experience and its role in this research is therefore addressed below.

4.4.3 Construction of Lived Experience

Phenomenology and critical pedagogy highlight the importance of understanding the situation of persons within their context, and the “role of the social, cultural, and political in shaping human identity” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 6). Phenomenological and critical researchers further highlight the importance of appreciating the complexity of lived experiences and research processes in order to build holistic understandings of emergent⁴⁴ social phenomena (that is, the ways in which lived experiences are socially, politically, historically and culturally constructed). Thus, theorists note that consideration of social, political, historical, cultural and contextual sites is necessary in understanding socially constructed and value-laden constructs (such as social justice and critical consciousness), as seemingly unintentional or insignificant details contribute to shaping individuals lived experiences and understandings of these phenomena. In other words, as John Dewey explains, since social phenomena do not occur in isolation, they cannot be understood in a decontextualized manner, but rather in “connection with the common experience of mankind” (as cited in Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2011, p. 72).

In addition to this, given the value-laden nature of social phenomena such as social justice and critical consciousness, context is necessary in order to understand the influence of socio-cultural, historical, and political ideologies and discourses. Further to this,

⁴⁴ Emergence in the context of this research, refers to the processes whereby interactions between persons, elements or phenomena form an unforeseeable ‘newness’ that cannot be broken down to the sum of its reducible parts – see also Appendix 4 for a discussion of the notion of emergence.

Creswell (2014) denotes that contextual understandings are paramount to authentically understanding what phenomena mean to participants, and how they manifest from within the local, organic and relational contexts in which participants live. These considerations are particularly relevant to the current context, given the influence of Indian history, culture and society in constructing, colonising, and marginalising groups on the basis of gender, caste, class and ancestral identities (see also Chapter 5). Additionally the prevailing zeitgeist of macro economic policies, globalisation and exploitation are particularly relevant to understanding the micro context experiences of social injustice and inequities faced by children in an increasingly privatised and marketised economic context (see also Chapter 5, section 5.9). In recognition of the importance of context, a detailed overview of social, historical, cultural, economic and political influences upon the existing situation of street children in Mumbai has been provided in Chapter 5 (see section 5.9). A brief micro overview of the research site (the centre and the streets) has also been provided in this chapter (see section 4.8).

This section has highlighted the use of phenomenological tools to support this research. The subsequent section draws on the Mosaic approach to highlight the tailoring and use of research methods to support research with young children (Clark & Moss, 2011).

4.5 The Mosaic Approach

The Mosaic approach presents a framework for listening to children's perspectives about their everyday lived experiences (Clark & Moss, 2011). Informed by philosophies, theorists and pedagogues in early childhood from Reggio Emilia, and from research on

participatory appraisals (Chambers, 1997, 2010, 2011a, 2011b), the Mosaic approach, views children as active, “beautiful, powerful, competent, creative, [and] curious” agents (Hewett, 2001, p. 96). It defines listening as the process of actively recognising, interpreting, valuing, acknowledging, and responding to the meanings that are co-constructed and communicated by children using a variety of expressions and cueing systems that are both verbal and non-verbal, or what Malaguzzi calls, the “hundred languages of children” (Clark, 2005a; Clark & Moss, 2011). This approach therefore advocates for the use of multi-layered methods that are sensitive to, and which capitalise on children’s strengths, interests and abilities⁴⁵ (Clark & Moss, 2005, 2011). Researchers have used several alternative methods to listen to children, including a) photography (Ali-Khan & Siry, 2014; Bhosekar, 2009; Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005; Prins, 2010), b) drawings (Einarsdottir, Dockett, & Perry, 2009; Harpham, Huong, Long, & Tuan, 2005; Punch, 2002), c) child-conferencing (Clark & Moss, 2005, 2011) and d) observations (Clark, 2005a, 2005b; Mayall, 2000). Pascal and Bertram (2009) suggest that this approach connects to the philosophical proponents of critical pedagogy, as it aims to listen to traditionally silenced groups in research, in order to support their liberation. Thus, this approach validates and legitimises children’s diverse, varied, and “other” ways of producing and communicating their understandings and lived experiences.

However, Waller and Bitou (2011) caution that the use of participatory methods does not automatically ensure participation, rather, “the key message from the literature is

⁴⁵ Punch (2002, p. 330) highlights that “this does not mean that children are incapable of engaging with methods used in research with adults”, rather, the assumption is that tailoring research approaches to listen to children’s multiple and diverse forms of communication – casts a wider net for listening, that is respectful and inclusive (and therefore widely applicable to all persons, for example, persons who prefer visual communications, persons with varying abilities, and persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds).

that it is the research design and relationships that confer real participation and engagement” (p. 12). Kellett (2010) and Woodhead and Faulkner (2008) support this view, arguing that truly listening to children must involve a fundamental shift in adult-child power dynamics, and a research paradigm that views children as critical social actors, rather than de-personalised objects under the adult’s gaze. Marshall and Rossman (2011) therefore consider that the use of multiple methods for listening to children is fundamentally a matter of respecting children’s diverse communications. With these considerations in mind, Clark and Moss (2011, p. 7) highlight the key principles underpinning their framework for listening, noting that it is:

- *Multi-method*: recognises the different ‘voices’ or languages of children
- *Participatory*: treats children as experts and agents in their own lives
- *Reflexive*: includes children, practitioners and parents in reflecting on meanings; addresses the question of interpretation
- *Adaptable*: can be applied in a variety of early childhood institutions
- *Focused on children’s lived experiences*: can be used for a variety of purposes including looking at lives lived rather than only at knowledge gained or care received
- *Embedded into practice*: a framework for listening which has the potential to be both used as an evaluative tool and to become embedded into early years practice.

Clark and Moss (2011, p. 13) further emphasise the three stage nature of this approach, commenting that the first stage involves “children and adults gathering documentation”, whilst the second stage involves “piecing together information for

dialogue, reflection and interpretation”, and the final stage engages researchers and pedagogues in acting upon the first two stages by “deciding on continuity and change.” Informed by a fundamentally participatory paradigm, Clark (2005b) and Clark and Moss (2011) highlight the importance of dialogue, interpretation and reflection in going “beyond listening” to conceptualising listening as an ontological praxis, that emerges from within the context of relationships with children and adults. Similarly, Harcourt and Einarisdottir (2011) highlight that children’s voices are socially positioned and constructed, multidimensional and dynamic (that is, subject to change). As such, “meanings comes into existence when two or more voices come into contact: there has to be a speaker and a listener, and ‘addresser’ and ‘addressee,’ and there will also be multiple voices” (Harcourt & Einarisdottir, 2011, pp. 303-304). In light of this, and as children’s communications are diverse, varied, and continuously developing, Clark (2005a, 2005b), Clark and Moss (2011) and Crivello et al. (2009) suggest the importance of using several data gathering techniques in order to co-construct layered meanings to weave together a holistic portrait or Mosaic of children’s experiences.

4.5.1 Pieces of the Mosaic

Clark and Moss (2011) identify several “pieces of the mosaic” (p. 15) through which children and adults can gather documentation together using multiple modalities, including observations, child-conferencing, child-led photography, tours, mapping, and role-playing. Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) also highlight and review the effectiveness of other techniques used in research with young children such as drawings, participatory interviews, focus groups, storytelling and narration. Crivello et al. (2009) suggest that these layers or “pieces of the mosaic” (Clark & Moss, 2011, p. 15) thus offer children

multiple forms of expression, and in turn, offer researchers insights into children's understandings and lived experiences from multiple angles – thereby supporting the crystallisation of data (Richardson, 1997) (see also section 4.14 and 4.14.1). Clark (2007, 2010) suggests that the use of a range of data gathering techniques provides awareness of the complex and diverse nature of children's "voices", understandings and experiences. Clark (2005b) has also argued that multiple methods for data gathering enable children's "internal listening". She goes on to suggest that data making tools (drawing, photography, storytelling, narration, dialogues) support children's meaning making, listening to the self, and interpretation – which, as Freire (1970) and advocates of critical hermeneutics argue, is central to the development of critical consciousness.

4.5.2 Use of the Mosaic Approach

Palaiologou (2014) writes that there has been a recent shift in early childhood research, with a burst of participatory approaches involving pre-school children in research processes. Several research projects have made use of the Mosaic approach, highlighting its effectiveness in investigating topics of relevance to young children, including children's perspectives of early years services (Clark, 2007; Clark & Moss, 2011; Clark & Statham, 2005), children's experiences of indoor and outdoor play spaces (Clark & Moss, 2005; Darbyshire et al., 2005; Mereweather & Fleet, 2014), children's transitions to school (Dockett & Perry, 2004, 2005), and several other projects.

The Mosaic approach has also been used as an innovative method for collecting data with young children in LAMI contexts, and in research with marginalised groups. For example, in Vietnam, Harpham et al. (2005) engaged young children in drawing and map-

making to investigate issues of child poverty, whilst Tekola Gebru (2009) collected drawings and diaries to elicit children's views of poverty in Ethiopia. Similarly, in research conducted as part of the longitudinal "Young Lives" project⁴⁶ in India, Ethiopia, Vietnam and Peru, researchers used culturally tailored ice-breaker tactics and imagination games to investigate elements of children's wellbeing (Crivello et al., 2009). Highlighting the effectiveness of these techniques to diverse socio-cultural contexts, Crivello et al. (2009) report that "a flexible multi-method approach strengthened our ability to engage diverse groups of children and adults on the topic of child wellbeing" (p. 68).

4.5.3 Critiques of the Mosaic Approach

Despite the growing interest and attention afforded to participatory approaches used with young children to elicit their views and perspectives, Harcourt and Einarsdottir (2011) report on the theoretical, philosophical and pragmatic "tensions" that have surfaced from the use of these approaches in early childhood research. Waller and Bitou (2011) unpack one such tension, noting that certain tools, such as observations and field notes, "may inhibit mutuality and sustained engagement between children and adults" (p. 18), thereby influencing the co-construction of meaning. In raising awareness of the purpose of research with young children, Waller and Bitou (2011) also question how participatory research can empower children, highlighting that the use of participatory tools requires a) parallel support from researchers positioning children as co-investigators, b) strong inter-subjectivity, and c) the maintenance of children's agency in meaning making. Harcourt and

⁴⁶ This is a large-scale, longitudinal research project with over 12 000 participants. The project investigates child well-being and childhood poverty in four countries, namely: Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam (see also: www.younglives.org.uk). The project aims to understand the "causes, dynamics and consequences of child poverty, and how specific policies affect children's wellbeing" (Crivello et al., 2009, p. 52).

Einarsdottir (2011) similarly question the dynamics of adult-child relationships and the influences of this upon which children's voices are heard, or silenced, and the subsequent influence of this in informing changes in educational practices. Mereweather and Fleet (2014) similarly highlight the importance of questioning power relations and imbalances in enabling children to be genuine co-investigators.

Further drawing on these tensions, researchers such as Baird (2013) and Greenfield (2011) question the effectiveness of data gathering tools, such as the use of photography with young children. Dockett and Perry (2005) and Mereweather and Fleet (2014) indicate that informal conversations stemming from photographs can tend to move away from the intended aims or topical goals initially set by researchers (see also section 4.15 for limitations of this research). Additionally, drawing on her research with young children in parenting programs, Baird (2013) indicates that children's conversations about their photographs can be limited to labelling people, places and objects, or providing short, curtailed responses. From a critical hermeneutics perspective, this also poses threats to the credibility of data, given that children's interpretations are central to understanding the meanings attached to data collected.

The tensions and praises denoted by researchers across diverse contexts for the use of the Mosaic approach highlight several possibilities and considerations for the continuous evolution of this approach and its complex research processes. Accordingly, the subsequent section reflects upon the opportunities and considerations posed by the use of the Mosaic approach in the context of the current study.

4.5.4 Relevance to Current Research

The Mosaic approach significantly informed the research design, methodology and research processes of this study. The image of children underpinning the Mosaic approach enabled the researcher to use methods that recognised children as active protagonists and experts with a wealth of experience and understanding of their own lives (Clark & Moss, 2011). As this research aims to carefully listen to children's lived experiences and understandings of social justice and critical consciousness, the Mosaic approach enabled the researcher to listen carefully for the many "languages" or expressions young children used to communicate and produce meanings (Clark, 2005b; Clark & Moss, 2011). Additionally, the sustained collection of multiple dimensions and layers of data further familiarised the researcher with children's idiosyncratic expressions and communications, which supported the development of inter-subjective and relational understandings.

Whilst researchers have highlighted the power imbalances associated with adults and educators researching with young children (Harcourt & Einarsdottir, 2011; Palaologou, 2014; Waller & Bitou, 2011), in this research, the use of the Mosaic approach enabled the researcher to redress power imbalances by being an "authentic novice" (Clark & Moss, 2005, p. 97) and co-learner. This is not to say that power imbalances were not experienced (see section 4.7.2), rather that the positioning of the researcher as an "outsider-insider"⁴⁷ to Indian culture, street context and understandings, enabled the

⁴⁷ Being an outsider-insider in this sense refers to the researcher's dual identity as an Australian Indian. Therefore, being an Australian or "outsider" (to varying degrees), enabled the researcher to pose questions to children about Indian language, culture, and ways of thinking, being, and doing, that would have seemed odd to ask, had the researcher been a complete "insider". On the other side of the coin, being an Indian or "insider" (again, to varying degrees) provided the researcher with context and a 'lens' to listen to, and understand, the values and judgements behind children's explanations of (their own and others') Indian ways of thinking, being and doing.

researcher at times to be a learner-teacher⁴⁸ in the power dynamic (as opposed to a teacher-learner). In doing so, the researcher was able to engage children in processes of interpretation and reflection that supported the communication of children's critical consciousness. Photo-elicitation was particularly useful in this regard, as it supported ongoing dialogue, and provided tangible provocations for children to consider their own realities. This is similar to research conducted by Bhosekar (2009), who used photographs with a small cohort of Mumbai street children in order to reflect on their lived experiences. Notably, certain pragmatic difficulties did arise from conducting research on the streets (child-led tours and family interviews), as for example; audio recordings were, at times, inaudible since the high decibel of street sounds overrode children's voices (see also section 4.15 for limitations).

Moreover, given the informal nature of educational service provisions provided by the NGO centre (see Field notes, Appendix 7⁴⁹), the flexible and adaptable nature of the Mosaic approach was useful in collecting data as and when it emerged from within the context of the setting. Similarly, on the streets, the use of child-led tours, and photography enabled children to "represent their own experiences and views" (Fargas-Malet et al., 2010, p. 182), whilst also supporting the gathering of intangible data, such as children's sense of belonging, and the idiosyncratic and affective nature of children's interactions and relationships with others in the community. The use of the Mosaic approach in collecting

⁴⁸ The terms 'learner-teacher' and 'teacher-learner' have been devised and used by Freire (1972, 1985b) to "understand the impossible separation of teaching and learning" (Freire, 1985b, p. 16). As it is used here, these terms highlight both Freire's (1985b) duality in the identities of children and the researcher as learners and teachers, as well as the shifts in power associated with being the 'teacher', 'expert' or 'authority' and the mind frame associated with being a 'learner' or 'listener'.

⁴⁹ Appendices 1-5 can be found at the end of this document. Appendices 6-13 can be found in the data CD accompanying this thesis.

multiple forms of data was therefore pertinent in contextualising and positioning children and this research within socio-historical and political contexts for analysis (see also Chapter 5).

Manifold mediums for data gathering were also useful in this context, given the multidimensional and complex nature of children's lived experiences and understandings of critical consciousness and social justice. The use of these alternative approaches to listening also facilitated "other" ways of knowing, being and understanding the meanings ascribed by children in this context. For example, the many layers of, at times contradictory, data gathered through the Mosaic approach, cached the understanding that children are dynamic persons, constantly in the process of being and becoming (Uprichard, 2008). Multiple methods therefore provided insights into the many "moments" of children's experiences and understandings of the central phenomena (Freire, 1970). Moreover, as children's verbal skills (and the researchers' Hindi speaking skills⁵⁰) were continuously developing; photographs, audio recordings, stories and drawings provided a platform for communication, which supported the development of inter-subjectivity, and the co-construction of knowledge through dialogue and play.

4.6 The Importance of Children's Voices

The focus on children's participation in research has gained increasing prominence in recent times (Baird, 2013). M. Hill (2006) links this movement to the increasing focus

⁵⁰ As I was born in India, and lived there till the age of seven, I entered the research site with conversational proficiency in Hindi. However, my knowledge of street-Hindi was limited, and this developed throughout the course this research. For example, before this research, I had never encountered the word 'jhopda' or 'jhopad patti', which children used to refer to the bamboo-and-plastic-sheath structures that were their homes on the street (see Appendix 6).

afforded to child rights movements and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989*. Simultaneously, shifts in the images of children, as being active social protagonists, and experts in their own lives have also been documented (Clark & Moss, 2011). As James (2007) writes, “no longer are they simply silent witnesses to the ravages of war or natural disasters, depicted as starving and malnourished as they haunt the pages of the Western press... now we also hear their voices” (p. 261). M. Hill (2006) suggests that this “participatory climate” has solidified children’s “entitlement to express their views on matters affecting them” (p. 71). Accordingly, this section delineates the literature surrounding the importance of listening to children and children’s voices in research that affects, or aims to affect their lives.

Despite an increasing focus on the voices of children, in the context of early childhood, Cannella (2002) writes, “the most critical voices that are silent in our constructions of early childhood education are the children with whom we work. Our constructions of research have not fostered methods that facilitate hearing their voices” (p. 10). The importance of children’s voices have been reiterated by researchers who have drawn connections with critical pedagogy, regarding the silence and “othering” experienced by children in educational research as being synonymous with silence experienced by oppressed and marginalised groups (Mac Naughton, 2003a; Pascal & Bertram, 2009).

In turn, a burgeoning number of researchers have employed participatory approaches in order to listen to views of children (Baird, 2013; Clark & Moss, 2011; Dockett & Perry, 2011; Groundwater-Smith, Dockett, & Bottrell, 2015; Harcourt &

Einarsdottir, 2011; Hawkins, 2014a; Mereweather & Fleet, 2014). However, as Hawkins (2010, 2014b) notes, not many participatory studies focus on children's engagements with critical consciousness and social justice. Fleet and Britt (2011) and Clark and Moss (2011) postulate the importance of early childhood researchers genuinely listening to children's voices, by highlighting that children's perspectives are necessary to understanding, and subsequently building on, educational experiences. Educational researchers further suggest that data from children is credible, valuable, and powerful, since it offers an insight that is otherwise unattainable by adult researchers (Baird, 2013). This is particularly the case for research conducted with marginalized groups such as street children, as these children's perspectives have often been "unseen" in the broader literature (L. Young & Barrett, 2001a, 2001b). In turn, researchers highlight the importance of disseminating findings to influence research, policy, practice and awareness, based on the lived experiences of young children in "unseen" or marginalized situations (UNICEF, 2006; L. Young & Barrett, 2001a, 2001b).

In research with children in marginalised contexts, child participation studies have justified the impetus of focussing on children by noting that children's views are qualitatively different to those of adults (Baird, 2013; Lopez, Hayden, Cologon, & Hadley, 2012). Similarly, Mac Naughton (2003a) explains that occurrences in children's lives undoubtedly affect the process of becoming, and that such a process is "full of tensions as children negotiate different possibilities for themselves as gendered, 'racialised' and classed beings, and attempt to clarify which forms of becoming are possible and desirable" (p. 39) – thus she suggests that listening to, and sharing, children's experiences connotes acts of social justice in the interests of equity.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Palaiologou (2014) highlights that research can only be genuinely participatory insofar as it is ethical. L. Young and Barrett (2001b, p. 130) add that “researching the lifeworld of street children who live and survive in the cityscape bestows on the researcher often unique and very difficult ethical and moral problems.” Given the complex nature of this research, and the importance of researching with young children in difficult contexts using participatory methods, several ethical tensions emerged throughout the course of this research. Alderson and Morrow (2011) and Palaiologou (2014) advise that research with young children requires continuous negotiation of ethical tensions between the researcher, children and others in the research context. Prior to entering the field, ethical approval was sought and gained from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1). This process enabled the researcher to prepare and conduct research in an ethical manner, and to put provisions in place to prevent or handle ethical tensions arising through the course of this research. Prominent ethical tensions arising from this research, namely: gaining informed consent from young children, the unequal nature of power relations between the researcher and children, issues of privacy and confidentiality, and the sensitive nature of information arising from street children, are discussed in this section.

4.7.1 Informed Consent

The principal issues arising in research with young children have centred on informed consent. Discussions pertaining to ethical engagement of children in research have focused “primarily on judgements about a child’s competence to provide informed consent” (Bradbury-Jones & Taylor, 2015, p. 169). As Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) indicate,

in gaining access to children, researchers must first attain the consent of gatekeepers – in this case, the NGO and families – before researching with children. Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) suggest that consent involves the ability to understand the implications of research involvement, and the discretion to make a knowledgeable decision to participate, or not to participate, in research based on one's own interests, and without the coercion of others. Researchers have thus problematized the elicitation of informed consent from young children on the basis of developmental abilities to understand and provide informed consent to researchers (Bradbury-Jones & Taylor, 2015; Creswell, 2014). Simultaneously researchers have advocated for the importance of going beyond attaining consent from families to gaining permissions from children themselves (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Dockett et al., 2009; Dockett, Einarsdóttir, & Perry, 2012; Dockett & Perry, 2011). Cocks (2006) argues that 'assent', rather than 'consent' is better suited to the inclusion of diverse young children in research, since assent "removes the reliance on the child demonstrating adult-centric attributes such as maturity, competence and completeness" (p. 257). Dockett et al. (2012) indicate that assent is "neither the lack of dissent – the failure to object... nor passive resignation" (p. 246), nor does it take away from the importance of children understanding the nature and content of the project, as the quality of information provided is critical to the ability to consent.

In this research, consent was first sought from the NGO staff (written) and families (verbal) (see Appendix 2) whilst the researcher engaged in the centre as a volunteer. In acknowledging children as agents in their own right, consent from children was sought after consent from families was provided. A verbal script was used to inform children about the voluntary nature of this research and to seek consent (see Appendix 3). The

script included broad information about what children's engagement in the research would involve – such as discussing life in the centre and on the streets, completing drawings, taking photographs, engaging in play and talking to the researcher. Cocks (2006), Dockett and Perry (2011) and Dockett et al. (2012) highlight the embedded nature of this process in the context of relationships, noting that “knowing children, their interests and preferences provides opportunities to gauge children's comfort with participation and to respect their dissent – regardless of their developmental level” (Dockett & Perry, 2011, pp. 242-243). Accordingly, in this research, the initial period of relationship building formed the relational basis for the researcher to know children and to observe children's overt and idiosyncratic signs of dissent. This process of seeking children's assent was continuous over the course of data collection. In further cementing this notion of assent, as Dockett and Perry (2011, p. 245) note “the notion of an assent form that seeks children's signature or mark needs to be considered by the researcher.” In this research, children also suggested showing consent through making their mark by providing an imprint of their thumb as a marker of assent⁵¹, explaining to the researcher that persons, who are illiterate in India, use this as a method of casting their vote.

4.7.2 Power Relations and Imbalances

The power of adults in relation to children poses particular ethical tensions, given that children might agree to partake in research, or refrain from withdrawing out of “perceived obligations to authority figures or their sense of how adults will react if they

⁵¹ Approximately one month into the research, following a re-visitation of the notion of consent, children also decided to formalise their consent by thumb-printing their identity on a shared piece of paper. Rani (Female, 7) suggested this method, as the use of thumb imprinting is the ‘voting’ process used by persons who are illiterate in India in order to cast their votes during elections (see Appendix 13).

dissent or withdraw” (Dockett et al., 2012, p. 247). Punch (2002) argues that since children are often positioned in unequal power relations with adults and in society, that “children are used to having much of their lives dominated by adults, they tend to expect adults’ power over them and they are not used to being treated as equals by adults” (p. 324). This poses significant ethical tensions, particularly as participatory approaches imply that truly listening to children involves not only adults positioning themselves as learner-teachers, but synchronously, children positioning themselves as authorities in their own lives (Clark, 2005b). Punch (2002) and L. Young and Barrett (2001b) suggest that although participatory approaches with street children begin to negate aspects of these power imbalances, the importance of using and disseminating information such that it empowers children’s “fuller participation... [and] decision-making in matters which affect them” (Punch, 2002, p. 325) is equally important. Similarly, M. Hill (2006) argues that in comparison to research conducted one-on-one with adults and children, the participation of peers in research with children has shown to dilute power imbalances and dynamics.

Aptekar (1994), drawing on research with street children, indicates that children on or from the street⁵² are particularly adept at communicating with multiple adults and peers, given the public nature of life on the streets, and the frequent employment of children on the streets. The children in this research were similarly autonomous, independent and at times, children’s interactions were full of what hooks’ (1989) calls “talking back” or “back talking”, that is, children dared to speak to adults as equals, voicing their opinions, even when this was invitation to reprimand. In this sense, children “talking back” posed power

⁵² See Chapter 1, for an overview and definition of street children, including children ‘on’ and ‘from’ the street (section 1.8.3).

imbalances with authority figures or families. However, in the context of this research, it also meant that children were comfortable with voicing their dissent and showcasing their authority and expertise (see also Chapter 6 and 7). Nonetheless, in this research, the children were continuously reminded of the voluntary nature of their participation, and the majority of within-centre research experiences were conducted either in peer groups, or with siblings. The use of participatory tools in this research further facilitated the redressing of power imbalances and provided children with control over the data collected. Baird (2013) has also raised the importance of being physically “level” with children in order to negate power imbalances. In this research, since all volunteers, NGO staff and children sat together on the floor; this also ensured that adults and children were interacting at the same physical level.

4.7.3 Sensitive Information, Confidentiality and Privacy

Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest that “ethical research practice is grounded in the moral principles of *respect for persons*, *beneficence*, and *justice*” (p. 47). In participatory research with young children, Broström (2006) questions if it is respectful for researchers to share information about children’s private lives and their secrets, whilst Prins (2010) raises concerns about such research imposing restrictions and injustices on children, by increasing adult surveillance and control over children’s lives. In exploring these tensions, Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) recommend that researchers engage with children from a standpoint that does not assume “children’s private lives are legitimately open to scrutiny in a way that those of adults are not, especially professional, middle-class adults” (p. 212). Dockett et al. (2012) further raise the importance of continuous reflexivity

in questioning if research is respectful to children's trust, suggesting that researchers remind children of the ways in which data is to be used and disseminated.

Following the advice of Cocks (2006), who suggests that "the recognition of privacy within the research lies in the sensitivity of seeking children's assent" (p. 259), in this research if the researcher perceived that children did not want to engage in the research, or to be observed or recorded, the researcher paused in the research to remind children of the voluntary nature of their role in the project. Similarly, since being a voluntary teacher, it was not possible for the researcher to be completely removed from children in the setting, if children did not wish the researcher to be present during open ended play experiences; the researcher provided children with some physical distance to ensure space for children's privacy.

Notably, L. Young and Barrett (2001b) describe that although mechanisms exist for the protection of children, and vulnerable groups in high income and Western contexts, these guidelines are often insufficient or inappropriate to research conducted with children in LAMI contexts. Reflecting on research conducted with street children in Uganda, L. Young and Barrett (2001b) note that "when children are 'excluded', as is the case with street children, it is often society's protectors themselves who are involved in these acts of abuse" (p. 132). In this research, children shared experiences of ill treatment at the hands of authority figures such as the police and local council, during the course of interviews, conversations and play-based experiences. Abebe (2009) argues that such information might not have been shared, had it not been for the nature of research questions and the trust bestowed upon the researcher, by children. However, as was the case in the research

conducted by L. Young and Barrett (2001b), NGO staff and families were aware of these mistreatments, but were limited in their capacities to act, as few mechanisms were in place to deal with such problems. L. Young and Barrett (2001b) question “whether it is in the best interests of the child to break their confidence and report such harm (and then to whom) or whether producing general statements through research is a better way of advocating children’s rights and protecting the children involved” (p. 132). In this research, whilst children reported experiences of abuse perpetrated by authority figures, children’s association with the NGO often provided some clout against abuse, whereby, in certain situations, children reported that making their affiliation with the centre known, offered an amount of protection from certain authority figures, such as the police (see Field Notes, Appendix 7).

Reflecting on the importance of disseminating research, the current study uses pseudonyms to ensure that children’s identities have been protected (Creswell, 2014). In regards to the dissemination of research, the researcher discussed with children the avenues where data could be disseminated – and sought to act as a mediator, by informing staff of children’s overarching views to support children’s empowerment and decision-making within the research context. However, dissemination of findings beyond this scope is necessary in ensuring broader change and the sustainability of listening to children occurs

following the completion of the research and the exit of the researcher⁵³. Accordingly, this study further aims to build up a “stronger voice” through dissemination of research findings to wider government, non-government and civil society audiences.

This section has considered some of the ethical considerations arising from this research with young street children. The subsequent section provides a brief description of the context in which this research was conducted.

4.8 Research Site

This section provides a brief overview of the site at which this research was conducted. Given the importance of socio-historical, political, economic and cultural elements influencing children and families in this research, a separate chapter has been dedicated to providing more in depth information about the research context (see Chapter 5). This section therefore provides only a brief overview of the centre and community within which the research was conducted.

⁵³ Cocks (2006) indicates that issues of exploitation and harm also arise when research(ers) “truly listen” to children’s voices and build trusting relationships with children, only to have to leave at the conclusion of the research. Cocks (2006, p. 260) suggests that “if you purposely work at gaining trust and building friendships with those who rarely experience this level of intimacy, you must prepare them for your departure when the work is complete.” In this research, the researcher was aware of this tension, and the potential consequences for children at the departure of the researcher (and visa versa). Whilst this is a recognisably concerning aspect of the research and similar studies – for example, Goode (1991) – in order to attempt to address this concern, the researcher ensured children knew from the outset that the researcher was at the centre for a period of six months. Additionally, six months following the completion of data collection, the researcher returned to the centre to touch base with children at the setting. Whilst this is a significant detriment to research of this nature, as L. Young and Barrett (2001b) suggest, the dissemination of findings and advocacy for the betterment of street children’s conditions aims to compensate for these potentially difficult research conditions.

4.8.1 The Drop-in Centre

The drop-in centre was the first point of entry for the researchers' engagements with children, families and NGO staff. At the time of the research, the organisation running the centre had been operational for over 20 years, and the drop-in centre was an established entity in the local community. The primary aim of the drop-in centre was to support children's educational development and attainment in order to improve opportunities for social mobility. The centre also provided for children's physical, cognitive and socio-educational needs by supplying daily meals, access to medical services, and tutoring support. Five core staff members, and regular visitors, such as counsellors, and the director of the NGO, ran the centre. A range of (international and national) student volunteers also attended the setting (see Field Notes, Appendix 7). Certain provisions for extracurricular activities were also available through the centre – however, given the pro bono nature of these activities, access to extra curricular provisions was not universal, and the majority of these activities were facilitated for teenagers and children in middle childhood, rather than children in their early years.

At the time of data collection, the centre was accommodating approximately 130 children, most of who attended the centre on a daily basis. School-going children attended either in the mornings or afternoons⁵⁴, whilst preschool children attended the Balwadi (preschool program) from approximately 10.30am to 4.30pm. The Balwadi program aimed at preparing children for school entry. The centre supported children in their schooling, by

⁵⁴ As different schools operate at different times, some schools were run in the morning, and others in the afternoon. The children who attend school in the morning came to the centre at the end of their school day and then eat their lunch at the centre (between 1-2pm), whilst children who attended school in the afternoon came to centre in the mornings, ate lunch and then went to school.

providing financial assistance for some children who attended fee-paying schools, and by giving educational support for all children (via volunteers). The children's schools taught in one of three mediums, including English-medium (private, fee-paying schools), Hindi-medium (government-run) and Marathi-medium (government-run). Children were assigned to different schools at the discretion of the centre director (see Field Notes, Appendix 7). Families were invited by centre staff to bring young children to the centre once they were 2-3 years old (see Field Notes, Appendix 7). The centre also recruited street children using a child-to-child method, whereby centre attendees invited new or unfamiliar children they met on the streets to the centre for food, shelter, and other services. The centre itself was an enclosed tin-shed-like structure, without furnishings, and children sat with teachers or volunteers on mats to study (see Field Notes, Appendix 7).

4.8.2 The Streets

The centre was located in the South of Mumbai. A Mumbai coastline, a train station, and several main roads, as well as smaller back-alleyways surrounded the centre. Notably, this area is also prone to several drug-related crimes, and is in close proximity to one of the largest red-light districts in the city (see Appendix 7 for Field Notes). As young children (aged 3-8 years) in this research were predominantly children of families living on the streets, as opposed to runaways or orphaned children, families and children often lived together on the streets, as opposed to children living on the streets by themselves. Although different families lived in close proximity to one another, the children and

families in this research did not live in a slum community⁵⁵, and at times, children and families lived in removed dwellings, such as, in the scaffolding of billboards or near the railway tracks, and on station footbridges. Children engaged in employment activities within these localities, from selling balloons, spice water and fruits at the train station or on the streets. Accordingly, although all the children in this research were children living on the street within a relatively small geographical circumference, the individual lived experiences of these children varied significantly (as noted earlier, more in-depth contextual information is provided in Chapter 5, see also Appendix 7).

This section has provided a broad overview of the research context. The subsequent section discusses the case study approach used to frame this study.

4.9 Case Study

McMillan (2004) defines a case study as “an in-depth analysis of one or more events, settings, programs, social groups, communities, individuals, or other ‘bounded systems’” (p. 271). As the purpose of the current study was to gain insights into the co-constructed nature of a group of street children’s understandings and lived experiences, rather than to generalise to wider populations, a case study approach was used for the current research. In keeping with the theoretical frames of phenomenology-informed, critical qualitative research, a single-site case study approach offered opportunities for the researcher to build relationships and be embedded with children and families within the research community. This is significant given that research conducted with young children

⁵⁵ The distinction between children living on the streets and in slums is significant as slums form their own community and are therefore defined as a separate group according to research and census data (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013).

often highlights the importance of relationships in authentically listening to children's idiosyncratic co-constructions of meaning (Clark & Moss, 2011). Similarly, as Aptekar and Heinonen (2003) write, the importance of building relationships with street children is central to supporting the rigour and credibility of data gained (see also section 4.14). Moreover, given the pragmatic constraints of time and the methodological difficulties associated with researching street children, the single site case study approach enabled the researcher to access participants and collect data within the time constraints of a doctoral study (see also section 4.15 for limitations of this research).

4.10 Participant Selection and Recruitment

Marshall and Rossman (2011) define purposeful sampling as the process of selecting participants that offer information-rich insights into the phenomena under investigation. Since the aim of this research was to better understand the perspectives and experiences of young street children, purposeful and convenience sampling was used to attain access to this marginalised group (see also Chapter 1, section 1.8.3.3 for justification for focussing on street children). Given the transient nature of street children's residences and employments (Kombarakaran, 2004), and the practical and ethical considerations related to recruiting children on/from the streets (see section 4.7), this study recruited children by capitalising on the existing relationships and connections of children with an established NGO. The NGO provided an entry point for the researcher to build relationships with children, families and staff, and to engage in sustained research for the purpose of eliciting in-depth data. The NGO provided a convenient sample and facilitated respectful access to children, families and the research community (see also section 4.8.1).

The processes used for recruiting and selecting the NGO and research participants are detailed below.

The NGO from which this research was conducted was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, this NGO was strongly reputed and the children and families who attended the centre appeared to have been attending for long periods of time (see also section 4.8.1). Thus, the NGO had well-established community connections, and it also meant that this population was somewhat less transient than other street children. Secondly, as the researcher had previously engaged with the centre in a voluntary capacity, the researcher was able to build on previous connections and relationships with staff, families, and older children (see also Chapter 1, section 1.10.1.1).

Three tiers of consent were sought within the organisation before the researcher was able to access the research site or children. Initially, the researcher emailed the chair of the organisation and provided information about the aims and the scope of the study. Once the chair approved the study, consent was sought from the managing director of the organisation. The researcher visited the managing director in person and outlined the purpose and intended processes of the research. Subsequent to this, the researcher was introduced to the newly appointed coordinator of the drop-in centre (the research site) and once final approval was gained from this third tier, the researcher was able to disseminate invitations to participate.

Invitations to participate were first distributed to NGO workers, after an initial conversation where the researcher explained the voluntary nature of the study, and the

objectives of the research. An initial period of rapport building with children and families then followed, during this time, staff supported the researcher by informally explaining the research to families and community members who visited the setting. Simultaneously, the researcher was assigned to work with the Balwadi teacher and children, and thereby engaged in frequent conversations with these children's families about the purpose of the research (see also Appendix 6 and 7). Following these informal conversations and explanations of the research, families were asked to provide verbal consent to enable their children to participate in this research (see Appendix 2). Once families provided consent, children were invited to be co-investigators in the research⁵⁶ (see Appendix 3).

Based on the shared philosophical underpinnings stemming from the Mosaic approach and critical pedagogy, street children in this study were viewed as experts and experience-rich informants who could provide valuable insights into their own experiences of social justice and critical consciousness. The recruitment of children in this study was guided by three criteria. Firstly, as this research focussed on children in the early years, the researcher sought children whose ages fell within the international definition for early childhood (that is 0-8 years). As children accessed the centre from the age of three onwards, this formed the natural lower age limit, and thus, the first criteria for recruitment was that children were 3-8 years of age. Secondly, given the in-depth and qualitative

⁵⁶ Families and NGO staff were also invited to participate in the research, and interviews were conducted with these participants in order to gain additional understandings of children's context and lived experiences. Whilst research highlights the importance of viewing children within the context of relationships with families and educators (Stephenson, 2009), for the purpose of this research, data collected with children formed the principal basis for analysis, interpretation and discussion. Information from families and NGO staff noted in the field notes contextualised data provided by children, however as the aim of this research was to elicit children's voices and perspectives, the primary data sources used throughout this thesis were those provided by children themselves.

nature of inquiry, which was intent on children continuously interpreting, reflecting and dialoguing with the researcher, the second criteria for this research was that child-participants be regular attendees of the centre. Lastly, in order to be able to manage the requirements of volunteering within the centre, as well as conducting layered research, the sample size was limited to 10 focus children (see also section 4.11.1 for selection of child participants). Thus, the ten children who attended the centre most regularly (all of whom volunteered to participate) were selected as focus children. No other criteria were applied to the recruitment of children. Children were initially asked to provide consent via verbal script, in which they were reminded of the voluntary nature of the research (see section 4.7.1 for informed consent). Subsequent to this, throughout the process of data collection, children were continuously observed for signs of disinterest and dissent, and were asked to reaffirm consent at several points, to ensure that consent was a continuous and mindful process of meaningful participation rather than a token of assumed acquiescence (Dockett & Perry, 2011).

4.11 Participants

As this study's core focus was on child-participants. Information on child participants in this research is provided in this section.

4.11.1 Child Participants

Once the researcher gained consent from the staff and families to work with children, the researcher was assigned as a volunteer helper to the Balwadi (preschool) program alongside the regular NGO staff. Over the course of the study, 32 children attended the Balwadi. Of these, approximately 18 children attended the centre on a regular

basis. However, three of these 18 children left the centre after the initial rapport-building phase and were thus not included in data collection. Three other children arrived at the centre partway through the research and for pragmatic purposes were included in many of the experiences conducted at the centre with the researcher, but not in the child-led tours, photography, or photo elicitation conversations. Similarly, two more children left the centre and then returned following a block of 2-3 months, and were therefore observed as part of the research but did not partake in the child-led photography, tours, and photo elicitations. To facilitate the inclusion of newcomer children and absentees into some of the experiences conducted as part of the research, all children were provided opportunities to use the camera to take photographs (not on the streets, but in the garden adjoining the centre, and in the centre itself), however, given the partial nature of this data, it was not used in the overall analysis.

Therefore, 10 focus children emerged as the key informants for this study. The sample size of ten children fit the scope of this research, as it enabled the researcher to collect in-depth qualitative data and to conduct interviews with staff and families within the given timeframe of six months. Additionally, as teaching groups within the centre consisted of six to 10 children per volunteer, this number of participants was in keeping with the logistics of working within the drop-in centre. As children within the centre moved from group to group, several other (school-going and older adolescent) children were included in observations alongside the focus children within the centre, but these

children did not part-take in out-of-centre research activities⁵⁷. Of the 10 focus children, four were of school-going age, however only two of these children attended schools⁵⁸. The two children that attended schools came to the centre in the morning and the afternoon, and engaged with the researcher and children in the Balwadi program during these times. Five of the 10 focus children reported engaging in some form of economic activity, including being a street seller (toys, balloons, books), fruit seller and drink seller. All children reported being helpers in their family context. A brief overview of the profile of child-participants in this study is detailed in Table 4.1 below (a more detailed profile of participants is provided in Chapter 6, section 6.3).

⁵⁷ Given the lack of physical separation of older and younger children within this setting, often times, older children engaged in experiences with younger children and visa versa. At times, older children took on the role of assistants (to either the NGO teacher or the researcher) and supported the facilitation of research. At other times, children engaged in play alongside younger children, or asked for the use of the camera to conduct their own research, or to take photographs (a separate camera was provided to the centre co-ordinator for this purpose, such that the photographs taken by young children remained separate from those taken by older or non-participant children).

⁵⁸ Of the two children who were school aged but did not attend school; one child had attended school earlier, but dropped out as a consequence of his family moving to the village. When (after several months) this child returned from the village, he began attending the centre but was waiting to re-enrol in school (this did not happen during the course of the six months that the research was conducted). The second child, having been unofficially labelled and pathologised as having a behavioural disorder, was unable to access school services. The centre was in the process of facilitating psychological testing for this child before considering schooling or non-formal/vocational options, however, this process of testing meant that the child did not attend school during the time this research was conducted.

Table 4.1

Profile of child participants

Name	Gender	Age ⁵⁹	Program
Sonakshi	Female	4	Balwadi
Payal	Female	5	Balwadi
Birbal	Male	7	Balwadi
Rani	Female	7	School (English-medium)
Bhijali	Female	3	Balwadi
Akbar	Male	7.5	School (Marathi-medium)
Arav	Male	4.5	Balwadi
Krish	Male	4.5	Balwadi
Tara	Female	4.5	Balwadi
Rathore	Male	8	Balwadi

4.12 Data Collection

Informed by the Mosaic approach, critical qualitative research and phenomenology, this study adopted tools to gather and construct data with young children, families and staff. This section fulfils a dual purpose, it first draws on the literature to outline the purpose, function and applicability of the instruments that have been used to collect data, and then highlights the ways in which these tools have been put to use in the context of the current study. A single phase of data collection was conducted over a period of six months.

⁵⁹ Families provided estimates of children's age (birth month and year). This was due to the fact that children's births had not been registered formally, and families had no birth certificate (the centre prepared affidavits for children in order to enable them entry into school). As such, often families estimated children's birthdays on the basis of seasons (see Appendix 7).

from August 2012 to January 2013. Six data collection tools were used throughout the process of this research, including; observations, informal dialogues and conversations⁶⁰, field notes, drawings and stories, child-led photography, and photo-elicitation. The timeline and the tools used for data collection in this study have been outlined in Table 4.2. The subsequent section unpacks the tools used for this research in more detail.

Table 4.2

Data collection timeline

	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Relationship building						
Observation						
Field notes						
Dialogue and conversation						
Drawing and story-telling						
Child-led photography						
1. Centre context						
2. Street context						
Photo-elicitation						

4.12.1 Observations and Field Notes

Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest that observations account for a range of formal and informal activities that involve the “systematic noting and recording of events,

⁶⁰ Conversations also formed the basis for observations, thus several observations and conversations have been merged within the same documentation (see Appendix 6 and 10).

behaviours, and artifacts (objects) in the social setting” (p. 139), whereas field notes are “detailed, nonjudgmental (as much as possible), concrete descriptions of what has been observed” (p. 139). Creswell (2014) suggests that observations and field notes are fundamental to any qualitative inquiry, as they support the immersion of the researcher, and enable the researcher to be familiarised with the setting, people, and routines within the research context. Clark and Moss (2011) similarly contend that observations and field notes are fundamental starting points that support watching as a form of listening to young children. However, since the locus of control in participant observations and field notes lies with the observer (in this case, the adult researcher), Greenfield (2011) highlights the importance of collecting multiple layers of data in seeking insights from participants into the nature of actions and interactions recorded. Freire (1970) similarly highlights the importance of observing participants under varying circumstances, with investigators recording the diverse nuances of participants’ ways of being, as a relationship-building precursor to framing participants as co-investigators. As Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) note, observations have been a commonly used strategy in research and educational contexts with young children, given the ability of observations to capture children’s non-verbal communications.

In this research, observations and field notes were used as foundations for understanding the routines and ways of being in the research context. Alongside information provided by NGO staff, observations and field notes also formed the basis for understanding children’s strengths, interests and capabilities (see also Appendix 6 and 7). Clark, McQuail, and Moss (2003) write that this is common practice in early childhood contexts, and forms an entry point for teachers to plan and program for children in a more

personalised and strengths-based manner. In a similar vein, observations were used in the current research to plan for research and teaching experiences (as a researcher and voluntary teacher). Given this duality, the researcher was involved in first hand experiences with children, and was therefore both a participant and an observer throughout this process. This meant that the researcher often took down 'jottings' and expanded on these at the end of the day. Alternatively, as children became more familiar with the use of the recorder, recorded conversations also provided the basis for some observations and field notes (see Appendix 6 and 7). Freire (1970, 1973), in writing of the importance of teachers as researchers, contends that such strategies for recording and listening to student behaviours, interactions and understandings are critical in opening spaces for dialogue, learning and critical consciousness.

Observations and field notes also served as a means for recording the wealth of intangible data arising from this context such as subtle and overt power relations and dynamics, the styles of educating young children, and the values attached to schooling, street life, money, people and relationships by children, families, and NGO staff. In adding a layer of critical hermeneutics, children's interpretations complemented the observations of the researcher. This involved the researcher conversationally reflecting with children about recorded observations, or showing children photographs, or replaying recordings associated with observations and field notes. In this sense, observations and field notes provided a lens for de-familiarising the familiar (for both the researcher and the children), such that the researcher and children could re-think the common or taken-for-granted occurrences of their lived experiences. Children also commented on photographs, and provided additional insights into observations through reflecting on what the researcher

had recorded. These provided insights for data analysis (see section 4.13), as the researcher was able to use observations and field notes to record what children notified was key to them. Notably, observations and children's re-interpretations of observations also provided a platform for relationship building, whereby children were able to engage as teacher-learners in explaining concepts or emotions to the researcher. Children's reflections on observations and field notes varied, and were sometimes concise, limited or non-existent, whilst at other times, reflections were the basis for humour, play, and explanations.

Following the guidelines of Marshall and Rossman (2011), the field notes in the current research encompassed recordings of environmental features of the context, noting key events or occurrences, power relations and reflective and interpretive elements of the researchers' experiences in the context. The field notes therefore encompassed direct observations, as well as recounts of the researcher's experience in the field. In recognising the potential for researcher bias in recounting (and therefore interpreting) experiences, where possible, the field notes also encompassed transcribed audio recordings. Furthermore, given the importance of critical hermeneutics in the investigation of critical consciousness, the researcher used field notes to draw out provocations that questioned values, regulations, politics, ethics and 'ways of being' in this context. These were then posed to children as questions or through play experiences and further facilitated reflection and observation.

4.12.2 Dialogue and Informal Conversation

Advancing the importance of the 'word' in naming the world, Freire (1970) has reconceptualised dialogue as communicative processes that create and re-create meaning

through action and reflection. Freire (1970) explains that “if it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings” (p. 69). Transferring this definition into the context of research with young children, Rudolph (2012) has used dialogue as a space for problem posing with school-age children, in order to understand and question the familiar and unfamiliar, and to thereby stimulate complex discussion. Mayall (2000) indicates that dialogue with children involves naturally occurring conversations that facilitate the researcher’s understanding of children’s knowledge and experiences within context. Mayall (2000) similarly forwards the importance of informal and emergent conversations with children, arguing that such interactions enable researchers to prompt understandings that are immediate and embodied in context. Moustakas (1994) further conveys that in phenomenological research, unstructured conversations facilitate the development of intersubjectivity between the researcher and participants, which opens opportunities for participants to describe phenomena in a naïve or uninhibited manner. Dialogue therefore provides paradigms for listening that are embedded in relational reciprocity that builds on listening as an ethics of encounter (Clark & Moss, 2011). Notably, as pedagogues from Reggio Emilia contend, listening and dialogue involve multiple forms of communication and co-constructed exchanges of meaning (Clark, 2007; Rinaldi, 2005).

Whilst several educational researchers highlight the importance of dialogue, the use of interviews in research with children has been critiqued on several grounds, and, “proxy” informants, such as families and teachers have often been sought to the exclusion of children’s voices (Darbyshire et al., 2005). Darbyshire et al. (2005) write that children have often been viewed as “unsophisticated or ‘silly’ and thus incapable of being taken

seriously in discussions” (p. 419). Dialogues and conversations as research tools, have also been critiqued on developmental grounds, with educational researchers rallying that children (particularly young children below the age of eight) do not have the capacity for abstract thinking, or that young children’s verbal language skills are not sufficient enough to provide rich understandings of complex phenomena (Dockett & Perry, 2003; Pyle, 2013). However, McLachlan and Britt (2015) and Rudolph (2012) have shown that dialogue with children can be deep, philosophical and complex. Punch (2002) further argues that conversations with children can form the basis of relationship building, whilst Mayall (2000) finds that “the context of the conversation provides space and time for leisurely discussion and development of the points” (p. 117).

In this research, dialogue and conversations were used with children as and when the opportunity arose. These informal conversations often occurred as the researcher engaged as a voluntary teacher (for example, debriefing at the completion of a reading experience), and subsequently, in play-based situations, or at “waiting” times (for example, when young children were waiting for their families to pick them up, or for their friends to walk home with them). Conversations in the context of role-play were also observed or recorded, with the use of props and resources acting as stimuli for verbal and non-verbal communications (Clark, 2005a). Mayall (2000) highlights the importance of engaging in conversations across diverse contexts, to capture divergent insights into children’s knowledge and understandings. Initially, dialogues were conducted within the centre, and later expanded to the streets (see also section 4.2 for the research design, and section 4.12.5 for the processes of photo elicitation used in this study).

Similar to Punch (2002), in this research, dialogues formed the basis of relationship building with children. Rapport building conversations centred on asking children about their topics of interest, and their experiences in school, the centre, or on the streets. Conversations with children tended to be emergent, in that, they arose chiefly from what was going on in the moment, and then extended outward – in this way, the researcher was able to engage in authentic, unstructured dialogue, in order to gain broad information from children. Similar to Rudolph's (2012) research, informal conversations and dialogues were also used as entry points for problem posing, given the aim of the research to elicit children's experiences with critical consciousness and social justice. These interactions also enabled the researcher to gain multiple insights and perspectives into the research context. Conversations were recorded on the audio recorder, or via jottings that were later expanded on in observations.

4.12.3 Drawing and Storytelling

Other “languages” of communication that have been widely used in research with young children are drawings and storytelling (Einarsdottir et al., 2009; Mereweather & Fleet, 2014; Punch, 2002; L. Young & Barrett, 2001a). Punch (2002) writes of the advantages of using drawings with young children, explaining that drawings and narratives open spaces for creativity, fun and the active involvement of children in research. L. Young and Barrett (2001a) also suggest that drawings and narratives facilitate a sense of ownership for children within the research and support creative expression. Einarsdottir et al. (2009), Tay-Lim and Lim (2013), Punch (2002) and L. Young and Barrett (2001a) add that drawings enable children to engage thoughtfully in a discourse of meaning-making, since drawings typically provide children with time and space to engage in processes of

expression, that can later be amended, and added to, whilst in contrast, conversations require immediate responses and are based on continuous reciprocity. Veale (2005) has contended that stories similarly facilitate imaginative examination of sensitive and contextually relevant experiences, that assist children to analyse and ascribe meanings to lived experiences. Einarsdottir et al. (2009), Punch (2002), and Tay-Lim and Lim (2013) also suggest that drawings are a useful lens for viewing and understanding children's representations of the world.

However, Punch (2002) cautions that drawings can be inhibited by children's self-efficacy of their artistic competence. Punch (2002) and L. Young and Barrett (2001a) also found that the use of drawings at times meant children copied each other's works therefore problematizing the interpretation of data. Punch (2002) also found that children often presented de-contextualised, stylised and stereotypical images that had been learnt from school or books that were not likely to be encountered as part of children's lived experiences. Extending on this, Punch (2002) relates the difficulties encountered in interpretation of data, as since children's "drawings were self-explanatory and representative, it was even felt to be insulting to ask the children what they had drawn, when it was quite clear that they had drawn a tree, flower, or a house" (p. 332). Moreover, research conducted by Crivello et al. (2009), indicated that children asked researchers to judge or "mark" their work, thus highlighting children's concerns about drawings being "correct" or "incorrect". In light of these tensions, Einarsdottir et al. (2009) consider the role that context, drawing practice and co-construction have on the discourse of drawing as a tool for meaning making.

In this research, children engaged in drawings and storytelling that were explorative, problem posing, and contextual. In order to avoid imposing an adult-centric approach to drawing and storytelling, children were initially asked to engage in open-ended drawing. This enabled the researcher to question and consider themes that were relevant to their lives and context, however, similar to Punch (2002), children engaged in many stylised and stereotypical drawings (children drew images such as chocolate-box cottages, flowers, butterflies). To extend on this, the researcher used children's socio-dramatic play as an entry point for co-creating stories with children, which were then written and presented back to children, who added drawings to their stories. The researcher also initially introduced resources (picture books⁶¹), which canvassed issues of social justice, fairness, and equity, and in turn, asked children to consider, draw and narrate stories on these themes during teaching-research experiences, and more spontaneously. These stories and drawings in turn provided a lens into salient topics such as those around fairness and justice, which could be linked to children's own experiences. The researcher also posed questions for children to consider whilst drawing, or after completion, in order to engage children in reflective conversation and interpretations of their drawings or stories. Children's stories were also at times read out in groups and then used as a basis for discussion. Children also had the opportunity to engage in open-ended drawings throughout the research process, as the researcher provided paper for children to draw on, narrate stories, and/or to 'make' paper-objects. In this research, children's drawings and

⁶¹ These books were written in English but were designed by UNICEF as part of the "Meena Communication Initiative" to address key themes emerging from the Indian context, such as female education, equality, and fairness (UNICEF South Asia, n.d.) (see also: http://www.unicef.org/rosa/media_2512.htm).

stories also formed the basis for continuous revisitation of key themes and ideas, and for group discussions.

4.12.4 Child-led Photography and Tours

Child-led photography has emerged as a strategic tool for collecting data with young children in participatory research projects, with an array of researchers using photography as a method of listening to children's perspectives (Clark, 2005a; Crivello et al., 2009; Dockett & Perry, 2005; Einarsdottir, 2005; Mereweather & Fleet, 2014; L. Young & Barrett, 2001a) (see also section 4.5 for Mosaic approach). Concurrently, child-led tours, that is, the process whereby children "guide adults around a familiar environment whilst making photographic and audio-recordings of the process" (Clark, 2010, p. 117), have been used to explore children's understandings and perceptions of their environments in research across an array of contexts (Clark & Moss, 2005, 2011; Loebach & Gilliland, 2010; Stephenson, 2009; Tucker, 2003). Researchers have argued for the use of these two tools, on the basis that such methods value children's active, visual and dynamic communications, and further place the locus of power and control in children's hands (Clark, 2010; Clark & Moss, 2011; Clark & Statham, 2005; Einarsdottir, 2005).

Similar to the advantages offered by drawings, cameras and photography have been found to be effective in providing platforms of visual communication, that actively engage children's interest and support children's varying developmental and communicative abilities (Barker & Weller, 2003; Clark & Moss, 2011; Punch, 2002; Stephenson, 2009). Mereweather and Fleet (2014) further contend that the processes involved in child-led tours and photography offer children an element of freedom and intentionality where

children are free to choose what is and is not photographed, and where adults are and/or are not directed. Stephenson (2009) has also suggested that photographs capture clear representations of children's perspectival realities. Similarly, Punch (2002) notes that children are often less likely to "copy" other children's photographs, given the lack of perceived artistic competence required in taking photographs. Extending on this, researchers have suggested that children are more likely to take adults on tours and to capture photographs of phenomena that are important to them (Clark & Percy-Smith, 2006; Clark & Statham, 2005; Stephenson, 2009).

Child-led tours and photography have also been cited as being particularly useful in research with street children, as photographs provide bridges of communication (Joanou, 2009) through visual insights into unfamiliar or unknown aspects of children's lives, environments and relationships with others on the streets. L. Young and Barrett (2001a) further contend that photographs and tours provide insights into street life that could not otherwise be directly observed by an "outsider". Visual methods have also been found to be useful in research with street children, as photographs provide a basis for children to question, interpret and share understandings evident within a tangible product (Bhosekar, 2009; Joanou, 2009; L. Young & Barrett, 2001a). Similarly, Cappello (2005) and Pyle (2013) have suggested that photographs and the context offered by tours are particularly useful in research where language is developing, or in situations where the language being used is not the first language of children or the researcher. L. Young and Barrett (2001a) also note that the use of photographs and child-led tours empowers children to enter in to the conversation as subjects with a sense of belonging and ownership, whereas more

traditional ethnocentric research has tended to psychologise or objectify street children as the “others”, who’s lives are to be interpreted through the gaze of privileged adults.

Offering some critiques of the use of photography and child-led tours, Punch (2002) has found that the use of photography often problematizes interpretation as children focus on the aesthetics (of what might constitute a “good” picture) as opposed to the content, which reflects what is significant to them. Joanou (2009) and Punch (2002) also pose ethical and methodological tensions emerging from the use of photography and child-led tours with children in marginalised contexts, highlighting access, safety and sustainability as key considerations⁶². Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) also raise methodological limitations, highlighting that photography may ensue in the inappropriate use of cameras, or the loss or damage of cameras. Moreover, Barker and Smith (2012) explain, “the everyday lives of children and young people are fluid and dynamic... [however] photographs record a fixed, static moment in time, and capturing events that are brief, fleeting and fluid may be very difficult” (p. 95). Additional recorded limitations include the difficulties associated with children capturing abstract topics and concepts (Barker & Smith, 2012), as well as children taking very few photographs (Barker & Weller, 2003). Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) also note that photographs pose tensions since children at times take photographs that they later regret.

⁶² In this research, children’s families (particularly older siblings) were well equipped with technologies such as mobile phones, thus children were aware of, and familiar with, photography as a medium for communication. Moreover, to ensure access and sustainability to photography after the completion of the research, two cameras were left in the care of the centre coordinator for the use of the centre and children.

In this research, children were reminded that they would be the first to view their photographs, and that any regretted photographs could be disposed of immediately (see also section 4.15 for limitations). Children were also initially familiarised with the camera, and staff (in the centre) and families (on the street) reinforced the importance of using the camera ‘with respect’. In this research, photography and child-led tours were used as complementary tools; children photographed their environments by leading the researcher on a photo tour (within the centre and on the streets). Photographs taken by children were also embedded within observations, for children to interpret and reflect on over the course of fieldwork.

4.12.4.1 Child-led photo tours within the centre.

At the outset of the research, the researcher facilitated an introductory session where children were familiarised with the camera and shown how to take photographs. In a group session with the researcher, the children were asked to take five photographs each of what was important to them, within the context of the centre. The use of a digital camera enabled immediate review (and deletion) of images and a brief discussion ensued regarding the photographs children had taken. Subsequent to this initial familiarisation, children were invited to take the researcher on a photo tour with another child (usually their sibling or friend) within the centre, or in the adjoining garden. Throughout this process, an audio recorder was used to record children’s commentaries during the photo tour. Photographs taken by children were then subjected to a review and discussion with the researcher and children through photo elicitation (see section 4.12.5). Children’s photographs from the centre or garden were also used as prompts for interpretation and review of critical and contextualised phenomena – for example, if children took

photographs of children fighting, these were used to facilitate discussions of power and hierarchy of children in the centre (see Appendix 8).

4.12.4.2 Child-led photo tours on the streets.

At the completion of children's photo tours within the centre, children were asked to accompany the researcher and a significant adult (NGO staff or family member) to conduct photo tours on the streets. Children were asked to direct the adults to places of importance to them, such as their homes or workplaces. Children were given the option of having photo tours recorded (via audio recorder) or having the researcher take jottings. The majority of children's commentaries were recorded on an audio recorder, however, at times, sections of recordings were inaudible due to the volumes of street and background noises (see also section 4.15 for limitations). In the days after, children were invited to review and discuss photographs in the context of the centre. This involved the child (or child and siblings) reviewing their photographs together with the researcher. Child-led photo tours of the streets and the related photo elicitation conversations were conducted three times with focus children. Younger children were also able to use photographs to support communication through drawing and play.

4.12.5 Photo Elicitation

Pyle (2013) defines photo elicitation as the "use of photographs during interviews to elicit responses from participants" (p. 1547). Clark (2010) highlights the importance of photo elicitation in providing insights into children's knowledge, understandings, perspectives and experiences. Einarsdottir (2005) similarly contends that "using children's photographs, the focus is on the children's perspectives because the children are not asked

direct questions from the adult's perspective as in traditional interviews; instead, the photos, which represent the child's perspective, direct the interviews" (p. 527). Fargas-Malet et al. (2010) also suggest that photo elicitation provides structure to conversations, evoking deeper understandings, emotions, and interpretations through the use of tangible prompts.

In caching the critiques of the use of photo elicitation, Pyle (2013) contends that pragmatic limitations arise with the use of photographs and photo elicitation as "only those activities that took place during data collection periods were photographed and discussed. This limitation meant that potentially important activities, not salient or observable during data collection, may have been missed" (p. 1547). Barker and Smith (2012) also note that children's interpretations of photographs can be contradictory, and complex – thereby influencing the researcher's ability to interpret children's understandings. Notably, limitations of photo elicitation may also arise, as children may not wish to discuss sensitive topics or illicit activities, such as, drug abuse (L. Young & Barrett, 2001b).

In this research, following the capture of photographs in the centre and on the streets, children were invited to review their photographs with the researcher. Children were asked to describe, label and explain to the researcher, the occurrences, people or environments photographed, and the significance of the photographs. Extending on the notion of critical hermeneutics, and positioning the self as an "authentic novice" (Clark & Moss, 2005, p. 97) the researcher also asked problem posing questions during the process of review, in order to question the familiar and unfamiliar. For example, in one photo elicitation conversation about the use of paid public bathrooms, children were asked where

they thought the money paid went to, and why (see Appendix 8). Photo elicitation conversations were also used as a pedagogical tool to discuss issues of relevance to children – for example, photographs of community members who were supportive or unsupportive of children, were used to discuss issues of fairness, access and justice (research question 2, see Appendix 8). Photo elicitation with young children was often facilitated through the use of drawings, gesture, pointing and the use of siblings to support meaning making and the understanding of the researcher through some of the “hundred languages” of children.

This segment has outlined the methods and processes for constructing and collecting data with young children. The subsequent section addresses the methods and processes of data analysis used for this research.

4.13 Data Analysis

Creswell (2014) describes data analysis as the systematic process of organising, examining, interpreting and validating data. Informed by phenomenology, critical qualitative research, and the Mosaic approach, in this research, thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo 9.2, which is a computer assisted data analysis software (CADAS). Marshall and Rossman (2011) describe the steps involved in data analysis, including; (1) the organisation of data, (2) immersion in the data, (3) generation of categories and themes, (4) coding of data, (5) data interpretation, (6) search for dis-conforming evidence, and (7) presenting the study. These steps are discussed in this section in order to outline the processes used for data analysis in this research.

4.13.1 Organisation of Data

In this research, the software NVivo, version 9.2 was used to analyse the range of data collected as part of this research. Observations and field notes were directly imported into NVivo, whilst conversations and dialogues were first translated and transcribed in verbatim before being imported. Photographs, stories and drawings were first scanned or directly imported into NVivo and then descriptors of photographs, drawings and stories were added as a written layer to the data within the NVivo software itself. Data were then sorted into folders or nodes according to the medium of information (observations, field notes, conversations, photographs, drawings).

4.13.2 Immersion in the Data

Marshall and Rossman (2011, p. 210) describe immersion as the process whereby researchers “cuddle up with, embrace, and get to know” the data, or in other words, mentally situating one’s consciousness deep within the data set. In this research, immersion occurred both during the process of data collection and subsequent to it, as the researcher first engaged children in dialogues eliciting their views of data collected, and subsequently analysed data after the completion of fieldwork. Marshall and Rossman (2011) validate this form of immersion by arguing; “in qualitative studies, data collection and analysis typically go hand in hand to build a coherent interpretation” (p. 208). Thus, in this research, the initial phase of immersion occurred alongside children – whereby the researcher shared data such as observations, field notes, photographs, and revisited children’s drawings in an attempt to reflect with children on their views, thoughts and ideas about their behaviours, understandings and feelings. Children’s interpretations of data therefore formed the first layer of immersion and provided an initial basis for

interpretation, which oriented the researcher's lens to focus on children's understandings and meaning making.

Subsequently, at the completion of data collection, the researcher was re-immersed in all data collected (including data on children's interpretations), and engaged in the phenomenological process of viewing data, by reading, and scrutinising data "so as to reveal their structure, meaning configuration, coherence and the circumstances of their occurrence and clustering" (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 15-16). Using NVivo, this process of immersion involved the researcher reflecting on the data, adding memos and annotations such that the context and meanings embedded within the data were clear and explicit. Although some analysts have suggested that the use of NVivo distances researchers from their data, thereby distorting analysis (Bergin, 2011; Bourdon, 2002; Welsh, 2002), others have argued that the use of software supports the consistency of data analysis (Jackson, 2014). In this research, annotations and memos were added to improve the consistency of data analysis, and to facilitate the immersion of the researcher in the data.

4.13.3 Coding and the Generation of Themes

Creswell (2014) defines coding as the process of organising data by "bracketing chunks... and writing a word representing a category in the margins" (pp. 197-198). In this research, using NVivo, once the data were grouped into folders according to medium, written data (such as observations, field notes, transcripts) were first read and coded inductively into 'nodes', which described themes emerging from the data. The same process was then repeated for analysis of the visual data. Throughout the process of analysis, codes were grouped into broader themes, or separated into smaller themes

according to meaning – that is, data was compared and contrasted before being grouped into a coherent theme, such that the essence of children’s perspectives and meanings could emerge through analysis.

In this research, NVivo was used to code the data and to generate themes. Bergin (2011) has questioned the use of NVivo and other data analysis software, arguing that the use of software impedes on the analysis of unstructured qualitative data, through ascribing inflexible and prescriptive methods for analysis. On the other hand, Bazeley and Jackson (2013) have argued that since NVivo enables researchers to manage, query and visualise large quantities of unstructured data, it increases the effectiveness and efficiency of data analysis by providing indispensable tools for its organisation. Bazeley and Jackson (2013), Jackson (2014) and Welsh (2002) further suggest that software such as NVivo affords data analysis procedures transparency, as these programs facilitate the organisation of data through clearly identifiable codes and categories, which negate the possibilities of researcher bias whilst maintaining rigour. Accordingly, NVivo was used throughout this research as the platform from which to analyse data, as it provided systematic and efficient methods for analysing, “recording, storing, matching and linking” data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 2).

4.13.4 Interpretation and Presentation

Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest that as themes emerge from coding, the researcher offers interpretations of what is learnt as “interpretation brings meaning and coherence to the themes, patterns, and categories, developing linkages and a story line that makes sense” (p. 219). Highlighting the importance of interpretation to phenomenology

and critical qualitative research, proponents of critical hermeneutics further contend that interpretation is fundamental to problematizing and questioning cultural norms and power dynamics. Interpretation in this research took two forms, initially, children interpreted data, problematizing the familiar to question the taken-for-granted ways of thinking, being and doing in the Indian context. The processes involved with children's interpretation further built the basis for understanding children's thinking and critical consciousness, as children's interpretations offered spaces for children to 'decode' observations and data in order to make meaning.

Subsequent to the completion of fieldwork, in recognising that no "pure" or "neutral" interpretations exist (Kincheloe, 2008), the political nature of data collected were analysed and questioned alongside children's interpretations. This process involved the researcher questioning the intentions and subtleties of participants' shared understandings, lived experiences and perceived truths. Given the importance of socio-historical, cultural and political effects on children's lived experiences and understandings (Kress, 2011), the researcher also contextualised data in order to support analysis (see Chapter 5). In doing so, the researcher sought to examine disconfirming evidence and to examine and offer alternative understandings of data. Moreover, in order to limit the possibilities of bias offered by the interpretive nature of qualitative research, the researcher has also explicitly identified and bracketed the potential influences of the researcher's bias, voice, and identities upon the research before presenting the findings emerging from this study (see Chapter 1, section 1.10.1.1 for the researcher's story).

This section has outlined the procedures and processes of data analysis used throughout this research. The following section delineates the methods used to ensure the rigour and credibility of research methods.

4.14 Rigour and Credibility

Maintaining the internal and external validity, reliability, credibility, authenticity and rigour of research methods and interpretations has been documented as being of seminal importance in educational research, particularly given the influence of research on policy and practice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). However, the use of the terms such as validity and reliability in qualitative research has been widely debated as researchers have problematized the meanings, values and paradigms attached to these words. Creswell (2014, p. 201) suggests that “qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects.” However, Lincoln and Guba (2003) suggest that the “accuracy” of findings is dependent on multiple theoretical, philosophical and pragmatic variables, since “validity is not like objectivity” (p. 274). Thus, Lincoln and Guba (2003) highlight the significance of two salient features – that is, the rigour of methods (are the processes used to conduct the research authentic and applicable?), and the credibility of findings and interpretations (“can our cocreated constructions be trusted to provide some purchase on some important human phenomenon?”) (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 275). Marshall and Rossman (2011) write of several procedures that ensure the trustworthiness and rigour of qualitative research, including crystallisation, engaging in reflexivity, prolonged engagement in the field,

collaboration and developing an audit trail. This section describes the use of these mechanisms in the current research to support the credibility and rigour of research methods and interpretations (see also Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Credibility and rigour of research methods and interpretations

	Method	Interpretation
Crystallisation	Multi-method data collection (photography, drawing, written, spoken).	Holistic, thematic data analysis of multiple layers of data
Voice and collaboration	Participatory methods to ensure children's perspectives are given 'voice' and continuous reflection, interpretation and dialogues with children	Use of emic data, photographs to support interpretation based on children's meaning making. Researcher interpretations informed by interpretations of children.
Reflexivity	Personal notes and field notes	Bracketing (informed by phenomenology and critical hermeneutics)
Prolonged engagement in the field	Fieldwork conducted over a period of six months.	Additional contextual understandings gained from socio-historical, political, cultural review of research context.
Audit trail	Systematic recording of data through observations	Transparency afforded through NVivo data analysis software

4.14.1 Crystallisation

Educational researchers have often cited triangulation, that is, “bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 252), as a method for ensuring the credibility of data. However, Richardson (1997) has critiqued the notion of triangulation, posing an alternative form of rigour through the notion of crystallisation, proposing that:

The central imaginary for “validity” for postmodernist texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities [*sic*], and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose... Crystallisation, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of “validity” (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallisation provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know (Richardson, 1997, p. 92).

In this research, the elicitation of children’s “hundred languages” of communication facilitated crystallisation, as the many forms of communication provided diverse angles and insights into children’s perspectives, experiences and understandings (Clark & Moss, 2011). Moreover, since research was collected over a sustained period of time, these multi-layered and multi-dimensional insights were dynamic, contradictory and

therefore holistic, capturing the “conflictual, moving, problematic” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 275) nature of human existence and phenomena – thereby further supporting crystallisation. The holistic and thematic nature of interpretation further supported rigour as multiple data sources were referenced in building up a cohesive portrait of findings, alongside socio-historical and political influences in context (see Chapter 5 and 6).

4.14.2 Reflexivity

Lincoln and Guba (2003) recognise researchers as human instruments in research, and discuss the notion of reflexivity in proving the credibility and rigour afforded to data and interpretations. Reflexivity therefore:

Demands that we interrogate each of our selves regarding the ways in which research efforts are shaped and staged around the binaries, contradictions, and paradoxes that form our own lives. We must question our selves, too, regarding how those binaries and paradoxes shape not only the identities called forth in the field and later in the discovery process of writing, but also our interactions with respondents, in who we become to them in the process of *becoming* ourselves (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 283).

Throughout the process of this research, the researcher made personal notes, questioned and de-familiarised taken-for-granted assumptions and power relations both with children in dialogues and through recorded field notes (see Appendix 6 and 7). Through this process, the researcher elucidated the consciousness of the self as a learner-teacher, and teacher-learner (Freire, 1985b). The multiple identities, beings and becomings of the researcher (Australian, Indian, Female, Learner, Teacher, Researcher) also unfolded

throughout this process, as the researcher challenged the ethical and political intentions and undertones of the self, the research process and the relationships with children, families and staff. The researcher has also engaged in a process of bracketing (see Chapter 1, section 1.10.1.1), whereby the researcher has portrayed the intentions that brought the researcher to the research, and the extent and nature of processes, philosophies and paradigms that have shaped the interpretations and findings emerging from this research. Creswell (2014) suggests that such reflexivity (in the form of bracketing) delimits researcher bias and increases the transparency of research, in turn strengthening the methodological and interpretive rigour of the research.

4.14.3 Voice and Collaboration

McMillan (2004, pp. 273-274) illuminates that “the basis of phenomenology is that there are multiple ways of interpreting the same experience, and that the meaning of the experience to each participant is what constitutes reality.” In recognition of this, Lincoln and Guba (2003) raise the importance of the notion of participant “voice” in adding credibility to research data and findings. Voice refers to emic data that enables participants to “speak for themselves... [with] emotional immediacy” (Lincoln & Guba, 2003, p. 282). Freire (1970) canvasses the significance of oppressed and marginalised groups speaking for themselves as subjects and not objects, noting the importance of individuals naming their world in order to transform it through praxis. Freire (1973, 1976, 1985b) further contends that elucidating participants’ voices is a central criterion to the validity of critical qualitative research, as the fundamental aim of such research is to challenge and redefine the status quo. Given the importance of sharing participants’ perspectives and knowledge, as they were experienced and understood by participants themselves, this research used

multiple tools for data collection in order to listen to children's idiosyncratic cultural critiques, and motivations. In doing so, participatory methods were used in order to ensure that children's perspectives and communications could be shared in the form in which they were captured such that the integrity of emic data could be maintained. Moreover, in this research, participants engaged with the researcher in an ongoing process of reflection, dialogue and interpretation in order to build layered understandings (see section 4.5 for the Mosaic approach and section 4.14.1 for a discussion of crystallisation).

4.14.4 Prolonged Engagement in the Field

The complex nature of social phenomena give rise to the importance of context in building accurate narratives and "thick descriptions" of participants' daily routines and lives (Kincheloe et al., 2011). Challenging the abstract (reason free from value judgements), decontextualized (objective), and totalising (generalizable) nature of scientific research, Denzin (2009) also questions the politics and ethics of applying "measurable standards" to qualitative research, since few qualitative researchers "think in a language of evidence, they think instead about experience, emotions, events, processes, performances, narratives, poetics, the politics of possibility" (p. 142). Offering an alternative and resistant path to scientific constructions of validity, Lincoln and Guba (2003) characterise ethics and epistemology as elements of rigour that are facilitated by researchers building relationships through prolonged engagement in the field. Lather (1993) further broaches the topic of reciprocity and relationships, suggesting that research rigour also rests in the extent to which relationships between participants and the researcher become reciprocal, as opposed to hierarchal. As the researcher spent sustained time in the field over six months, collecting multiple observations and field notes, the

continual process of equalising power relations through participatory methods and the positioning of the researcher as a learner-teacher/teacher-learner and insider-outsider/outside-insider, attempted to redress these imbalances (see also section 4.7.2 for a discussion of power relations and ethics). Prolonged fieldwork also supported the intersubjectivity and co-constructed nature of knowledge (Stephenson, 2009), for as Punch (2002) notes, “it is necessary to spend prolonged, or repeated, periods with anyone in order to get to know them beyond a one-off interview and to gain a greater understanding of their views and experiences” (p. 322).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue that the situated nature of knowing in relationships and contexts further contributes to the validity of research designs and data. In framing the importance of context in social critique, Freire (1973, 1976) describes the magnitude of understanding the many political, social, ethical, cultural, and historical factors that influence experiences of social justice and inequality to one’s critical consciousness. In this research, prolonged engagement in the field enabled the researcher to gather multiple layers of data, and to form thick descriptions, that is, insights into children’s behaviours, and understandings of the effects of context upon children’s interactions (Denham & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The complexity of contextual factors has been considered in the data analysis process to add to the interpretive rigour of this research (see Chapter 5). To add to the transparency of the data analysis process, an audit trail of interpretations has been completed to further support the rigour of this research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

4.15 Limitations

Indubitably, the complex nature of conducting qualitative research with street children meant that several limitations were experienced in the completion of the research. The primary critique thrown at qualitative case study inquiries is that data is gathered from single site, and is therefore limited in its generalizability to the wider populous (McMillan, 2004). However, qualitative researchers highlight the importance of contextualising research, recognising the ethical, political and socio-historical situation of participants and research processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Reflecting on the critiques aimed at case study research, and the praise afforded to certain quantitative research as being the “gold standard” in the investigation of socio-educational phenomena, Shields (as cited in Merriam, 2014, pp. 52-53) argues:

The strength of qualitative approaches is that they account for and include difference – ideologically, epistemologically, methodologically – and most importantly, humanly. They do not attempt to eliminate what cannot be simplified. Thus, it is precisely because case study includes paradoxes and acknowledges that there are no simple answers, that it can and should qualify as the gold standard.

Adding to this argument, phenomenological theorists advocate the importance of investigating lived experiences through participants’ own perspectives, such that genuine understandings and the essence or meaning of phenomena as it has been constructed by participants can be understood (Thomson, 2008; Van Manen, 2014). Critical qualitative researchers furthermore problematize the ethical and political neutrality of research evidence, questioning the consequences of deriving “objective” and generalizable findings that normalise, and therefore, marginalise and exclude certain groups (Denzin, 2009).

Furthermore, qualitative inquiries informed by phenomenology have also been critiqued on the basis of granting biases, as it has been argued that phenomenological and critical qualitative research processes lend themselves to ‘researcher bias’ during the process of data analysis (Merriam, 2014). Critics argue that the lens of the researcher influences what themes emerge, and what data is given prominence. In addressing this critique, it is recognised that the researcher is a human instrument in this research (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). Thus, a segment in Chapter 1 has sought to situate the researcher in relation to the research, and to thereby make visible or transparent, the researchers’ pre-conceived understandings, multiple identities, and the ‘lens’ from which the researcher has approached this research (see Chapter 1, section 1.10.1.1). Moreover, as the aim of this study was to highlight children’s voices, the continuous process of reflection, interpretation and dialogue carried out by the researcher and children meant that the researcher’s post-fieldwork data analysis was primed by the interpretations and analyses conducted with children whilst in the field. Accordingly, although it is acknowledged that the researcher’s ‘lens’ has influenced what themes have emerged from the data, this lens was strongly informed by children’s own voices, interpretations and reflections. Moreover, in line with the critical hermeneutic approach taken through this research, it is also argued that all research adopts a particular political, social, ethical and historical ‘lens’, and that therefore, all research (and thinking) is fundamentally interpretive (Kincheloe, 2008).

Pragmatic limitations were also encountered during the course of data collection. Principally, given the fluid nature of children’s grouping within the setting, the experiences conducted as part of the research were often ones that children would ‘come and go’ from

as and when they were so inclined. This meant that older children regularly infiltrated experiences, either assisting or detracting children from the goals of the researcher at the time. For example, during photo elicitation exercises with children, non-participant children often sought to play with or take the photographs being reviewed. The open nature of children's interactions and discussions in the research also presented limitations, as at times, children would destroy other children's data (drawings, stories), however these expressions of anger or violence, in and of themselves presented data that were recorded through observations and field notes. The other side of the limitation posed by the open nature of the research was that child-participants were unlikely to feel pressured to 'stay with' the researcher if they did not want to, therefore it was easier to ascertain children's assent to research experiences, since children tended to move freely between groups.

Similar to limitations encountered by many other researchers who have conducted photo-elicitation interviews with young children, this research found that conversations with children about photographs, observations, stories (written by children) and other data would often float off tangent. However, phenomenological theory insists that navigating through unstructured dialogue, is paramount to engaging in deepened thought, and that this engagement in turn, influences the emergence of genuine meaning-making (Barnacle, 2001; Van Manen, 2014). This was also significant given that Hindi was the additional language of the researcher. However, this limitation enabled the researcher to be an "authentic novice" (Clark & Moss, 2005, p. 97), and to listen to children's meanings, and eventually develop inter-subjective knowledge that was based on children's definitions and explanations of words, drawings, and other data gathered. In order to further support understanding, multiple methods for data collection were used to gain multi-dimensional

insights into children's shared understandings and lived experiences. Additionally, a limitation arising from the use of photography in this research involved children deleting a large number of photographs that they did not 'like', or did not want to share. L. Young and Barrett (2001b) address the ethics of eliciting sensitive information from street children, and raise the importance of respecting children's rights to share or reserve information. In light of the importance of respecting children's privacy and confidentiality (see section 4.7 for ethical considerations), any photographs children did not want shared were deleted.

Limitations also arose from the completion of conversations with children on the streets. The constant presence of strangers, community members, families, children or others on the streets may have caused power imbalances and influenced what children shared and did not share during these experiences. Similarly, the presence of parents, NGO workers or the researcher may also have influenced the photographs taken by children on the street. However, child-led tours were conducted with the researcher in the presence of a parent or an NGO worker, as this was fundamental to children's safety. Children and the researcher engaged in multiple conversations, and data was collected with children from both within the centre, and the streets, to negate the influences of what children may or may not share in certain contexts or in the presence of others. Additionally, given the confines of conducting research in 'private homes' that are within 'public spaces', this limitation was perceived as a cultural and contextual occurrence that provided context to the constructs being discussed with children. An additional limitation of collecting data from the streets was also experienced, as data collected was at times inaudible given the large amount of background noise from the streets. All transcripts were transcribed in

verbatim, however, as it was not possible, nor appropriate for child participants to check transcripts, any inaudible segments within data have been identified and noted as such. However, the researcher made notes following conversations with children on the street, and engaged in a ‘recap’ of key points at the end to ensure that salient ideas communicated were understood by the researcher and recorded in an additional medium – that is, jottings.

4.16 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an in-depth overview of the methodological tools and research design adopted for the current research. Philosophical and theoretical justifications for the use of qualitative research preceded an overview of the main instruments used in this study, before participant profiles were relayed and information regarding the processes of data collection were discussed. Key methodological considerations pertaining to participant recruitment, data analysis, and consistency and credibility were further highlighted alongside limitations posed by the current research. The subsequent chapter provides an in-depth overview of the research context.

Chapter 5: Research Context

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the methodological approaches and tools used for the purpose of this research. A justification and explanation of the use of qualitative and phenomenological lines of inquiry preceded a review of the procedures used for data collection, participant recruitment and data analysis. The validity and reliability of this research were further discussed alongside methodological limitations arising from this study. Ethical considerations pertaining to this research, including researching with vulnerable populations and young children, were also reviewed.

To understand the social ecology of macro-and micro-impacts upon street children, this chapter considers historical, religious, political, economic and socio-cultural elements of Indian society. The understanding of these contextual elements highlights the idiosyncratic nature of social justice and critical consciousness in this research context. By focusing on the socio-historical systems, and the residues of these upon existing ideological conditions of knowledge and power, this chapter reiterates the complex and interconnected nature of social justice and social oppression in the Indian context and, more specifically, in Mumbai. Cultural and social factors affecting children are portrayed before a more in-depth situational analysis of street children in Mumbai is provided. Subsequently, the lack of government services focusing specifically on street children is addressed before the range and nature of provisions from the NGO sector are discussed.

By highlighting the history of Indian oppression and resistance, the ongoing crests of ethnic and religious violence, and the effects of neo-liberal marketised ideologies, this

chapter seeks to elucidate the emergent and contextual nature of social oppression and injustice faced by minorities. Accordingly, the chapter focuses on the diverse forms of inclusion, exclusion, discrimination and (mis)treatment experienced by marginalised or oppressed groups such as women and children, as well as focusing more specifically on the situation of street children in Mumbai, narrowing the lens to the research site. Lastly, in identifying the prevalence and cause of street children in Mumbai, the chapter identifies positive support mechanisms currently available to street children in Mumbai.

5.2 Purpose of Contextualisation

As identified in earlier chapters (Chapters 1, 2 and 3), the two central concerns of this research are a) critical consciousness and b) social justice. As critical consciousness involves “reading the world” (Freire, 1985b, p. 15) through socio-political, historical, ethical and cultural awareness, it is situated in an understanding of context. That is, to be able to engage in an informed critique of social oppression, an understanding of the socio-historical and contextual conditions that contribute to oppression in society are necessary. As Kyrlo (2013a, p. 51) shares, “Freire’s concept of conscientização... is filtered through a contextual framework that... is situated in historical spaces and times... the process is not a blueprint to indicate how it unfolds for every individual regardless of their society, location and era.” As described in Chapter 2, social justice and critical consciousness aim for the transformation of discrimination and oppression, these concepts are also predicated on a dense and critical understanding of relationships, discourse, power, ideology and language, and the manner in which these manifest across contextual (that is, micro, meso, exo, and macro) levels. Freire (1976) therefore contends that knowledge of structural and

systematic inequities is important in opening up avenues to resist and transform institutionalised forms of injustice.

To paraphrase Barbu (as cited in Freire, 1973, p. 21), any context “in all its manifestations is never only what it is, but also what it was.” Foucault (2002) suggests that the deep entwine of history and politics invariably leads to the internalisation of knowledge and power discourses (such as regimes of truth) that have been constructed over time. Accordingly, Foucault (2002) and others (Gallagher, 2008; Poster, 1982; Tesar, 2014) suggest that socio-historical and macro-level political ideologies govern and produce subjectivities and norms that affect the inclusion and exclusion of individuals in micro-contexts. For example, in the Indian context, Ovichegan (2014) reports on the social exclusion of Dalit⁶³ students in universities, due to macro-level “positive discrimination” policies. These policies legislate that universities must enable a certain quota of Dalit students to be admitted into higher education courses. Ironically, the very policies that are intended to support the inclusion of Dalit students is leading to micro-exclusion (Ovichegan, 2014). This is predominantly due to non-Dalit students perceiving that Dalit students have not received admission due to their academic abilities, but rather because of the quota system (which they in turn perceive to be unfair). As this example suggests, understanding the deeper imprints of power and the many contradictory effects it produces,

⁶³ ‘Dalit’, literally meaning “broken, ground down, downtrodden or oppressed” (Lamsal, 2012, p. 76) are the lowest caste of people in the hierarchical Hindu Caste System. Previously known as the ‘untouchables’, this caste was marred by the perception that their person, and anything touched by their person was ‘defiled’ (Lamsal, 2012). This is predominantly due to the fact that Dalits were assigned “the most menial and degrading jobs; they were considered to be the carriers of pollution” (Gorringe, 2009, p. 151). This long-standing social stigma has further added to the economic, political, educational and religious disadvantage faced by this group of people. In earlier efforts to counter discrimination, Mahatma Gandhi called the Dalit people Harijan, or ‘God’s children’ (Gandhi, 1954), however as the term ‘Dalit’ is the preferred term used by this group of people to describe themselves, it is the term used throughout this thesis.

is worth analysing through a socio-political and historical lens. An understanding of context is therefore necessary in perceiving how lived experiences (for example, of social justice and critical consciousness) organically surface from idiosyncratic (silent and dominant) histories and conditions. Mac Naughton (2005) further suggests that investigation of these contextual idiosyncrasies adds depth to the understanding of what terms such as fairness, equality and social justice mean in this context.

With the aforementioned rationales in mind, the overarching purpose of this chapter is to critically examine how particular political, economic and socio-historical conditions dominate the understanding of the past and present, and thereby contribute to the inequalities in it (Mac Naughton, 2005). In questioning whose interests have been privileged and/or silenced, this chapter foregrounds contextual factors that have influenced the lived experiences of children and families on the street in urban Mumbai. Beginning with a historical account and analysis of key occurrences such as India's colonisation and independence, the subsequent section frames the residual impacts of India's history upon its citizens in the present day. Political, religious and economic influences are then discussed before a more specific insight into the situation of Mumbai's street children is elucidated.

5.3 Framing the Historical Analysis

History has often been understood as an innocent discipline (Poster, 1982) that strings facts together in a linear and chronological fashion. Contrary to this belief, a Foucauldian lens suggests that the "effects of the past and its power in the present are often silenced in traditional historical accounts which present history as a set of undisputed

chronological facts or events caused by ‘great men’ who made discoveries” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 147). Taking this view, the brief review of political Indian histories provided here critiques and problematizes the residues of the past upon the current “other”, or more specifically in this research context, upon marginalised groups, such as women, religious/caste minorities, street children, and families living on the street in Mumbai (Thapar, 2005). Prior to this review, a brief explanation and justification of the way in which this historical undertaking has been framed, is addressed below.

First and foremost, it is not within the scope of this chapter to provide a complete or indelible history of India⁶⁴. As India is a diverse and populous country, an initial focus on India is followed by more in-depth and contextualised focus on Mumbai. Pragmatically, since historians indicate that the Indian civilisation began approximately around the 4th millennium BC (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004), this timeframe is, for the purposes of this chapter, too infinite to dwell on. As such, the three most recent and well-documented historical occurrences, that is, colonisation, independence and the partition, and the modern republic of India, are the central concerns of this chapter. Whilst pre-colonial rule set the basis for the systematic structure adopted and used by the British Empire in India (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004), historians and analysts suggest that the socio-historical effects of colonisation, independence and the republic have particularly impacted on the ways in which current institutions, and state and political (economic and social) instruments operate (Blackburn, 2005; Kulke & Rothermund, 2004; Lange, 2009).

⁶⁴ See Bayly (1999), Kulke and Rothermund (2004) and Metcalf and Metcalf (2002) for in-depth historical literature and information on ancient, medieval and modern India.

Secondly, to avoid the universalisation and totalisation of historical discourse silenced and hidden histories of India's colonisation, independence and modern republic, are depicted throughout this chapter. As Mac Naughton (2005, p. 4) suggests:

Individuals may tell several – possibly competing stories about themselves (identities) and about societies. The politics of our time and place influence which stories (of individuals or societies) are told, when and by whom, which is why some stories are heard more often and given greater status than others.

Consequently, identifying the stories (of individuals or societies) that are silenced or marginalised and then sharing them is a political act.

Thirdly, “Foucault believed that the past and the present are intimately and politically connected; and that these connections produce contested and overlapping ways of thinking and being in our world” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 147). To begin to understand the past's residual influences on current ways of thinking and being, Foucault suggests “re-meeting” history. To re-meet history is to “look again at what has been and to see it in new ways that provoke us to act and to see differently in the present” (Mac Naughton, 2005, p. 147). However, as Dahlberg et al. (2007, p. 25) suggest, since “there is no single reality, only many perspectival realities,” there can be no single history, only multiple perspectival histories. In re-looking at the multiple histories⁶⁵ of India, the work of certain renowned historians, namely Kulke and Rothermund, Metcalf and Metcalf, and Stein, have been used

⁶⁵ The histories presented here are for the purpose of viewing the emergence of social justice and critical consciousness demonstrated by participants through a socio-historical lens. Thus, I acknowledge that I am not a historian, and that I have not conducted historical analyses of primary sources, but have rather relied on the work of other historians and secondary sources. However, I reiterate that the aim of this brief ‘historicisation of the present’ is not to present this study as a historical work, but rather to acknowledge the importance of socio-historical factors in influencing the current lives of participants in the research context.

here, as the analyses conducted by these historians addresses the social justice focus of this research, and raise socio-historical positions that are of relevance to the research context and participants. Accordingly, specific thematic histories of the present, namely surrounding practices of child marriage, missing children, slavery, child labour, violence against women, exclusion, corruption, education and the impacts of economic rationalism on poverty and inequality are sought here to seek out the “otherwise”, in order to tactically challenge relations of power, and thereby question how power operates to oppress and transform (Mac Naughton, 2005). In doing so, the silenced and “othered” histories and the current experiences of women, children, families and communities on the street are brought forward⁶⁶.

The following section addresses the events and effects of colonisation, independence and the modern republic of India. In recognition that the discipline of history is not separate from politics, culture, religion or society, Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) ecological systems theory is used to draw out the overlapping links and effects of the past (chrono-system) across contextual levels (micro, meso, exo, macro) in the present.

5.3.1 Colonisation

Mac Naughton (2005) has defined colonisation as “the history of exploitation of people and their physical (e.g. mineral and natural) resources by ‘invaders’” (p. 152). The

⁶⁶ Notably, as it is not possible to reference some “other” forms of history (such as certain oral histories, or histories documented in languages other than English) – it is recognised that this historical reproduction is itself operating within the frames of privilege and reference afforded by English thinkers, writers and the English language. In light of this, critical emphasis on English-literate Indian writers, advocates and pedagogues, such as Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1832), Mohandas Karamchand (‘Mahatma’) Gandhi (1869-1948), Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) and others who fought alongside oppressed groups, are highlighted through the chapter.

diversity and plethora of opium, textiles, “pearls, diamonds, perfumes, rose-essences, elephants [and] lions” (Hegel, as cited in Stein, 1998, p. 15) prevalent in India, had long portrayed it as an inviting prospect for traders and conquerors alike. Embattled Sultans, Princes and later the Mughal Emperors held vast territorial kingdoms⁶⁷ which were open to trade practices (for example, with the Roman Empire) (Thorley, 1969), long before the “discovery” of India by the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama in 1498 (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2002). Portuguese arrival opened up more prosperous opportunities for trade, as “local rulers along the coast were willing enough to come to agreements which provided their territories with revenue and did not seem to impact upon their powers” (Stein, 1998, p. 204). Several settlements sprung up from this initial “discovery”, and it was not long before the Portuguese colonised parts of India, claiming it as ‘Estado da Índia’⁶⁸ (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004).

⁶⁷ At one time or another, the territories of India covered whole or parts of modern day India as well as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bengal, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2002).

⁶⁸ Estado da Índia, formally known as Estado da Índia Portuguesa, or Portuguese India, was the first part of India to be colonised but the last to be a part of Independent India. Even after India’s Independence from the British in 1947, the Portuguese refused to relinquish control of their Indian ‘possessions’, and it was by force that the final colony of Goa was taken by the Indian government in 1961 (Stein, 1998).

In 1534, the Portuguese overtook the islands of Bombay⁶⁹ from the Sultan of Gujarat (Kale & Joshi, 2012). The islands offered the Portuguese a strategic naval advantage as well as some natural protection from inland attacks (Bryant, 2013). As Portuguese trade was a royal endeavour, it was sanctioned by the Papal authority in Rome and gave Portugal the monopoly to “invade, conquer, subject and rule [the] territories of the unbelievers” (Neil, as cited in Csordas & Kurian, 2015, p. 80). Accordingly, Portuguese conquests were accompanied by the promotion of Jesuit and Catholic Christianity⁷⁰, and policies forwarding the marriage of sailors to local Indian women (Stein, 1998). Several churches were subsequently built throughout Portuguese colonies, thereby offering ideologies and values based on Europeanised Christianity to ‘unbelievers’ via the provision of education, health and social welfare services (Braganza & Mukherji, 2013). Csordas and Kurian (2015) suggest that the process of conversion was a belligerent endeavour, with the Portuguese “‘enticing’ it’s converts with promises of trust and profit... [and] with more aggressive tactics of destruction of Hindu temples and redirecting temples’ revenues to mission activities with the promise of establishing for the locals a confraternity and a college” (Csordas & Kurian, 2015, pp. 80-81). Bauman (2013)

⁶⁹ Bombay, or present day Mumbai, was a group of seven islands (now one land mass after the islands were merged on reclaimed land in 1845) (Stein, 1998) that held strategic geographical advantage on the west coast of India. Known by the Portuguese as Bombain (translating to ‘Good Bay’) (Pacione, 2006), the British took on the name ‘Bombay’ when it was given to King Charles II as part of the dowry of his bride, Catharine of Braganza (Cadell, 1958). The King, in turn, gave Bombay to the British East India Company in exchange for a large loan (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). In 1996, the city was renamed from Bombay to Mumbai, as the leading government party of the time sought to change the ideology and structure (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004) left behind from the British legacy (Bhagat & Jones, 2013). For the purpose of accuracy, the official titles of both ‘Bombay’ and ‘Mumbai’ are used in this chapter, Bombay is used when referring to the site, up until 1996, and Mumbai is used to refer to the period thereafter.

⁷⁰ Syrian Christians, or Christian followers of Thomas the Apostle (who arrived in India sometime during 1AD), were already a part of the South Indian community by the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 (Haynes, 2014). The Syrian Christians held high status in their communities during the 6th century, but as the arrival of the Portuguese sought to ‘Europeanise’ their Christianity. This had several effects on this group’s social standing and their later exposure to religious conflict (Bauman, 2013).

indicates that Francis Xavier “oversaw the first mass infusion of lower-caste Hindus into the Christian fold” (Bauman, 2013, p. 636) (the residual impacts of conversion to Christianity are discussed under section 5.4.2). The Portuguese reign over Bombay lasted until 1661, at which point it was offered to King Charles II as part of the dowry of his Portuguese bride, Catharine of Braganza (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004; Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006).

By the turn of the sixteenth century, Portuguese dominance in India declined whilst British, Dutch and French powers began to rise under the British East India Company, est. 1600; the Dutch East India Company, est. 1602, and later the French East India Company, est. 1664 (Stein, 1998). During the same period, India, under the auspices of the Mughal Empire was already operating within a complex hierarchical administration and its own socio-political and economic system (Lange, Mahoney, & vom Hau, 2006). It was the “most powerful empire the sub-continent had ever known” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 1), and as such was not, at the time, prey to conquest, but rather to trade. Under the reign of Mughal Emperors, the empire faced expansion in terms of agriculture, commercial networks, technological changes and the founding of political and religious institutions – all of which provided a strong basis for the British era of colonialism (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). The socio-political and economic Mughal systems require some consideration, as the long-term effects of these systems upon inequality, and later capitalism, privatisation and marketization, are salient (Torri, 2014).

The Mughals developed a centralised economic system for revenue and tax collection, in which nobles⁷¹ were awarded ranks, and appointed to positions within two dual hierarchies, one devoted to civil responsibilities and the other to the military (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). As part of their duties, the ruling elites were assigned to collect taxes from the sub-elites, the chieftains or landholders, who in turn pocketed it from the peasant agricultural cultivators of the land (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004). Stein (1998) suggests that these early signs of hierarchical economic rationalism had pertinent effects on inequality as “well over half of the output from the fields in his [the Emperor’s] realm, after the costs of production had been met, is estimated to have been taken from the peasant producers by way of official taxes and unofficial exactions. Moreover, payments were exacted in money, and this required a well regulated silver currency” (Stein, 1998, p. 169). These exactions, alongside the rampant trades already undertaken by the East India Companies, forced peasants to compete in larger economies with laissez faire markets whilst they experienced ‘unceasing oppression’ from the Mughal system, which forced them to relinquish all surplus (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). At a later stage, a series of revolts led by landholders and supported by peasants took place, eventually contributing to the downfall of the Mughal Empire (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). However, even when the Mughal Empire fell, the unequal systems it had created survived to be later reinforced by the British. These hierarchies “bred the habits of domination and dependence which still prevail among us in the form of paternalistic approaches to problems” (Freire, 1973, p. 22), such as those experienced by street populations.

⁷¹ The Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) “embraced and then built on the Sultanate policy of a diverse and inclusive ruling elite. He sought to incorporate powerful indigenous lineages... The diverse Mughal ruling elites comprised not only differing strands from central Asia, but Persians... some Arabs, as well as locally born Muslims, Rajputs, together with a few Brahmins and later, Marathas” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, pp. 16-17).

In the face of this flourishing yet unequal economic climate, the “Mughals welcomed the English to offset the predominance of the Portuguese, and later of the Dutch, as did Indian merchants, who relished the opportunities afforded for profitable trade” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 45). The British East India Company was a joint-stock enterprise with a board of directors that rose to prominence during the seventeenth century as individuals could not trade on their own from such a long distance between India and Europe (Peers, 2006). Accordingly, as a business venture rather than a Papal or Crown one, the English (unlike the Portuguese) did not engage in the conversion of “unbelievers”, and prohibited Christian missionaries from coming to India until 1813 (Peers, 2006). The demand in England for indigo dye, saltpetre, Malabar pepper and textiles increased rapidly during the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Stein, 1998), bringing India deeper into the globalised market economy (Habib, 1969), and arguably, into the holds of capitalist thought (Shah, 2013) (residual impacts of this on the political and economic structures of Modern India are discussed in section 5.5).

As the Mughal Empire weakened with the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, trade grew to be evermore profitable, and the East India Companies fought amongst themselves to gain advantage through political means (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Concurrently, rivalries between Britain and France⁷² manifested in India, and French and British powers fought for supremacy using proxy Indian Princes who were concurrently

⁷² A spinoff from the War of the Austrian Succession in Europe during 1744-1748 which “inaugurated some seventy years of conflict between Britain and France” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 17).

battling each other for succession⁷³ (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004). Over time, the influence of circumstances led the British East India Company to gain the majority of territories over the French (Lal, 2003). In one particular instance, that of Bengal, British attempts to deter the French were seen by the local Nawab (prince) as an act of defiance against his authority. This led to military challenges⁷⁴, which ultimately resulted in the beginning of the British East India Company's colonial rule over the richest Indian provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. From then;

No longer able to keep up the pretence that they were mere traders, in 1765, by a treaty with the Mughal emperor, in return for an annual tribute the Company secured the *diwani*, or revenue collecting rights, for the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. Legally, this made the Company the emperor's deputy, as revenue minister, a position they retained until 1858... In form Bengal remained a Mughal province. In fact, however, it was wholly under the control of the East India Company, for neither the emperor in Delhi nor the figurehead Nawab exercised any independent authority over the region (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 53).

Henceforth, Indian society under colonial rule came to be "one whose raw material export economy was determined by an external market, whose very centre of economic

⁷³ For example, in two such territories where Indian Princes battled for succession, namely, Hyderabad and Arcot, the French and British backed opposing Princes. In Hyderabad, the French-backed Prince won, whilst in Arcot, it was the British.

⁷⁴ In 1756, the Nawab Siraj-ud-daula of Bengal marched on Calcutta, defeated the barracks and imprisoned his captives, in an attempt to re-establish his power against the British. Despite the British retaliation that followed, this act "reverberated down the years as evidence for the British of Indian cruelty and barbarism" (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 49). The British East India Company, in turn, retorted against this attack and succeeded in restoring the security of its trading privileges in Calcutta. However, to prevent any recurrence of these attacks, the colonel, Robert Clive entered into an intrigue with the Nawab's general, Mir Jafar, effectively encouraging him to sabotage and betray the Nawab with the help of his troops. In doing so, the Nawab was de-throned and the pliable Mir Jafar came to power, thereby securing Bengal, Bihar and Orissa for the Company.

decision was located abroad – a ‘reflex,’ ‘object’ society, lacking a sense of nationhood. Backward. Illiterate. Anti-dialogical. Elitist” (Freire, 1973, p. 9). Early administrators such as Robert Clive and later Warren Hastings were tasked with rooting out and managing corruption within the Indian system but did not succeed in this endeavour. Ironically, Clive took £234, 000 of the Company’s loot (Stein, 1998, p. 208) and was made Baron Clive of Plassey, and Hastings was accused (and later acquitted) of twenty charges – including those of corruption and the violation of the rights of Indians during his term as governor general. These early beginnings of institutionalised injustice and corruption led the next governor general, Lord Cornwallis to make Indian officeholders scapegoats; he restricted the administration such that only those of European British origin could hold higher-level (and therefore, higher paid) posts, declaring: “every native of Hindostan, I verily believe, is corrupt” (as cited in Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 59) (corruption in the current Indian system is discussed in section 5.5).

Whilst the British East India Company prospered through the exploitation of Indian resources, little money was re-invested back into India (T. Roy, 2014). This “drain of wealth” (Habib, 1969, p. 32) was further compounded by the Secretary of State for India, who maintained an exchange rate of 15 rupees per British sovereign, leading to a significant increase in the debts of the peasantry (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004). Borrowing Hill’s (2003) argument, it is evident that the impacts of this initial exploitation and loss of equity have had significant effects upon social justice, democracy and on systematic cultures in the present context (this is exemplified by the current prevalence of corruption in India, the debility of India’s currency against Western countries, and related issues of

inequality, access to, and investment in public services – these issues are discussed in sections 5.3.1.2.1 and 5.5).

By the late eighteenth century, the Company had passed control of India to the British parliament following the rebellion of 1857 in which civil unrest resulted from the Company's soldiers revolting against the Company (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004). Queen Victoria subsequently declared herself 'Empress of India' in the year 1877 in an official proclamation to the princes, chieftains and people of India (Stein, 1998). These colonial transitions did not support the pre-conditions necessary for democratic experiences and/or social justice (Freire, 1973). The growing neo-liberal mentalities of the elite during the period of colonisation favoured the profitability of trade and slavocratic⁷⁵ hierarchies (Freire, 1973) over the development of public entities, thus having broad scale residual impacts on social justice, the accessibility and availability of public provisions, and equity for the majority of the Indian population. Stein (1998, p. 258) writes:

Those who governed India during the later nineteenth century were certain that markets would set prices, determine supplies and distribute benefits. They were certain too that there was little for the state to do; even the provision of education was left to Indians themselves and to missionary bodies.

Thus, as British rule cemented and solidified in India, the exploitation and mining of Indian resources to private companies for profit in Britain saw exponential increases. Freire (1973, p. 11) argues that such 'mining' practices have resulted in the "excessive

⁷⁵ Slavocratic is a term used by Freire (1973) to refer to systems that preserve or advance the use of slavery.

power of a few, leading to the dehumanisation of all” alongside individualistic rather than collective rationalities and governances that does not prioritise equity, participation, inclusion or social justice.

5.3.1.1 Ideology.

Several undercurrent changes accompanied the physical and structural vicissitudes of colonisation. Principally, gradual shifts in ideology privileged ‘British’ thoughts (about race, class, gender, class, caste) and manners – thereby “othering” Indian identity, culture, language and religions. The supremacy of British assertions was reinforced by views of those in power such as that of Lord Macaulay (a law member on the governor general’s council), who argued that “one shelf in a Western library would contain more valuable knowledge than all the literature and wisdom of the Orient put together” (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004, p. 254). This sparked the ideology of social assimilation as Macaulay (amongst others) suggested that Indians receive an education that would make them “gentlemen”, and therefore, replicas of their British rulers (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004). Subsequently, this ideological perception influenced changes to the civil and criminal jurisdictions and educational practices. As Tuhiwai Smith (1999) satirically notes, “even places such as India, China and Japan... which were very literate cultures prior to their ‘discovery’ by the West, were invoked through other categories which defined them as uncultured” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, pp. 31-32). This historical moment prefaces the assimilation and internalisation of the dominance of colonised ways of thinking, being and doing, remnants of which are evident in regimes of truth that privilege English literacy and fluency in the current Indian context. Research indicates that the attendance at English medium schools in the Indian context is a marker of caste and class privilege, which has

significant social and economic implications for the life chances of students that do (and do not) attend these settings. Recent economic research indicates that English fluency significantly increases hourly wages for males (Azam, Chin, & Prakash, 2013). This has several implications for social justice, social mobility and equality in the context of the current study, given that, in Mumbai, where this research was conducted, English-medium schools tend to be private, fee-paying institutions (Juneja, 2001). As such, the lack of access to these schools for those that are the most marginalised (such as street children) highlights the manner in which the twin effects of privatised education and colonialism, operate as forms of social control, that discreetly discriminate, silence and paternalistically dominate over the “other” and the oppressed. Thus, the long-term effects of colonial ideologies can be traced to the privileged status offered to English – and the exponentially better opportunities in terms of education, employability and prestige that the dominance of this language offers to Indians (Azam et al., 2013) (see also section 5.7 for information on education systems). More direct forms of social control, that is, through the civil and criminal justice systems are subsequently discussed.

5.3.1.2 Civil and criminal justice system.

As the slow colonisation of the British over India spread, India faced changes to its systematic operations. British officers were appointed as magistrates across Indian territories and were responsible for decisions with little or no legal training or knowledge of the intricacies of Indian customs (such as the Hindu law of inheritance). Thus, the system of civil jurisdiction, which was based on the “continuous mediation between ancient rules and changing reality” (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004, p. 248) changed as the British codified (and therefore rigidified) existing laws, and further brought in Western

legal procedures (such as service notices to defendants) (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004).

These systematic changes further “helped to strengthen the foundations of British rule and it [also] contributed to state finance, because the court fees were quite high” (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004, p. 248). Notably, British legislation also resulted in positive improvements in the more humanising treatment of women in the Indian context (see section 5.3.1.2.2).

These large-scale ideological and practical changes to the justice system had particular impacts on several issues, including (but not limited to) the exclusion, killing, and ill treatment of widows, slavery, child marriage and child trafficking. As these issues are particularly relevant to the current situation of women and children, two of these themes (namely widow treatment and slavery) are discussed below in an effort to ‘re-meet’ histories of the present (issues pertaining to child marriage and child trafficking are discussed in section 5.6).

5.3.1.2.1 Slavery.

Slavery in India is a multi-faceted and socio-historically embedded phenomenon that has its many diverse social origins in ancient and medieval times (Avari, 2013), long before the arrival of the British. By the time the British landed to inherit this “immemorial antiquity” (Stein, 1998), slavery was commonplace and cut across relations of caste, gender and religion (Major, 2012). There were several varied types of slavery in existence at the time – amongst these were: prisoners of war, bondage from debt, non-payment of taxes, ‘bought’ and ‘given’ slaves, ancestrally ‘inherited’ slaves and persons enslaved for punishment (Stein, 1998). Slaves were diversely trained and performed many roles, such as

cooking, bricklaying, seaming, dying, scribing and more - thereby providing economic benefits and entertainment to their masters⁷⁶. Although the British did not introduce slavery to India (as had been the case in the Americas and elsewhere), slavery was controversially perpetuated in the interests of British and Indian elites, as well as Company rule and profit (Stein, 1998). As Major (2012, p. 43) notes:

Eighteenth century Europeans, including some Britons, were involved in buying, selling and exporting Indian slaves, transferring them around the subcontinent or to European slave colonies across the globe. Moreover, many eighteenth century European households in India included domestic slaves, with the owners' right of property over them being upheld in law. Thus, although both colonial observers and subsequent historians usually represent South Asian slavery as an indigenous institution, with which the British were only concerned as colonial reforms, until the end of the eighteenth century Europeans were deeply implicated in both slave-holding and slave-trading in the region.

The opportunity to legally curb slavery arose with the *Emancipation Act of 1833* (Stein, 1998), which advocated the abolishment of slavery across all British colonies. Although this act was made effective elsewhere, it was opposed in India on the grounds of economic hardship as well as customary practice – it was argued that slavery was an “indigenous, religiously sanctioned and unoppressive institution, too tied up with exotic forms of Indian sociability and domesticity to be interrupted by the best-intentioned of

⁷⁶ It is noteworthy that gender played a significant factor in what roles were assigned to male and female slaves. Whilst adult males could sell themselves for slavery in exchange for food and security, females (as property of males) were sold such that the profit of the slave went from the new owner to the old (N. Chatterjee, 2014).

British reformers” (N. Chatterjee, 2014, p. 583). N. Chatterjee (2014) and Major (2012) argue that this policy of non-interference conveniently satisfied economic and moral conditions, thereby constructing India as a fount of free and ethical labour.

The existence of slavery in contemporary Indian society is marked by this dual exploitation and dehumanisation. As the agricultural or domestic contexts in which slaves worked saw little intervention from authorities, masters were free to rule tyrannically. Stein (1998) remarks that slavery in the domestic context was a relationship alike those of quasi-kinship, as all the wives, children, and slaves were held under the control of the master, to different degrees, means and ends. Thus, the paternalistic, predatory and dependent nature of domination faced by the oppressed fostered a lack of participation and a survival based on cultures of silence, anti-dialogue, submission and obedience (Freire, 1973). Furthermore, as it was customary that descendants and offspring of slaves continued to be kept in bondage, this oppression was passed on from generation to generation (Stein, 1998).

There were some aspects of slavery that were later found to be unacceptable to English gentlemen, such as the sale of girls to dancing troupes – which were seen as unchaste and sinful – and the kidnapping of children⁷⁷ (Stein, 1998). This was further compounded during times of famine, when men would sell their wives, sisters, children, or themselves in exchange for food and security (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004; Stein, 1998). Rather than the abolishment of slavery, these instances of kidnapping and trafficking

⁷⁷ Stein (1998) reports that boatloads of children, stolen from their families would arrive down the river in Calcutta to be sold.

resulted in the sale of slaves being forbidden, unless owners could provide documentation that slaves were already in servitude (Stein, 1998).

Even though slavery was abolished in 1843, it was difficult for slaves to know of their emancipation (Major, 2012). Enforceability of such a widespread phenomenon, which also supported the economic bases of India's trade, was therefore problematic. Tracing the significance of this history to the present moment raises further concerns. Despite bonded labour and child labour now being illegal, child domestic labour in India is still a culturally accepted and prevalent phenomenon (UNICEF, 2014a). Children working in these conditions are often subjected to physical, mental and emotional abuse as well as to work in hazardous industries – such as firework factories and construction (International Labour Office, 2013). The historically elitist mentality and ideology of slavery may continue to influence norms, as children are still known to be employed by the middle-class and affluent (UNICEF, 2014a). Basic legal protections for children in these situations remain weak (US Department of Labor, 2013), as do government provisions for the conditions that contribute to children/families experiencing slavery, trafficking and sexual exploitation, such as poverty. Thus, in re-meeting history, it could be argued that these multiple overlapping factors influence the current experiences of slavocratic oppression faced by marginalised and silenced groups such as street children and child slaves. A. Kohli (2012) suggests that one of the elements contributing to poverty in India has stemmed from the inequality of the socio-historical ruling alliance in India, which has prioritised economic growth at the cost of social, collective and political investments (see also section 5.5).

The US Department of Labor (2013) reports that there is limited evidence of the extent of forms of child labour such as bonded labour in gemstone cutting, quarrying stones, brick kilns, sexual exploitation, carpet weaving, forced begging and forced armed conflict. These statistics are of particular relevance to children on the street⁷⁸, who engage (voluntarily or involuntarily) in various forms of labour out of economic necessity (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013). Lack of evidence to shed light on the extent of child labour has been cited as problematic by government departments (US Department of Labor, 2013) as well as NGOs. Despite this, Ghosh (2014) reports that India has at least 12.66 million child labourers and 14.7 million enslaved workers. Further complicating and oppressing the economic situation for street children is the dehumanisation, violence and abuse that children encounter, including police abuse and the killing of street children in India (Human Rights Watch, 1996) (this is also unpacked further under section 5.9 which addresses the situation of street children in Mumbai).

Compounding issues of slavery are the intertwined issues of child trafficking and sexual exploitation (see also section 5.6.2 for child marriage). UNICEF (n.d., para 2) finds:

[The] scope of trafficking range[s] from industrial and domestic labour to forced early marriages and commercial sexual exploitation... [with] 40 per cent of women sex workers enter[ing] into prostitution before the age of 18 years. Moreover, for children who have been trafficked and rescued, opportunities for rehabilitation remain scarce and reintegration process[es] arduous.

⁷⁸ As noted in Chapter 1 (section 1.8.3), street children do not form a homogenous group – there are significant diversities and differences in the life experiences of children living or working on the street. Operational definitions for ‘street children’, ‘children on the street’ and ‘children of the street’ are canvassed in Chapter 1 under section 1.8.3. Research detailing the current situation of street children in Mumbai is discussed in section 5.9 of this chapter.

Following historical trends of stealing children from families for a profit, females and children are still affected exponentially more by the practices of child trafficking than males (Ghosh, 2014). Ghosh (2014) indicates that this is further perpetuated by the fact that females in prostitution and domestic slavery are harder to trace than males. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) further reports that one child goes missing in India every eight minutes, and that 40% of these children are never found (National Crime Records Bureau, 2013) (this is also discussed in section 5.9).

Whilst in this instance, the impact of colonisation exacerbated existing conditions of slavery, in another situation, that of the treatment of widows, British intervention had more positive effects (Stein, 1998). The affirmative actions arising from colonial rule on Sati⁷⁹ and the treatment of widows are discussed below.

5.3.1.2.2 Sati and the treatment of widows.

Whilst in the case of slavery, the British claimed the policy of non-intervention, in other areas, particularly, that of industry and economy, several reforms to practices were made to favour capitalists, particularly British ones from an early stage of colonisation

⁷⁹ The funeral ritual for Hindus involves burning the body of the deceased on a woodpile. Sati is the practice of burning widows alive with their deceased husbands. The practice of Sati is grounded in Hindu mythology's *Ramayana*, which tells the tale of Rama, the seventh avatar of the Hindu God, Vishnu. In the story, Sita, Rama's wife, is kidnapped by the villain Ravana and held in his captivity. After being rescued, Sita is made to undergo a trial by fire to prove her chastity and fidelity, or in other words, that she was not 'guilty' of being raped by Ravana. In a similar vain, Sati became symbolic in the upper castes of Hindu society, of women's fidelity and devotion to their husbands. Stein (1998) highlights the power of the internalisation of this ideology, as he notes; "what is curious is that, while the opponents of Sati pictured the widow as weak, helpless and often drugged, the advocates presented her as strong, self-willed and heroic" (Stein, 1998, p. 223).

(Major, 2012). Later, as Indian elites moved to economic and political peripheries, British morals were increasingly adopted in changing legislative policies – this, in turn, led to several oppositions from Indians, on the grounds that Indians should be able to practice religious freedoms. One of the most celebrated and humanising British reforms pertained to Sati. Sati was the practice of burning widows with their husband's during funeral cremations. Christian missionaries, educated Indians and British business travellers brought the plight of Sati to the British East India Company, asking for reforms (Stein, 1998). Advocates against Sati, such as Ram Mohun Roy, presented a range of arguments about the cruelties experienced by women – highlighting for example, the “atrocities of tying the unfortunate widow to the funeral pile to make sure she did not escape” (Roy, as cited in Stein, 1998, p. 222). Counterfactually, in a petition to Lord Bentinck against the prohibition of Sati, opponents highlighted the fact that Hindu women performed Sati “of their own accord and pleasure, and for the benefit of their Husbands’ souls and for their own” (Stein, 1998, pp. 223-224). Despite the initial Sati ban of 1829, the *Sati Prevention Act, 1829* was also later put into effect in order to further prevent this practice as cases of Sati, as a socio-cultural practice, had endured despite these legislations. Recent statistics show that the recorded number of Sati crimes has significantly decreased, with one reported case in 2011 and no reported cases in 2012 (National Crime Records Bureau, 2013), however Rangaswamy Thara, Padmavati, and Srinivasan (2004) argue that there is a need for psychological support for widows across India in order to permanently end Sati and increase the capacities and psychosocial wellbeing of widows. Historically, the treatment of widows was further evidence of the ill treatment of women – this was another point at which British intervention in policy had positive effects.

The treatment of widows during colonial and pre-colonial times was brought forward as a situation for reform as widows, including child widows, experienced physical abuse, marginalisation, social segregation⁸⁰, and were further prohibited from remarriage (Adinarayana Reddy, 2004) until the British intervention of the *Hindu Remarriage Act, 1856*⁸¹ (Forbes, 1979). The education offered to males during the period of colonisation was an impetus for the transfer of liberal thinking and consciousness to the Indian context (Stein, 1998). The ‘gentlemen’s’ education afforded to those privileged such as Roy (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004), enabled them to critique forms of social oppression experienced by women, and to use press and media in order to petition for such causes – thereby laying foundations for the role of education in proliferating social justice movements and critical consciousness. Roy, amongst others, supported female education and further sought to dismantle child/infant marriage (see also section 5.6.2) as a way of supporting the equality of women (Forbes, 1979). At the present moment, the education of female children in India is still lower than that of males (Raj, McDougal, & Rusch, 2012), with 58.5% of males in 2008-2012 participating in secondary school, compared to 48.7% for females during the same period (UNICEF, 2014b) (see also section 5.6.3 for gender educational inequality and exclusion).

Despite legal advancements, analysts report that the treatment of Indian widows remains dire (Adinarayana Reddy, 2004). Raj, Saggurti, Balaiah, and Silverman (2009) attribute this to a lack of education and to the problem of enforceability – in that, though it

⁸⁰ Segregation included physical segregation, akin to an orphanage for children, as well as Purdah, or veiling.

⁸¹ Adinarayana Reddy (2004) suggests that remarriage of widows in upper caste Indian society is still a culturally and socially prohibited phenomenon.

is permissible by law for a widow to remarry, cultural, social and religious sanctions might prevent this from being a realistic possibility. Adinarayana Reddy (2004) reports that women still face discrimination, on the basis of ritual sanctions, and that despite the lapse of time from colonial and pre-colonial eras, widows still continue to face marginalisation, abuse and social segregation within Indian communities. Forbes (1979) suggests that the generally low status of women, coupled with longstanding Hindu religious texts has contributed to this “endless misery” (Stein, 1998), as well as that of child marriage. In re-meeting history, Raj et al. (2009) and A. Roy (2005) comment on the status of women – bringing into consideration the current lack of educational opportunities offered to female children. They tie the socio-historical ill treatment of women and widows to the cultural preference for male children, female infanticide, and the practice of child marriage – citing these conditions as evidence of the oppression of women in India (these issues are further canvassed in section 5.6).

Notably, whilst certain areas saw positive reforms during the colonial era, some traditional oppressive practices remained unreformed and/or were strengthened (Stein, 1998). Freire (1973) argues that such forms of social (in)justice and inequality – be it economic, social, gendered or political – all effect the critical consciousness of populations and can encourage passivity and massification, that is, internalisation of the unfairness of the (gendered, economic, social or political) status quo. On a counter-argument, Freire (2004) later highlights how instances of resistance to social injustice aid the development of critical consciousness. The following segment describes one such instance of resistance, that is, the independence of India from the British. Highlighting the complex nature of this

resistance, alongside some of its effects, the events following independence – in the form of the partition of India – are also considered.

5.3.2 Independence and the Partition

Several overlapping historical, social, political and economic constituents set the stage for Indian independence, beginning with colonial constraints on civil society from the mid 1800s and the revolt of 1857-8⁸² (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Several inter-related factors occurring in rapid – at times overlapping – succession further contributed to the independence agenda. Amongst these happenings were World War I and II⁸³, the bubonic plague, influenza, famines⁸⁴, railway developments, calls for Indian participation in the government⁸⁵, and the surfacing of religious tensions, particularly amongst Hindu and Muslim nationals (Pandey, 2001). The cumulative effects of these events, coupled with the ill-treatment of Indians at the hands of colonisers, led to several protests⁸⁶, marches and work stoppage (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006).

⁸² In which Indian troops working for the British revolted against their masters (see Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, pp. 92-122 for more information).

⁸³ As a part of the British Empire, India was called into action during both world wars. Later advocates for nationalism used the arguments of liberalism from the war to support their own freedoms. However, India was integral to the British, who used exports to India to support their own economy.

⁸⁴ Famines occurred predominantly due to the lack of monsoon in 1896 and again in 1899. Famine was exacerbated by the agrarian instability and the “adherence to free trade principles [which] compromised the delivery of necessary aid” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 154).

⁸⁵ Amidst growing opposition against colonisation, the British declared an objective forwarding the “gradual development of self-governing institutions... as an integral part of the British Empire” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 167) – not unlike those operating in the white-settled colonies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Self-government reforms were slow to eventuate, and to appease the lack of participation of Indians in the government a diarchy system was established. The dual system allowed central powers to remain under British control, whilst leaving local legislatures to Indian ministers – thereby maintaining a paternalistic power.

⁸⁶ This led the government in some areas to introduce martial law.

Amongst these resistances was the peaceful protest in Amritsar, Punjab in 1919 – which came to be particularly salient to the cause of Independence. The paternalistic attitudes of the local garrison, Colonel Reginald Dyer – who saw the protest as a sign of childish disobedience that needed to be punished (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006) – led to the dispersion and use of illegal force. Dyer’s men opened fire upon the peaceful protesters, who were enclosed in the space of the Jallianwalla Bagh, thereby killing some 370 men, women and children, and injuring over a 1000 more. Dyer⁸⁷ was not repentant; he argued that the massacre was justified for its “moral effect” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). For the advocates of independence, the massacre became a symbol of colonial injustice. This formed the impetus for the non-cooperation movement led by Gandhi and the Indian National Congress (INC). Gandhi, a Jain-Hindu born in Gujarat, was afforded an English education, studied as a lawyer and became the voice of several critically conscious criticisms of gender identity⁸⁸, caste society, imperialism, modernisation⁸⁹ and several other areas. To Gandhi, independence “was not a simple matter of Indians replacing Britons in the seat of government. It involved a wholesale transformation of society from the bottom up” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 172).

The two non-cooperation or civil disobedience movements occurred from 1920-22 and 1930-34 and paved the way for the Indian National Congress (INC), led by Gandhi

⁸⁷ “Although the Government of India forced Dyer to resign his commission...Dyer’s reception on his return to England, where he was received like a conquering hero and awarded a purse of £30,000, undercut the effects of the censure” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 169).

⁸⁸ The non-cooperation movement stemmed from Gandhi’s assertion that whilst the British employed brute and ‘masculine’ force through colonisation, the non-cooperation movement held ‘female’ strength (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006).

⁸⁹ One of Gandhi’s most salient criticisms was that of the “Western obsession with material goods, and the culture of competition necessary to secure them” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 172) – therefore arguing against industrial development.

and later by Jawaharlal Nehru, to be a major political contender against the British (Brock, 1983). Gandhi sought solidarity amongst the people of India through these non-cooperation movements (at the same time bringing the plight of the ‘untouchables’, ‘harijans’ or ‘Dalits’ to the fore) (see also section 5.4 on religion) (Gandhi, 1954) to build an inclusive national identity. However, religious differences amongst the two principal political entities forming at the time, namely the INC and the Muslim League divided Indian interests under the form of religion. The mid-1930s saw Britain and India moving slowly to “an amicable parting of ways” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 203), however the declaration of the Second World War saw this ‘amicable parting’ dissipate. India’s resources were once again needed by the British in order to succeed in war efforts, and as a result, several crises occupied the 1940s across the country.

Wartime crisis saw a series of negotiations between Britain and India about the prospects of Independence, which later collapsed (Pandey, 2001). This led to the ‘Quit India’ movement in 1942 – which spiralled from the civil disobedience movement but unlike Gandhi’s passive approach⁹⁰, eventuated into a violent peasant rebellion that resulted in the destruction of government properties, strikes, and fights against police and troops (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004). The British in turn organised battalions, which crushed the uprising within six weeks, and kept all congress leaders in detention until the end of the war in 1945 (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Nonetheless, this resistance, alongside the earlier non-cooperation movements led by Gandhi, were major catalysts in ending

⁹⁰ Gandhi was imprisoned during the time and so could not communicate with the public, or organise the masses into a disciplined and non-violent ‘Quit India’ movement (Stein, 1998).

colonial rule and establishing India as a democracy that sought social justice through (resistant) participation, inclusion and equity for its people.

At the approach of independence, anxiety over the fate of Muslims in India led the Muslim League to advocate for an independent state (Pandey, 2001). As the war came to an end, the British entered into negotiations again with Indian leaders, which, amidst massacres and riots, eventually brought the ‘partition’ of India and the newly formed Muslim state of Pakistan (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). It was argued by the Muslim League that the only genuine road to independence for all Indians was one in which “the Muslims [were] in a free Pakistan and the Hindus in a free Hindustan” (Pandey, 2001, p. 21). In 1946, ‘Direct Action’ was taken by the Muslim League against the direction of constitutional negotiations of the time – August 16 of 1946, or ‘Direct Action Day’, saw the beginning of immense violence between Hindus and Muslims that lasted four days in Calcutta, during which several thousand people were killed, countless more displaced, beaten, injured, raped, and homes/villages destroyed (Pandey, 2001). Added to this, “many people took their own lives, or those of their family members, rather than surrendering to bondage and dishonour” (Pandey, 2001, p. 24). As the sentiment of violence spread, other groups such as the Sikhs partook or were absorbed into these situations, which, by March of 1947 engulfed much of Northern India (Pandey, 2001). Amidst this continuous and chaotic loss of life, Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, announced Independence on midnight of August 15, 1947:

Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At

the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will wake to life and freedom.

At the same time, to escape persecution, people on all sides of the partition sought to flee to communities where they would be safe, that is, Muslims to Pakistan, and Hindus and Sikhs to India (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). The borders, therefore, saw the most bloodshed:

Trains carrying refugees across the border were especially tempting targets for all sides... these trains would be ambushed or derailed, and the hapless passengers murdered as they sat in their compartments or after being tossed out on to the tracks. Frequently trains would arrive at their destinations carrying on board hundreds of dead bodies... for those who survived, fear generated a widespread perception that one could be safe only among the members of one's own community (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 221).

In defiance against the partition, Nehru and the INC maintained that India was a secular state, such that Muslims (many of whom remained behind after partition), along with all other minorities were equal to their Hindu fellow citizens (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). As a result of the partition, some 12.5 million people were divided, uprooted and/or made to be refugees (Brock, 1983). The residues of these religious divisions have seen several tensions between India and Pakistan, as well as within India amongst Hindus and Muslims. This has manifested in various forms over the years (some of these manifestations which are particularly relevant to the research context, such as the Bombay riots in 1992-3, the Mumbai attacks in 2008, and the Mumbai bombings in 2011, are

discussed in section 5.4.4). In “re-meeting” history, it could be argued that some of India’s current religious tensions stem from this mass conflict and displacement from 1946-7.

After independence, India declared itself the legitimate successor of the British Raj, and transferred the structures of the state, civil and military services to the Indian government – thereby forming the basis for the systems of the modern republic of India (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006).

5.3.3 Modern Republic of India

The modern republic of India was, by the 1990s, one of the world’s largest democracies with a population growing to a billion people by the beginning of the millennium (Chandra, 2014). Despite being rife with corruption and bribery (or perhaps because of it), India’s political system was large and lively (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Economic liberalism had driven the growth of the urban middle class, whilst simultaneously, a third or more of India’s population, both rural and urban, lived in poverty, prompting Amartya Sen (as cited in Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 286), in 1997, to note:

After 50 years of independence, half the adults in India are illiterate (indeed more than two thirds of the adult women cannot read or write). Indian reformist leaders... have failed to acknowledge the role of widespread literacy and numeracy and other forms of social achievement... which permit a shared and participatory process of economic expansion. India has not had difficulty in raising its overall rate of economic growth by removing constraints and restrictions and by making

use of opportunities of trade... but a large part of Indian society remains excluded from the range of economic opportunities.

The post-independence government of India sought to bring about an end to poverty through technological advancement and through a socialist agenda (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). However, faced by several restrictions – such as an inefficient state sector, import restrictions, residues of a colonial economy and the age-old hierarchies – the government was limited in its ability to achieve its socialist goals (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Instead, propelled by increasing globalisation, capitalism and liberalism, the perpetual exposure of consumer-oriented lifestyles through an ever-present media saw the juxtaposition of wealthier classes against the deprivation faced by the economically and socio-politically oppressed. This environment sparked several class conflicts, which highlighted the inequality endured by several marginalised groups, thereby opening up political spaces for people's participation and resistance to the socio-political violence of inequality.

Similarly, in an effort to reverse the caste based inequality, discrimination and exclusion faced by the Dalits (see section 5.4 on religion), the post-independence government introduced positive discrimination policies in the 1950s (Ovichegan, 2015). The 'Dalits' are comprised of two main groups, namely, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Lamsal, 2012). These positive discrimination policies led to a quota system in which 15% of university places are reserved for Dalit students and faculty members in all universities across India (Ovichegan, 2014). Moreover, Metcalf and Metcalf (2006) and Thapar (2005) suggest that other disadvantaged groups, such as those belonging to the

‘Other Backward Classes’ (OBC), have further sought the preference offered to the Dalits in an effort to negate their inequities. However, Ovichegan (2014, p. 360) reports that the “quota system has not been fully applied, and it remains a highly contested piece of policy” as caste hierarchies within universities continue to limit the meaningful participation of Dalits. The applicability of this policy to higher education (and the lack of applicability to the private sector) (Heyer & Jayal, 2009), coupled with the lack of policies supporting oppressed classes in the early years, primary or secondary education is noteworthy, given that research indicates the importance of the earlier years of schooling in setting up the foundations for university entry (Heyer & Jayal, 2009). The lack of policy and provisional support offered to Dalits prior to university entry raises macro-level questions about the tokenistic nature of such affirmative action policies and, in the micro context, highlights the influence of such policies on students’ abilities to cope and to achieve success in higher education. This has salient impacts for the context of the current study, as the majority of child participants belong to OBCs.

In addition to caste inequality, class inequality faced by the rural populations of India also came to the fore during the 1990s. Agricultural productivity during this time was desolated by drought and economically liberal policies, which led to a lack of credit and attention to irrigation and infrastructure (Shah, 2013). The countryside thus saw widespread suicide by farmers, which prompted the beginnings of a safety net, weaved under India’s impoverished masses (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). In re-meeting history, these rural conditions have had significant influences upon urban populations and structures, as many individuals and families living in rural populations flock to urban centres in search of employment, and subsequently live in slums or on the streets (UNICEF, 2006).

On the richer side of the divide imposed by economic liberalism, technological advancements in the country have brought about opportunities in the global software industry and in outsourcing, alongside other profitable productions from Bollywood (discussed in section 5.8) and spiritual tourism. According to Ganguly and Mukherji (2011), modern India has seen rapid increases in GDP and the Indian market has continued to gain prominence over the last decade, despite the global financial crisis of 2008/9. However Metcalf and Metcalf (2006) report that alongside these developments, parts of the country faced several internal socio-political contradictions, financial, cultural and religious struggles – the interconnected effects of which are discussed in the subsequent section on religion.

5.4 Religion

Religion forms a large part of the interconnected foundations of Indian culture, socio-political violence, history and education. India is the home and birthplace of several religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism. At 80.5%, the majority of India's population are Hindus, followed by 13.4% of Muslims, and 2.3% of Christians (Census of India, 2011b). For the purposes of contextualisation, a brief overview of Hinduism is followed by an explanation of the caste system (Bayly, 1999). Subsequently, following a brief overview describing the current situation of Muslims and Christians in India, a short review of religious riots and terrorism, specifically in Mumbai is conducted in order to highlight the overlapping socio-political and historical issues of violence for children and families on the street.

5.4.1. Hinduism and the Caste System

Hinduism involves a range of customs, traditions and ideologies that emerge from sacred literature, named the Veda (Flood, 1996). Hindu principles and philosophies include the belief in reincarnation, karma (that is the law that all effects have consequences) and dharma (righteousness). Hindus celebrate a diverse range of rituals, which recognise different deities, under a supreme God (Flood, 1996).

Broadly speaking, the caste system is a hierarchical form of social stratification. Bayly (1999) suggests that caste incorporates a notion of attachment, in which kinship groups or common descendants are used to formulate groupings. A. K. Singh (2014) indicates that the caste system emerged in order to support an interdependent civilisation – in which, the four primary groups, namely: priests, warriors, merchants, labourers and artisans – would work together to support order and governance. As the social roles formed, people were increasingly divided according to occupation and economic place in society (A. K. Singh, 2014) as well as birth group (Bayly, 1999). At the top of the hierarchy were the Brahmins, who are spiritual guides, teachers and creators of law, followed by the Kshatriyas, that is, the rulers and warriors, then the Vaishyas, who engaged in commercial livelihoods with producers and wealth-creators, and lastly, the Shudras, or the ‘servile toilers’, below which exist the Dalits or ‘untouchables’ (Bayly, 1999).

The existence of caste, in the history of India, as well as during modern times, affects social rules and customs, such as arranged marriages, and the preference for inter-caste marriages. The caste system is also seen to affect poverty (Rao, 2010), inequality,

social exclusion (Ovichegan, 2015), stigma (Gandhi, 1954), social injustice (Ovichegan, 2015) and overlapping access to resources such as health, segregated education, power and prestige (Thapliyal, 2015b). Although discrimination on the basis of caste is illegal in India, reports confirm that such discrimination still pervades (Vaid, 2012). Ovichegan (2014) confirms that Dalits, who comprise 16.2% of the population of India are one of the most disadvantaged groups in terms of human development. Notably, Dalit is not a class term but a caste term – however Vaid (2012) has argued that the interconnected nature of social, cultural and occupational elements tightens the links between caste and class (Vaid, 2012). On some occasions, the inequities and social stigma experienced by lower-caste Hindus has led to the conversion of Hindus to the Christian faith, with several implications – Christianity and the persecution of Christians is discussed below.

5.4.2 Christianity in India

Despite being the third largest religion in India, only 2.3% of Indians are Christian (Census of India, 2011b). As noted previously, the ‘Syrian Christians’ integrated into India after 1AD (Bauman, 2013), however Europeanised Christianity, which was introduced by the Portuguese and later, the Dutch, Danish, Scottish and British missionaries (Lobo, 2002), remained distinct from the earlier integrated Christianity of the Syro-Malabar and the Syro-Malankara rite St Thomas Christians, who have been in India for approximately 2000 years (Lobo, 2002). Accordingly, the majority of Christians in India now are either Catholic or Protestant (Lobo, 2002). Bauman (2013) also finds that for those in the lower castes, Christianity appears as an escape from the social stigma and disadvantage of caste. This has been cited as one of the causes of the religious persecution of Christians in India, as Melanchthon (2002, p. 103) explains, “part of the animosity towards Christians, then, is

due to the fact that many Christian schools have been built to educate the masses thereby upsetting the existing caste system.” Historically reflecting on the political agenda of early Christian education, Kumar (2005) writes that colonial and Christian ideas alongside English-medium education have offered both an avenue for critical consciousness, as well as an impetus for “othering” one’s Indian identity. This is particularly evident from the words of Bonnerjee (the first president of the INC), who in 1865, wrote from England in a letter to his uncle: “I have discarded all ideas of caste, I have come to hate all the demoralising practices of our countrymen and I write this letter, an entirely altered man” (as cited in Kumar, 2005, p. 37). Kumar (2005) suggests that the possibilities for critical consciousness emerging from English-medium education remain relevant, particularly for oppressed groups. However, given the lack of access afforded to English-medium schooling, and the Christian undertones of religious English schools, Kumar (2005) also raises the importance of unpacking the political agenda of religious and educational sites⁹¹.

Hindu-Indians have also argued that missionaries and Christian institutions such as schools inculcate Western values of individualism – which are seen as ‘anti-national’ (Melanchthon, 2002). Such perspectives have been tied to the persecution of Christians in India. Several acts of violence have precipitated in the persecution of Christian minorities in states across India. In particular, the state of Gujarat, ruled by the Bharatiya Janata (Indian People’s) Party (BJP), has seen the persecution of both Christian and Muslim minorities (discussed under section 5.4.4), with minorities experiencing “insults, arson, loot, rape and assault on women, and even killing[s]” (Lobo, 2002, p. 115). Lobo (2002)

⁹¹ Mumbai currently has a particularly strong Christian community and several affiliated educational institutions such as St Xavier’s College, Wilson College and Sophia College (Fernando & Gispert-Sauch, 2004).

and Melanchthon (2002) highlight the nature of these attacks as well as the treatment or lack of involvement of government authorities, police and others organisations. Lobo (2002, p. 119) reports, “the position taken by the state is undoubtedly anti-minorities. It has downplayed the violence and arson. It counted the loss in terms of money and not the unquantifiable damage and desecration of sacred space, time, persona, symbols, and signs of the minorities.” Foucault (2002) suggests that such overt and covert exclusionary tactics reinforce the dominance of assimilation, which Freire (1973) adds, causes the violent dehumanisation of all.

5.4.3 Muslims in India

Currently comprising 13.4% of the Indian population (Census of India, 2011b), Muslims have been present in India from its earliest histories. During the colonial era, “when the first censuses were taken in the late nineteenth century, the Muslim population of British India was roughly one-quarter of the whole” (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 7). Notably, whilst the majority of India’s population has remained Hindu, the Emperors of the Mughal Empire were of the Muslim faith (Kulke & Rothermund, 2004) – whilst the princes of the empire’s territories were of a range of Muslim and Hindu faiths. Accordingly, at different times, the Mughal Emperor’s policies on Hindus varied, with the last Emperor, Aurangzeb, re-imposing a poll tax (*jizya*) on Hindu populations that had been previously discontinued. Evidenced by the Mughal, and later histories, such as those accompanying the partition, it is apparent that religious tensions and political intents have been precariously tied within the Indian context.

The experiences of these minorities are of significance as much of the recent history of modern India has been attached to religious and symbolic violence (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Accordingly, particularly salient instances of religious riots, terrorism and in particular their residual effects on children and families living on the street in Mumbai is considered in the following section – this is particularly salient in recognising the construction of social justice and critical consciousness in the research context.

5.4.4 Religious Riots and Terrorism

Religious and caste riots occupied much of the 1990s, as well as parts of the two proceeding decades. In 1992, several conditions – including class conflict, economic competition, unemployment, population density and changing political discourse – aggravated by the destruction of a 16th century mosque, led to the ‘Bombay riots’ (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). Nearly a thousand people – the majority of whom were Muslim – were killed during these riots (Srikrishna, 1998). Barnard-Wills and Moore (2010) report that thousands were injured and 150 000 people were displaced. The reigniting of Hindu and Muslim tensions brought the issue of religious pluralism in India to the fore, with nationalist parties such as the BJP and others gaining increasing momentum on the political stage in forwarding a Hindu state.

In 2002, similar communal violence followed after a railway carriage fire in Godhra, Gujarat. The incident resulted in Hindu ‘retaliations’ (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006), targeting Muslims in Gujarat. Metcalf and Metcalf (2006) speculate that the lack of government intervention in this case was due to the nationalist undercurrents of the BJP, the leading party of Gujarat at the time:

The Gujarat state government, far from seeking to contain Hindu ‘reprisals’, tactically connived at the ensuing violence. For three days the police stood idly by as Hindu mobs, led by VHP and BJP activists... pulled [Muslim] owners outside, killed the man and raped and killed the women, and then set the buildings afire... the state’s BJP government⁹² paid no price for its complicity in these events (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006, p. 299).

This case highlights the several interconnected and overlapping struggles and conflicts of religion, socio-historical residues of religious violence, the role of the police and government – and whose interests are served. At the end of these events, Muslims were blamed for starting the fire on the carriage of the railway, and the state government was exonerated from all responsibility (Metcalf & Metcalf, 2006). The rhythmic wave of religious violence has continued to flow in Mumbai as well through three other significant events, namely the attacks in Mumbai in 2006, 2008, and 2011.

In 2006, a series of seven bombings over an eleven-minute period, occurred during rush hour on central train stations in Mumbai (Rabasa et al., 2009). The bombings resulted in 209 people being killed and over 700 injured (Barnard-Wills & Moore, 2010). The Indian government named two Pakistani-based organisations as culprits (Kronstadt, 2007). Similarly, 2008 saw a series of attacks, which lasted over a period of three days, resulting in 150 people dead and 200-300 wounded (Barnard-Wills & Moore, 2010). The terrorists

⁹² The state was then under the leadership of Narendra Modi, who is now the Prime Minister of India. Modi has been praised for these economic policies, which have resulted in a high rate of economic growth. However, he has been criticised for inattention to human development (Jaffrelot & Verniers, 2011).

attacked local and national cultural landmarks – which were crowded places, as well as prominent hotels, such as the Taj, which are linked to colonial power and a sign of India's economic wealth (Barnard-Wills & Moore, 2010). Finally, 2011 saw the most recent occurrence – in which a series of three coordinated bombs that resulted in 26 deaths and 130 injured (Subrahmanian, Mannes, Roul, & Raghavan, 2013).

Whilst these terrorist attacks reveal the broad-scale political, religious and socio-cultural strata, the residual impacts on children and families witnessing this violence from living unprotected on the streets has received little attention. Of particular relevance to this study, is that all three of the most recent Mumbai attacks have taken place in relative proximity to the research site. Researchers such as Osofsky (1999) address impacts of exposure to chronic community violence, which can result in child and parental behavioural impacts, emotional effects, developmental differences and negative coping strategies. Furthermore, the lack of government 'safety-nets' in terms of socio-emotional and psychological services available to children and families on the street, further highlights the impacts of inequality as well as the marginalisation of already peripheral groups.

Significantly, the open nature of these attacks, in crowded, public places where street children and families live and work – is particularly salient, in thinking about the meaning of social justice and critical consciousness for children and families on the streets, where recurring violence on such a scale is increasingly 'normalised' as a form of power. Moreover, the multiple layers of violence experienced by street children, such as physical violence (discussed in section 5.9.5) – from police brutality, domestic violence/abuse,

street violence, uncensored media violence, and symbolic violence – in terms of exclusion, discrimination and religious violence – hails an ever-present message in which dehumanisation is perpetuated through the subtle or direct exercises of power. Freire (1970) has indicated how such experiences can further lead to ‘sub-oppression’ in which, for example, children and adults on the street who identify with the power of oppression, engage in the further perpetuation of injustice by using violence on the street as an expression of power.

5.5 Political and Socio-economic Structures

India, with a population of over one billion, is the world’s largest democracy (Neale, 2014), however, analysts have questioned the nature of democracy in existence in India (Chandra, 2014). As Heller (2000, p. 485) notes:

Much as the robustness of India’s democratic institutions has been rightfully celebrated, the effectiveness of those institutions is increasingly in doubt. Fifty-three years of almost uninterrupted democratic rule has done little to reduce the political, social, and economic marginalisation of India’s popular classes... the increasing incidence of caste and communal violence, the criminalisation of politics, the spread of corruption, and the rise of ethni-chauvinist and communitarian parties all point to a crisis of the democratic state.

Accordingly, what follows is a brief analysis of the political and economic structures and the changes that have affected (and continue to affect) these institutions’ abilities to support marginalised groups such as street children and families.

Post-independence, India adopted a political system that was much alike that of its British colonisers (Heller, 2000) – the Westminster style of government prevailed with two houses, the lower of which, called Lok Sabha, or the house of the people represents people from India's geographically and demographically diverse states. Post-independence saw confirmation of India as a democracy, with principles of free speech and free press advocated alongside a constitution that enshrined economic justice and equality. The post-independence era also saw the outlawing of untouchability, as well as the appointment of Dalit leaders. Led by Jawaharlal Nehru, the post-independent INC government of India forwarded secularism and socialism but was caught amidst the hierarchies of pre-colonial and colonial India. The INC sought to make India a closed economy but maintained some private companies that had continued to dwell in India after independence. These policies saw wide agrarian reform and state control of economy, thereby favouring the public sector over that of the private.

Over time and against the residual backdrop of the socio-economic hierarchies still present in India, these socialist reforms saw varying oppositions from those in positions of power. Following the interlude of several years and incidents – such as conflicts with China, Pakistan, various Maoist revolution struggles, the continuous entrenchment of corruption, bribery and tax evasion – the period of 1975-1990 saw the promotion of private enterprise within a closed economy, and by 1984, India was opened to the world capitalist system and private enterprise.

Significantly, although India is one of the world's largest and fastest growing economies (Ganguly & Mukherji, 2011), increasingly, research on the distribution of

wealth in the country problematize the democratic nature of the political economy. With a GDP of \$1.877 trillion⁹³ (World Bank, 2015b), the OECD highlights that there is limited information on government expenditure (OECD, 2014). Available data indicates that in 2011, 1.1% of the GDP was spent on the public health sector, whilst at the same time, 2.8% of the GDP was input into the private health sector (OECD, 2014). This discrepancy highlights the reversal of government expenditure on the public sector, and the widening gap of inaccessibility for those in situations of poverty (Patnaik & Shah, 2014). The increasing poverty in the countryside has also seen mass migration of families and children to urban centres for employment (de Haan, 1997). Significantly, the economic conditions, fuelled by privatisation, have limited the capacity of marginalised groups to participate fully, meaningfully or effectively within the political system (Heller, 2000). In turn, the lack of government provisions for street children and families has rendered the ‘business’ of NGOs and civil societies to work within an increasingly growing niche (Heller, 2000). However, Heller (2000) suggests the coverage of NGO services is inconsistent and further problematic in terms of providing widespread accessibility as it is dependent on the availability of funding.

Heller (2000) indicates that the failure of the state in providing basic services and increasing privatisation has seen the criminalisation of political structures – with widespread corruption and bribery further disturbing public infrastructure, policy and development. Panchu and Rastogi (2013) suggest that corruption has become so integral an accepted practice that it is virtually a pre-requisite for the completion of everyday systematic goals. However, Gould (2015) indicates that several country-wide public and

⁹³ Amount is in US dollars (World Bank, 2015b).

policy movements against corruption have emerged in recent years, sparking slow but important changes in micro and macro practices. Nonetheless, Mitra (2013) reports that the lack of transparency and accountability in government systems has filtered out to impact on several public institutions and functions, for example, Bhushan Malik (2015) reports on the irregularity of teacher attendance at public government run schools. This, in turn, has particular impacts on the quality of education and the educational outcomes of those accessing such institutions, such as street children who often attend these services as they are offered free-of-charge.

To quell corruption, in 2005, the *Right to Information (RTI) Act* came into effect in order to provide a mechanism for accountability and to shed light on the spread of corruption and bribery in India (Garg, 2012). As noted earlier, the right to accurate information critically predicates the ability to be critically conscious, and to challenge structures of social oppression. In the case of India, subsequent to the enforcement of the RTI act, several applications were made in order to access information, and various cases of the murder of RTI advocates were simultaneously reported (Asian Centre for Human Rights, 2011). Despite these forms of ultimate censorship, S. Singh and Karn (2012) report that there is a lack of awareness and usage of the act, with little improvement afforded by this measure to the delivery of information. Other researchers remain divided on the effectiveness of the act (Bhattacharyya, 2014; Garg, 2012; Niehaus & Sukhtankar, 2013; Peisakhin, 2012; S. Singh & Karn, 2012).

The overlapping nature of political and economic structures in India has several impacts on its citizenry. The direct and indirect effects of these systems upon the

experience of social justice, particularly for marginalised groups in Indian society, is evidenced by the lack of public facilities, safety-nets, services and supports available. Pertinent to the consideration of these impacts, is the caution proposed by Heller (2000), who suggests that a democracy operating on the principles of economic liberalism – which reinforce inequities – is increasingly likely to result in a welfare state, with increased political fragmentation and criminalisation, communal violence, and a pseudo, anti-dialogic democracy. The following section focuses on the symbolic violence, discrimination and oppression prevalent in India.

5.6 Symbolic Violence and the Treatment of Women

Symbolic violence, that is, social and cultural domination occurring in the crevices of everyday ways of thinking, being and doing, focuses on subtle forms of power such as discrimination and oppression. As social justice is predicated on struggling against symbolic and physical violence, this section provides a brief overview of the interplay and effects of particular customs, policies and practices, with a thematic focus on symbolic violence experienced by women in the Indian context (symbolic/physical violence experienced by street children is addressed below in section 5.9.5). A brief overview of the situation of women is first discussed, in order to understand the nature and extent of social oppression in society. In specifically focussing on symbolic violence (discrimination and exclusion experienced), this section problematizes the effects of the social construction of female identity in India, highlighting the nature of interlocking systems of domination, at institutional, domestic and societal levels. As India's treatment of women is neither homogenous, nor singular, this section focuses particularly on the treatment of women in relation to issues affecting children and mothers/primary caregivers, such as female

infanticide, child marriage, kidnapping and abduction, and educational exclusion of females.

5.6.1 Female Infanticide

According to reported estimates by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (2007), of the 19% of the world's children, that is, 440 million children, who live in India, 40% are in need of child protection. Female infanticide is one such practice against which children in India require protection. Attributed to cultural, economic and social causes, the phenomenon of female infanticide in India is age old (Patel, 2013). The preference for males, particularly for male sons, who are seen as providers for the family, alongside the social-construction of females as of lesser worth, as liable to bring shame on the family, for example, through being victims of social violence such as rape (an issue particularly relevant to street children who live in open and public spaces), and the construction of females as being burdensome – for example, due to the practice of dowry, which although illegal, is still pervasive – have all been cited as common causes of female infanticide. Patel (2013) indicates that more than 10, 000 female children a year are victims of infanticide, however, estimates on the extent of infanticide are difficult to record, and in 2005, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recorded 108 cases⁹⁴ of infanticide, 86 cases of foeticide and 933 cases of children (male and female) left to exposure and abandonment (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2007). Poverty is a particularly significant indicator of female infanticide, however Patel (2013) notes that the prevalence of cases in educated and developed populations in India is also evident. This

⁹⁴ These figures are further complicated as birth registration in India is currently at 62% (World Bank, 2015b).

issue has received government and media attention, with policies now in place banning parents from determining the gender of an unborn child. Despite this, MacKenzie (2015) reports that technological advancements render it possible to limit female births, the result of which is six million less females born between 2001-2011 in India. Surviving infanticide, the socio-emotional and psychological treatment of female children is further circumspect to other forms of symbolic and physical violence, such as slavery (discussed in section 5.3.1.2.1) and child marriage.

5.6.2 Child Marriage

According to Indian custom, marriage is a socio-cultural bond, entered into for the allegiance of two families, rather than two persons⁹⁵. In this sense, arranged marriages – which in turn perpetuate the dowry system and reinforce caste associations – are entered into for the benefit and welfare of the whole family (Shukla, 2015). Child marriage, a practice that has been occurring in India from its early history,⁹⁶ is therefore rationalised on the basis of culture and tradition (P. Chatterjee, 2011). According to the *Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006*, child marriage is the marriage of girls under the age of 18 and boys under the age of 21 (Raj et al., 2012). The most prevalent causes of child marriage include the lack of education, constructions of females as burdensome, the custom of dowry (the younger a child is, the less is the dowry that needs to be paid by parents), the assumption that child marriage is a protector against sexual violence, and the presumption

⁹⁵ Marriage traditionally results in the female leaving her parents' home to live in the home of her husband and his family (P. Chatterjee, 2011).

⁹⁶ Sultans in the 14th century would take child brides (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2007). Forbes (1979) and A. Roy (2005) also comment on the religious rationales for child marriage, noting that there are a number of scared Hindu texts which sanction pre-pubertal marriage.

that marriage is a way to financially and socially secure a child's position and future (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2007).

P. Chatterjee (2011) reports that child marriage is a violation of children's rights, affecting children's mental health, nutrition, access to education, and experiences of violence, abuse and exploitation. Despite child marriage being outlawed by the British in 1929 (Forbes, 1979), child marriage is still a pervasive practice, with research indicating that more than 50% of currently married Indian women, were married before the legal consent age of 18 (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2007; Raj et al., 2012). For families on the street, child marriage is at times seen as a form of protection against trafficking and social violence such as rape (TISS, 2013). UNICEF (2011) reports that the harmful effects of child marriage are felt most acutely by female children, but have significantly adverse effects upon the whole of society as well:

For both girls and boys, marriage has a strong physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional impact, cutting off educational opportunities and chances of personal growth. The consequences for girls are especially dire, as they are usually compelled into early childbearing and social isolation. Child brides will frequently drop out of school and be exposed to higher risk of domestic violence and abuse, increased economic dependence, denial of decision-making power, inequality at home, which further perpetuates discrimination and low status of girls/women (UNICEF, 2011, p. 1).

The issue of child marriage is further disturbing given that research indicates that domestic violence is more prevalent in women who have been married as children

(Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2007). National Crime Records Bureau (2013) statistics shed further light on the extent of this issue by indicating the number of cases reported for issues such as dowry death (8233 cases reported) and the experience of cruelty by husbands and relatives (106, 527 cases reported). Significantly compounding this issue, is the fact that marital rape is not considered illegal, and that reported cases show that “India has the world’s largest number of sexually abused children, with a child below 16 years raped every 155th minute, a child below 10 every 13th hour and one in every 10 children sexually abused at any point of time” (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2007, p. 7).

Discrimination and victimisation of women is further repudiated through the crimes experienced by women. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (2013) these include crimes such as rape, kidnapping and abduction, “assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty” and, “insult to the modesty of women” (p. 79). The social perception of violence against women resulting in shame for women, rather than for the male perpetrators poses significant questions regarding the misogynistic status of women in Indian society. Adopting Cannella’s (2002) and Foucault’s (2002) argument, it could be argued that child marriage is a mechanism of social control and a site of power-oppression that further perpetuates hierarchical, patriarchal, paternalistic and misogynistic attitudes in society. In turn, it results in an attitude of ‘disciplining’ women and children to ‘keep them in their place’ which is effectively a place of social isolation, uneducated dependence and discrimination.

5.6.3 Educational Inequality and Exclusion

The UNDP (2013) report on human development ranks India 127 out of 152 for gender equality – highlighting the lack of reproductive health, empowerment and participation in labour market. In the early years context, research suggests that male children receive more attention and childcare, and are also breastfed by their mothers for longer periods than female children (Barcellos et al., 2014). As Azam and Kingdon (2013) show, this early differential treatment increases with age, with pro-male bias in primary school escalating as children attend middle school and secondary school – resulting in lesser female school attendance as children grow older. The research further indicates that there is a propensity for households to spend less on female children by sending them to fee-free government schools, whereas males are given the preference of attendance at fee-charging private schools – thus, the quality of educational opportunity offered to female children is lower than that of their male counterparts (Azam & Kingdon, 2013). Furthermore, as children reach secondary school, there is an increasing decision made to enrol male children, but not female children (Azam & Kingdon, 2013). Whilst the preference for pro-male bias is seen more in rural than in urban settings (Azam & Kingdon, 2013), Arora (2012) reports that although higher per capita income equates to lower gender inequality, in some high-income states, gender inequality is still significantly high. Notably, although census data indicates that the literacy rates of all persons in India have improved, there are significant discrepancies in the nature of these improvements, which arise chiefly from state-based differences in the implementation of educational policies (Census of India, 2011c). These discrepancies also extend to literacy rates between males and females (Census of India, 2011c). For example, 91.98% of females in Kerala are literate, compared to 96.02% of males in the same state, whereas in Rajasthan, 52.66% of

females are literate, compared to 80.51% for males in the same state (Census of India, 2011c). In the state of Maharashtra, where this research was conducted, 89.82% of males are literate, compared to 75.48% of females – thus posing questions about the residual impacts of patriarchy in female education, and the subsequent impacts of gender discrimination (amongst other contextual elements, see also section 5.6 on the treatment of women) upon the socio-economic mobility, equality and experiences of social justice for female children in the research context. In order to understand how the educational system plays a part in larger society, the subsequent section provides a brief overview on the educational system in India.

5.7 Educational System in India

India has the second largest education system in the world after China (Rhines Cheney et al., 2006), however equitable access to quality education remains problematic given the nature of public, private and NGO-based services in the Indian context. Rhines Cheney et al. (2006, p. 1) report that “males in India complete just 2.9 years of schooling on average, females just 1.8 years”, raising questions about the nature of education in public and private sectors. Despite this low average, there remain high levels of competition for entry into (early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education) institutions, with only 10% of the age-cohort (that is, nine million students) enrolled in higher education (Rhines Cheney et al., 2006). Notably, the socio-historically elitist nature

of educational provision⁹⁷ has meant “even today, the vast majority of students making it through middle school to high school continue to be from high-level castes and middle- to upper class families living in urban areas” (Rhines Cheney et al., 2006, pp. 1-2). In an effort to understand the complicated nature of educational provision, this section provides an overview of the educational system, with a particular focus on early childhood education and primary schooling, which are the most relevant to this research.

5.7.1 Early Childhood Provisions

According to socio-historical practice, early childhood provisions were a function of the family, with immediate and extended family members playing a pivotal role in the child rearing and development of young children (V. Kaur & Sankar, 2009). Perceptibly, school has remained a pertinent focus for government provision, as well as for public and private sector providers as - the Indian constitution highlights the importance of free education to all children between the ages of 6-14 (V. Kaur & Sankar, 2009). Increasingly however, early childhood has received a burst of attention as a valuable service for younger children, particularly from higher socio-economically advantaged families (V. Kaur & Sankar, 2009).

Traditionally, until the independence of India in 1947, the provision of childcare was at the discretion of voluntary services and private agencies that provided preschool education for children 3-6 years of age (V. Kaur & Sankar, 2009). After 1953, a Central

⁹⁷ “Traditional Hindu education was tailored to the needs of Brahmin boys... Under British rule from the 1700s until 1947, India’s education policies reinforced the pre-existing elitist tendencies, tying entrance and advancement in government services to academic education. Colonial rule contributed to the legacy of an education system geared to preserving the position of the more privileged classes. Education served as a ‘gatekeeper,’ permitting an avenue of upward mobility only to those with resources” (Cheney et al., 2006, p. 1).

Social Welfare Board was set up which began to provide grants and aid for schemes run by the voluntary sector. The long-term impacts of these policies have meant that significant equity issues arise in the accessibility of early childhood services. More than 60% of children do not attend any form of prior-to-school setting, whilst affluent families start their children in preschools as early as two years of age (V. Kaur & Sankar, 2009). The competition between affluent families for access to early childhood services is acute, with as many as 300 children competing for one opening (V. Kaur & Sankar, 2009) – increasingly, entry into “good” early childhood settings lay the foundations for children to then attend the affluent private English-medium primary schools (Prochner, 2002).

On the opposite end, as early childhood education and care services are not given governmental or funding priority⁹⁸, this has meant that lower-income families crowd children into primary school, with 9.3% of ‘underage’ children attending primary school services (V. Kaur & Sankar, 2009). Alongside private sector provision of early childhood services, NGOs further provide early childhood services – however, these are often specialised and limited to groups with certain eligibility criteria (for example, street children, rural children, Dalit children), thereby problematizing the outreach and consistency of these programs. However as Heller (2000) suggests, the NGO sector covers a large gap in the provision of early childhood services. Given that 53% of students drop out before completing primary school, the absence of prior-to-school and transition programs that lay the foundation for schooling in the Indian context, is problematic.

Provisions for primary school are discussed in the following section.

⁹⁸ Recently, government attention to early childhood has increased, with prior to school services being provided. However 96.3% of these programs are in rural areas, and only 3.7% in urban settings such as Mumbai where this research was conducted (V. Kaur & Sankar, 2009).

5.7.2 Primary School

The Indian school system follows a British structure, with primary school consisting of grades 1-5, and middle school consisting of grades 6-8, both of which are compulsory. Similar to the system of early childhood provision, education in primary school is provided by both the public and the private sector. Research by Tooley and Dixon (2006) and Kingdon (1996) reports that private school attendees significantly outperform public school students (for example, Kingdon's study showed that private school children scored 30% higher on standardised tests in mathematics). Tooley and colleagues (Tooley & Dixon, 2003, 2006; Tooley, Dixon, & Gomathi, 2007) indicate that there has been a significant increase in the enrolment of poor and marginalised groups to private institutions, and that there is a place for private institutions in meeting educational goals for all (such as the Millennium Development Goals). However, the longitudinal research completed by Woodhead et al. (2013) challenges this contention by indicating that whilst children from poorer households are increasingly enrolling in private schools, outcomes for children remain inequitable, particularly for those from marginalised backgrounds. Positively, there is near to universal enrolment at the beginning of primary school (Kingdon, 2007). However, Rhines Cheney et al. (2006, p. 4) report that the:

Quality of state-run schools ranges from top-notch to abysmal. Private schools are, on the whole, better but many of them charge high fees making them accessible only to the middle and higher class families and admissions can be highly competitive. A recent phenomenon has been the proliferation of low-cost private schools in both rural and urban India. These schools often have poorer facilities and infrastructure than the government schools, but are able to hire many more teachers

and have smaller classes and greater teaching activity because private teachers are paid much lower salaries than public school unionized teachers.

Unsurprisingly, growing privatisation has meant that 95.7% of the increase in total primary school enrolment for 1993-2002 has been in the private school sector (Kingdon, 2007). However, recent research from Härmä (2009, 2011), Kingdon (2007) and Woodhead et al. (2013) suggests that although the private sector has increased the accessibility of quality educational initiatives for a section of the population, it still remains inequitable and inaccessible to the lowest income earners. As Woodhead et al. (2013, p. 72) caution:

The risk is that recent trends result in an increasingly divisive education system in which private school ‘choices’ reinforce traditional economic, social and cultural divisions. At the same time, many government schools are becoming ‘ghettoized’ – attended mainly by those from the poorest, most disadvantaged and marginalised groups in society... which will serve to reinforce wider structural inequalities.

Further complicating educational provision, India is home to a multitude of languages (Rhines Cheney et al., 2006), with “more than a 100 ‘dominant languages’, [and] 96% of India’s population speaking 19 of these (excluding English)” (Heyer & Jayal, 2009, p. 6). Across various states, fee-free and fee-charging schools deliver education in a range of languages, for example, in the state of Maharashtra where this research was conducted, ‘consumers’ are able to ‘choose’ from a range of public and private Marathi-medium, Hindi-medium, Urdu-medium and English-medium schools (amongst others). Pai (2005, p. 1800) writes that the “Mumbai Municipal Corporation that imparts education in

eight languages⁹⁹ finds it difficult to get teachers and writers to write good and appropriate textbooks.” Significantly, research indicates that English skill and proficiency in the Indian context is a predictive of social mobility, employability and prestige, however, in Mumbai, only 3.13% of public fee-free schools teach in English (Juneja, 2001). In comparison, 92.67% of all English-medium schools are (aided or unaided) private schools (Juneja, 2001), thus English-medium schooling remains primarily a domain of the private sector, typically attended by children from higher-classes (Rhines Cheney et al., 2006). However, Pai (2005, p. 1801) notes that:

[The] Govt. of India has introduced the Three Language Formula in its educational system, which means every child has to study two more languages other than their first language. The two languages are introduced simultaneously at upper primary level. If the children are studying in English medium schools, Hindi is treated as a second language, and Marathi the third... English is the third language to all other students, and Hindi is second for Marathi medium students, and Marathi for Hindi medium students.

Notably, although access to English language learning is therefore available to all students in the state of Maharashtra when they reach upper primary, Pai (2005, p. 1801) concedes, “unfortunately the three- language formula has not been successful, mainly because these languages do not follow second language teaching methodology.” Juneja (2001) further argues that this is influenced by the quality, or perceived quality of public and private schools and their educational delivery.

⁹⁹ These eight languages include Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and English.

State-run primary schools, as Rhines Cheney et al. (2006) note, vary in the quality of their educational delivery, however, Bhushan Malik (2015) and Kingdon (2007) highlight some of the common challenges experienced by public schools. Due to the lack of prior-to-school settings available to lower-income-families, ‘underage’ children are being crowded into primary school settings, resulting in a higher teacher-to-pupil ratio within these settings. The average teacher-to-pupil ratio across the country is 1:43 (Rhines Cheney et al., 2006), whilst ‘crowded’ schools see an average ratio of 1:67 (Bhushan Malik, 2015). In an effort to improve universal access to education, the government implemented the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, or the “campaign for education for all” (Kingdon, 2007, p. 16) in 2004. This scheme seeks to improve universal access through provisions and incentives such as teacher education, increased salary, vocational training for early school leavers and more. However, despite this advent, the current lack of teacher qualifications and adequate school facilities, such as separate bathrooms for females and males, adequate drinking water, teachers’ aids, and books, further add to the attendance and learning barriers faced by children (Bhushan Malik, 2015; Kingdon, 2007). According to Freire (1998), particular marginalised groups, such as street children, further face barriers to learning due to the nature of the curriculum, which presents decontextualized, totalised, unfamiliar and superimposed ‘elitist’ realities through a curriculum that neither reflects, recognises nor values the experiences of marginalised groups – thereby perpetuating systematic exclusion, inequality and stigmatisation.

This section has focused on the systematic nature of public and private schooling, highlighting the impacts of education particularly on LAMI families. The subsequent

section provides an overview of salient situational and contextual factors in the city of Mumbai where this research was conducted.

5.8 Mumbai

In light of the overarching information provided on Indian systems, this section provides a brief overview of contextual elements focal to Mumbai, as this is where the current research was conducted. Mumbai is the most populated city in India, with 11.98 million people recorded as its inhabitants in 2001 (Census of India, 2011a). Situated on the western coast of India, Mumbai is the capital city of the state of Maharashtra, covering 437.77 square kilometres (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013) of city and surrounding suburbs. The geographical focus of this research is on the city of Mumbai, as opposed to the suburbs, as the research was conducted out of an NGO where children attended programs designed for street children aged 3-18 (see Chapter 4, section 4.8) and lived in close proximity to this service. Mumbai is under the local governance and administration of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM), formerly known as the Bombay Municipal Council (BMC) (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013). Stretched out across 24 wards, the MCGM perform several roles (see also challenges faced by street children in section 5.9.5), including caretaking of the environment, and urban governance.

Mumbai, writes Pacione (2006), is a tale of two cities in one. Mumbai is India's business and financial capital; it has the highest GDP of any city in India, is a major port for foreign trade and sees a wealth of international visitors. It is also the most unequal and diverse city in India (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013), with the

poorest distribution of wealth, religious and ethnic tensions (see section 5.4) and polarity of extremes, such that it is a ‘confusion’ of the first world and the third world in one city (Pacione, 2006). Bachan (UNICEF, 2012), writes that according to recent estimates; between 100 and 300 families arrive in Mumbai daily, in search of employment – many of whom end up in slums due to lack of economic opportunities. Over 60% of Mumbai’s population are squatters (Pacione, 2006), and one third of all households in Mumbai do not have adequate access to safe drinking water – leading to the increased prevalence of diseases and contaminations due to inadequate sewerage facilities (Pacione, 2006). Moreover, seasonal flooding due to monsoon presents further problems for families and children living on the street, and raises the prevalence of water-born diseases such as malaria (see also health-related challenges of street children in section 5.9.5). Mumbai is also home to Bollywood, which is the largest film industry in the world. Bollywood is said to be one of the reasons children run away from their homes to Mumbai (Tata Institute of Social Sciences & Action Aid India, 2013). The subsequent section discusses more specifically, the situation of street children in Mumbai, India.

5.9 Street Children in Mumbai

Narrowing the focus to the micro context, this section focuses on the conditions and experiences of street children in Mumbai, highlighting the economic, educational, physical and social situation of children on the street. Further information on the prevalence of street children, causes of living on the street, and the problems faced by street children are also addressed in this section. This section concludes with a focus on child, family and community support mechanisms available in Mumbai for street children, through the government and civil society NGOs. Notably, due to the lack of research on

street children in Mumbai, this section relies primarily on the recent large-scale census study (with 37, 059 respondents) conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Action Aid India (2013) (hereafter referred to as the Tata study for the sake of brevity), and on other available, but noticeably limited research evidence that is currently accessible (see also Chapter 4, section 4.7 for methodological considerations for research with street children).

5.9.1 Prevalence

According to the Tata study (2013), there are 37, 059 children currently living on the streets in Mumbai. 70%, that is 25, 960, of these children are male and 30%, that is 11, 099, are female. The majority of Mumbai's street children are 16-18 years old (20.83%), followed by 13-15 year olds (18.84%), 10-12 year olds (17.83%), 7-9 year olds (14.01%), 4-6 year olds (14.77%) and lastly, 0-3 year olds (13.69%). Significantly, researchers in the Tata study (2013, p. 28) note "the number of boys kept increasing across the various age groups while the number of girls kept decreasing." Additionally, the study indicates that 2.3% of street children are currently married, whilst 0.3% are widowed, 0.1% separated and 0.4% in live in relationships. Notably, 6.3% of children in the Tata study gave no response and the remaining 90.5% of children indicated that they were never married. The Tata study (2013) also indicates that the majority of street children are Hindu (58.9%), Muslim (30.6%) or did not know their religion (7%). Similarly, 41.9% of children did not know which caste they belonged to, whilst 16.5% of children were Dalits, that is, schedule caste or schedule tribe, followed by 11.4% of children from Other Backward Classes.

Following the UNICEF definitions for street children (see Chapter 1, section 1.8.3) that divide children according to children living on the street, children working on the street and families on the street, Mumbai sees all three categories. According to the Tata study (2013), the majority of street children in Mumbai are children of families living on the street (at 65.09% of all street children), followed by children who work on the street (24.44%), and children who live on the street (8.02%). The Tata study (2013) also found that majority of street children in Mumbai live near commercial areas where they have the opportunity to engage in economic activities – such as, near railways and expressways, places of worship, market places, tourist places and construction sites.

5.9.2 Causes

The causes of children living on the street are varied and diverse in nature. Aptekar (1994), Kombarakaran (2004) and the Tata study (2013) report that causes range from poverty and the prospect of finding economic opportunities in urban cities, to inadequate parenting, school failure and abandonment. The majority of children in the Tata study (2013) came to Mumbai with their family (43.7%), whilst a percentage (13.3%) came due to poverty, parental abandonment (11%), running away from home (7%), and violence or abuse in the home environment (2.5%). The minority of children cited reasons such as losing their family during a calamity (0.4%) or being kidnapped (0.1%) as reasons for being on the street. Similarly, Kombarakaran (2004) reports that children cited stressful conditions in the home environment, such as from corporal punishment, strenuous manual labour, family conflict and rejection from family members, alongside poverty as the main reasons for leaving home to come to the streets. Although the Tata study (2013) indicates that a greater number of children are abandoned than runaway, Kombakaran's (2004)

research suggests that the majority of children living on the streets without their families, are runaways, rather than children that have been abandoned. Despite this, in the study by Kombarakaran (2004), 65% of children subsequently reported a desire to return home.

5.9.3 Education

Under the constitution, it is a right of every child to have access to education from age 6-14 (Rhines Cheney et al., 2006; Thapliyal, 2012), however, according to the Tata study (2013), 24% of children over the age of 6, were illiterate. The study also found educational inequality and discrepancies between the education of female children and that of male children, with the educational status of female children being significantly below that of male children. Of the 14% of children in the 4-6 year old age cohort, 31% accessed or attended pre-school or Balwadi services. The Tata study (2013) further elucidates that 4.77% of children identified that they could read or write but did not attend a school, possibly due to the NGO run programs that conduct literacy programs in public spaces such as gardens and on street-side mats. Notably, 21.74% of children had completed schooling up until the third grade and another 20.03% until grade 8, whilst 15% of respondents gave answers that were not applicable. The Tata study (2013, p. 30) explains one possible cause for the increase in drop-out rates for children after the eighth grade:

Prior to the Right to Education Act coming into existence, Maharashtra had a programme where children up to class VIII were promoted without examinations.

The assessment criteria for promoting them to the next level were based mainly on class performance. Hence, children managed to continue education till class VIII.

Given that a more serious assessment based on examinations began after class VIII,

children tended to drop out as their foundation was weak and they found it difficult to cope with the expectations and demands of the education system.

There is a lack of data available on the type of schooling undertaken by Mumbai's street children, that is, information regarding how many children attend Marathi-medium, Hindi-medium, English-medium and other-medium public and private schools remains limited. The support of some NGOs (such as that the NGO from which this research was conducted) enables children to receive either public schooling or private schooling through payment of school fees. However, how exactly children are chosen to be put into English-medium, Hindi-medium and Marathi-medium public and private schools, from within NGOs remains at the discretion of NGO co-ordinators and leaders, and is ill documented in the research literature. This has a significant impact on the quality of education that children receive, as well as leading to diverse implications in terms of the meaning of educational grade attainment for different students. That is, the program for pushing students up without examinations has at times meant that children slip through the cracks of the system, as the lack of assessment renders it difficult to know the standard of education achieved by these students. This means that students may move, for example, from grade five to six without attaining the grade-level achievements and standards set out by the broader curriculum.

5.9.4 Economic Activity

In the Tata study (2013), 55.5% of all children reported being engaged in various forms of economic activity. The most commonly cited economic activity for children was selling flowers, newspapers, fruits and other items on the road at 11.5%, thereafter,

children indicate working in roadside stalls and repair shops (10.6%), restaurants (9%), begging (7.9%) and rag picking (5.5%). Notably, although 23.3% of children in the Tata study (2013) reported doing nothing, the researchers in the study note that, whilst it is possible that these children, (92% of which were aged 0-15), may not engage in economic activities, it may also be the case that children and/or families felt “threatened to admit that... children were working given the awareness or the fear of children being rescued from child labour and put into children’s homes” (p. 32). The Tata study (2013) also indicates that children cited economic employment through theft, sex trade, selling scraps, plumbing, ironing, basket-making, driving and cleaning cars and two wheelers. The majority of children in the study worked 1-20 hours a week (62.6%) or 41-60 hours a week (2.3%), however, 29.3% of children also gave answers categorised as not applicable – perhaps a further result of the anxiety surrounding child labour laws. Probing further into employment activities, the Tata study (2013) reports that 38.5% of children showed earning up to 1000Rs a week (approximately \$17 USD¹⁰⁰), or 1001-2000Rs (approximately \$17 to \$34 USD) a week (22.5%), with another bulk of children (32.1%) providing no response or a non-applicable response. The majority of children highlighted that their income was spent predominantly on food, making contributions to their family, and on access to public toilet and bath facilities. Other expenditures included clothing, health-related expenses, tobacco, entertainment, shelter and paying police and others.

¹⁰⁰ In 2013, when the Tata Institute and Action Aid India study was conducted, 1 Indian Rupee purchased (on average throughout the year) approximately 0.01715 of \$1USD. Thus, approximations of rupee to dollar conversions made throughout this chapter use this conversion exchange rate.

5.9.5 Challenges

Unsurprisingly, the challenges faced by street children in Mumbai are numerous. Amongst the health-related challenges, such as inadequate nutrition (Das et al., 2012; Kombarakaran, 2004), are health related issues such as substance, alcohol or tobacco abuse. The Tata study (2013) highlights that approximately 15% of street children are addicted to tobacco, alcohol or to substances such as whitener, shoe polish, and harder drugs such as heroin. Broadly, the majority of research surrounding street children in Mumbai, focuses on the challenges faced by children in terms of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances abuse (Gaidhane et al., 2008; Praveen et al., 2012; Sharma, 2009), followed by the prevalence of health-related concerns such HIV/AIDS and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (Gurumurthy, 2000; Setia et al., 2006). These studies report that there is a significant overlap in health concerns, as many substance abusers also report being physically and sexually abused (Gaidhane et al., 2008). The risk associated with these behaviours manifests in other risks and risky behaviours, which further cause challenges to children living on the street.

Psychosocial and emotional issues, such as those arising from abuse, exclusion, and displacement by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) (formerly known as the Bombay Municipal Council or the BMC) are also prevalent amongst street children in Mumbai (Kombarakaran, 2004). Research indicates that as street children are a transient population, challenges include finding adequate shelter, maintaining sanitation and healthy living conditions, and avoiding harassment or abuse from municipal authorities and the police (Kombarakaran, 2004; Rane & Shroff, 1994). Increasingly, the lack of sanitation leads to sickness such as fever, asthma, skin infections and dysentery (Kombarakaran,

2004). Problematically, Rane and Shroff (1994) indicate that children seeking medical attention came across hostile medical attendees and/or were denied access due to lack of documentation, and therefore avoided going to doctors or government hospitals unless absolutely necessary (or accompanied by an NGO or social worker). Other psychosocial and emotional fears were also highlighted – as children indicated being scared of ghosts, kidnappers and thieves who might separate them from their families, particularly at night. The kidnapping and sexual exploitation of children are also risk factors that children identified in the Tata (2013) study. Female children with younger siblings also identified the stressors of having to care for their younger siblings and indicated the limitations this posed on other areas of their lives.

Furthermore, the Tata study (2013) reports on the continuum of abuse experienced by street children from police and municipal authorities, and the ways in which these impact upon the experiences of social exclusion, fear and perceived risk to life felt by street children. Children report that the municipal councils use the *Vagrancy Act 1874* and the *Bombay Prevention of Begging Act 1959* (Mukherjee, 2008) to harass persons living on the street. The confiscation of belongings and properties by the municipal council and authorities was also reported as being a principal concern through the research (Kombarakaran, 2004). This in turn impacts on children's abilities to participate meaningfully in other areas of their life, such as schooling and work.

Physical abuse, perceived risk to life and sexual abuse were also commonly cited challenges throughout the research. Kombarakaran (2004) notes that prostitution, pick pocketing and peddling of drugs were reported as common activities undertaken by

children that were associated with various forms of sexual and physical abuse. Ganesan and Gossman (1996) and the Human Rights Watch (1996) also report on the police abuse experienced by Mumbai's street children, through which children are illegally detained, physically abused, and at times, killed. As Ganesan and Gossman (1996, p. 2) explain "several factors contribute to this phenomenon: police perceptions of street children, widespread corruption and a culture of police violence, the inadequacy and non-implementation of legal safeguards, and the level of impunity that that law enforcement officials enjoy." Ganesan and Gossman (1996) further highlight that street children are 'easy targets' for police, due to their lack of knowledge of their rights, and the lack of adults or family members available to protect them. The regime of truth surrounding corruption further plays a role in the experience of abuse by street children – as street children, who tend to carry their savings and earnings on their person, are targeted by police into giving up their money to them in order to 'escape' jail, remand homes or being taken to the police station (Ganesan & Gossman, 1996).

The interconnected nature of these concerns renders economic challenges amongst the most pervasive and influential. Research shows that exploitation of street children from employers; in terms of the quantity of work and the adequacy of remuneration are especially salient challenges experienced by street children (Rane & Shroff, 1994). Significantly, the lack of access to banks, or savings facilities, results in street children spending their earnings in order to prevent it from being stolen or exacted by the police – with children in the Tata study (2013) also indicating that theft of property or money was a salient challenge experienced. As poverty is a significant factor influencing children and families living on the street, the lack of access to banking or savings facilities can be seen

to further perpetuate children's experiences of poverty. However, several NGOs are now beginning to adopt saving and credit schemes to support children with banking initiatives (Ramalingam, 2015).

5.9.6 Support Mechanisms

In order to address the aforementioned challenges experienced by street children, some support mechanisms from government and civil society are available to street children. A. Singh and Purohit (2011) highlight that there are limited government-led public services available specifically for street children in Mumbai, or India. In 1993, the Government of India set up the "Scheme for Assistance to Street Children", under the Ministry of Welfare (A. Singh & Purohit, 2011). However, despite consultations, the scheme proved ineffective for NGO participation and the social policy was limited in its outreach. Pandey (1991) discusses the lack of specific focus on street children, whilst the Consortium for Research on Education, Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE, 2009) and V. Kaur and Sankar (2009), highlight the more broadly available services such as government hospitals, government schools, Anganwadis or community shelters, in rural areas and programs for the education of females and Dalits. Some schemes, such as the Alternative, Innovative and Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS/AIE), deliver education in urban slum settings, which children can attend, however this does not qualify as formal schooling. These diverse programs, though not focused on street children, provide educational resources, free lunch (the mid-day-meal Scheme) and scholarships throughout India. In Maharashtra, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) also works on an NGO-partnership system, in which grants in aid are provided to NGOs, some of which focus specifically on street children.

A range of NGOs focus directly or indirectly on street children in Mumbai. Rane and Shroff (1994) sub-divide these NGOs into three main categories, namely: community-based programs, night-shelter and day care shelter programs, and group homes. The Tata study (2013) highlights the specific nature of NGOs working with street children, that is, organisations specifically for sexually exploited street children, or substance abusing street children. A variety of NGOs with specific foci use multidisciplinary or more specific intervention strategies, focussing special areas, such as street children who are: females, runaways, in need of nutrition, affected with HIV/Aids, drug abusers and substance abusers. The Tata study (2013, p.14) reports that these NGOs therefore provide access to services such as “health check-ups, recreational activities, non-formal education, repatriation, midday meals, day-care centres, residential facilities, and drug detoxification” – moreover, these services provide referrals to organisations and services that cannot be provided through the NGO. Ramalingam (2015) also reports on an innovative program that supports street children through providing access to saving, credit union and other banking schemes.

Kombarakaran (2004) indicates that support provided by NGOs play a significant role in the survival of street children, with services such as night-shelters and drop-in centres providing a safe environment, as well as access to hygienic facilities for children (to bathe and use the bathroom), they also offer free food, education, shelter from bad weather during monsoon, and access to medical attention. Furthermore, the ability of NGOs to deal with government agencies in order to organise affidavits and documentation

such as ration cards¹⁰¹, Aadhar cards¹⁰² and birth certificates is an invaluable service in supporting children to gain access to resources, as well as services, such as schooling and educational institutions. The Tata study (2013) reports that NGOs focus strongly on formal or non-formal education and vocational training as a form of ‘rehabilitation’ for street children – viewing this as an entry point for the socio-economic mobility of street children. However, the Tata study (2013) suggests that whilst NGOs tend to follow strong child rights and child participation perspectives, there are still high dropout rates (where children discontinue, prior to the completion of the ‘rehabilitation’ or ‘restoration’ program) amongst children using these services (contextual information on the NGO associated with this research is overviewed in section 4.8).

5.10 Re-meeting the Complex Interplay of History, Economics, Politics and Society:

Educational Contexts, Street Children and this Research

Thus far, the research context chapter has provided a macro-level overview of historical, social, political, economic and socio-cultural nuances that have influenced and shaped India. Subsequently, an overview of exo, and meso-level policies, practices and structures influencing the lives of street children in Mumbai has been reviewed. Prefacing the interpretation of findings (see Chapter 6), this section adopts a critical lens to re-meet the influences of colonisation, patriarchy, domination and inequality in the micro context of street children in this study – focussing particularly on the educational context, practices

¹⁰¹ “A Ration Card is a document issued under an order or authority of the State Government, as per the Public Distribution System, for the purchase of essential commodities from fair price shops. State Governments issue distinctive Ration Cards to Above Poverty Line, Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya families [those who make up 10 million of the poorest families] and conduct periodical review and checking of Ration Cards” (National Informatics Centre, 2005, p. para 1).

¹⁰² The Aadhaar card is a proof of identity card issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India, on behalf of the Government of India. It has a 12-digit individual identification number and serves as a proof of identity and address across India (UIDAI, 2012).

and pedagogies that are most salient for the educational aims of this research. Thus in re-meeting historical, economic, political, socio-cultural, and socio-economic influences, this section addresses the informal and formal policies, unanticipated (policy, pedagogy, practice) outcomes, hidden structures, relationships and connections that privilege or marginalise street children in this context.

As highlighted in section 5.6 and 5.7, the economic, socio-cultural, historical and gendered nature of educational inequality faced by young children on the street, problematizes the notion of education as an equaliser in the current research context. Positivist research reports on the higher quality of education provided by private, fee-paying schools over public schools by indicating that children from fee-paying settings preform significantly better than children in public settings (Kingdon, 1996; Tooley & Dixon, 2003; Tooley et al., 2007). From a critical perspective, this shows the ways in which the Indian education system works to recycle the power afforded to certain social classes, castes and genders whilst maintaining the “myths of meritocracy and democracy” (Marshall, 1986, p. 361) as rhetoric for naturalising neoliberalism, consumerism and inequality. For example, as section 5.9.3 shows, initial access to schooling for street children is problematized by the lack of social supports, irregular policy implementation (for example in relation to right to education, child labour laws)¹⁰³, government provisions and/or documentation (such as birth certification and registration). Coupled with this, the neoliberal and capitalist nature of education systems in India market knowledge as a commodity (hooks, 1989), thereby limiting access to quality education to those who can

¹⁰³ The focus on the rights of employers as opposed to the rights of employees in this sense also highlights the neoliberal and marketised inequality in the treatment of lower classes and street children in the study.

afford private, fee-paying, English-medium schools¹⁰⁴. Given that the children in this study have limited access to fee-paying private education, the exclusion of students from quality schooling highlights the particularly marginalising, divisive and exclusionary impacts of privatisation and bureaucracy upon street children, thus problematizing the notion of education being an avenue for social justice and critical consciousness. Furthermore, as the Tata study (2013) shows, if and when access to schooling is granted, it is disrupted by the council, police and authority figures that oppress, discriminate against, abuse, mistreat and exclude children on the street.

As highlighted in section 5.9.5, the mistreatment of street children, from several public authority figures such as the police, the council and private authority figures such as employers brings to the fore the oppressive truths that have been accepted in the treatment of street children. The Indian history of slavery, coupled with the crystallisation of the Indian caste system, has shaped the perception of street children – particularly those of Dalit or OBC descent – as inherently inferior, depraved and “other”. Additionally, the internalisation of middle-and-upper-class colonised beliefs has seen the dehumanisation and criminalisation of “squatters” living and working on the street. For example, Mukherjee (2008) reports that laws from the colonial era have evolved to see the continued criminalisation of begging and vagrancy. Mukherjee (2008) argues that these unequal relations of power result in social control and legitimisation that forward the notion that the streets belong to the (elite, authoritative, privileged) public, but not those members of the public that live, beg, or work on the street. Thus, this dehumanisation and pathologising of

¹⁰⁴ Reportedly, in certain areas, families have been required to make donations to support their children’s school entry (see Field Notes, Appendix 7).

street children as criminal has seen mistreatment and abuse of street children (under the guise of maintenance of public order) to be a “normal” and accepted or taken for granted practice.

In the educational contexts, Shields (2007) argues that the internalisation of dominant discourse, (in this case, the internalisation of socio-historical constructions of street children and street life) “other” children, and focus blame on families, children (and the streets), rather than differences in values, systematic ideologies, structures and mechanisms – thus highlighting the dual importance of critical consciousness and social justice endeavours with these oppressed groups. For example, Juneja (2011, p. 35) writes, “despite the valiant efforts being made by the NGOs as well as by the Municipal Corporation, illiteracy, non-enrolment, drop-out and stagnation continue to plague the system.” In this way, issues of accessibility, school retention and efficiency are localised as being an issue within students, rather than within systems. From this perspective, education is seen as a tool to “fix” or “cure” children living on the street. hooks (1989) argues that such an education provides racist and stereotypical lenses for viewing the world (and the self) in order to conform to norms – thereby negating opportunities for students to be critically conscious.

The regulation of street children by authorities in schools and other educational contexts also raises several questions for children’s experiences and understandings social justice and critical consciousness in this study. As noted in section 5.3, socio-historically, education was an exclusive and elitist task taken on by those of the higher classes and castes (Rhines Cheney et al., 2006). Subsequently, the importation of English education

systems and structures has seen the naturalisation of colonised hierarchies privileging English-speaking, and dominant, patriarchal, neoliberal, Western, White ways of thinking, being, and doing – the impacts of which are evident in the present moment through the privileging of English-medium schooling, and the lack of educational attainment amongst females, and lower classes and castes in Indian society. Moreover, the importation of standardised tools and tests for measuring intelligence and aptitude have seen the normalisation, ranking, classification and observation of children on the basis of “objective” (decontextualized, abstract, totalising) knowledge. This dominant discourse has in turn seen the “minoritisation” of street children’s culture, life and experiences, which are invisible in curricula, content and educational resources (such as textbooks) (Shields, 2007). Educational pedagogies and praxis that use these decontextualized techniques to normalise, rank, observe, discipline and classify children therefore inevitably present “other” children (such as street children) as resistant or inferior to children who appear to fit within the conformist structures of the dominant culture¹⁰⁵.

Notably, Bénéï (2005) reports that discipline and order are highly valued ideals forwarded by schools in Maharashtra (the state in which this study took place). Bénéï (2005, p. 143) writes that discipline is seen as integral to students becoming “well-trained and disciplined citizens.” Thus, in the Indian context, “best” pedagogical praxis is seen as one in which children are “sitting at their tables and doing their homework without a word, no noise” (Bénéï, 2005, p. 144). Harber (2004) critiques such a “policing” approach to

¹⁰⁵ Shields (2007) reports that the internalisation of regimes of truths occurs at such a subconscious level that discrimination and inferior educational praxis directed at the “other” occur despite the best intentions of the teacher. hooks (1989) suggests that the intertwined nature of domination and oppression imposed by the system itself therefore require critical examination.

praxis by questioning the ways in which children can learn to be democratic citizens through silence, anti-dialogue, and uncritical obedience of authority¹⁰⁶. This raises several considerations for the current study in examining children's understandings of social justice and critical consciousness – given that children are expected to adhere to strict frames of obedience in educational contexts.

Moreover, although legal provisions (such as the Right to Education Act) have come into effect to support the education of all children (Thapliyal, 2012), Dyer (2010, p. 301) suggests that the “provision of formal education reflects institutionalised patterns of economic discrimination and status inequality.” Vijayanti and Subramanian (2014) highlight that since dominant and internalised structures and systems remain unchanged, few accommodations have been made to support the inclusion of socio-historically “other” groups such as street children, or children from lower castes. In this regard, hooks (1989) suggests that education has been used as a tool for conformity – to naturalise the implicit class-ism, racism, caste-ism, and status quo presented by curriculum, content, pedagogies and praxis. Therefore, although quotas for positive discrimination are available when students reach higher education – the effectiveness of these policies in addressing implicit racism, access and equity remain questionable¹⁰⁷ (Ovichagan, 2014, 2015).

¹⁰⁶ This strict approach to behaviour management is further complicated by obedience being a cultural marker of respect to teachers, and as differential “rules” apply for governing the behaviour of male and female children according to socially acceptable gender roles (see Chapter 7, section 7.5 for a discussion of children's behaviour in this research).

¹⁰⁷ The lack of structural and systematic provisions in the early years also problematizes the effectiveness of these strategies given that research indicates that investment in the early years yields the greatest returns.

Freire (1979) notes that education is an ethical and political endeavour. From a critical lens, this section demonstrates that street children are pathologised, excluded, and marginalised through the rhetoric, bureaucracy, colonisation and the hegemonic discourse pervasive in educational settings. The above analyses of the research context confirm this through recognising that the Indian system of education is inherently riddled with economic inequality, gender inequality, and colonised influences (English privilege). Furthermore, teaching practices that forward assimilation and conformity position street children to be objects rather than subjects in a dehumanised and dehumanising structure. The system further “others” children, minoritising them and marginalising them, as the curricula, content and context of education are abstract, decontextualized and totalising – and do not reflect the lives of street children. Increased hegemonic notions of individualism, competition and hierarchy continue to estrange and alienate children considered “other” from increasingly narrow ‘norms’ and privatised educational commodities, which forward inequality and disempowerment.

The purpose of re-meeting these historical, cultural, and political influences was to provide a multi-layered context for considering children’s understandings of social justice and critical consciousness from a critical lens. Therefore, this section focused particularly on educational contexts, which critical pedagogues suggest – can be spaces either for internalising the status quo or for challenging domination (see also Chapter 2).

5.11 Conclusion

This chapter dissected the socio-historical, political, cultural and economic conditions and elements that have contributed to the emergence of ‘regimes of truth’

(Foucault, 2002) and ways of doing, being and thinking in this research context. A rationale for understanding the research context was provided and theoretical frames of critical pedagogy were used to provide a thematic analysis of relevant socio-historical, political, ideological, religious, economic and cultural factors affecting and shaping the research context. The analysis was conducted by critiquing the knowledge-power nexus stemming from contextual, ideological and socio-cultural discourses prevalent in the research context. Accordingly, analyses of the education system, local and wider governments, civil society (NGOs) and family/community welfare systems were conducted. Both the residual and interconnected effects of these factors upon the lived experiences of children and families living on the street was then elucidated in order to shape an overall understanding of street life for the participants in this study. In light of the contextual elements influencing the core research threads of critical consciousness and social justice, the subsequent chapter details the findings arising from this research.

Chapter 6: Findings

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a situational analysis foregrounding the context and conditions under which children's lived experiences emerged. The works of Freire (1970, 1973) and Foucault (2002) were used to analyse the residues of taken-for-granted social, political, historical and cultural powers, impacting on current ways of thinking, being and doing in the research context. The analysis also outlined the socio-economic situation, key cultural factors, the situation of children, particularly street children in urban contexts, and the systematic state and political mechanisms available for supporting street children. Accordingly, analyses of the education system, local and wider government, civil society (NGOs) and family/community welfare systems were also conducted, before information about the research site itself was relayed.

This chapter presents the findings from the research question and sub-questions. This thesis addresses the overarching research question; How do young children demonstrate their understandings and lived experiences of social justice and critical consciousness? Sub-questions underlying this research question, include:

- a. What are young street children's demonstrated understandings and lived experiences of social justice in one context in Mumbai, India?
- b. What are young street children's demonstrated understandings and lived experiences of critical consciousness in one context in Mumbai, India?

This chapter begins with a visual representation of the intersection between this study's two sub-questions (regarding critical consciousness and social justice) based on

Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) matrix adaptation of Henry Giroux's definition of resistance (see also Chapter 2, section 2.5.1). A rationale for using this lens is discussed before it is used to frame the key findings from this study (see Figure 6.1). Limitations of this framework (specifically in relation to the Indian context) are also addressed.

6.2 Resistance Theory Lens

Extending on the theoretical lens provided by critical pedagogy, this thesis adopts a resistance theory lens to analyse children's demonstrations of critical consciousness and social justice. As highlighted in earlier chapters (Chapter 2, Chapter 5) analysts have argued that critical pedagogy involves "knowing the system" in order to change it (Horton & Freire, 1990). Increasingly, theorists and researchers have made connections between resistance, social justice and critical consciousness – forwarding the notion that resistance is central to both social justice and critical consciousness (see also, Chapter 2). This understanding implies that acts of resistance are fundamental to creating change (at micro and macro levels). Thus, resistance against the status quo is a necessary precursor for critically conscious and socially just changes in society.

From the perspective of critical pedagogy, critical consciousness and social justice are inherently inter-related (Freire, 1998) (see also Chapter 3, section 3.2.3). Addressing this interconnection from the perspective of resistance theory, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) provide a framework, based on Henry Giroux's criteria for addressing what constitutes resistance, namely - "(a) students must have a critique of social oppression, and (b) students must be motivated by an interest in social justice" (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, pp. 316-317). Their framework uses the horizontal axis to show the

continuum of interest in social justice, whilst using the vertical axis to represent the level of critique of social oppression. Thus, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) framework visualizes the interconnection of the two sub-research questions underscoring this study – that is, those pertaining to social justice and critical consciousness. This framework therefore provides a viable tool for “mapping” the findings of this research, as it provides a lens for considering the ways in which children a) know the system and b) are motivated to change the system (see also Chapter 2, section 2.4 and 2.5).

As the themes emerging from the current study highlight children's resistant and oppositional behaviours, this study has applied Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) framework to showcase children's resistant experiences and demonstrations of critical consciousness and social justice¹⁰⁸. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) explain that the quadrants of their matrix involve four kinds of reactive and resistant behaviours. Thus, the four quadrants encompass: 1) reactionary behaviours, 2) self-defeating resistance, 3) conformist resistance and 4) transformative resistance (see Figure 6.1).

¹⁰⁸ As this research did not start out by searching for resistance, children's resistant expressions of social justice and critical consciousness were an unexpected finding. Thus, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) framework emerged as a tool for analysis after data collection had been completed.

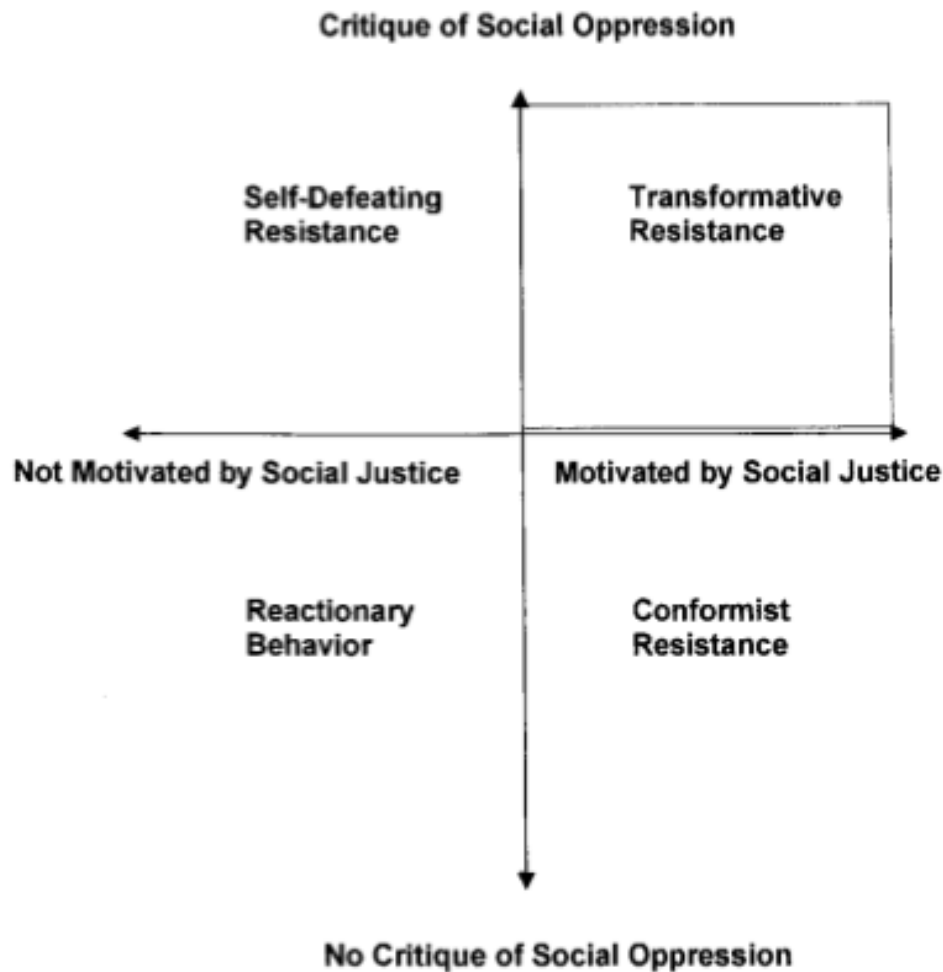


Figure 6.1. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) framework for resistance.

Using this visual depiction (see Figure 6.1), Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) provide an explanation of what each of the four quadrants within this framework entail. These are detailed below alongside some examples of these forms of resistance from the current study:

1. *Reactionary Behaviour* – behaviours in the reactionary quadrant do not meet the criteria for resistance, critical consciousness or social justice, as these are neither informed by critical consciousness, nor are they carried out in the interests of social justice. These behaviours are classified as

reactive or reactionary as they occur without ethical or political consideration to people, environments and events – for example, being naughty “for the sake of it”. As children’s reactionary behaviours are not indicative of children’s experiences of critical consciousness or social justice, data coded under the theme of reactionary behaviours have not been canvassed within this chapter.

2. *Self-defeating Resistance* – this kind of resistance is characterised by being perceptive of social oppression, or engaging in some form of critique of oppression and discrimination, but not being motivated by an interest in social justice. This results in the enactment of behaviours that are “not transformational and in fact helps to re-create the oppressive conditions from which it originated” (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 317). This quadrant recognises human agency, however, it is classified as self-defeating, as it does not involve acts in the interest of social justice. This quadrant involves, for example, children recognising that school systems are unfair, but results in students dropping out, or skipping school.
3. *Conformist Resistance* – this section represents behaviours that exhibit a motivation for social justice but lack critical consciousness or social critique. These acts are conformist as the actors use existing structures and systems in order to work towards social justice goals. These behaviours “offer ‘Band-Aids’ to take care of symptoms of the problem rather than deal with the structural causes of the problem. In other words, these students choose to strive toward social justice within the existing

social systems and social conventions” (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 318) without challenging these existing systems or structures. For example, this might involve children studying hard in an existing oppressive or unfair system in order to have better life chances, without addressing systematic inequality or injustice. In the context of this study, this also involves behaviours that ranged from being obedient to oppositional. Obedient behaviours formed an “underlife”, as children identified showing obedience as a form of silent resistance to avoid negative repercussions but were conscious of the oppression being imposed. On the other hand, oppositional behaviours involved behaviours that were resistant but not transformative. An example of conformist behaviour in this study involved children internalising oppression and inferiority, in turn, blaming their families for their experiences of inequality and injustice.

4. *Transformative Resistance* – this quadrant involves praxis that shows critical consciousness and is motivated by an interest in social justice. Transformative acts involve changing taken for granted ways of being, doing and thinking; these can be resistant or emancipatory endeavours that address changes in environment, behaviour, and context. It includes ethical and political acts that are both overt and covert. This involves critically informed knowledge and action that is reflected upon in the interest of social change. It also involves big and small acts of participation, inclusion and equity – for example, children in this study aspired to “be someone”, “help others” and to “stand on their own two

feet” – thus, children rejected negative stereotypes bestowed on street children and indicated a desire for changing their own experiences of injustice.

This study uses the framework developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) as a map or lens for looking at the critically conscious or socially just behaviours demonstrated by children in this study. Solorzano and Delgado Bernal’s (2001) criteria defining the four resistant or oppositional behaviours are used here to group the intersection of children’s demonstrations of critical consciousness and social justice. Although resistance theory and critical pedagogy have been afforded various critiques (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.1.1.1), the theoretical basis of critical pedagogy highlights the importance of resistance in enabling the emergence of social justice and critical consciousness (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.1). Thus, as resistance theory and critical pedagogy question not only children’s behaviours but also, the role of educational sites and their complex and interconnected relationship within society, the framework offered by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) provides a useful theoretical tool for focussing on, and critiquing the political and ethical capacities of educators and learners in complex ways. However, certain limitations and differences in the use and application of this framework to the Indian context require consideration – these are addressed in the subsequent section.

6.2.1 Limitations and Differences in the Application of the Lens

As the framework developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) was intended for use with university-level Chicano and Chicana students in the United States,

some limitations and differences arise in the use of this framework in the Indian context with young street children. This section canvasses these issues and provides additional information about the application of this lens to the current study.

Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) discuss the importance of theorising, analysing and interpreting resistant behaviours by exploring the meanings, intentions and purposes attached to behaviours by the resisters or protagonists themselves. As this study was conducted with young street children, a potential limitation of this lens is that it requires participants to articulate their rationales for demonstrating resistant behaviours. This condition is problematic in the context of this study given that analysis is through the lens of the researcher and as the young children in this research did not always appear to analyse or explain their behaviours. Thus, it could be argued that there is some margin for error in the accuracy of behaviours being interpreted and classified by the researcher as self-defeating, reactionary, conformist or transformational (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). However, as Giroux (2001b) argues, it is conceivable that participants “may not be able to explain why he or she displayed such behaviour, or the interpretation may be distorted. In this case, the underlying interest in such behaviour may be illuminated against the backdrop of social practices and values out of which the behaviour emerges” (p. 110).

Accordingly, this research has sought to contextualise the resistant behaviours young street children exhibited by providing an overview of the historical, economic, and socio-political contexts surrounding the formation and enactment of children’s resistant behaviours (see Chapter 5). Moreover, in acknowledging that “it is nearly impossible for a researcher or educator to accurately assess a behaviour as resistance without

communicating with and learning from the student's perspective" (p. 321), multiple layers of verbal and non-verbal data have been collected in this study in order to portray multi-layered understandings and "thick" descriptions of child participants' behaviours, intents and rationales. Lastly, where possible, children themselves were asked to reflect on data such as photographs and some observations in order to shed light on their behaviours, and underlying meanings and rationales (see Chapter 4). Thus, these counter measures support the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of participants' demonstrations of critical consciousness and social justice.

A second limitation levelled at the framework is that the "box-like" x-and-y-axis-based categorisation of behaviours could be perceived to characterise student resistance or resisters in a binary, rigid or reductionist manner. However, as Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001, p. 317) clarify:

The distinction between the four behaviours is not static or rigid, and neither are these behaviours inclusive of all types of oppositional behaviour. In addition, the quadrants should not be seen as discrete and static entities, but rather, within each quadrant is a range of a student's critique of social oppression and motivation for social justice. We also acknowledge that the manifestations of these four categories may be different among females and males.

Moreover, similar to the use of quadrants by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001), in the current study, the lens was used to map children's behaviours rather than children themselves. As such, the lens offers avenues for capturing the fluid and contradictory nature of children's varied experiences of critical consciousness and social justice.

Another consideration arising from the use of this framework emerges as the theoretical insights behind the lens developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) have been tailored in order to interpret Latino realities – thus focusing on sites or situations of oppression that are particularly relevant to Latino students, such as race, language, immigration, phenology and sexuality (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). This poses significant differences for its application to the current study, which aims to analyse young street children's experiences of social justice and critical consciousness amidst contextually diverse forms of oppression such as those related to poverty, abuse from authorities, widespread discrimination, socio-political stigma, gender and religious (caste) stigma (see Chapter 5, section 5.9.5 for challenges faced by Indian street children). Arguably however, as the lens itself enables researchers to simultaneously consider multiple forms of intersectional (racial, economic, sexual, ability-based, class-based, political, and/or historical) oppression faced by individuals, it is transferable to a wide range of people, contexts and experiences of oppression. Nonetheless, in acknowledging certain contextual differences in the *application* of this lens to the Indian context, several distinctions arise, particularly given the social construction of children and childhood realities in India (see Chapter 5). That is to say, children's expressions of social justice and critical consciousness in this study can only be understood when viewed through the lens of contextual (Indian) discourses that situate and recognise children and childhoods as a socially constructed cultural conception (James & Prout, 2015).

These considerations have pertinent implications for the application of the lens developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) as unlike the examples of student resistance provided in their paper, in which Latino students were encouraged in their

development of resistance strategies (by family members or mentors that shared the importance of political participation), the children in this study have been subsumed by Indian discourses of childhood¹⁰⁹ which value obedience, anti-dialogue, martyrdom, respect for elders/authority figures, and passivity. As a result, it could be argued that since children in this study have been taught to normalise, regulate and exclude themselves, that children's opportunities to develop motivations for social justice, critical consciousness, political participation and resistance have been stunted. However, as this research did not start out by searching for resistance, children's resistant expressions of social justice and critical consciousness were an unexpected finding in this study. Thus, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) framework emerged as a tool for analysis after data collection had been completed. Thus, the researcher did not expect the young children in this study to demonstrate awareness and action similar to Latino or other students shaped by different cultures and histories of political action or participation (such as in the research by Silva & Langhout, 2011; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Souto-Manning, 2009). Rather, these unexpected findings and data revealed that children were aware of oppression and willing to take action despite their lack of experience with critical pedagogies and political action.

Thus, although these findings (that young children are critically aware of injustice, and prone to act in political/resistant ways to combat injustice) are unexpected in the

¹⁰⁹ R. Kaur (2015) indicates that in the Indian context, representations of Indian children have ranged from being vulnerable to uncorrupted, inferior (to adults), incompetent, dependent and/or irrational. As Chapter 5 implies, such social constructions of Indian children and childhoods has had several implications in the treatment of children from the normalisation of child labour to the exploitation and abuse of young children. Moreover, De Moura (2002) writes that street children are taught to "naturalise social deprivation and stigmatise poor families and children... [as] street children street children and their families are portrayed as displaying socially unacceptable attributes which place them outside mainstream society" (p. 353).

context of the current study, critical pedagogues and researchers have argued that it is precisely within overly authoritarian and oppressive contexts that resistance breeds contempt against the unjust and unfair imposition of rules, power, and/or ways of thinking, being and doing (Schutz, 2004). Ample research therefore indicates that diverse populations of students are capable of showcasing awareness and political action – albeit in contextually and behaviourally diverse ways.

In acknowledging contextual differences in the application of this lens, Chapter 5 highlights the ways in which young street children and childhoods are instituted, regulated and represented by social, historical, political and economic forces and also highlights the strengths, autonomies, resistances and political or social participations exhibited by Indian street children. Extending on this, it is acknowledged here that this chapter applies the framework developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) to view children's demonstrations of social justice and critical consciousness through the lens of cultural discourses and social constructions of young Indian street children, which have been outlined in Chapter 5. Thus, the application of this framework in this chapter recognises that the development and emergence of children's resistance is culturally mediated.

A final limitation and difference arising from the application of this framework to the Indian context is that “oppositional behaviours, like the subjectivities that constitute them, are produced amidst contradictory discourses and values” (Giroux, 2001b, p. 103). Thus, since the Indian culture promotes the obedience of young children particularly in educational contexts, it is difficult to map children's expressions of “unconscious ideologies” or to determine the extent to which children's “silence” may be indicative of

“underlife” or “internal” resistance (that is, critical consciousness) or obedience (that is, uncritical acceptance of the status quo). As such, it is possible that child participants’ expressions of “internal” or “underlife” forms of resistance could tend to be misinterpreted or ignored. In order to address this limitation, the researcher collected several observations, field notes and photographs, and where possible, sought insights from key caregivers who were familiar with children and their idiosyncrasies to comment on children’s behaviours (see Chapter 4, section 4.14). Children themselves were also consulted and asked to reflect on the thinking underlying their actions and recorded behaviours in order to ensure that expressions of “underlife” or “internal” resistance were interpreted in an accurate a manner as possible. Moreover, this study sought to account for the oscillating discourses and values underscoring children’s behaviours by providing multiple layers of (individual and inter-subjective) data, and by acknowledging the larger socio-political tensions that affected children as they navigated systematic and interpersonal power-relations (such as those related to the council, police, teachers, street dwellers, peers and others), and the meanings behind their own actions.

Importantly, this thesis does not suggest that the lens used in this study is encompassing of all the range of behaviours and understandings related to resistance, however this lens was found to be particularly appropriate for providing a geography (or map) of the findings emerging from this study. Additionally, the ways in which findings from this study are presented within quadrants are not meant to be interpreted as rigid or stagnant. The study participants exhibited multiple identities and selves, within diverse contexts, relationships, situations and environments. Thus, whilst the quadrants developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) provide broad criteria for categorising the

interplay between social justice, critical consciousness, and resistance, these quadrants are not adequate for showcasing the dynamism and complexity of what it is to be human, and the continually unfinished process of children 'being' and 'becoming' (Freire, 1970). In addressing this limitation, the subsequent section provides a detailed profile of participant identities and subjectivities before imposing the lens on the data in order to portray children's experiences of critical consciousness and social justice.

This section has presented Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) framework for characterising resistance. This framework provides the 'lens' used to analyse the findings from the current study of young street children in Mumbai. This section has also outlined the limitations of this framework and the considerations to be accounted for in the application of this framework to the current study. Limitations have been addressed and differences relating to the social construction of Indian children and development have been discussed. A detailed profile of participants is provided in the following section before the major themes emerging from this research are portrayed through the use of the lens developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001).

6.3 Profile of Participants

A profile of the 10 focus child-participants is provided below. Children's own views, thoughts and communications have been used where possible to compose these profiles. Data from a range of sources including field notes, observations, parent interviews, photo elicitation conversations and stories have also been used to compose these portraits of children.

6.3.1 Akbar, Male, 7.5 Years Old

Akbar was the oldest of three children. He lived with his mother and two younger brothers – Malik, 3.5 years old and Mohan, 2 years old – on the beach alongside a small community of other beach-dwellers (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Akbar, Round 1). As Akbar's mother was unemployed and his two younger brothers were too young to work, Akbar was the primary income earner for his family (Aditi¹¹⁰, Parent Interview, Round 1). Akbar's job involved selling balloons and other seasonal or occasional products, such as flags on Independence Day (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Akbar, Round 1). Akbar's mother suggested that he was a persuasive seller and that he was extremely quick at adding and subtracting sums of money (Aditi, Parent Interview, Round 1). Being familiar with systematic inequality, Akbar spoke with heated anger and criticality about the council, the police and other authorities that he felt treated street populations unfairly (Appendix 6, Observation 15, 23.8.12). He would often warn or advise his younger brothers about what to do if they were ever to encounter these figures on the street (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Akbar, Round 2-3). Since Indian and International tourists often frequented the beach where Akbar worked, Akbar frequently interacted with strangers, and where possible, used these interactions to practice some English words (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Akbar, Round 2). Like many other children in the centre, Akbar aspired to learn English (Appendix 6, Observation 22, 6.9.12), but given the lack of access to English-medium schooling, Akbar attended a council-run Marathi-medium school in the mornings and came to the centre in the afternoons. He was often critical of the school, teachers and of the education system

¹¹⁰ Pseudonyms have been used to refer to parent participants in the interest of privacy and confidentiality.

more broadly, saying on one occasion that the teachers in his school attended irregularly, did not care about him or other children and that they “only talk at you and don’t explain anything” (Appendix, 8.1, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tours, Akbar, Round 1). Having attended the centre from a young age, Akbar shared several insights into the workings of the centre, the role of teachers and volunteers, and the centre’s objectives (Appendix 8.1, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tours, Akbar, Round 1). Akbar’s favourite activities at the centre included engaging in pretend play, playing in the garden, and playing football with his friends and brothers at the centre. Akbar was extremely protective of his younger brothers – he would often become angry if other children teased them, and would stand up for them, or shout at them to stand up for themselves thus showing his sensitivity to the interpersonal relations and experiences of power and unfairness with peers in the centre. Akbar aspired to be a driver when he grew up because “I like cars and... [then] there won’t be any [financial] tension for my family” (Appendix 11, Akbar, IMG_0236_2 Note).

6.3.2 Arav, Male, 4.5 Years Old

Arav lived with his mother and father on the beach. At the time this research was conducted Arav was an only child, however, a few months prior to data collection, Arav had lost his four-month-old sibling, who he called “his baby” that he remembered getting sick and passing away (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 60, 8.11.12). Arav was a new arrival at the centre when data collection began, and he attended the Balwadi program daily as a quiet but enthusiastic learner (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 60, 8.11.12). He often told his mother that he thought the centre should teach children in a more direct, structured, school-like fashion (Ishita, Parent Interview, Round 1). Arav commonly sidled into a corner or made himself invisible when older peers at the centre engaged in violent or

confrontational activities. After these encounters subdued, Arav would reflect on his dislike of children in the centre fighting or not obeying school/centre-based rules (Appendix 6, Observation 7, 14.8.12). Arav loved reading books – particularly those with real-life pictures, he also enjoyed drawing, climbing trees, and often shared his excitement about soon getting to wear a school uniform and go to school (Appendix 11, Stories, Arav). Arav spent most of his time (in the centre and on the street) attached to his best friend, Krish (Male, 4.5 years old), who was also his direct neighbour that he slept across from, ate with, and lived next to (Ishita, Parent Interview, Round 1). Arav’s mother indicated that she never worried about Arav roaming the street because a) he was a male child not a female child, and b) because Krish and his mother and brothers were always with him to keep him safe (Ishita, Parent Interview, Round 1). Arav did not work, but spent much of his time helping Krish and his family with their employment, by sitting with Krish and/or discarding their rubbish (for example, fruit seeds and skins). Arav shared that he wanted to be a cricket or football player, and promised Krish that he would care for his family, as well as his own if/when he became a star player (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 47, 10.10.12). Although usually quiet during large group times, Arav often took on the role of advocating rules for equality during smaller socio-dramatic play situations with children the same age or younger than him, and he frequently reminded his peers of the importance of sharing and ensuring that everyone got “half and half” of any play resource (Appendix 6, Observation 7, 14.8.12).

6.3.3 Bhijali, Female, 3.5 Years Old

Bhijali belonged to a blended family with an older half-sister Mumtaz (15 years old), half-brother Ram (10 years old), an older sister Rani (7 years old) and a younger

sister Jyoti (6 months old). She lived on the beach with her mother, father, maternal grandfather, older sister Rani and baby sister Jyoti (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Bhijali, Round 1). Bhijali and her family were often visited by her older half-siblings, her paternal grandfather, aunts and uncles, and several other “chachas” or uncles who were friends of the family but not directly related by blood (Suvi, Parent Interviews, Round 1-2). Bhijali’s family owned and worked a portable-roadside-stall that sold spiced water and refreshments (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Bhijali, Round 1). Her mother and father also engaged in various seasonal work activities such as fishing (Suvi, Parent Interviews, Round 1). Bhijali and her sister Rani (Female, 7 years old) often helped their family work the roadside-stall by carrying boxes of lemons, washing glasses, and helping mix spice water (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Bhijali, Round 2-3). When her mother, father or grandfather did not accompany her on the streets, Bhijali closely followed the cues and instructions of her older sister Rani (Female, 7 years old). Bhijali was a new arrival at the centre when data for this study was being collected, and was initially hesitant to engage with any adults, peers or children except for her sister, Rani (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 10, 7.8.12). However, as Bhijali became more comfortable in the centre, she was observed taking on a nurturing role for children the same age or younger than her (Appendix 8.1, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tours, Rani, Round 2, 18.10.12). Bhijali’s mother described her as a “Don” or gangster, who commonly used violence, confrontational body language, and curses to deal with peers, authority figures, teachers, other adults and/or situations of unfairness, exclusion, bullying or oppression that she encountered on the street or at the centre (Suvi, Parent Interviews, Round 2). Bhijali was often considered soft-spoken in the centre, however, she compensated for this by communicating strongly through the use of her body language, facial gestures and if

necessary, screams (Appendix 6, Observation 47, 19.10.12). In the centre, Bhijali commonly displayed an indifferent attitude to rules, often appearing to intentionally disregard them despite being reprimanded (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 37, 22.9.12). Through the use of photographs, drawings, body language, facial expressions and observations, Bhijali displayed knowledge of how to negotiate in buying and selling, and also showcased a general anger at particular (but not all) council members – such as the police, but not the council street cleaners (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Round 2-3). At the time of data collection, Bhijali's mother and the Balwadi teacher at the centre were organising for her to join her sister Rani in an English-stream school at the start of the next school year (Suvi, Parent Interviews, Round 1). Bhijali's favourite activities at the centre included engaging in socio-dramatic play, reciting finger plays, and engaging in block play (Appendix 8.1, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tours, Round 1-3).

6.3.4 Birbal, Male, 7 Years Old

Birbal lived on a street corner behind a train station with his mother, father and two younger sisters Payal and Sonakshi (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Birbal, Round 1). Birbal's father worked for the council as a cleaner of street rubbish and his mother had occasional jobs as a cleaner. Birbal and his younger sisters did not work or help their family with household chores. His home was situated under a mid-sized tree on a back alleyway that adjoined the main road – with a bus depot on one side, and a petrol pump-come-grocery shop on the other (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Birbal, Round 1). Birbal was known to use the grocery shop as a 'bank' – that is, he would give his money to the grocery store owner (a man him and his family knew and trusted, and whom he called 'uncle') to keep in the till for safe-keeping (Appendix 6, Observation

66, 30.11.12). Birbal indicated that he withdrew money only if/when his mother needed it, and that he was saving most of it for when he was older (Appendix 6, Observation 66, 30.11.12). Across the street from his alleyway home were cinemas, electronics stores, a university and rows full of shops. Birbal and his sisters often crossed the busy street by themselves to watch the TVs in the electronics shop (Appendix 6, Observation 28, 14.9.12). Despite being school-aged, Birbal attended the centre on a regular basis but was not a school pupil. He had once attended school however, his family had relocated from Mumbai to the rural village where his extended family were when he was younger, and he had thus been pulled out of school (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 1). Since moving back to Mumbai, he was – at the time of data collection – waiting to be re-admitted into a school. Birbal often said that he aspired to be a doctor (Field Notes, Entry 53), a policeman and/or a driver (Appendix 6, Observation 37, 28.9.12), a motorbike owner, and that he wanted to attend an English school because “English gets you jobs... then we can go [on a] plane [or] train” (Appendix 6, Observation 31, 20.9.12). Birbal was an avid storyteller, and wrote, drew and narrated several violent but humorous stories with his best friend Rathore (Male, 8) about superheroes, human heroes, policemen, and a hand puppet named Chintu (Appendix 11, Stories, Birbal). Birbal was especially independent and often spoke proudly – and carelessly – about travelling alone on trains to faraway stations without a ticket, and walking on the train tracks (Appendix 6, Observation 44, 11.10.12).

6.3.5 Krish, Male, 4.5 Years Old

Krish lived on the beach with his mother and two older brothers, Rohan (11 years old) and Rajeev (9 years old), less than two metres across from his best friend Arav (Male, 4.5 years old) whom he also referred to as his brother from time to time (Appendix 8.2,

Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Krish, Round 2). Krish, his brothers and his mother worked by selling fruits on a moving cart that they walked with up and down the beach and adjoining streets. Krish would help his mother and brothers by cutting and arranging fruits on the cart. Krish was extremely proud of his job (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Krish, Round 1). He had knowledge of a wide repertoire of fruits, and could share many insights about certain fruit trees, plants and the price of different amounts of fruits (Vani, Parent Interviews, Round 1). As Krish's family did not have a permit for their fruit-cart, Krish followed his brothers' lead when confronted by the council and/or police (Vani, Parent Interviews, Round 1). Krish indicated that his job in such situations was to listen to his older brothers and to hide himself or as many of their fruits, utensils and belongings as possible (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Krish, Round 2-3). Krish maintained the importance of being apathetic, or shrugging off feelings of anger or sadness that came with being unfairly treated by the council and the police (Appendix 6, Observation 40, 4.10.12). Krish's maternal grandmother often visited the family on the beach. Occasionally, Krish's mother indicated that she sent her sons away to live with their maternal grandmother for a few days at a time, especially when they were sick or when she was worried about their safety on the beach (Vani, Parent Interviews, Round 1). Krish came to the centre daily with his two older brothers and Arav. At the centre, Krish would often generously invite teachers and friends at the centre to come and have some fruits with him and his family (Appendix 6, Observation 19, 3.9.12). Unlike his quiet and often-obedient best friend (Arav, Male, 4.5 years old), Krish often enjoyed breaking rules in as unquiet, humorous, and mischievous way as possible – he would laugh openly at Arav, peers and teachers when he was asked to obey rules (Appendix 6, Observation 17, 27.8.12). Krish's favourite activities at the centre involved climbing trees, pretend play,

eating and playing with his friends in the garden (Appendix 8.1, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tours, Krish, Round 1-3). Krish did not share any particular aspirations of what he wanted to be when he grew up, but following Arav's lead did once say he sought to be a football (soccer) or cricket player (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 47, 10.10.12). As Krish's older brothers attended a council-run school, Krish aspired to go to school with his brothers and Arav but was unsure which school he would (or would want to) be going to.

6.3.6 Payal, Female, 5 Years Old

Payal – the second of three children – lived with her mother, father, older brother (Birbal, Male, 7 years old), and younger sister, (Sonakshi, Female, 4 years old) on a back alleyway behind a train station, near to a bus depot, main road and petrol pump (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Payal, Round 1). Prior to attending the centre, Payal had spent several months with her immediate and extended family in the rural village where her parents were from (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 2). Thus, unlike her brother (Birbal, Male, 7 years old), Payal had never attended school, and/or the centre prior to her arrival there in 2012 (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 2). Payal and her siblings did not work, or help their mother with household chores, unlike many of their friends at the centre. However, Payal was particularly nurturing towards her younger sister, Sonakshi (Female, 4 years old), whom she always played with, and watched closely (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 2). When Payal first arrived at the centre, teachers, peers and volunteers indicated that her speech was difficult to understand – perhaps as a result of the difference in dialect of Hindi spoken in the village as compared to the city (Shreya, Teacher Interviews, Round 2-3). However, Payal's mother noticed that she assimilated quickly to her surroundings, and that her speech became gradually more like a Mumbai-ite after a

month or so of living on the street (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 2). Payal's mother noted that she was often bullied by boys at the centre – including her brother – but that Payal never fought back against other children, even when she was being physically hurt (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 2-3). When being bullied in the centre, Payal was observed to cry, or wail loudly to attract attention from teachers or nearby adults (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 76, 20.12.12). She often also hid behind her friends or other older children when she was afraid of being bullied or hurt. On the streets however, Payal indicated that if/when she saw strangers or “bad people” such as kidnappers approach her or her younger sister, that she would make sure to scream, bite them and then run away (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tour, Payal, Round 3). Payal was particularly afraid of kidnappers and the night time, and did not relate as many fears about the police or the council as the other focus children (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Payal, Round 3). Payal, like many other children, also sought to attend an English-medium school, and would often skip attending the centre, to go and stand outside of an electronics store where she could watch and learn from some English TV (Appendix 7, Entry 37, 22.9.12). Payal also watched TV shows that centred on dance as she aspired to be a dancer, and often showcased her dancing skills, leading other Balwadi children in dances and dance-play (Appendix 6, Observation 28, 14.9.12). Payal was also extremely fond of ‘cake’ and drew many stories about eating cake and having birthdays, and inviting children to their birthday parties (Appendix 11, Stories, Payal).

6.3.7 Rani, Female, 7 Years Old

Rani lived with her mother, father, maternal grandfather and two younger sisters – Bhijali (3.5 years old) and Jyoti (6 months old) – sandwiched between a main road and the

beachfront (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Rani, Round 1). Despite having two older half-siblings (Mumtaz, Female, 15 years old, and Ram, Male, 10 years old), Rani considered herself to be the oldest child, as her half-siblings lived away from home (Mumtaz, Female, 15 years old, lived in a shelter for girls and Ram, Male, 10 years old, lived in a shelter for boys) in separate sites across town (Suvi, Parent Interviews, Round 1-2). Thus, as the “eldest” child, Rani took on several responsibilities and performed various chores and tasks in order to support her family, including, caring for and protecting her younger sisters (Appendix 6, Observation 54, 1.11.12). Rani shared that she was particularly skilled at protecting her younger sisters as she had a stern “scary” tone, knew what to say, was a fast runner, and knew how to get help if needed (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Rani, Round 3). Her role as protector included keeping her sisters safe from potential kidnappers, tourists, beachgoers, the council, police and/or other street children or adults (Suvi, Parent Interviews, Round 1). As Rani’s family owned a portable roadside stall selling spice-water and refreshments, Rani and her sister Bhijali (Female, 3.5 years old) also helped run the stall, clean dishes and carry ingredients (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Rani, Round 2-3). Rani attended an English-medium school in the morning and came to the centre in the afternoons. She was in the first grade when the data collection for this study began, and was anxious to do well so that she could please her mother, and the teachers at the centre/school. However, Rani also expressed frustration at school tests, and at schoolteachers who covered content quickly (Appendix 6, Observation 61, 21.11.12). At the centre, Rani sat with volunteers reciting poems, prayers¹¹¹ and sayings in English as well as completing her homework before she could

¹¹¹ As Rani (Female, 7 years old) attended an English-stream school that was a Catholic school, the learning and recitation of prayers was considered to be testable curriculum content (See Appendix

play with the Balwadi children. She would also complete practice tests and was self-critical when she was unable to get all the answers correct. Rani was acutely aware of the importance of learning English, and would often practice English with volunteers at the centre. On the streets, she would speak to strangers during work, or talk to international tourists in English, occasionally to forcefully tell them not to take pictures of her, her family or her home (Appendix 6, Observation 84, 17.01.13). Rani indicated that she wanted to be a teacher when she grew up, as she wanted to teach other street children how to speak in English since they would not otherwise have the chance to learn it (Appendix 6, Observation 72, 14.12.12). At the centre, Rani was often called a “smart” and “good” child, presumably partly because she attended an English-medium school and tended to help teachers enforce rules, particularly with younger Balwadi children (Shreya, Teacher Interviews, Round 3). Rani often played with her sister (Bhijali, Female, 3.5 years old), and the younger Balwadi children at the centre. She loved socio-dramatic play, writing stories and drawing/colouring in (Appendix 8.1, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tours, Round 2). Rani was often a leader, director and author of socio-dramatic plays, in which she directed other children, narrated the story for children to follow and played a lead role in herself. These socio-dramatic plays often centred around school (with her being a teacher), family, and the streets – including interactions with the council. Rani shared that the council made her upset and angry when they broke street-dweller’s homes but she reiterated the importance of being tough and not crying when this happened (Appendix 6, Observation 60, 20.11.12).

6.3.8 Rathore, Male, 8 Years Old

Rathore was an only child who lived alone with his father behind the garden adjoining the centre, between the railway and the main street in the scaffolds of a billboard (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Rathore, Round 1). Rathore's mother had passed away several months prior to his attending the centre in 2012 (Appendix 6, Observation 62, 22.11.12), and Rathore and his father had recently returned to the streets following an interval of many months, some of which Rathore had spent in a boys shelter (Ajay, Parent Interviews, Round 1). Rathore had previously attended the centre as a younger child, and was still familiar with many of its workings (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 23, 28.8.12). Rathore attended the centre daily, and often followed his friends to their homes on the beach where he would play with them after the centre closed (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Rathore, Round 2). On the streets (and in the centre), Rathore was critical of strangers, adults, authorities, the council and other street children (except his close friends). He shared numerous experiences of run-ins with police, the council and other authorities. Rathore was dangerously overt in his expressions of resistance against authority figures, and often expressed carelessness about "being caught" or being hurt (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 66, 28.11.12). Rathore was well known by numerous community members, many of whom he called 'chacha' – and he frequently received free food from adults on the street, which he then shared with his best friends (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Round 2). Rathore was highly independent, confident, strong-minded, dynamic, critical and an expert at expressing defiance. His father affirmed his autonomous spirit, commenting that Rathore "just run[s] away from the house as soon as my eyes open... [and] he comes home at 11 o'clock in the night" (Ajay, Parent Interviews, Round 1). In the centre, Rathore was often considered to be a "problem child"

as he expressed himself often through physical violence, colourful language, and destructive behaviour (Appendix 6, Observation 57, 8.11.12). At the time at which this research was conducted, Rathore was in the process of undergoing psychological testing, with teachers at the centre indicating that he had “a low IQ and at the slightest provocation [he] exhibits negative behaviour” (Anisa, Teacher Interviews, Round 1). As a result of this label and perception, Rathore did not attend school as he was thought to have a “mental disability” that schools could not ‘control’ or work with (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 32, 14.9.12; Entry 55, 27.10.12). Rathore often expressed frustration at being characterised as “sick” and/or “mad” by peers, teachers and educational systems that he thought either excluded him or sought to control him. In defiance against this, Rathore once remarked – during an explanation of his refusal to take prescribed medicines – that he did not care if people called him crazy since “I like having my own mind” (Field Notes, Entry 71, 8.12.12). Rathore came to the centre regularly, engaging with the Balwadi group of children despite being older than them. As the eldest child in the Balwadi group, Rathore often took a leadership role – sometimes against the wishes of the attending teacher or volunteer – in directing, punishing, or playing with children (Appendix 6, Observation 12, 20.8.12). Rathore was eager to learn, he loved books and was especially fond of “reading” out stories to the younger Balwadi children. He also enjoyed writing stories, engaging in dramatic play, playing football (soccer), and like many other children, sought to attend an English school, but was very critical of the education systems that he was excluded from (Appendix 6, Observation 26, 12.9.12). Rathore shared some bleak and self-defeating prophecies about his future, narrating that he would “grow up and die in a fight” (Appendix 6, Observation 37, 28.9.12). Despite this, he also shared that he wanted to be a

“good policeman or a [movie] hero” (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Rathore, Round 3).

6.3.9 Sonakshi, Female, 4 Years Old

Sonakshi was the youngest of three. She lived on a back alleyway with her mother, father, older brother (Birbal, Male, 7 years old) and older sister (Payal, Female, 5 years old) under a tree that was adjoined by a petrol pump, bus depot and a train station (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Sonakshi, Round 1). Sonakshi, like her older brother and sister, did not work or help her mother with chores around the home – however, she often enjoyed playing with pots and pans, and sitting next to their mother as she cooked for them (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 1). Sonakshi arrived at the centre soon after data collection started. She was a quiet expert at minimizing herself, avoiding confrontation with peers – especially older peers, and keeping to the margins of conversation and activity, preferring the role of an observer (Appendix 6, Observation 57, 8.11.12). She was particularly reluctant to venture her thoughts in discussions with older peers, however, as she became more comfortable at the centre, she began to voice some thoughts with more confidence (Appendix 6, Observation 72, 14.12.12). Like most other children in this study, Sonakshi shared that she wanted to attend an English-medium school (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 49, 12.10.12). She would often accompany her siblings (Payal, Female, 5 years old, and Birbal, Male, 7 years old) to the electronics store across the street from their home to watch English TV whenever possible (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 37, 22.9.12). In the centre, Sonkashi was fond of the garden, pretend play and dress-ups, particularly those that centred on festive occasions such as weddings and involved women in saris, kurtas and salwaars (that is, different types of Indian clothing

worn by women) (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Sonakshi, Round 3). Sonakshi's favourite friends at the centre included Rani (Female, 7 years old), Bhijali, (Female, 3.5 years old), Tara (Female, 4.5 years old) and her sister Payal (Female, 5 years old) with whom she engaged frequently. On the streets, Sonakshi's mother shared that of all her children, she was most afraid for the safety of her youngest, as a) Sonakshi was small and female, b) they lived dangerously close to the red light district, and c) she perceived Sonakshi was the "fairest" of her two daughters (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 2-3). Sonakshi, like Payal (Female, 5 years old) showed that she was afraid of kidnappers through stories and photographs (Appendix 11, Stories, Sonakshi). She also added to her mother's stories by nodding, gestures, pointing and softly voicing how her family slept at night tied to each other to ensure that she – and her brother and sister – were not stolen away (Pooja, Parent Interviews, Round 2). Sonakshi indicated that she was wary of strangers and said that knew how to fend for herself (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Round 2). She often advised children in pretend play of the importance of running and/or biting and running away when in danger. Despite being critical of strangers, Sonakshi occasionally arrived at the centre having received "free gifts" from strangers on the beach or alleyway that her siblings and other children at the centre had not received (Appendix 6, Observation 64, 28.11.12).

6.3.10 Tara, Female, 4.5 Years Old

At the time of initial data collection, Tara was the youngest of four, however, at the end of data collection, her mother gave birth to a baby boy (Vinod), thus changing Tara's role and placement in her family (Appendix 6, Observation 85, 18.1.13). When Vinod was born, Tara's play shifted to include more socio-dramatic play in which she pretended to

take care of Vinod who she called ‘her baby’ (Appendix 6, Observation 85, 18.1.13). Thus, Tara showed an awareness that it was her role as the ‘next’ eldest to watch over him closely. Tara lived on the beach with her siblings (Laxmi, Female, 16 years old, Sakshi, Female, 14 years old, and Rafiq, Male, 8 years old), their mother, and for an early and brief period, their mother’s partner at the time (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 72, 11.12.12). Despite being the youngest, Tara often took care of her older sisters and brother when they were sick – by fetching them water, and patting them to sleep or sitting by them (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 72, 11.12.12). Tara did not work, but often helped her older brother and sisters to cook or complete chores for their mother (Lata, Parent Interviews, Round 1). Tara had been attending the centre since she was two, and was thus familiar with the workings, teachers and volunteers of the centre (Ria, Teacher Interviews, Round 3). She was also well known by many of the older children who were friends of her siblings, and perhaps because of this, was not afraid of teenagers and older children like many other Balwadi children were. Tara did however occasionally push teenagers or older children when they teased her, and would then run to hide behind the protection of her sisters or brother (Appendix 8.1, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tours, Tara, Round 2). Having attended the centre for over two years, Tara often expressed boredom at the experiences and activities presented at the centre and was also considered shrewd by her sibling Laxmi, who shared that Tara came to the centre only at her own choosing and if/when she saw some benefit to attending – such as if her mother paid her to do so¹¹² or if there was a special lunch at the centre (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 37, 22.9.12). However Tara

¹¹² Tara’s mother Lata was employed at the time at which the research was conducted but spoke in general terms about ‘work’. As per the ethical considerations cited in Chapter 4, the researcher did not probe further into the nature of work conducted, as Lata appeared hesitant to disclose this information.

expressed that she enjoyed coming to the centre, particularly when her friends Rani (Female, 7 years old) and Bhijali (Female, 3.5 years old) were in attendance there (Appendix 8.1, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tours, Round 1). At the centre, Tara enjoyed reading books, playing with blocks, garden play and pretend play. On the street, as her siblings attended school, Tara often wandered the beach by herself and played on dismantled “rides” during the day – that would then be set up and used at night by paying customers (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Round 3). She also indicated that she loved playing in the water, and roaming the beach at night with her siblings. Tara was particularly critical of systematic inequity, the council and its members who – throughout the course of data collection – broke her home several times (Appendix 8.2, Photo Elicitation, Street Tours, Round 3). She expressed a strong sense of anger and injustice when her home was broken, labelling such situations “mean” and “unfair” (Appendix 6, Observation 72, 14.12.12). Tara recurrently expressed the desire to be a beautician when she grew up (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 53, 23.10.12). She highlighted the importance of being beautiful but also indicated that being employed and having an income would help her and her family to ‘stand on their own two feet’ (Appendix 7, Field Notes, Entry 53, 23.10.12).

This section has provided a profile of participants, providing a description and analysis broadly focussing on children’s understandings of social justice and critical consciousness in relation to the drop-in centre, school, peers, authority figures and families/community members on the streets. The subsequent section provides an overview of children’s lived experiences and perspectives, using the resistance theory lens devised by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001).

6.4 Children's Lived Experiences and Perspectives

The previous section has provided a profile of child participants in order to broadly showcase children's lifeworlds, subjectivities, lived experiences and backgrounds. The previous section broadly highlights how children perceived and interacted with adults, peers, authorities and within educational contexts, thereby offering insight into some of children's experiences with critical consciousness and social justice. Extending on this, the current section details the exchanges of the focus children. In order to discern children's lived experiences and understandings of critical consciousness and social justice, children were asked to engage in communication exchanges (using dialogue, photography, writing, and art) to convey meanings. Importantly, in considering critical consciousness, children were also asked to later reflect on and analyse their ideas, actions and thoughts¹¹³ (see Chapter 4, section 4.12 for details). This section uses the framework developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) in order to further unpack children's lived experiences of social justice and critical consciousness. Drawing on the dataset, this section explores children's lived experiences of critical consciousness and social justice by using Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) lens. This section therefore considers children's demonstrations of conformist resistance, self-defeating resistance and transformative resistance. An overview of the intersection of children's lived experiences and understandings of critical consciousness and social justice are identified in Figure 6.2 below.

¹¹³ Although children did not always comment during the reflection and analysis process, this was particularly useful in discerning children's experiences and understandings of critical consciousness and social justice, and their processes of meaning making (see Chapter 4, section 4.12).

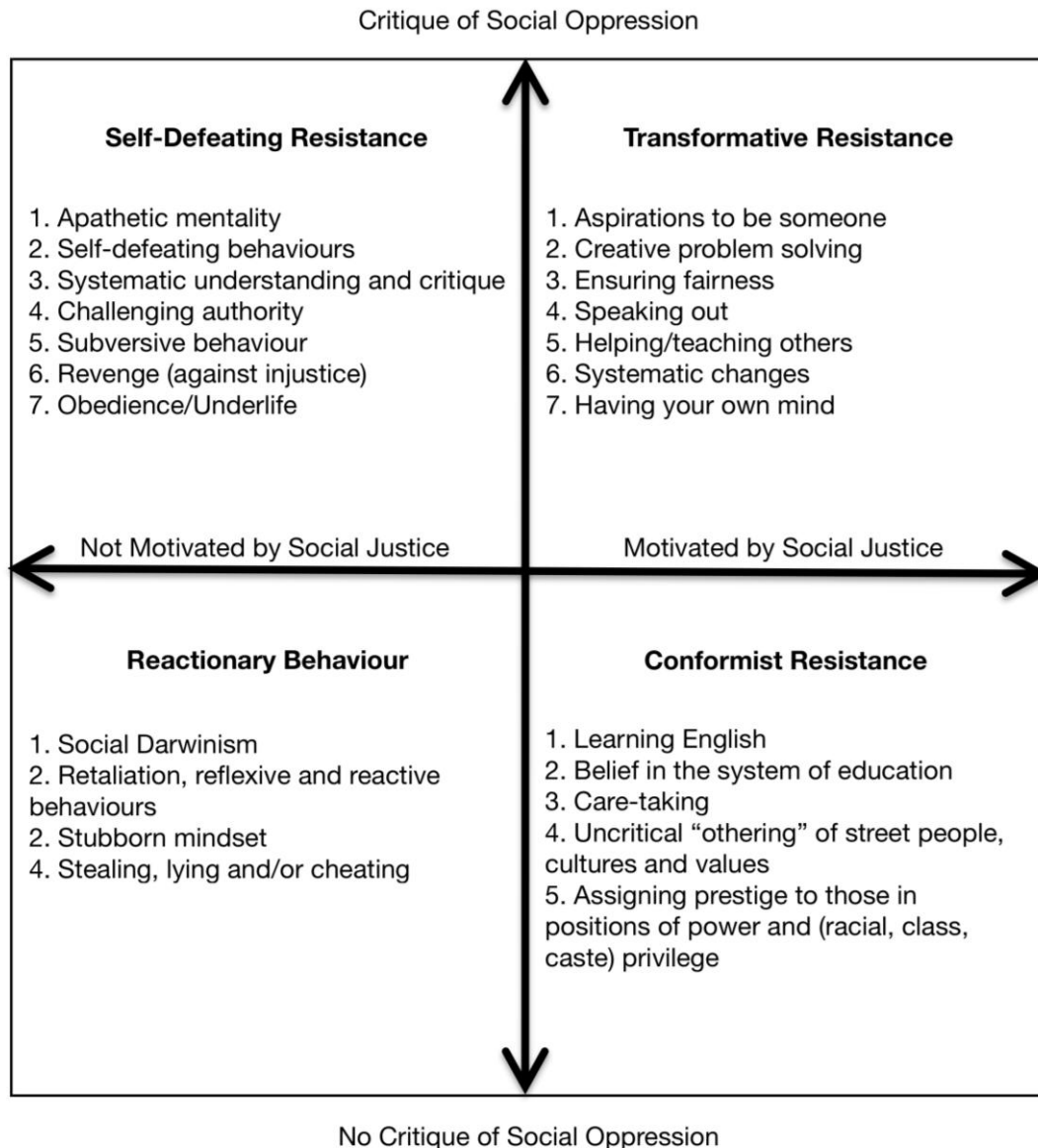


Figure 6.2. Overview of resistant behaviours displayed by children in this study, according to children's critical consciousness and motivation for social justice

Findings emerging from each of these quadrants are subsequently unpacked in this section. Expressions of conformist resistance are first discussed in order to show one aspect of children's motivation for social justice, before children's expressions of critical consciousness are conveyed through the analysis of data coded under self-defeating

resistance. The quadrant of reactionary behaviours is then briefly considered before children's expressions of transformative resistance (that is, experiences of critical consciousness *and* social justice) are delineated.

6.4.1 Conformist Resistance

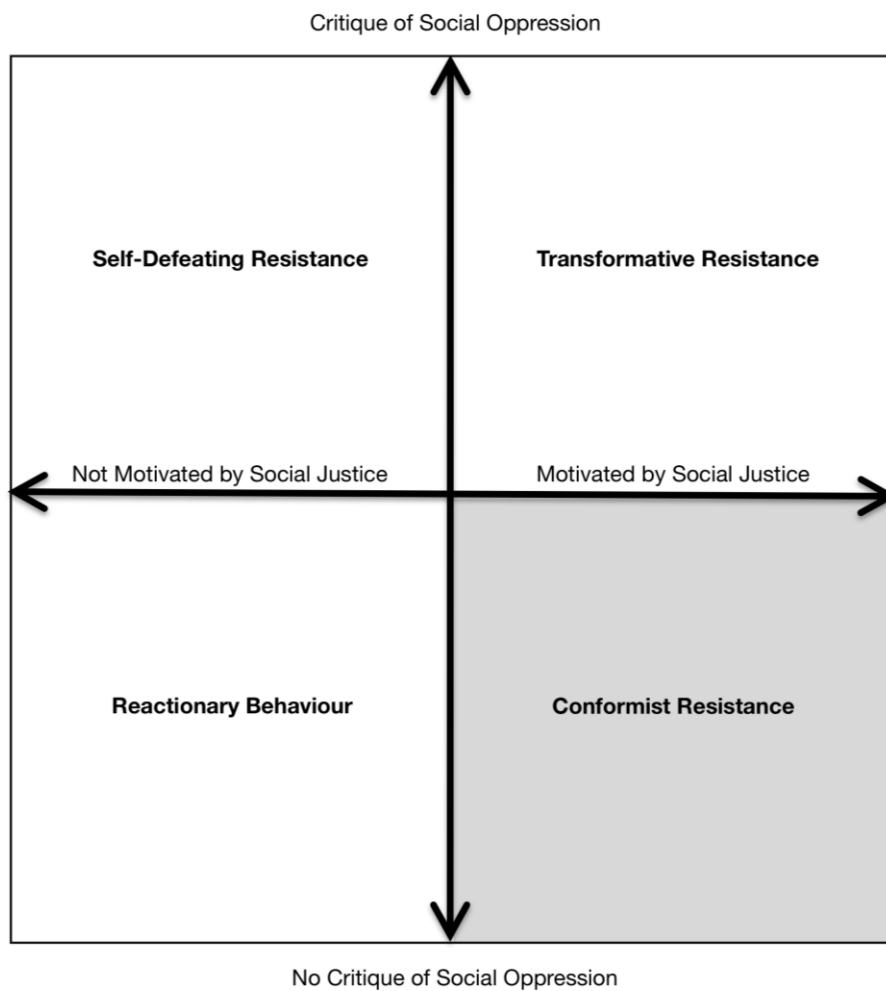


Figure 6.3. Conformist resistance

Conformist experiences and understandings were characterised by children being motivated by social justice (for self and others), however this desire was not coupled with critical consciousness. In this sense, many children were not aware or perhaps not able to

articulate their layered understandings of oppression. As the original creators of the resistance framework, Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) point out – conformist resistance implies that children “want life chances to get better for themselves and others but are likely to blame themselves, their families, or their culture for negative personal and social conditions” (p. 318). This thesis has used the parameters of this definition for conformist resistance set forward by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001). Thus, as these authors point out, social justice and individual ambition are not necessarily mutually exclusive. According to this definition, conformist resistance may be motivated by both individual ambition (“better for themselves”) as well as by broader motivations for social justice (“better for others”). Thus, according to these criteria, data showcasing children’s expressions of social justice (that is, where children were motivated to change some aspect of their world or lives for the betterment of self or others) – were coded and/or presented as conformist resistance. Thus, children’s understandings and experiences reflected the importance of using the existing systems and structures in order to have better life chances.

Focus children described:

- a. The importance of schooling,
- b. Learning English,
- c. Believing in the system,
- d. Hard work,
- e. Perseverance in improving life chances.

These sub-themes are detailed below.

6.4.1.1 Learning English.

The majority of children communicated the importance of being able to speak, read and write English, in order to have better life chances. Thus, children were motivated by an interest in social justice, as they perceived that this literary capacity would support their identity and life opportunities. However, where children did not question or articulate why English was privileged in society – this was coded as conformist resistance. Children’s privileging of English was highlighted through several examples within the data:

“If you speak in Hindi they will say ‘oh you don’t know anything, you are brainless’ but if you speak in English then they will know that you are good” (Rani, Female, 7, Observation 22, 6.9.12).

“Because from it [English] you get respect, and... if we stand in dirty clothes... they’ll think, what sort of person is this, and yet he spoke so well with us? Nowadays, Didi¹¹⁴, it’s like this only with English. You should only speak English” (Akbar, Male, 7.5, Observation 22, 6.9.12).

“You speak English, right, so you can travel, that’s why. If I could speak English, I would go around the whole world” (Birbal, Male, 7, Observation 31, 20.9.12).

¹¹⁴ Didi is a term literally meaning ‘older sister’ but is applied to an older female such as a teacher. It is used in this context to refer to the female teachers and volunteers at the centre.

6.4.1.2 Belief in the system of education.

The majority of children also demonstrated similar ideas about schooling and hard work as they perceived the importance of getting through school in order to achieve better life opportunities, thus portraying a belief in the system of education. However, where children were not critically conscious of the inequities and injustices prevalent with the heavily privatised and exclusive educational system, these understandings were subsumed under the theme of conformist resistance (see also Chapter 5, section 5.6.3 and 5.7):

“You have to go to school. If you don’t go to school, you can’t be a doctor or teacher... because if you can’t be a teacher, you can’t help others to learn” (Payal, Female, 5, Observation 43, 10.10.12).

“If you can go to school you can get a job, if you don’t you can’t do anything” (Akbar, Male, 7.5, Observation 43, 10.10.12).

During a one-on-one conversation about the importance of schooling (Observation 50, 25.10.12):

Rathore (Male, 8): It’s necessary to go to school...

Zinnia: And why is it important to go to school?

Rathore (Male, 8): School... School gives us... school makes us grow up and be good people. With school... it’s the good that’s [in] here [Rathore points at his head].

During a conversation about the meaning of “smart” or “intelligent” (Observation 43, 10.10.12):

Birbal (Male, 7): teachers do tests...

Zinnia: So tests tell you how smart you are?

Rani (Female, 7): ha, they tell us, if you’re stupid or smart or how smart, how good you’ve done. And that’s how smart you are...

Akbar (Male, 7.5): That’s why anyone who doesn’t go to school is stupid.

“Everything will be okay if you can go through school” (Payal, Female, 5.5, Observation 85, 18.1.13).

“We should learn to read and write in English” (Payal, Female, 5, Observation 72, 14.12.12).

During a socio-dramatic play where Rani (Female, 7) is pretending to be the teacher, she says to her ‘class’: “Come class. Come. Sit. Take out your books. Copy from the board, I will write [the lesson] up... open your notebooks. First...then second...” [After a while] she pretends to walk around the classroom, in between the rows of children, she stops over Sonakshi (Female, 4) and looks down on her work, saying ‘no, you are doing it WRONG! Bad girl, naughty girl! Stupid girl!’ When Rani was asked [about this incident] later, she said: “I have to scold her, or else she will only always get it wrong only. I have to say stupid girl, so she tries harder to do better work and go through school” (Observation 25, 11.9.12).

“There are things that I want to do, but you need to focus and study and not give up easy. Playing is important too, but you need to be serious when you grow up... because you have to take care of your family then” (Birbal, Male, 7, Observation 31, 20.9.12).

6.4.1.3 Care-taking.

The importance of maintaining wellbeing regardless of context, situation or condition was reiterated by some children as being an important factor in maintaining opportunities for betterment. As children did not address the underlying cause, or critique social factors influencing the lack of wellbeing, this was classified as a conformist understanding:

“In the centre, we get food, books, we get.... Uniforms! The Didis take us to get medicine when we get sick. So we have a nicer life, you know, so we can study better and do well and be better grown up people in life” (Akbar, Male, 7.5, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tour, Round 1, Picture 1, 17.10.12) (see Figure 6.4 below).



Figure 6.4. Akbar's (Male, 7.5) photograph of children getting food at the centre

“I help my Mummy, like Meena [book character]. I do cooking, cleaning, sweeping, washing, go help with throwing the lemons and many, many things... I take care of my sisters, I study also. We need to take care of them because then [we will] grow up and take care of them [parents]” (Rani, Female, 7, Observation 48, 20.10.12).

Children’s demonstrations of conformist resistance also at times highlighted that children were aware of interpersonal power dynamics and recognised conformity and the domination of adults (and the use of force or punishment) as positives, thereby showing how children themselves act as instruments of domination and reproduction.

“Sometimes... you need to punish [us] and listen [to us] immediately because otherwise you can’t say you’re getting this [punishment] for something that happened a long time ago [because then] that isn’t fair” (Rathore, Male, 8, Observation 72, 14.12.12).

“You can’t have a job if you don’t go to school” (Tara, Female, 4.5, Observation 79, 8.1.13).

During a conversation about how to facilitate fairness and equality in their own lives (Observation 72, 14.12.12):

Akbar (Male, 7.5): [we should] wear clean clothes and keep [our] skin clean from boils and nits...

Rathore (Male, 8): [We should] teach children to hide up high [away from the police and council]...

Arav (Male, 4.5): [You should] know about the [council] how to learn who to listen to and who to tell when the [council] is coming to take your things and house.

These conformist ideas show children's understanding of social justice concepts such as bettering life chances and caretaking. However, as children did not question the social and systematic components of these ideas, these highlight children's tendencies toward conformity. The next segment discusses perceptive quadrant of social justice and critical consciousness.

6.4.2 Self-defeating resistance.

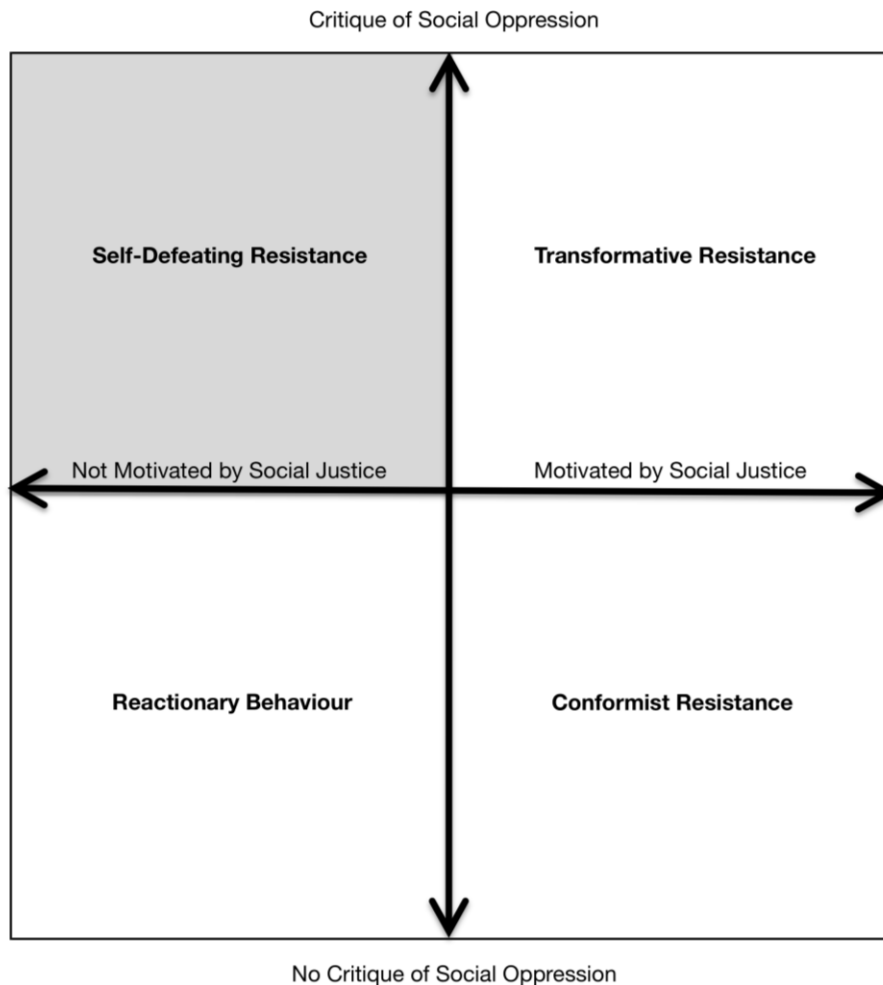


Figure 6.5. Self-defeating resistance

In this finding, children questioned, challenged or were aware of forms of social oppression or discrimination – however, whilst recognising the unjust nature of their reality, children did not act in the interest of social justice. Instead children perpetuated behaviours and actions that resulted in oppression or self-defeating practices. Children’s apathetic mentalities, self-defeating ideas, questioning and challenging ideas showed a sense of critical consciousness, but were not motivated by social justice. These behaviours and attitudes are described below.

6.4.2.1 Apathetic mentality.

This theme emerged as most children highlighted the importance of apathy, as a form of coping with injustice. Whilst recognising social inequities, injustices and discrimination, children portrayed a “that’s life” attitude, and were therefore not motivated by an interest in social justice or change. Many children adopted a “get over it” or apathetic attitude that assisted them in coping with, and moving forward from injustice. For example, children indicated:

“With teachers you don’t talk much, teachers only focus on the study, and they yell, they hit, that’s – you know, but then they hit and we forget about it. If we take tension about these small things, we’ll die early” (Akbar, Male, 7.5, Observation 60, 21.11.12).

“We know the [council] will come. They break [our] homes, but it doesn’t matter, we’ll make [our] homes again, so there’s no point in fighting. Not to get sad” (Arav, Male, 4.5, Observation 40, 4.10.12) (See Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.6. Arav's (Male, 4.5) drawing of the council burning homes

“They are just doing their job. It’s not their fault. They are just people like us. I think they must be poor also. You just feed them money and make them go away.”
(Rani, Female, 7, Photo Elicitation, Street Tour, Round 1, Picture 5, 31.10.12) (See Figure 6.7).



Figure 6.7. Rani's (Female, 7) photograph of the council "just doing their job"

6.4.2.2 Self-defeating behaviours.

Children's self-defeating behaviours were grounded in a critique of the lack of opportunities and the failure of the system to provide for all. However, whilst the majority of children were critical of social oppression, this manifested in ideas that perpetuated negative prophecies and ideas about their own life opportunities:

“If you're smart they send you to [an] English school, if you're not they send you to [a government] school... I always want[ed] to go to [an] English school... but now I'm seven already, so I'm too old to move school[s]... [even though] I asked if I could move. So I can't do anything now, nothing will happen with me” (Akbar, Male, 7, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tour, Round 2, 24.10.12).

“They’re not ever going to let me go to school. I’m not going to go to school. I’ll grow up and die in a fight” (Rathore, Male, 8, Observation 37, 28.9.12).

6.4.2.3 Systematic understanding and critique.

Similar to the above, many children’s critical, questioning and challenging behaviours were indicative of their consciousness of systematic injustice and inequities. However, where this awareness was not followed up by any subsequent endeavour or interest in social justice, it was characterised as being self-defeating. For example, displaying criticality of the power of authority figures, some children asked:

“All the time, it’s sit like this, do like this, ‘good boy’, ‘good girl’, ‘naughty boy’, ‘naughty girl’ ... they’re always only telling us what to do. But why?” (Rani, Female, 7, Observation 41, 5.10.12).

“Sometimes they don’t listen even when we say things, they just get mad without listening to why I might have done some wrong things. So why should I listen?” (Rathore, Male, 8, Observation 51, 27.10.12).

As well as engaging in a critique of teachers and volunteers, some children were also critical of broader government bodies (including the council and police) (see Chapter 5, section 5.9.5) and inequities:

During a socio-dramatic playing of ‘house’, Rani (Female, 7) commented that, “the [council] came and they took all the things at my Aunty’s house, they came and

they did, they beat everyone up and everyone was hurt badly... that's not right, is it, Didi? They can move you, but why should they hit you?... Yes, they wouldn't do that to the big [rich] people, if had to leave their house, but they wouldn't [have to] anyway" (Observation 60, 20.11.12).

Rani: It's a hospital.

Zinnia: Oh is it? I thought it was a hotel.

Rani: No, it's a hospital... but only for big people ('big' in this instance referring not to age, but to status)

Zinnia: Oh is it? I thought hospital means for everyone?

Rani: Noo Didi! Hospital... (clicks tongue) hospital, see, my hospital is in [near a far away station] – Didi takes us when we are sick. It's a hospital ... and it's a doctor. That hospital (pointing) is only for big people, and lots of doctors who speak English see – for big people, and foreigners who speak English. People with money, not people like us (Observation 8, 13.8.12) (see Figure 6.8).



Figure 6.8. Rani's (Female, 7) photograph of her home against the hospital

“But if people shouldn’t steal things, like the [council] is kind of stealing our things, aren’t they?” (Krish, Male, 4.5, Observation 40, 4.10.12).

Birbal (Male, 7) narrated the following story: “the police come and say to the shop owner, ‘close down this shop’. The police take money from the shop and leave. Then the police go and take money from the Eunuchs. The Eunuchs kill the policeman’s Mother and Father. So then the policeman gets upset and he gets on a cow and runs away. [Later,] the policeman gives the money he stole to a criminal. Then the policeman comes back and puts the criminal into jail. Then when he is in the jail, the policeman beats the criminal up (a lot, a lot!). Not only does the policeman beat the criminal, he finds the criminal’s Mother, Father and Sister and he beats them all up too. Then the policeman kills everyone in the whole wide

world. The End.” In later reflections on this story, he noted, that: “sometimes the police are not good because instead of helping sometimes they just beat everyone” (Observation 34, 25.09.12) (see Figure 6.9 below).

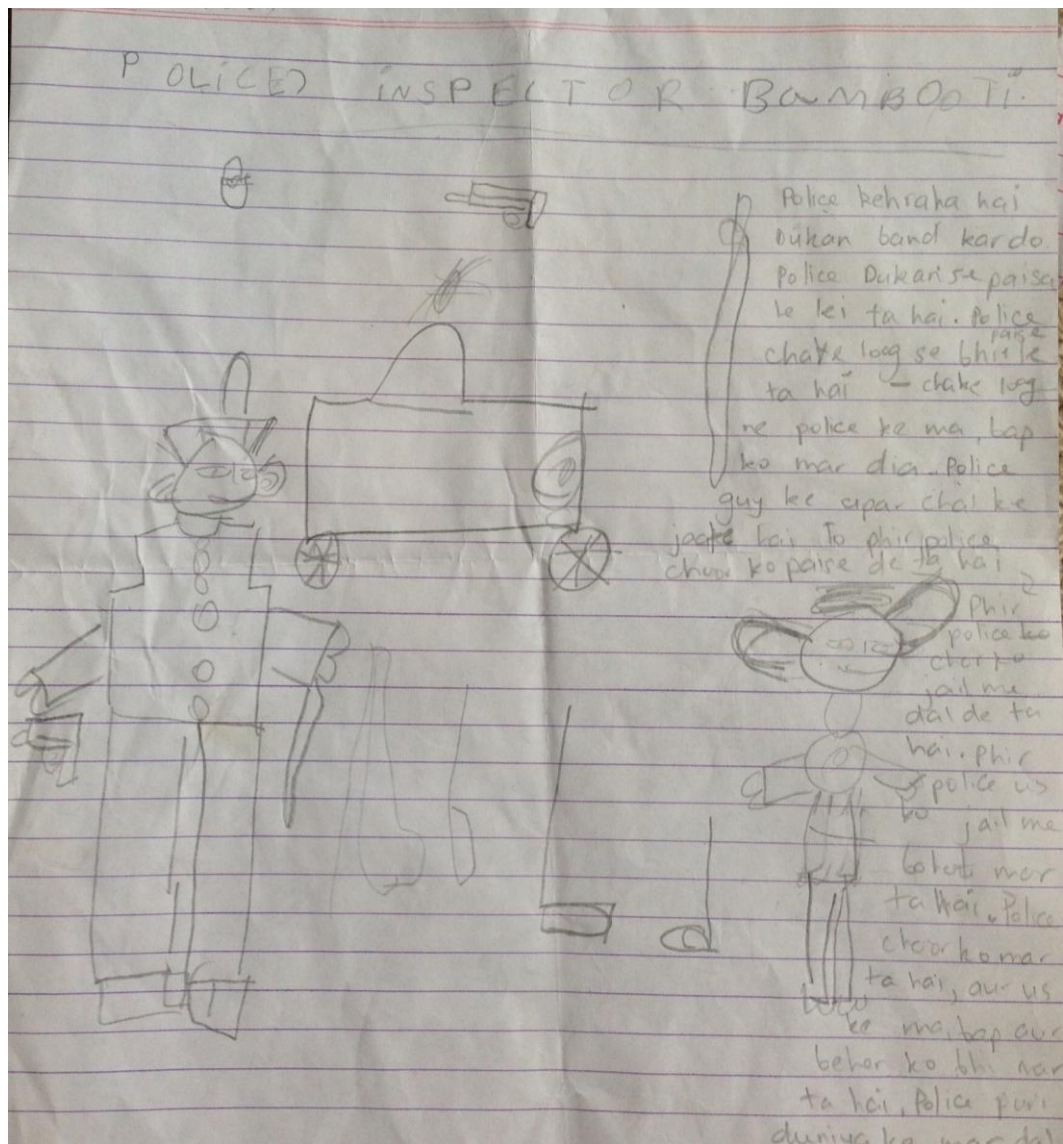


Figure 6.9. Birbal's (Male, 7) story: Police, inspector, bambooti

Both school-going children also forwarded critiques of the school system:

“Everybody has problems but school eats my brain. I don’t know why they want to be teaching us science anyway, I’m not going to be a scientist when I grow up” (Rani, Female, 7, Observation 61, 21.11.12).

“Teachers don’t explain anything to us. They don’t help us to understanding the meaning of anything. So [these are] some schools problems” (Akbar, Male, 7.5, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tour, Round 1, 17.10.12).

The majority of children also challenged broader forms of authority in subversive and covert ways, showing resistant critiques of those in positions of power:

Rathore (Male, 8) runs out onto the footpath behind Sonakshi (Female, 4) and I. Sonakshi and I take a seat on the stairs of the station as we wait for Ria Didi. Rathore stops on his run to us, he turns around and catches a nearby police cohort walking by on the street. He does not point this out to Sonakshi or myself; Sonakshi points them out to me. Meanwhile, Rathore takes two almost unnoticeable steps closer to us and in exaggerated movements, mimics the salute of a police officer to the police officers as they are walking by some 10-20 metres from where he stands. As he stands, soldier straight, with his salute to the police, the police notice him, and then give him a dismissive nod and wave him off with one hand as they continue to walk by. Rathore begins to laugh as he mutters, just audibly enough for Sonakshi and I to hear; ‘you sister fucker, mother fucker’... He

continues to laugh at his own joke and when he turns around in an abrupt move, dropping the salute and soldier pose, he sees Sonakshi giggling, and he breaks into open laughter with her before running off up the station stairs to find Ria Didi (Observation 57, 8.11.12).

Several children also discussed several instances of fair and unfair treatment, thereby demonstrating that children were aware of the ways in which cultural, patriarchal or systematic injustices manifested in reality.

After reading a picture book about stopping ‘dowry’ practices, three children talk about caste, dowry and marriages (Observation 45, 12.10.12):

Akbar (Male, 7.5): people have to be of the same religion, and the same skin-colour, and the same money and everything. So a rich – girl’s family has to pay more for a rich boy, so rich-rich go together, that’s how it works...

Birbal (Male, 7): Yeah, like how I’m an OBC, I’m stuck to marry an OBC.

During a conversation about what could be done to make things fair and equal for children (Observation 70, 11.12.12), Akbar (Male, 7.5) says, “we could go to the [council]’s houses and set their houses on fire!”

During a socio-dramatic play, two children explain what it means to be a “good girl”:

Rani (Female, 7): It means... you cook and care for your family, and you... you... do things for them before yourself.

Tara (Female, 4.5): It means you don't speak.

Zinnia: Don't speak?

Tara (Female, 4.5): Yeah, you don't say anything, and you smile and make them tea and be... like this [pretends to shyly hide her face with a pretend sari and then giggles with Rani].

During study time, two children talk to a volunteer about school subjects

(Observation 61, 21.11.12):

Akbar (Male, 7.5): History and geography are also stupid. What do you have to learn history for? Can't even do anything with that.

Birbal (Male, 7): What's geography?

[Volunteer 1]: It's like different countries and all.

Birbal (Male, 7): Oh America, London like that.

[Volunteer 1]: Yeah.

Birbal (Male, 7): No one needs that also.

[Volunteer 1]: You need it for flying on planes.

Birbal (Male, 7): We don't need it. We're never going to fly on a plane.

6.4.2.4 Obedience and underlife.

The final self-defeating behaviour involved obedience – this was an “underlife” behaviour (Schutz, 2004) – which was identified by a few focus children who, at times, discussed the importance of being silent to avoid negative repercussions after an event occurred. It was therefore critically conscious but stemming from a perceived or real lack of power and was evidenced by the following instructions, dominant ways of being, or

authorities. It was therefore critically conscious but not motivated by social justice or transformation.

Bhijali [Female, 3.5]... does not... seem overly concerned about being told off...[but she] looks at Kamal Didi with an angry look, [and] simply mutters under her breath, a string of (what sounds like) angry [and] venomous curses, then [she] nods her head, as if to say “I showed you”... [a little later] her head drops, and she picks up the pencil and pretends to do her “writing” as... Kamal Didi looks back in her direction (Observation 53, 31.10.12).

“You just only have to be quiet and do what teacher says, otherwise you will get into trouble if you tell your idea[s]” (Rani, Female, 7, Observation 25, 11.9.12).

The dissection of children’s self-defeating behaviours shows the many layers to young children’s thinking and consciousness. The next segment unpacks the reactive interaction between critical consciousness and social justice.

6.4.3 Reactionary Behaviour

Children’s reactionary behaviours were characterised by neither critical consciousness, nor by an interest in social justice. Reactionary behaviours were unaware and/or uncritical, and they unwittingly reproduced oppression and inequality. Reactive behaviours involved violence, obedience, and reflexive tactics for survival, and were therefore not motivated by social justice. Reactive behaviours tended to be conducted out of spite or revenge, and as such, they occurred without critical consciousness or a

motivation for social justice. Thus, as this thesis focuses on children's experiences of critical consciousness and social justice, and as 'reactionary behaviours' are not indicative of children's experiences of critical consciousness and/or social justice, findings and themes occurring under these behaviours have been excluded as this sub-set of findings does not directly address the central research questions outlined in the thesis (see Chapter 1, Section 1.6).

6.4.4 Transformative Resistance

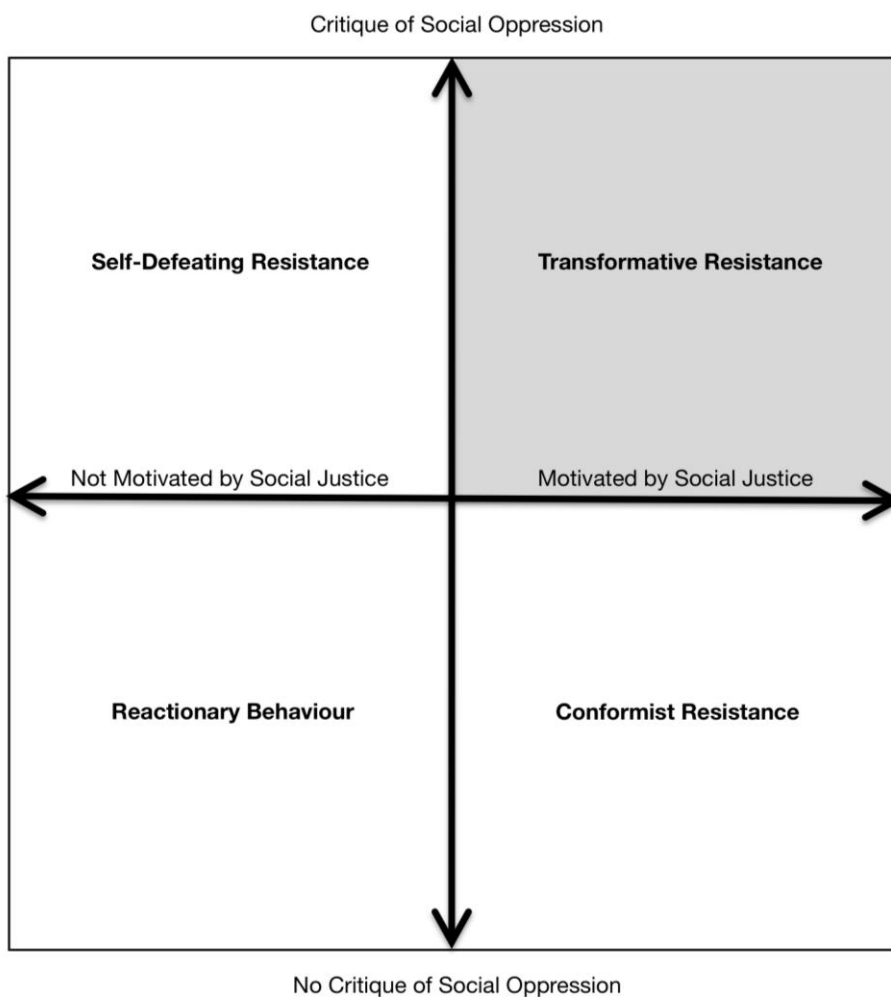


Figure 6.10. Transformative resistance

The final quadrant showing the intersection of social justice and critical consciousness discusses transformative praxis. Findings were categorised as transformative if they were motivated by social justice *and* demonstrated an awareness and critique of social, political, economic, cultural and/or historical oppression. Transformative behaviours included dreaming and planning to “be someone”, creative problem solving, ensuring fairness and justice, helping others, independent acts that were grounded in the desire to “stand on one’s own two feet”, and aspirations for teaching others social justice principles.

6.4.4.1 Aspirations and plans to be someone.

Children’s aspirations and plans to be someone, demonstrated critical consciousness as children recognised obstacles whilst maintaining hope for their future. This also involved plans to be someone in non-traditional ways that did not rely on (or circumnavigated) oppressive systems – such as schools. For the most part, these intentions to be someone were resistant as children were a) aware of stereotypes or societal projections of the capabilities of street children, but b) children were still able to visualise “happy endings” for themselves. The majority of children shared these thoughts:

“You study or you marry so that you’re not a burden on your family... if you had money, it wouldn’t matter but we are not rich... I’m going to grow up and be a beautician” (Tara, Female, 4.5, Observation 11, 17.8.12).

“I want to become great and earn lots of money, I want to play for now also, but [I will] no matter how hard I have to work” (Krish, Male, 4.5, Field Notes, Entry 47, 10.10.12)

The children sit with another teacher and I at the centre and start drawing/talking about what ‘being someone’ and what they would like to be when they grow up (Observation 80, 9.1.13):

Krish (Male, 4.5): [being someone means] having money and doing what you want...

Payal (Female, 5): I will... be a dancer...

Arav (Male, 4.5): I will have my own car!...

Bhijali (Female, 3.5): [Having a] house.

Tara (Female, 4.5): I want to have my own [beauty] salon and will... help my brothers and sisters to have money.

Sonakshi (Female, 4.5): [I want to] wear rings and gold...

Payal (Female, 5): ...and eat [lots of] cake whenever you want!

6.4.4.2 Creative problem solving.

A few children also exhibited creative problem solving skills. These resulted in children resisting or circumnavigating the oppression they faced in their everyday lives.

This was considered transformative as it was a) pushed by an interest in social justice and b) critically conscious of conditions of oppression and discrimination¹¹⁵:

This [Saturday] is the one day of the week where children are allowed to watch television in the centre. Aman, (who is a male teenager) comes in to the centre as the children are watching the TV. Before Aman's arrival into the centre, a movie for younger children had been chosen due to the lack of availability of other films. This is a rare occurrence as younger children did not often seem to have much of a say in regards to what was showing on the television on Saturday afternoons, because nearly all children of all ages are in the centre watching during this time. Despite this, all the children were sitting and watching (the Barbie version of the Three Musketeers) and there seemed to be a fair level of engagement from all the children ... At approximately 2/3rds through the film, Aman comes into the centre. Without asking permission from the staff, (who were all sitting watching with the children), Aman stops the playback of the film and takes out the disc. The staff call

¹¹⁵ As section 3.2.2.1 identifies, the definition of social justice used in this thesis encompasses "the active (ethical, political, social, cultural, economic, axiological) and critically conscious struggle for transformation (that is, access, participation, inclusion, equity for all persons), against all forms of discrimination, exclusion, inequality, unfairness, marginalisation and oppression" (pp. 97-98). In accordance with the parameters of this definition, both the situations under this section (creative problem solving) have been characterised as 'motivated by social justice' since in both situations, children are actively – if silently – and critically struggling against authoritarian rule and unfair/unequal treatment. For example, Sonakshi works out a way to 'obey' and 'disobey' rules and authority in order to resist against an arbitrary "rule" by finding a creative (non-conforming, divergent) solution to her problem. In doing so, she shows awareness of the arbitrary rule, and is motivated to act against it in a way that does not invite punishment. Whilst Rathore is physically and verbally challenging the hierarchy of "who matters" in the centre by removing himself and his friends from an unfair situation, he is seeking to redress this balance by protesting against this treatment of himself and his peers. Thus, these examples demonstrate that a motivation for social justice and "making the best out of a bad job" may not necessarily be mutually exclusive since children's intents to "better" situations for themselves or others align with their challenging of unfair or authoritarian situations. Thus, as examples align with the definition of social justice set forth in section 3.2.2.1 of the thesis, these examples have been classified as 'motivated by social justice'.

out to him to stop, but he disregards this saying, ‘this is rubbish, I have something better’. Despite their efforts at telling Aman to put the film on after this one finishes, or the calls of unfairness (from both older and younger children), Aman puts in the movie and begins to watch (the staff eventually give up) and the majority of children settle to watch the next film – a Bollywood film, an apparent comedy about a violent Policeman. Rathore (Male, 8), visibly angry that nothing is being done about this, stands up, yells an eloquent string of curses and in the same breath rounds up his group of younger friends and peers and takes them outside to play (Observation 24, 8.9.12).

Sonakshi (Female, 4) has just come to the centre carrying a brand new backpack (with a happy bear on the cover) and a lunchbox. As it comes time for lunch, the children all sit in a line and wait for the ‘Didi’s’ to call them up to have their lunch. Sonakshi waits patiently, holding the lunchbox in her hand. When her name is called she takes the lunchbox up and holds it out indicating that she would like food in the lunchbox in no uncertain terms. The Didi refuses - ‘everyone must eat in the Thali’ she says, ‘besides, don’t get your new lunchbox dirty just now. Have your dinner in it when you get home.’ The teacher proceeds to give Sonakshi a Thali with food on it. Sonakshi takes the Thali, sits down quietly and then goes, fills water in the lunchbox and using the spoon (that came with the lunchbox) ‘drinks’ water from it, whilst still continuing to eat from the Thali (Observation 64, 28.11.12) (see Figure 6.11).



Figure 6.11. Sonakshi (Female, 4) drinking water from her new lunchbox

6.4.4.3 Ensuring fairness.

Most children also expressed the importance of ensuring fairness for all. These children's recognition of the importance of fairness involved both a) the recognition that reality can be unfair, and b) the struggle to change experiences of unfairness:

After breaking his roti in half and sharing it with his best friend, “everyone should get half and half, if they don’t then it isn’t fair... [and] it makes me angry when you don’t share, so here, next time, you share” (Arav, Male, 4.5, Observation 9, 14.8.12).

“At least out of 8 things, give me 4. Half and half, if you give her 8 and give me 5... I will fight and I will win” (Rani, Female, 7, Field Notes, Entry 35, 19.9.12).

“I’m a good [older] brother, I take care of them [two younger brothers]... I make sure – they have enough to play, or they play together nicely, with respect” (Akbar, 7.5, Male, Observation 61, 21.11.12).

When the boys have been on the swing too long and they are not getting up, I tell them “Go from here now!” or I tell them “I’ll tell Didi!” and then if they tell me to go away, I go and tell Didi that, “Didi, Didi, look they are not getting up” (Payal, 5, Female, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tour, Round 3, Picture 4, 19.10.12) (see Figure 6.12).



Figure 6.12. Payal's (Female, 5) photograph of boys not sharing swings

6.4.4.4 Speaking out.

Within the transformative quadrant, data showed that the majority of children were conscious of the importance of changing the oppressive practices of others (such as parents and peers). In this regard, children sometimes spoke out defiantly, against elders:

“Sometimes, my Ma drinks and yells at me and hits me so then I yell at her and tell her she shouldn’t drink. I know she will be angry but I have to tell her” (Akbar, Male, 7.5, Observation 74, 20.12.12).



Figure 6.13. Payal's (Female, 5) photograph of where she thinks the vans come to give children biscuits and kidnap them.

“When the people¹¹⁶ come with biscuits, you have to yell and spit and scream loudly... to tell them to go away and to make sure someone hears you, turns to see you so they can’t take you and... I scream at them “TAKE YOUR BISCUIT! I DON’T WANT YOUR BISCUIT! YOU GO!” (Payal, Female, 5, Photo Elicitation, Street Tour, Round 3, Picture 3, 9.1.13).

“If anyone comes even close to touch my sister, I scream [at them] like a crazy person!” (Rani, Female, 7, Observation 54, 1.11.12).

Bhijali (Female, 3.5) sits down next to Shreya Didi and plays with the two dolls given to her... [Later] Rathore (Male, 8) comes to try to play with Bhijali, she looks up at him sceptically, holds her dolls close, and says in a voice that is clear, but not in any particular language, some kind of scolding, it is her tone that is threatening along with the hand she waves at him. She holds out her right hand, open palm, in front of her face and directs it at him, she shakes her hand in small side-to-side movements as if to say ‘I will hit you’ and in the same clear and loud tone, (again in no particular language) she scolds him to stay away. He understands (that she does not want to play) and annoyed, picks up one of her dolls and throws it to the side, saying as he goes ‘I don’t want to play with your stupid doll anyway’, as she screams. Shreya Didi tells Rathore off... Bhijali retrieves her discarded doll

¹¹⁶ People here is referring to kidnappers who roam the streets looking for street children that they can steal and make into beggars, families explained that street children were targeted for this, and that there were several ‘gangs’ that ran this ‘business’, in which street children are taken and forced to beg (see Field Notes, Appendix 7).

and returns to sit where she was, shifting closer in to Shreya Didi (Observation 47, 19.10.12).

“People [tourists] come na... they come to see the beach... bring their cameras, [if] they stop to take [a] photo of me, I say ‘Ayee’, [then switching to English] ‘NO PHOTO’! ... Just ‘because they want to see how poor people live’, that’s what Ma says” (Rani, Female, 7, Observation 84, 17.01.13).

6.4.4.5 Helping and teaching others social justice.

Some children also spoke about the importance of helping others (in the everyday context of their immediate lives, but also as adults), noting the importance of relationships, social networks and person-to-person support in ensuring broader changes. Children unpacked and analysed how teaching other social justice principles could help raise awareness and understanding:

“You can teach others about what is right and wrong” (Tara, Female, 4.5, Observation 72 revisitation, 18.12.12).

“Once you think and understand why something is right and wrong, you can teach others to think so they can do it also” (Rathore, Male, 8, Observation 72, 14.12.12).

“You can sit children in a circle and make them all sit and understand too. So you teach others once you know” (Birbal, Male, 7, Observation 70, 11.12.12).

“Like say if a poor blind man comes to ask you, ‘what’s this written?’ then you can say to him, like here, Uncle, this address is saying this here and it’s here, so you can help people if you know how to read and write” (Rani, Female, 7, Observation 11, 17.8.12).

After narrating and drawing a story about kidnappers, two children discuss why stories can be important and useful in teaching (Observation 83, 16.1.13):

Payal (Female, 5): [stories] can be used to teach other children about being smart...

Rani (Female, 7): [our story is] a good one, it tells how to be clever because it tells you to – that you need to be crazy and strong and to fight back.

Zinnia: So [stories] can teach you how to be strong and smart?

Rani (Female, 7): Yes and to fight back...

Payal (Female, 5): Yeah [because] to be smart is to have your own mind and take care of yourself and your family so the story can teach you that.

Some children also discussed ways in which interpersonal and systematic forms of injustice and unfairness could be challenged or changed. That is, children discussed both what they could do for each other, peers and the community (interpersonal) as well as what could be done more broadly (systematic) to effect change. Thus, children demonstrated that they were capable of sharing critiques of social oppression, as well as that they were motivated by an interest in social justice.

During a conversation about what could be done to make things fair and equal for all street children (Observation 70, 11.12.12):

Rani (Female, 7): People should share their money.

Bhijali (Female, 3.5): Yeah.

Rani (Female, 7): And their house.

Rathore (Male, 8): [Shaking his head and clicking his tongue] People want their own things.

Birbal (Male, 7): Yeah I'm not going to share my house with you!

Payal (Female, 5): I'll share – I'll open a night shelter for all girls.

During a conversation about how to facilitate fairness and equality in their own lives (Observation 72, 14.12.12):

Rathore (Male, 8): You can go on TV, on the news [to raise awareness]

Arav (Male, 4.5): [We could] learn things from law-men [lawyers]...

Tara (Female, 4.5): Tell Didi [at the centre] when something bad is happening so [that] they can help...

Akbar (Male, 7.5): We should have homes but the homes should be where we are – not somewhere far away because we live here, we work here, school is here, so this is our place and we should be able to stay here.

Sitting in mixed groups with Yash (Male, 17), five children talk to him about ways to teach people in their community about fairness (Observation 73, 18.12.12):

Rathore (Male, 8): What about [teaching] the people who can't read?

Birbal (Male, 7): [We can] make it a video?...

Akbar (Male, 7.5): But where would you play it? No one has video.

Sonakshi (Female, 4.5): Put it on TV?

Rathore (Male, 8): Idiot, people don't just go on TV – there are channels and someone has to decide it.

Yash (Male, 17): You can put it on the computer [internet]... but then no one from [the community] will see it – it will be only all strangers.

Zinnia: What about a play?

Yash (Male, 17): Like when people come to see you on the street – police won't like that... but we could do it in the centre?

Rani (Female, 7): And use one of our stories?

Zinnia: Yeah.

Overall, transformative practices involved both oppositional and creative mechanisms for resisting and opening spaces for change. The majority of children engaged with transformational resistance, thereby demonstrating their power, participation and agency. It also shows the diverse ways in which children demonstrate critical consciousness, motivation for social justice and “other” transformative and resistant ways of thinking, being and doing.

The previous section has provided an overview of the findings according to the lens provided by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001). Using the four quadrants detailed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001), findings highlighted the ways in which children demonstrate critical consciousness, social justice and resistance. The following section provides a summary of the findings and makes links to the subsequent discussion chapter.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter began by outlining the research questions answered throughout this chapter. The framework for mapping social justice and critical consciousness developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) was explained, and limitations and differences in its use and application to this study were discussed. A detailed profile of participants was then provided before the framework developed by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) was used through this chapter to map the geography of current findings. The framework was used as a lens to relate the interconnectedness between children's experiences and understandings of critical consciousness and social justice. In using this framework, the findings for the current research demonstrate children's reactionary behaviours, self-defeating resistance, conformist resistance and transformative resistance.

It was shown that the focus children in this study displayed behaviours that fit within the four categories provided by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal's (2001) framework. This study finds that despite participants' experiences of marginalisation and oppression, the children in this study demonstrated the ability to "think beyond borders" by being critically conscious and motivated by social justice (transformative resistance). The implications of children's expressions of conformist, self-defeating and transformative resistance are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The central research question for the current study sought to investigate how young street children's lived experiences and understandings of critical consciousness were demonstrated and supported emerging concepts of social justice. Sub-questions addressed; How do young children experience and demonstrate a) critical consciousness and b) social justice? These questions were investigated through the use of phenomenology and the Mosaic approach. The previous chapter presented multiple forms of data to provide insights into young street children's lived experiences, and their demonstrated understandings of critical consciousness and social justice. The previous chapter also presented a lens, adapted from the work of Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001), which was used to illuminate the intersection between children's critical consciousness and their motivation toward social justice (see Chapter 6, section 6.2 for an overview of the application of this framework to the current study).

This chapter provides a discussion of key themes emerging from this research in the context of the broader literature. This chapter further reviews implications for research, policy and practice before providing an overall conclusion for the thesis.

7.2 Overview of Findings

Using the lens provided by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001), it was shown that the majority of child participants in this study were critically conscious and/or were driven by social justice, in primarily resistant or oppositional ways. However, most of the children in this study were also shown to have accepted dominant ways of thinking, being

and doing. The findings showed that many children demonstrated *conformist* forms of resistance, which indicates a lack of critique of social oppression. Most children also demonstrated reactionary behaviours, which were not critically conscious or motivated by social justice¹¹⁷. Similar to the work of Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001), findings from the current study coalesced into three major behavioural themes. These are 1) self-defeating resistance, 2) conformist resistance, and 3) transformative resistance. These themes are described below.

In the context of this study, *self-defeating resistance* was epitomised by children challenging and critiquing oppressive systems, people and practices. This theme describes children's expressions of critical consciousness that were accompanied by apathy, self-defeating behaviours¹¹⁸, or a sense of justice that seeks to reinforce domination and oppression through revenge, punishment and/or sub-oppression¹¹⁹ over others. Therefore within this theme children were seen to demonstrate a critical understanding of oppressive elements in society, however children did not appear to be motivated by an interest in social justice to change or challenge these oppressions.

¹¹⁷ This particular finding is not unpacked in this thesis, as reactionary behaviours are not seen to be critically conscious or motivated by social justice (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). However, further research into the impetus and impact of reactionary behaviours would be valuable to investigate in a separate study.

¹¹⁸ As described in the Chapter 6, self-defeating behaviours refer to those actions that recognise oppression, and the effects of oppression upon individuals – however; this recognition is not accompanied by motivation to change life for the better. Thus, self-defeating behaviours predict the impact of oppression upon the self or group, for example, young children in this study believing that their futures are bleak because they do not attend English schools presents an example of self-defeating behaviour.

¹¹⁹ Sub-oppression is a term characterised by Freire (1970) who uses it to refer to oppressed groups that internalise the oppressor and thus seek to perpetuate violence or the continuation of systematic oppression through acting in the interests of the status quo (and against that of their class, caste, culture, identity and/or comrades).

Conversely, *conformist resistance* refers to children's demonstrations of a will and intent to change their world and lives for the better, but without critical attention being paid to oppressive, exclusionary or discriminatory factors. This finding highlights children's desire for changes, which are rooted in a continued use of existing systems and practices. Conformist resistance in this study was indicative of children accepting existing ideologies, authorities, systems and practices. That is, children indicated a desire for changing themselves to fit within the system (rather than changing the system) – thus reflecting the view that the “other” is inferior.

The final theme emerging from this research highlights children's critical consciousness and social justice emerging through transformative resistance. *Transformative resistance* involved children demonstrating both critical consciousness and an active interest in social justice in the attempt to improve their lives and the lives of others. Children's transformative behaviours encompassed children challenging and changing taken-for-granted assumptions, behaviours and practices through both overt and covert forms of critically informed resistance, creative problem solving, aspiring/dreaming and through ensuring fairness for all (via participation, inclusion, access and equity). Children showed awareness of ethical and political powers and practices but recognised alternative avenues or resisted common pathways and ideas in order to make their own path towards emancipation and social justice.

Using the framework provided by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) (see Figure 7.1 and 7.2 below) to address the research question and sub-questions, it is evident

that children's experiences of critical consciousness in this study (sub-question one) showcase children's self-defeating and transformative resistance (see Figure 7.1).

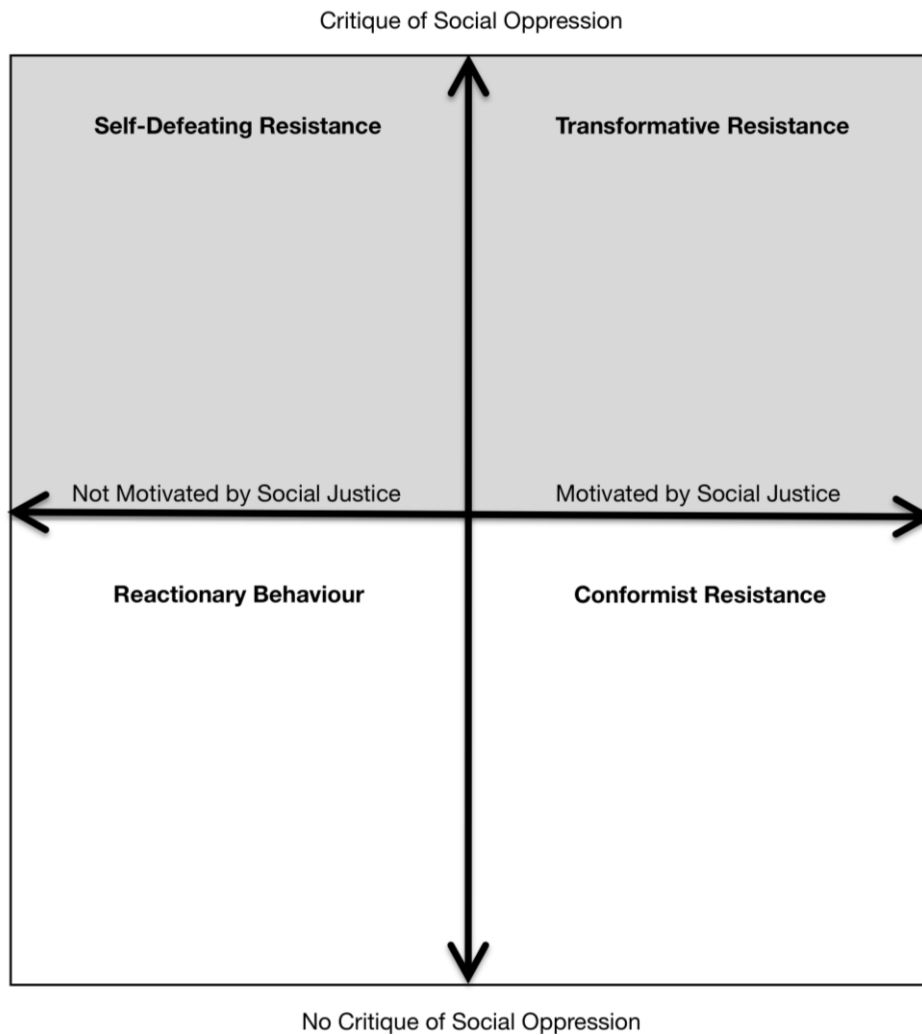


Figure 7.1. Children's experiences of critical consciousness

Conversely, children's experiences of social justice (sub-question two) are captured by the themes of conformist resistance and transformative resistance (see also Figure 7.2).

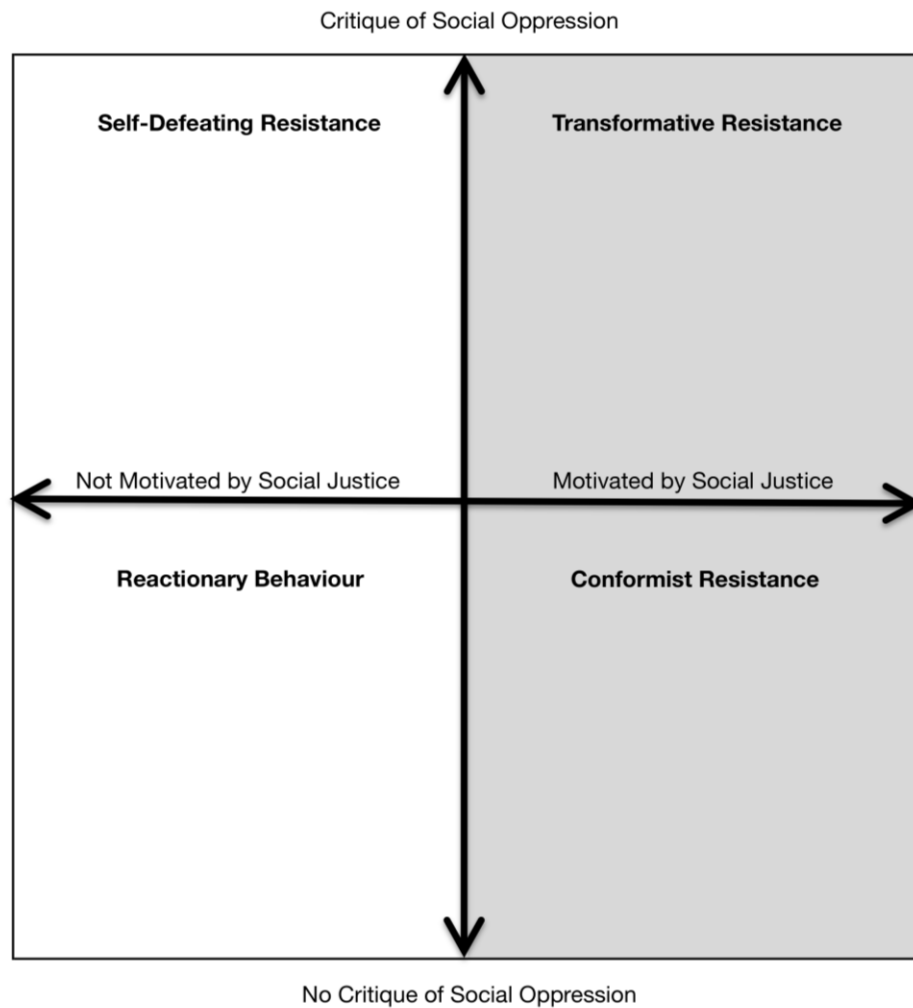


Figure 7.2. Children's experiences of social justice

Thus, whilst children's experiences of critical consciousness and social justice are evidenced by these three themes (self-defeating, conformist and transformative resistance), the overlap of children's experiences of critical consciousness *and* social justice emerges only through children's demonstrations of transformative resistance.

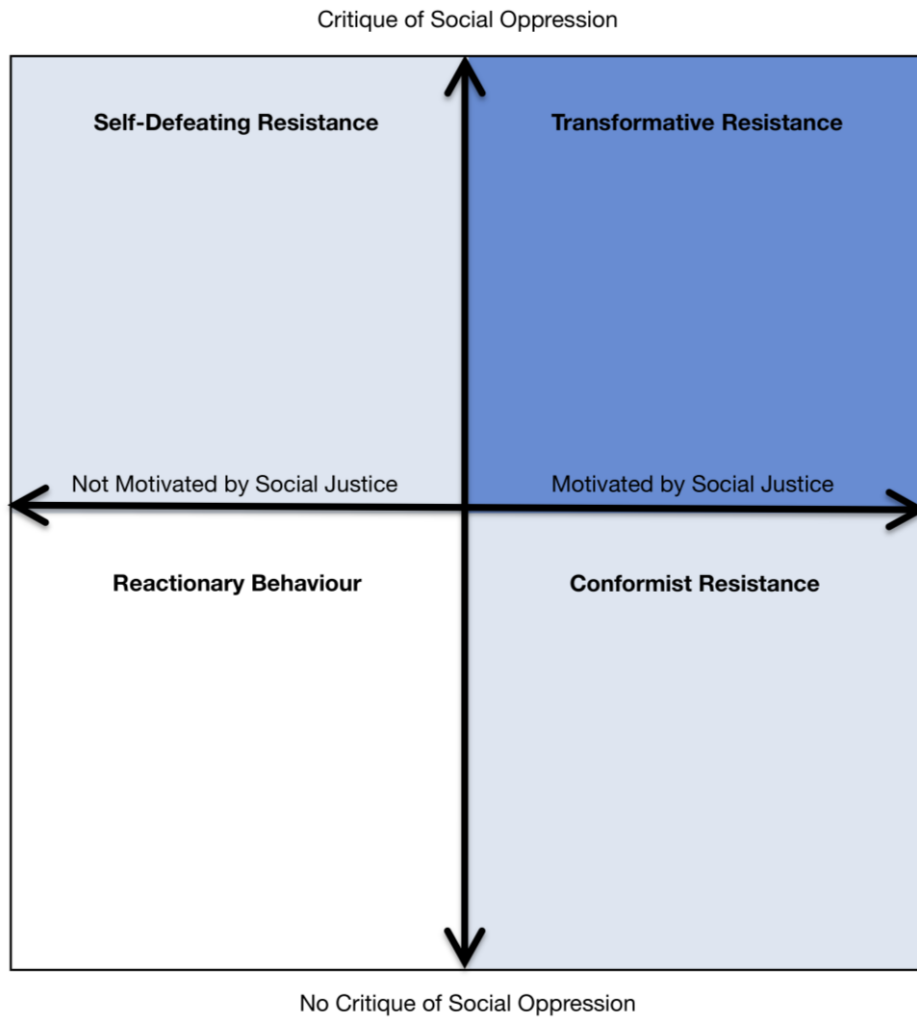


Figure 7.3. Children's experiences of social justice and critical consciousness

Recognisably, these themes were neither static nor wholly distinct from one another, as children's behaviours and demonstrated understandings were shown to be fluid, changing and complex (as lived experiences are themselves). As such, children's choices and actions were shown to be contextual, occurring within the contested spaces filled with the many (and at times contradictory) ideas, ethics, practices, powers and perspectives evident in their lives.

This section has provided an overview of the key findings emerging from this research with young children. The subsequent section discusses these findings in the context of the broader literature. An explanation of the key themes unpacked and the outline of the discussion are detailed in the subsequent section.

7.3 Discussion of Findings

This discussion chapter contextualises this study's main findings against a broader research tapestry, using critical pedagogy and literature in the field of resistance theory, critical consciousness¹²⁰ and ECD to examine the significance of this study's findings. This chapter discusses three key themes, these are:

Theme 1. Ideology and the influence of neoliberalism and child development on
young children's lived experiences

Theme 2. Behaviour as a form of communication

Theme 3. Underlife resistance and the pedagogy of indignation

Drawing on the findings from the current research regarding children's self-defeating resistance, the first theme considers the ideological influence of neoliberal discourses in dividing and marginalising children. Discussion of this theme involves unpacking findings reporting children's conformist and self-defeating resistance. The second theme explores the notion of children's oppositional behaviours being a form of communication. The third theme addresses covert forms of resistance and transformative

¹²⁰ As noted in Chapter 3 (section 3.2.3), this investigation focuses specifically on the overlap of critical consciousness *and* social justice. However, as the majority of literature on social justice in early childhood does not focus on critical consciousness, only literature on critical consciousness (which has an inherent focus on social justice) was included in the review of the literature – and is therefore, also the literature used to contextualize the findings from this research.

resistance in children's internalisation and rejection of dominant discourses and the status quo. This section has provided an outline of the three key themes addressed for discussion throughout this chapter. In the subsequent section, each key theme is unpacked, beginning with the influence of neoliberalism and developmental discourses.

7.4 Neoliberal and Developmental Discourses: Divide and Rule

As Foucault (1978, p. 93) once famously said, "power is everywhere". An "Orwellian" reading and application of this idea to the oppositional experiences of children in this study, highlights the many ways in which power emerges or is used as a form of social control, and as a means for reproducing existing systematic inequalities.

Concentrating on the influence of neoliberal and child development discourses, this section considers the ways in which children's displays of conformist and self-defeating resistance highlight children's consciousness of the self as an "other", particularly in terms of class and culture. This section unpacks the ways in which discourses of neo-liberalism and child development have served to marginalise and/or exclude children, and the ways in which the majority of children in this study were critically conscious of this oppression.

7.4.1 Neoliberal Discourses

As the research context chapter describes, India's political and economic structures have long been imbibed by neoliberal policies and practices that have, over time, come to be uncritically accepted *regimes of truth* (see Chapter 5, section 5.3). Analysts argue that this is evidenced by the current lack of public provisions, the adoption of privatizing practices, and the punitively neo-conservative measures used to suppress the "problem" of marginalised groups such as slum dwellers, squatters, and street children/families (A.

Kohli, 2012; Sebastian, Kala, & Rukanda, 2010). The majority of children in this study alluded to the impacts of neoliberalism upon lower castes and social classes.¹²¹ Most child participants critiqued the ways in which the privatization of schooling systems perpetuated inequalities, and hijacked opportunities for learning English, and thus, for social mobility. For example, Birbal, a seven-year-old male participant in this study voiced:

“English gets you good jobs... [if] you learn English, then everything will take care of itself. But see if you can’t go [to an English school] then you have to do the bad jobs that no one else wants to do” (Observation 31, 20.9.12).

Recent reports from Indian economists and researchers have also confirmed Birbal’s striking analysis, noting that:

Being fluent in English (compared to not speaking any English) increases hourly wages of men by 34%, which is as much as the return to completing secondary school and half as much as the return to completing a Bachelor’s degree (Azam et al., 2013, p. 1).

Analysing the rights-based educational discourses in India, Thapliyal (2015b) argues that “the language of rights has been co-opted to legitimise segregated and unequal schooling and, relatedly, promote the privatisation of public education” (p. 1). Recognising the inequalities emerging from privatisation, many child participants in this research showed their contempt of the parading rhetoric of “consumer choice” – which is used across the world to justify the privatisation of public services (D. Hill, Templer, Sotiris,

¹²¹ Families and teachers in the current study identified that the majority of children in the centre belonged to the ‘Otherwise Backwards Classes’ or the ‘Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe’. A plethora of literature suggests that the caste system is also seen to affect poverty (Rao, 2010), inequality, social exclusion (Ovichagan, 2015), stigma (Gandhi, 1954), social injustice (Ovichagan, 2015) and overlapping access to resources such as health, education, power and prestige.

Banfield, & Agastone-Wilson, 2013; McLaren, 2005; Thapliyal, 2015b). For example, Akbar, a seven-and-a-half-year old male child explained (see Photo Elicitation, Street Tour, Round 1):

Akbar: I wanted to go to English school. But we don't get to [have a] say. Didi chooses for us...

Zinnia: Is it because you have to pay for English school?

Akbar: Yeah. People with money can say – “I want to go to English school” and they can go.

Zinnia: People with money. But not other people?

Akbar: Yes. Only people with money.

These children's criticality of privatisation was also accompanied by an awareness of the effects of exclusionary practices, inequality and its effects. Thus, this research highlights that children are “political beings and becomings.... [that] are aware of and competent to engage with... power relations and structures as represented in discourses of schooling” (Thapliyal, 2015a, p. 87). Demonstrably similar to the research conducted by Butler (1998) and Souto-Manning (2009), the majority of children in this study were critically conscious of the systematic segregation that occurred (within the centre¹²²) whereby some children accessed private ‘low-fee’ English schools¹²³, whilst others could not. This led many children in this study to express self-defeating behaviours, violence, and anger. For example, some children in this study voiced notions such as “I always

¹²² As noted earlier, the term the “centre” is used throughout this thesis to refer to the NGO site where this research was conducted (see Chapter 1, section 1.10.1.1).

¹²³ Given the limited availability of NGO's funds, the centre supported some children to access private low fee paying English schooling.

wanted to go to an English school... but now I'm seven already, so I'm too old to move school... now, nothing will happen with me" (Akbar, Male, 7.5, Photo Elicitation, Centre Tour, Round 2). Complementing the lived experiences shared by children in this research, evidence from a longitudinal research in Andhra Pradesh, India reiterates that whilst "many relatively poorer households... now succeed in accessing private schooling and any benefits it may provide... Even private schools presented as 'low fee' are not within reach for those from some of the most marginalised backgrounds" (Woodhead et al., 2013, p. 72).

Echoing the perspectives of many children in this research, D. Hill et al. (2013) argue that the "privatisation of public assets – the stealing of the commons... by the capitalist class sees... the diminution of the dreams, aspirations and the very lives of the working class" (pp. 300-301). Children's self-defeating behaviours are particularly reflective of these effects of capitalism and privatisation, as Arav, a four-and-a-half-year-old male child participant shared: "if you don't have money [for school], then you can't grow up to be anyone" (Field Notes, Entry 17, 17.8.12). Analysing this example against the broader literature, resistance theorists and Marxist analysts argue that such perspectives demonstrate that neoliberal and capitalist regimes of truth have an ideological role in fostering a culture of self-defeat and conformity to systematically oppressive ways of thinking, being and doing (Giroux, 2001b; D. Hill, 2013a; D. Hill et al., 2013).

Troupes of writers contend that hegemonic discourses indoctrinate the general populous into believing that conformity and equality are synonymous (Cole & Hill, 2013; Elliott, 2015; hooks, 2003, 2013). In this study, many young children appeared to

internalise such an ideology, and to project the acceptance of the status quo through conformist resistance (see Chapter 6, section 6.4.1). Similar to previous research, most of the children in this study often portrayed the view that their identity, family or culture was an inferior “other” that needed to be moulded (by instructional, or even violent means) into the superior “same” (Ogbu, 2003; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; P. E. Willis, 1977). For example, Akbar, a seven-and-a-half-year-old male child¹²⁴, discussed that it was “not good to stay in a jhopda¹²⁵” [and that when the council breaks their homes] “they [the council] have to do it” (Observation 15, 23.8.12). This observation highlights the ways in which children are socialised to embody the values of oppressors, and the ways in which children too, form active cogs of oppressive systems (Tesar, 2014). Thus, the importance of critical revolutionary consciousness, or class-consciousness is paramount to disrupting hegemonic thinking, and building awareness for political, economic and social change (Freire, 1970).

Alluding to the educational context, Giroux (2001b) suggests that schools – as social sites – reinforce overt and hidden tactics of social assimilation through the hidden curriculum, technical rationalities and the commercialisation of learners as “human

¹²⁴ As Chapter 5 shows, the culture of patriarchy has influenced many ways of thinking, being and doing in the research context. Whilst acknowledging the salience of gender-related forms of oppression, for the purpose of this study, the commonalities between the lived experiences of both male and female children are explored in the interests of brevity, and solidarity. This is not to suggest that gender differences do not affect males as well as females, or that gender analysis is irrelevant to this research (as the children in this study did identify several experiences of inequalities emerging from gender differences). However, as the major themes in this research involved injustices emerging from economic, developmental and behavioural contingencies, these are the key concepts unpacked in this chapter. In light of this, it could be argued that children had naturalised gender inequities, and that therefore, there is a need for further research in the Indian context that focuses on gender differentials and the role of critical consciousness for gender equality.

¹²⁵ Jhopda refers to the plastic and bamboo structures of which children’s homes are made.

capital” or “market value”. The majority of children in this research often mimicked the perspective that conformity to dominant ways of thinking, being and doing would afford them socio-economic opportunities, if not justice (see for example Chapter 6, section 6.4.1 for an overview of children’s displays of conformist resistance). Thus, it could be argued that the majority of children in this study understood that “assimilation is the way to gain acceptance and approval from those in power” (hooks, 1989, p. 80). Conversely, analysis of children’s exhibitions of conformist resistance could suggest that many children did not recognise that their conformity, in fact, supported and affirmed the systematic structures of domination from which they wished to escape – this forwards the argument that children’s conformist resistance was therefore symptomatic of their “false consciousness” (hooks, 1989; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001; Tesar, 2014).

Extending on the notion of “false consciousness”, some children in this study also subscribed to dominant ideas about what constitutes success – that is, a few children communicated the importance of studying hard, obeying teachers, doing well on standardised tests, and being rewarded for “good” behaviour and “conscientiousness”. Critiquing the use of institutional rewards, Freire (1970) suggests that these incentives operate as “methods of manipulation... [which] inoculate individuals with the bourgeois appetite for personal success” (p. 130), and in turn, limit people from acting in the interests of their social class (Robertson & Hill, 2014). In analysing children’s conformist expressions in this study, it could be argued that “if the terms of success as defined by the standards of the ruling groups within white-supremacist, capitalist patriarchy are the only standards that exist, then assimilation is indeed necessary” (hooks, 1989, p. 81). This suggests that there is a need to open opportunities for students, pre-service and in-service

teachers to learn and share oppositional and *actionable* social alternatives to pedagogy and praxis, which support the development of critical consciousness, self-determination, and political efficacy (Elliott, 2015; Fielding & Moss, 2012; hooks, 2014) (see also section 7.7.3 for implications for practice).

Pointing to the prevalence of “banking” approaches to education, Ratnam (2015) writes that whilst schools in India are now more accepting of diverse students, “notions of ‘standardization’ and ‘homogenization’ that tend to ignore their diverse voice[s], make transaction in the classroom an alienating experience” (p. 253). International early childhood experts indicate that discourses of child development and micropractices of power¹²⁶ contribute to such notions of ‘standardisation’ and ‘homogenisation’ that can, in turn, lead to the exclusion and marginalisation of various groups (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999; Penn, 2005). Accordingly, discourses of child development, and micropractices of power are discussed in the subsequent section.

7.4.2 Developmental Discourses and Micropractices of Power

Several analysts contend that the discourse of child development and micropractices of power impose themselves as regimes of truth in early childhood contexts (Cannella, 2002; Mac Naughton, 2005) (see also Chapter 2, section 2.4.1.6). As discussed in Chapter 2, critical theorists contend that developmental discourses are decontextualized, abstract, totalising, and divisive. Critics argue that developmental discourses have resulted in practices that normalise, regulate and exclude children on the basis of minority culture

¹²⁶ Overviews of the discourses of child development and micropractices of power have been unpacked in Chapter 2, section 2.4.1.6.2 and 2.4.1.6.3.

understandings of age-and-stage-appropriate development and/or practice (Cannella, 2002; Penn, 2005). Congruently, critical theorists have argued that micropractices of power – such as normalisation, exclusion, classification, distribution, and regulation¹²⁷ – act as “technologies of governing” (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 16) that maintain social control, and the authority afforded to developmental regimes of truth. Drawing on examples of children’s self-defeating and conformist resistance from this study, this section considers the ways in which developmental discourses and micropractices of power influence children’s experiences of social in/justice and critical consciousness.

Dahlberg and Moss (2005) suggest that developmental norms define who/what is considered “normal” – thereby raising issues of racial, cultural, class-based and/or gendered privilege in society. In the current research context, certain “truths” informed by child development led to the comparing and contrasting of children’s “academic” or “cognitive” abilities.¹²⁸ Consequently, children perceived to be “developmentally able” or “advanced” were afforded access to private, English-medium schooling, whilst others were not (see Field Notes, Entry 29, 4.9.12). Reproductive theorists might argue that in this manner, young children were divided and marginalised even before entering the educational system, separated into categories that rated children according to the extent of their affinity to dominant groups (Au & Apple, 2009). As a result of this division, the

¹²⁷ An overview and explanation of these micropractices of power is provided in Chapter 2, section 2.4.1.6.2.

¹²⁸ In the research context, prior-to-school age street children attended the preschool program or Balwadi through the centre. At the completion of the pre-school program, young children were sorted into three school groups – that is, English-medium, Hindi-medium and Marathi-medium schooling. Children’s access English-medium schooling was dependent on donor contributions and funding – therefore, not all young children could access English-medium or private, low-fee paying schooling. The director of the NGO would decide which children entered which stream of schooling, however the criteria and processes used for sorting were unclear (see Appendix 6, Field Notes, Entry 29, 11.9.12).

majority of children in this current study often appeared to internalise exclusive messages, and to portray self-defeating resistance, expressing views such as “only smart children go to English school... I’m not smart so I can’t go” (Rathore, Male, 8, Observation 26, 12.9.12). Critical Marxists argue that the use of such “divide and rule” approaches fracture the abilities of the underclass to develop collective consciousness or a sense of belonging to their racial, cultural or class groups (D. Hill, 2013b) – instilling instead a desire to be like the oppressive elite.

Reflecting on the political nature of education, criticalists suggest that micropractices of power such as normalisation, exclusion and distribution (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.1.6.2) work to reinforce the pervasiveness of developmental discourses, and to limit access to educational resources (Penn, 2005). In the context of this research, although most participants were critical of the hierarchical segregation that enabled some children to access resources over others – children also expressed an overwhelming desire to attend English-medium schooling. For example, Payal, a five-year-old female child said, “I also want to learn English” (Field Notes, Entry 49, 12.10.12), whilst Sonakshi, a four-year-old female child verbalised that “English is important” (Field Notes, Entry 49, 12.10.12). Analysing these examples, it could be argued that children’s will to conform is symptomatic of the culture of imperialism and marginalisation, that not only creates inequalities but systematically naturalises them (Johansson & Lalander, 2012). For, as hooks contends; “domination has an ideological function that cannot be overthrown whilst existing systems remain in tact” (hooks, 1989, p. 32). Thus, it could be argued that both children and adults have been dehumanised by adherence to an “unjust social order” (Freire, 1970, p. 26). Children’s expressions of conformist resistance are therefore

understandable, given that conformity to existing structures – in this case, English-medium-schooling – offers acceptance and legitimisation from those in power (hooks, 2014).

Wary of the reductionist and positivist logic implored by neoliberal and developmental regimes of truth, theorists have called for radical disruptions to the current practices of education systems (Giroux, 2014; D. Hill, 2015; McLaren, 2015). Moss (2015b) also argues that deterministic views of intelligence characterise educational sites as loci of technical practice, rather than ethical or political praxis. Thus, ideological critique and analyses of the ways in which discourses shape learners subjectivities are pertinent to the development of counter-hegemonic discourses (Giroux, 2001b; Tesar, 2014) (these insights are further considered under the implications for future research and practice section 7.7.2 and 7.7.3).

This section has unpacked the ways in which the ideological functions of neoliberalism and child development have recycled inequities, or have led individuals to internalise (and thereby perpetuate) discrimination and oppression against the self, or others. The subsequent section discusses the ways in which children's non-conformist (transformative and self-defeating) resistant behaviours can be understood to be forms of communication.

7.5 Resistant Behaviour as Communication

Researchers have indicated that street children across the world engage in anti-social, violent, risk-taking, or criminal behaviours (Davies, 2008; Orme & Seipel, 2007).

Thomas de Benítes (2011) argues that, although dangerous, these behaviours also highlight street children's sense of agency, autonomy, and efficacy. She goes on to argue that it is the *actualisation* of these attributes that can incur unsafe or transformative behaviours (Thomas de Benítes, 2011). This view aligns with resistance theories, which suggest that resistant behaviours can communicate critiques of social oppression and/or motivations for social justice (Giroux, 2001b; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Thus, the importance of analysing the underlying meaning and intention of "problematic" behaviours, and the ways in which these produce a culture of resistance is paramount (Kim, 2010; Ogbu, 2003). This section analyses findings (transformative and self-defeating resistance) from the current study against the backdrop of the literature on student resistance to discuss the ways in which resistance communicates desires for a) self-preservation and agency, and b) social justice, and the wish to be heard in educational contexts.

7.5.1 Resistance as a Communication of Self-defence and Agency

Critics suggest that a range of literature associates problematic behaviour with student deficit, and assumes that these behaviours emerge from inherently negative values and attitudes (Giroux, 2001b; Kim, 2010; Powell, 2013), including those, which might be associated with students' culture, class or race. Similar to previous research, many child participants in this study disengaged from learning, and displayed various forms of self-defeating resistance (Durand, 1993; Ogbu, 2003). For example, as documented in the field notes: "Krish [male, 4.5] was bored... and so he simply got up and walked away. Tara [female, 4.5]... doesn't even come to the centre without some kind of monetary incentive from her mother" (Field Notes, Entry 37, 22.9.12). From the perspective of dominant "behaviour management" discourses, this observation could be analysed as an example of

children's inattentiveness, disobedience and failure to comply (Powell, 2013). Challenging this line of thought, resistance theorists could argue that dominant discourses demonise resisters as apolitical and baseless disruptors that teachers should punish, control or exclude (K. P. Allen, 2010; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu, 2002; Powell, 2013). Moreover, such mentalities persecute children for oppositional behaviours, whilst curtailing the necessity of educators self-reflecting or searching the environment for inadequacies that contribute to student disengagement, frustration and/or violence (Kim, 2010).

Alternatively, similar to previous research, these "refusal to learn" (Kim, 2010, p. 269) behaviours could be seen as efforts to communicate the need for meaningful pedagogy, autonomy and engaging learning experiences (Durand, 1993; Kim, 2010; Mavropoulou & Padeliadu, 2002). Arguably, self-defeating behaviours (which show critiques of social oppression) could morph into transformative resistance if educators are supported to value, recognise and learn from children's communicative acts (see also implications for practice, section 7.7.3).

Conversely, children's "refusal to learn" (Kim, 2010, p. 269) could be considered to be symptomatic of self-defence mechanisms – that is, children's refusal enables them to control situations and to forward the view that they "will not" rather than "cannot" complete the tasks assigned of them (Kim, 2010). For example, Akbar, a seven-and-a-half-year-old male child, whilst refusing to study, critiqued standardised tests in a self-defeating manner by noting: "I'm not going to college anyway, so I don't care, but it's stupid" (Field Notes, Entry 46, 9.10.12). In this way, some children exhibited self-defeating behaviours, by which means they set themselves low expectations such that they could avoid disappointment. Thus, similar to previous research, it could be argued that children are

active communicators – expressing the desire for control and success, by using non-compliance as a way of maintaining agency and demonstrating critical consciousness of oppressive conditions – such as those imposed by standardised tests (Q. Allen, 2012; Kim, 2010; Rudolph, 2012).

Researchers have also argued that such resistance offers children “survival strategies that keep them from internalising learned helplessness that may otherwise lead them to think of themselves as a failure... [Thus] resistance can ironically help students avoid such learned helplessness and may promote personal pride” (Kim, 2010, p. 270). However, dominant worldviews may prevent educators from perceiving behaviour as a form of communication as “though schools are cultural sites marked by complex relations of dominance and resistance, the official discourse of schooling depoliticises the notion of culture and dismisses resistance or at least the political significance of resistance” (Giroux, 2001b, p. 66). This is particularly problematic, given that teachers are more likely to “punish students rather than listen” (Kim, 2010, p. 261) to students, and more so, since research suggests that, for students who exhibit “problematic” behaviour, there appears to be a direct school to prison pipeline phenomenon (Graham, 2014; Lindsay, 2013; Rossatto et al., 2015). Thus, resistance theorists suggest that understanding children’s transformative motives and desires is paramount to mobilising micro and macro change – the subsequent section unpacks the notion of resistance as communication of a desire for social justice and a call to be heard.

7.5.2 Resistance as a Communication of the Desire for Social Justice and Listening

Theorists have suggested that children's rejection of the institutional "will to conform" could be seen as a way for children to communicate their desire to participate as protagonists in their lives and learning (Mac Naughton, 2005; McLaren, 2003b). In the context of the current research, for example, Sonakshi, a four-year-old female child critiqued the unidirectional nature of instruction, noting: "Didis [teachers] should listen to us too" (Field Notes, Entry 45, 5.10.12). This implies that young children are actively motivated by a desire "to make themselves heard and to define themselves as active participants in the world" (McLaren, 2003b, p. 245). From the perspective of critical pedagogy, this desire to be heard also highlights the need for repositioning adult perspectives, curricula and pedagogies to be contextually, politically and ethically relevant to learners. As Freire (1998, pp. 36-37) suggests:

Why not discuss with the students the concrete reality of their lives and that aggressive reality in which violence is permanent and where people are much more familiar with death than with life? Why not establish an "intimate" connection between knowledge considered basic to any school curriculum and knowledge that is the fruit of the lived experience of these students as individuals? Why not discuss the implications, political and ideological?

Extending on this argument, Freire (1970, 1973) critiques "banking" approaches to education which perceive learners to be uncritical blank slates that (ought to) reverently absorb, the "knowledge" that educators provide. Critical theorists argue that such an image of children and adults propels the view that education is a disembodied-yet-rational process of conforming to the status quo (McLaren, 1999). Therefore, learners that resist

these structures and processes of learning – by daring to think for themselves, or by seeing themselves as equal to teachers – are reprimanded for exhibiting what “banking” discourses have shaped to be an expression of unforgivable and utmost disrespect (hooks, 2014). In light of this, Freire (1973, p. 14) argues:

The elite defend a sui generis democracy in which the people are “unwell” and require “medicine” – whereas in fact their “ailment” is the wish to speak up and participate. Each time the people try to speak up and try to express themselves freely and to act, it is a sign they continue to be ill and thus need more medicine. In this strange interpretation of democracy, health is synonymous with popular silence and inaction.

Applying this line of thinking to the context of education, Bourassa (2012) questions: do children resist schooling or does it resist them? This highlights the differences evident between the intended and actualised purpose(s) of education, and offers insights into the ways in which education serves the interests of the dominant elite (Freire, 1970). Analysts suggest that by viewing children as passive “blank slates” incapable of participating in the process of their own consciousness, and by employing a paradigm that subscribes to working “on” rather than “with” students – the development of a democratic attitude is stifled because the act of learning is itself oppressive. Analysing the infiltration of cultural messages in educational contexts, Bourdieu (1977) contends that “official” educational discourses as well as seemingly “insignificant” practices of daily life shape learners’ identities and can thereby contribute to the internalisation of the status quo. Within such frames of reference of what constitutes “good” and “bad” behaviours, criticalists highlight that children in educational contexts have been:

Disciplined not so much through the direct physical application of force between master and pupil, but rather via a range of mechanisms, from the ordering of chairs by row and group division by sex and dis/ability... to individualized mind-altering pharmacological treatments like Ritalin (Powell, 2013, p. 113).

In the context of the current research, some children utilised transformative resistance strategies to challenge exclusive disciplinary actions. For example, on one occasion, Rathore (male, 8) refused to accept his “suspension” from the centre for fighting and “talking back” to teachers, and continued to attend despite teachers using various avenues to communicate his suspension to him (Field Notes, Entry 51, 19.10.12). Arguably, similar to earlier research, Rathore’s criticality (and resistance) against his segregation reflects his desire for learning, inclusion, participation and equal treatment – thereby showcasing his motivation for social justice (Butler, 1998; Silva & Langhout, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2009). As is the case with other research with young children, this example suggests that some children in this study were, at times, aware of oppressive power relations and sought to use political forms of resistance to change this imbalance of power and have their perspectives “seen” and “heard” (Silva & Langhout, 2011). Similar to research by Durand (1993) and Kim (2010) these forms of “speaking out” can also highlight children’s self-determination, political efficacy and agency.

However, analysing Rathore’s refusal to “be suspended” from another perspective, critics of resistance theory suggest that “labels” given to children or resistant behaviours imply several possibilities for broader collective change, however children’s immediate acts generally occur for personal gain (Lindsay, 2013). Thus, researchers question what

form of “analytical preciseness” is required to judge if resistance is emancipatory, and suggest that educators and theorists need to be mindful of overplaying the significance of resistance or “reading too much” into what resistant behaviour may be intending to communicate (Giroux, 2001b; D. I. Smith, 2010). Addressing this critique, this study, along with other researchers, highlights the importance of participatory approaches that enable resisters themselves to articulate, interpret and co-construct the meanings and intentions behind their resistance (Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001).

Moreover, similar to research by Souto-Manning (2009), the use of such resistant strategies could also be interpreted as evidence of children’s will to challenge institutional values of obedience, anti-dialogue and silent acceptance of the status quo – thereby communicating a motivation for social justice. The use of transformative resistance could also be seen to communicate the (seemingly hidden) availability of social alternatives, that reflect both a) knowledge of the workings of educational systems and/or people, and b) knowledge of ways in which to subvert or challenge inequities that present themselves through the system (Horton & Freire, 1990).

A plethora of research suggests that resistant or problematic behaviours can be changed or better managed in order to support individuals to communicate meanings in more effective, and less disruptive/destructive ways (Durand, 1993; Graham, 2014). However, extending on the notion of resistant behaviour as communication, advocates from critical pedagogy raise the importance of maintaining the sense of injustice that fuels the spirit of opposition, such that micro and macro transformations are possible (Giroux, 2001b; Solorzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). That is, research suggests that the

marginalisation of “problematic” children can contribute to the reproduction of existing inequalities (Graham, 2008, 2014; Powell, 2013), whilst the changing of systems to support children’s behavioural developments can contribute to the development of critical consciousness and motivation for social justice (Cann, 2012; Martin, 2008; Silva & Langhout, 2011). This understanding highlights the importance of pedagogically supporting resistant manifestations of critical consciousness and social justice.

Arguably, the importance of educators adopting the view that behaviour is a form of communication is particularly significant in ECD contexts since, as was demonstrated in this research, since many children may resist oppressive situations without explaining or justifying their actions. In light of this, Graham (2014) highlights the importance of educators remembering that behaviour is continuously in a process of “becoming.” This is pertinent in light of scholarly assertions that viewing behaviour as a form of communication can support educators to engage in radical pedagogical work, that opens possibilities for social transformation (Giroux, 2001b; Graham, 2014; Kim, 2010).

This section has used findings from the current study and the broader literature in order to unpack the notion of resistant behaviours as a form of communication. Extending on this notion, the subsequent section considers the ways in which resistance can offer educational possibilities through the use of pedagogies of indignation that aim to facilitate social changes.

7.6 Underlife Resistance and the Pedagogy of Indignation

Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) articulate the belief that “the hatred/rage/hostility/indignation that result[s] from any group of people systematically being denied their right to food, clothing, shelter, education, and justice will ultimately cause society to implode” (p. 143). In light of this view and the increasing inequalities and crises faced by humankind (see Chapter 1, section 1.1), educational activists have called forward the importance of the pedagogy of indignation (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Freire, 2004; Macedo, 2004). Building on the foundations of critical pedagogy, the pedagogy of indignation suggests that anger is a natural and just response to injustices faced throughout the course of everyday life (Freire, 2004). Advocates of this sub-section of critical pedagogy argue that anger is a necessary strategy for change, as it enables the infuriated to recapture human dignity against the dictatorship of “no alternatives” or deterministic regimes of truth (Fielding & Moss, 2012; Kajner, Chovanec, Underwood, & Mian, 2013; Kincheloe, 2008). Indignant pedagogy aims to channel justifiable anger “into the courage to act and fundamentally change the direction of society, even in the face of the broader society’s cowardice” (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008, p. 143). However, in situations where resistance against oppression places individuals at risk of bodily harm, researchers call forward the importance of hidden or “underlife” forms of opposition – that enable individuals to fight for justice whilst maintaining a guise of conformity. This section unpacks the ways in which findings from the current study and broader literature can be analysed through the lens of the pedagogy of indignation and “underlife” resistance. This section also highlights community-based opportunities for social justice and critical consciousness emerging from this perspective.

Early childhood researchers argue that the view of resistance as a form of communication highlights the importance of relationships (Mac Naughton, 2003b). A plethora of research indicates that adult behaviours significantly influence the social messages that children internalise and reflect (Grille, 2005; Hyland, 2010). In the current study, many children often appeared to internalise a sense of apathy against injustice, despite being critically consciousness of the effects of oppression. Most children in this study also often displayed self-defeating resistance, for example, projecting the views of a key adult in her life, Rani, a seven-year-old female expressed the importance of internalising anger and hurt: “My mummy says that the [council] will come and break and go but we shouldn’t cry, nothing comes from crying” (Observation 60, 20.11.12).

Several researchers indicate that such attempts at “toughening up” children to be resilient to injustices are not uncommon, particularly in marginalised and low-income communities (Leyendecker, Harwood, Comparini, & Yalcinkaya, 2005; Magai & McFadden, 1995). However, perspectives from indignant pedagogy argue that such cultural messages – particularly when communicated by key adults and educators – narrow the necessity for developing critical consciousness (Silva & Langhout, 2011). Theorists have argued that these cultural messages socialise children into naturalising the status quo, thereby manipulating the mind-set of the oppressed into thinking that they must perpetually adapt, or cope with oppression – rather than engage in praxis to transform situations of injustice (Fielding & Moss, 2012; Freire, 1970).

Challenging this view, the pedagogy of indignation argues that rather than trying to subdue or suppress resistant behaviours – educators and communities ought to support

children to recognise, de-naturalise and then resist injustice, such that broader social change, and a critically conscious awareness of social justice can emerge (Freire, 2004; Mac Naughton, 2005). Pointing to the importance of critical consciousness, writers have suggested that, whilst anger and a sense of injustice are necessary to facilitating critical attitudes, without support for the development socio-political efficacy, efforts for social change will remain in the realm of “hypotheticals” (Watts et al., 2011). Moreover, in analysing possibilities emerging from resistance and the pedagogy of indignation, Giroux (2001) cautions that not all oppositional behaviours can be characterised as resistant, since “resistance” involves underlying principles of emancipation. Accordingly, this research reiterates the views and findings from the research by Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001), which suggests that possibilities for actualising social change through the pedagogy of indignation emerge when transformative resistance becomes the meeting space for social justice and critical consciousness in situations of oppression.

However, it could be argued that adults socialise children to be apathetic or silent as a protective mechanism since critiques of social oppression can be dangerous, particularly in situations where overt critique is tantamount to harm, humiliation, or risk (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012; Schutz, 2004). This echoes the sentiment that “for the oppressed, the exploited, the dominated, domination is not just a subject for radical discourse, for books. It is about pain” (hooks, 1989, pp. 3-4). Wary of risk and harm, the majority of children in this study appeared to “know” (and test) the boundaries of “safe” behaviour, expressing their critiques of social oppression and their motivation for social justice in a number of ways. For example, Rathore, an eight-year-old male child fired a string of abuses under his breath at police officers in the community, showing his anger of

their abuse, whilst maintaining an outward appearance of respect (Observation 57, 8.11.12). Researchers contend that such “under the breath” or “underlife” forms of critical consciousness are necessary to the development of a participatory society, since there can be no democracy without dissent (Giroux, 2001b). However, from a counter-perspective, Robinson and Ward (2001) highlight the necessity of a clear distinction between the notions of resistance for survival and resistance for liberation. Similarly, several researchers highlight the importance of the notion of praxis – that is reflection and action, such that resistance can act as a viable entry point for relevant and “real” change (Bajaj, 2014; Freire, 1976, 2000; Horton & Freire, 1990; Kincheloe, 2008; Rossatto, 2002). Confirming this view, certain research has shown that community solidarity and engagement in “underlife” or hidden forms of resistance for emancipation can transpire into the development of community critical consciousness and change (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012).

As ECD sites have been shown to be community hubs, theorists suggest that there is scope for developing these spaces into sites that make the personal, political and visa versa (Camangian, 2015; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). This is particularly relevant for marginalised groups such as street children, who are often blamed for crime, chaos and societal ills (Camangian, 2015). Sparks (1997) further identifies the importance of overt and covert forms of dissent emerging from oppressed or silenced groups that reside at the margins of society. Although this research provides some insights on the covert forms of resistance adopted by young street children in the Indian context, there remains a “need to understand more thoroughly the complex ways in which people mediate and respond to the

interface between their own lived experiences and structures of domination and constraint” (Giroux, 2001b, p. 108) (see implications for further research, section 7.7.2 and 7.8).

The above sections have discussed the key findings emerging from this study. The first theme discussed the effects of neoliberalism, using children’s expressions of self-defeating resistance to showcase children’s consciousness of oppression. A discussion of children’s conformist resistance and the ways in which children internalised social messages regarding English privilege, and child development were also discussed against the backdrop of literature regarding regimes of truth and ideological critique. Subsequently, a discussion of the ways in which children’s non-conformist behaviours can be understood as a form of communication ensued. Finally, discussions of underlife resistance and the pedagogy of indignation were conducted, highlighting the ways in which children’s anger informed covert forms of resistance. The subsequent section discusses implications arising from this study.

7.7 Implications

This section considers implications for policy, research and practice that emerge from the current study.

7.7.1 Policy Implications

The primary policy implication emerging from this research is the need for educational policies that support the development of critical consciousness and social justice for young children, families, educators and communities. Specifically, in the Indian context, this implication involves public institutions such as schools engaging learners in

relevant action-based education that builds on contextually relevant principles and examples of Indian democracy to support local and global transformations. As traditional early childhood and educational policies in India do not tend to address the diverse needs of young street children (see Chapter 5, section 5.9.5), it is recommended that theoretical constructs from critical pedagogy be embedded within educational and social policies in order to address the multiple forms of oppression that street children face on a daily basis. Extending on Freire (1970) and D. Hill's (2015) theories, such ideological changes to policy could support the movement for a contextually relevant, critical and socially just education which could, in turn, alert children to the importance and value of education – thereby minimalizing dropout rates (see Chapter 5, section 5.7).

Furthermore, as this research points to the possibilities for social change offered by children's experiences and demonstrations of transformative resistance, one recommendation surfacing from this finding is for socio-educational policies in India and internationally, to recognise and put a spotlight on the value of politically, socially, historically and contextually relevant counter-discourses, oppositional worldviews and marginalised perspectives - such as those offered by street children – in educational policy discourses. As Penn (2005) suggests, such policy changes may contribute to broader inclusion, participation and equality for marginalised and “othered” groups, whilst supporting the practice of resistance as a valuable political counter-discourse.

Supplementary to this, a further policy implication is to invest in ECD programs that act as community hubs to support young children, families and educators to develop critical consciousness and motivation for social justice through these settings. This is

particularly relevant for vulnerable children, families and communities in the Indian context that experience multiple forms of economic, social, cultural and political oppression as this research reiterates the importance of praxis, and “real” change at the micro and macro level. A further implication for policy is to ensure the continuity of relationships experienced by street children and families through ECD programs. As children and families living on the street experience multiple forms of disruption, stigma and abuse, the importance of maintaining the existence of trusting relationships is paramount (Baird, 2014). Furthermore, given the ingrained and idiosyncratic nature of many forms of oppression experienced by children, families and communities on the street in India, a further implication for policy is to ensure the longitudinal sustainability of ECD programs, and the importance of eliciting community voice in shaping initiatives and directions for community development (Ledwith, 2011; Vinson, Rawsthorne, Beavis, & Ericson, 2015).

As this study showcases the ways in which neoliberal policies in India influence the marginalisation, exclusion and oppression of young street children, a pertinent policy implication is the development of democratic (as opposed to capitalist) policy alternatives (D. Hill, 2015; McLaren, 2014). This implies that the Indian government should choose to provide or reclaim public services and supports, such that the existing achievement gaps between public and private schooling may be closed (see Chapter 5, section 5.7.2), and that policies for equality, access, participation and inclusion may be actualised (D. Hill, 2011, 2013b). Although this research focuses on one Indian educational context, theorists suggest that broad applicability of such Marxist humanist policies are necessary as education, society, and the political economy are all intricately connected (D. Hill, 2015; McLaren,

2010, 2014). This implication for policy development also calls for “repositioning” – such that policies and disadvantages are addressed from the perspective of the social, economic, historic, and religious/caste-based oppression faced by Indian populations (see Chapter 5) (Apple et al., 2009). Moreover, given the fractured nature of schooling in the Indian context, and the deeply ingrained privilege afforded to English-medium schooling, two salient, and seemingly contrary policy implications arise. Speaking to the complexity of English privilege, Adrienne Rich voices, “this is the oppressor’s language, yet I need to talk to you” (hooks, 1989, p. 28). Thus, on one hand, research indicates that English literacy in this context could mobilise children to overcome real situations of economic and socio-cultural oppression and, in turn, support collective efforts at transformation (Azam et al., 2013). On the other hand, this view highlights that “language is also a place of struggle” (hooks, 1989, p. 28). In light of this, policy implications could involve the privileging of Indian languages through educational curricular and policy – for example, as is the case in New Zealand (Duhn, 2012). Conversely, perspectives from critical pedagogy suggest that supporting young oppressed children to develop their literacy skills could mobilise these groups to lead self-determination and social changes (Horton & Freire, 1990). Thus, another policy implication might be to support children from marginalised and oppressed groups to access English-medium institutions. However, this implication highlights the need for children, families and communities to develop critical consciousness in relation to the notion of English-privilege. In this way, practical issues pertaining to children’s inclusion and exclusion are addressed alongside critiques of neoliberalism, and the role of language as a site of oppression.

Finally, as this research provides evidence that the use of child development discourses can exclude young children, an implication arising from this research is the

importance of supporting educators and educational policy makers to be critical of the abstract, totalising and decontextualized nature of such discourses (Cannella, 2002; Walters, 1994). Thus, this implication highlights the importance of supporting policy makers and teachers to engage in ideology critique, and to be critically conscious of “universal” discourses that marginalise and exclude children. In practice, this might involve teachers being supported (via training and resources) to shift away from “developmentally appropriate practices” to critical pedagogies, political and ethical praxis, and curricula that highlight social justice, citizenship and democracy as educational and societal aims (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Mac Naughton, 2005; Moss, 2011, 2014, 2015b).

7.7.2 Research Implications

This research calls for further studies eliciting young children’s perspectives, particularly from non-Western contexts. As this study highlights the ways in which young children experience and demonstrate critical consciousness and social justice, further research into children’s overt and covert engagements with these constructs is paramount. As shown in this study, young children are active communicators and protagonists. Hopefully beyond all findings, this study has provided evidence of the importance of including children’s voices in research, policy and practice and acknowledging children as experts and protagonists of their communities. Similar to research conducted by Hawkins (2010), it is suggested that participatory and action research methods, with diverse and flexible data collection strategies – such as the Mosaic approach – be applied. This implication involves embedding elements of “praxis” into research so that understandings of practicable ways to engage young children in community development may emerge. Prolonged engagement and longitudinal research with young children within and outside of

educational contexts could also extend the knowledge base on the development and use of critical consciousness. An example of this is the ‘Young Lives’ project, which elicits the views of children from four LAMI countries to showcase inequalities, and lived experiences within educational contexts, and at the community level (Crivello et al., 2009; Dornan & Woodhead, 2015).

This research found that young children’s critical consciousness and social justice emerged in resistant ways at times despite educators’ efforts. Thus, a pertinent implication arising from this study is further research into the ways in which educators can channel young children’s critical consciousness and motivation for social justice into educational and community initiatives. Similarly, research on the ways in which educators can involve children, families and communities in challenging unjust systems and structures together also necessitates inquiry. This implication also involves conducting further research within and outside of educational contexts, to highlight the synchronicity of socio-educational and community developments. For example, recent research highlights the role of young children in supporting community developments for critical consciousness and social justice outside of traditional educational contexts in Afghanistan (Brodsky, Portnoy, et al., 2012; Brodsky, Talwar, et al., 2012).

Further research on ways to support educators to be mindful of children’s “underlife” forms of resistance also necessitates inquiry. In this way, educators could investigate the ways in which children’s oppositional worldviews could contribute to the development of social alternatives, within and outside of educational contexts. Research that further showcases the development of children’s critical consciousness could also

provide insights into the ways in which ethical and political educational praxis might be developed. Investigation of the multiple forms of oppression experienced by children, and the forms of resistance children engage in to transform, rather than adapt to oppression, is also necessary. Research on children's transformative resistance could therefore extend understandings of avenues for actualising systematic change against oppression. This aligns with theoretical undercurrents from the 'new sociology of childhood' and has been exemplified by research conducted with older students, such as by Cammarota (2004), Lindsay (2013), and Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001).

7.7.3 Practice Implications

As the 'gurus' of critical pedagogy have reiterated, education is a political and powerful act (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2011; McLaren, 2003a). Recognisably, the power and politics of education affects those that are privileged, and those that are oppressed and exploited in qualitatively different ways (Mendes, 2014; Penn, 2005). Several implications of this notion for practice emerged from this research.

This study illuminates how listening to young children is of critical importance, particularly in programs that aim to support children to achieve their individual aspirations and goals through education. Implications for practice in this regard also involve the importance of educators listening to children's resistant behaviours as a form of communication – thereby, ensuring that, rather than viewing behaviour as inherent deficits in children, educators change environments, curricular and teaching practices to support children to flourish as active, critical and democratic citizens. This also involves educators including families, and the community in shared engagements with children to develop

critical consciousness and to advocate for change. For example, some researchers emphasise the role of children's centres in acting as "public spaces, places of encounter for citizens both younger and older, community workshops and sites of democratic practice and experimentation" (Moss, 2015a, p. 211). There is evidence that this notion works: the Green Pen Children's Centre in Corby, United Kingdom, is often touted as an example of a 'hub' which supports family and community engagement in challenging the status quo (Whalley, 2006).

As Chapter 5, section 5.7 highlights, the overly "banking" nature of education in India is underscored by teacher preparation and professional development programs that emphasise the transference of "neutral" information from teachers to students. A salient recommendation for changing ECE pedagogies in this context therefore involves supporting pre-service teachers and teachers to engage with critical pedagogies and resistance theories. Particularly, the importance of Indian educators recognising and valuing counter-discourses and oppositional worldviews emerging from children's own lived experiences and perspectives are paramount. Moreover, it is recommended that all educators be supported to value counter-discourses and oppositional worldviews as advocates of possibility and human agency. In particular, it is recommended that educators working with marginalised and oppressed groups are supported to engage with pedagogies of indignation, that is, that theoretical tools are provided to children, educators and communities to facilitate shared investigation of the multiple forms of oppression experienced by the students and communities. Similarly, further support for pre-service teachers to be critically conscious of their role in challenging the status quo is also necessary (Freire, 2004; Kincheloe, 2008).

Practical implications for educators involve supporting children to develop oppositional worldviews that mobilise children's political efficacy and the actioning of social alternatives. This could involve the use of radical and indignant pedagogy, which recognises and acknowledges the importance of justified anger, and builds on children's keen sense of injustice through educational and community initiatives. Moreover, this study suggests that rather than trying to "fit" children into existing educational categories and systems, educators employ pedagogical practices that support the inclusion of children, and utilise critical and counter-hegemonic discourses to inform practice. Similarly, this study highlights the importance of educators engaging in critiques of economic and social systems, by considering the role and influence of discourses related to neoliberalism – this is particularly relevant for educators working with young children in LAMI and marginalised contexts. This line of thought could build on research by Picower (2011) who highlights the ways in which educators in elementary (primary) schools challenge neoliberal discourses and practices by developing student critical consciousness and motivation for social justice.

As this study highlights that children are active protagonists, another implication for practice involves engaging children in contextually relevant political and ideological critiques that lend themselves to critical actions. For example, Thapliyal (2015a) analyses students' views of schooling on a news program in India, and shows that children are capable of critiquing discourses – such as those of schooling – through a forum with wide outreach into the community (television). Extending on such research, this study implies that educators can and should involve children in dialogue and problem posing that

engenders critical thought and action that is relevant to the oppression faced by young children. Finally, as the children in this study were perceptive of many forms of oppression – such as those arising from interactions with the police, council, educators, kidnappers, adults, and/or other persons on the street – this research suggests that educators should extend on children’s lived experiences, justified anger, and keen sense of social justice, to forward local initiatives for democratic action, and collective moments that support participation, inclusion and equality. This could build on earlier reports and practices, such as those by Silva and Langhout (2011) and Souto-Manning (2009), which show how children have engaged in critical consciousness to be protagonists for change.

7.8 Limitations and Further Research Suggestions

This section reports on limitations of this research, and relatedly, outlines suggestions for future research (methodological limitations have also been addressed in more depth in Chapter 4, section 4.15).

The current study investigated the experiences of one small group of young street children in Mumbai, India. Whilst the researcher was able to elicit in-depth insights, further research conducted with larger samples across diverse contexts would offer greater generalizability. Moreover, as this research was conducted in order to meet requirements for a doctoral dissertation, this investigation was time-limited. Thus, although the researcher completed fieldwork over a prolonged period of six months, this research did not invoke a longitudinal design, and continued follow-up was not possible. In light of this, further research with continued follow up could build a strong evidence base, and inform policy implications for the development of public education for critical consciousness.

Longitudinal research could also depict the ways in which children's experiences of critical consciousness and social justice change as children grow older. This knowledge could be used to support educators, families and communities to understand the diverse factors influencing the sustained development of critical consciousness and motivation for social justice – or lack thereof.

This research provided valuable insights into the views of children in relation to one group of street children's lived experiences of critical consciousness and social justice. As children exhibited critical consciousness and social justice in primarily resistant ways, further research investigating the ways in which teachers can capitalise on children's transformative resistance is also necessary. This research also explored notions of resistant behaviours as forms of communication, which expressed desires for social justice, and critical consciousness. Similar to earlier research, as this study found that children's resistance was met with punishment and adult disapproval, further research investigating educators' practical engagements with discourses of behaviour as a form of communication could also support the development of democratic and political praxis imbued with an ethic of listening.

This study addresses a noticeable gap in the literature by reporting on critical consciousness from the perspectives of young children in marginalised contexts. However, a plethora of research highlights the importance of viewing children's views in the context of family and community relationships (Baird, 2013; Greenfield, 2011; Stephenson, 2009). Thus, further research eliciting children, family and community views on social justice and critical consciousness for community developments are also paramount. Research

gathering the views of multiple community members can ensure the inclusion of several stakeholders. Relatedly, further research on the role of young children and ECD spaces in facilitating critical community consciousness could also support understandings of ECD sites being community hubs for ethical, political and democratic praxis. This is particularly salient for communities of children living in families on the street, or LAMI sites in non-Western contexts, for whom, public participation and collective acts of resistance may incur harm.

This research builds on the ‘new sociology of childhood’ movement for participatory research with young children, and highlights that further research with young children in oppressed situations is necessary. Further participatory research on social change with children, families, educators and community members could support the understanding of children’s political agency and efficacy. Finally, whilst this research provides insights into children’s capacities for engaging in transformative resistance in one ECD program and street context, this study did not involve children engaging in praxis – that is, children expressed awareness of social oppression and motivation for social justice but did not act in an informed or collective manner together with educators upon broader situations of injustice – such as those involving the police, council, and school systems. Thus, further research focusing on the ways in which young children, educators, families and communities act as collective agents for broader social change could mobilise educational praxis and inform policy from the bottom up, to be more participatory, inclusive and equitable.

7.9 Conclusion

This thesis reports on an investigation of young street children's experiences of critical consciousness and social justice in one area of urban Mumbai. This first chapter of the thesis defined and justified the study's investigative focus on young street children, critical consciousness and social justice, and provided an overview of the central research question and sub-questions. Chapter 2 presented critical pedagogy as the theoretical framework underpinning the current research. The applicability of critical pedagogy to the current research was detailed before core components of the theory were unpacked, and the ways in which critical pedagogy supports the "knowing" of oppressive systems (critical consciousness) and the development of avenues for "changing" oppressive systems (social justice) were discussed.

Chapter 3 reviewed the overlap in the literature on critical consciousness and social justice, and highlighted the ways in which critical consciousness has manifested in educational programs with young children, educators and in communities. This chapter also discussed the gaps in the literature. The methods used to collect, organise and analyse data were reviewed in Chapter 4. The current study used a qualitative case study approach to investigate young children's lived experiences and understandings of social justice and critical consciousness in the context of urban Mumbai, India. The research was conducted from a single site in the south of Mumbai, India. Research participants were children living on the street, between the ages of 3-8. Participants were recruited through an NGO with strong connections in the local community. The children in this research attended the centre's preschool or early school programs. Each participant in this research has been given a pseudonym to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The case study approach was

informed by phenomenology and the Mosaic approach for researching with children. Data was collected over a period of six months.

In order to contextualize findings against the broader socio-historical, political, economic, and social contexts, Chapter 5 provided a detailed overview of the research context. This chapter examined existing taken-for-granted assumptions and regimes of truth influencing young street children in this study. The thematic findings emerging from this study were then detailed in Chapter 6. Three salient findings emerged from this study; these identified the extent to which children demonstrated critical consciousness and motivation for social justice. Findings coalesced into three themes – these were conformist resistance, self-defeating resistance and transformative resistance. Similar to findings from Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001), results from this research suggest that the coupling of social critique with a motivation for social justice can support critical consciousness and social justice through resistance (transformative resistance).

The discussion chapter tangles research from the field of critical consciousness and resistance theory, to suggest that children's resistance can offer pedagogical and socio-political opportunities. This chapter unpacks findings emerging from this research to argue that children and educators might collectively be able to learn and act in the interests of citizenship, democracy, participation, inclusion and equity. In this research, children showed they were critically conscious of oppression and motivated by social justice as they devised plans for systematic change to make educational systems, police and council practices more just and equitable to street populations. For example, children suggested canvassing their "case" for equality and justice to the media, and the courts in order to

achieve transformative social changes. In light of this finding, this thesis calls for further research to be conducted with children, families, communities and educators, particularly in non-Western, LAMI contexts.

Another outcome of this thesis was that findings demonstrated how children's oppositional behaviours and acts of resistance represent forms of communication. This research suggests that children engage with resistance in order to communicate their understandings and critiques of social oppression. This research builds on prior understandings to emphasise that young children have a sense of social justice, which they actively practice and pursue. This builds on earlier research and theories – by key thinkers in critical pedagogy and critical consciousness in ECD¹²⁹ (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.1 for an overview of seminal analysts in critical pedagogy), who advocate for educators, researchers and adults in children's lives to engage in the ethic of truly listening to young children's behaviours as forms of communication. The study supports this body of literature by demonstrating that young children are able to challenge the injustices and inequalities they face in the context of their everyday lives. In doing so, this thesis furthers understandings of how young children from marginalised contexts can be supported to engage with resistance in transformative ways. Moreover, drawing on literature from the field of resistance theory, critical pedagogy and critical consciousness, this thesis suggests that ECD programs can use pedagogies of indignation to maintain a sense of social justice and justified anger in order to engage with transformative resistance for social change.

¹²⁹ Seminal researchers on critical consciousness in ECD include – but are not limited to – Melissa Butler, Gloria Ladson-Billings, Regina Langhout, Janelle Silva, and Mariana Souto-Manning.

In conclusion, this thesis investigated the ways in which young street children were critically consciousness, and motivated by social justice to change their own lived experiences of oppression. This thesis makes a contribution to the literature on critical consciousness by focussing on the ways in which young children in a marginalised non-Western context engage as active, critical citizens. In doing so, this research argues that democratic, political and ethical educational engagements with transformative resistance in ECD contexts, can, and should, open up possibilities for truly revolutionary social change – and thus play an active role in facilitating the development of young thinkers without borders.

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List of Appendices

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Appendix 1: Ethics Approval from the Macquarie University Human Research

Ethics Committee



Ethics Secretariat <ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au>

to Prof, Dr, Dr, Miss ▾

Dear Prof Hayden

Re: "Young thinkers without borders: Children's everyday divergent thinking and criticality in thought, action and reflection - links to social change"
(Ethics Ref: 5201200396)

Thank you for your recent correspondence. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Human Research Ethics Committee and you may now commence your research.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Kathy Cologon
Miss Zinnia Mevawalla
Ms Fay Hadley
Prof Jacqueline Hayden

NB. STUDENTS: IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP A COPY OF THIS APPROVAL EMAIL TO SUBMIT WITH YOUR THESIS.

Please note the following standard requirements of approval:

1. The approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
2. Approval will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 12 September 2013
Progress Report 2 Due: 12 September 2014
Progress Report 3 Due: 12 September 2015
Progress Report 4 Due: 12 September 2016
Final Report Due: 12 September 2017

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew approval for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of approvals allows the Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).

4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/forms

5. Please notify the Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have final approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of final ethics approval.

Yours sincerely
Dr Karolyn White
Director of Research Ethics
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 2: Information and Consent Form for Families



Institute of Early Childhood
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 9776
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 9890
Email: jacqueline.hayden@mq.edu.au

Verbal or Written

Informed Consent From Parents/Significant Others

Script

Hi _____,

My name is Zinnia. Thank you so much for talking to me today. As (teacher) might have told you, I am a student from Sydney, Australia and I am doing my university studies in early childhood education. I am here today because I would like to know a little bit more about how your child/ren is/are learning at the drop in centre. Your child/ren is/are in my teaching group at the drop-in where I've been volunteering as part of my studies. So I'm here today just to ask you if you will give permission for me to include your child/ren (name of child/ren) in my research study.

This means that I would ask your child/ren some questions as they take part in the activities of the centre. Questions will be about themselves – such as; what they like to do, who they play and learn with and what they think about the activities at the centre. Besides just asking questions.

I will ask the children to make drawings and may collect these also with some other items including some photos and videos of the children as they sing, dance, and talk. I will ask your children permission to collect or copy any of these. The items which I collect and the photos, videos and recordings which I make will be available to be seen by teachers and by parents. Photos will be posted at the centre.



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I will also provide information about what I learnt about all of the children – but this will not entail information about any individual child – just about how all the children are learning and expressing themselves. I will use some of the information I collect when I go back to Australia for my university studies and even to write some articles. No one person will be named in any items, which I write. I need your permission to include your child/ren (name of child/ren) in this study. By giving permission you can nonetheless pull out the child/ren at any time. You can also ask me for any photos of your child/ren and I will be happy to turn these over to you. You can pick and choose which photos you would like me to use for the project. If you do not want your child/ren to be involved in this project, that is fine. The child/ren will not be aware that they are not participating.

They can still come to my group if they want. If you agree to let your child/ren (name of child/ren) participate, I will also seek some information from you: I would like to have a few conversations with you, which will take about 30 minutes. In the conversation I will be seeking information about your child/ren – such as; what each child/she/he likes to do, what each child/she/he is good at and other questions about how the child/ren like(s) to learn and how each child/she/he interacts with you and other people.

The information you give me will not be available to anyone else (at the drop-in centre or elsewhere). I will use the information collected when I go back to Australia for my university studies and even to write some articles. No one person will be named or identified in any items, which I write. I will also ask your permission to record our conversations on a recorder but this is not necessary, if you prefer that I did not use a recorder. During the conversations you can choose not to answer any question or to stop talking to me at any time. None of this will affect your child/ren's participation at the drop in centre. If you agree to these conditions, can we start our first conversation now (or when can I come back for this conversation?) Thank you.



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I, _____ have read (*or, where appropriate, have had read to me*) and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____
(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____
Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____
Investigator's Signature: _____
Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone +61 02 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix 3: Information and Consent Form for Children



Institute of Early Childhood
Faculty of Human Sciences
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Phone: +61 (0)2 9850 9776
Fax: +61 (0)2 9850 9890
Email: jacqueline.hayden@mq.edu.au

Informed Consent From Minors Script

Hi _____, my name is Zinnia.

Thank you so much for talking to me today. Do you know why you're here? It is because (teacher) has put you in my group for teaching. I am going to be volunteering here for six months, so we are going to be learning lots of different things together. As we learn together, I am going to ask you lots of different questions – sometimes these will be questions about yourself, about what you like to do, with whom and what you think about things. Sometimes as I ask you questions, we will also be learning and drawing together, writing together, singing and dancing and taking photos and videos together. When we do this, I am going to record (copy) your voice, pictures, videos, drawings, writing and other things sometimes on a recorder, or on a camera or the video. I am really interested in hearing and seeing what you think so I want to ask you if it is okay with you if I record these things in these ways? You can also keep any pictures that you would like to keep afterwards.

You can tell me to stop recording at any time. And you don't have to answer some questions if you don't want to. You can stop talking to me at any time. You can also tell me that you don't want your photos or videos taken anymore at any time. This will be fine, and you can still stay in my teaching group and (teacher) won't move you out of this group unless you want to go. When we talk I am going to turn on the recorder. Do you know what this does? It copies your voice. We can try this (say hello etc. and give child a chance to listen to herself/himself). We can stop and listen to your voice whenever you want.

Appendix 4: Social Justice and Complexity Theory Journal Article

Mevawalla, Z. (2013). The crucible: Adding complexity to the question of social justice in early childhood development. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 14(4), 290-299. doi: 10.2304/ciec.2013.14.4.290

The Crucible: adding complexity to the question of social justice in early childhood development

ZINNIA MEVAWALLA

*Institute of Early Childhood,
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ABSTRACT As an ideology, the concept of social justice has long been a worthy, if slightly volatile, companion of early childhood theorists and researchers. Whilst the majority of the literature has valorised social justice, discontented questions regarding 'what' the construct entails and 'how' it might be tamed to work still remain. Using complexity theory, this article problematises the amalgam of social justice by readdressing the role of participation, inclusion and equality in early childhood systems. It is argued that social justice evolves from essentially local and relational interactions amongst a range of stakeholders. By framing early childhood interactions as those occurring within the context of relationships which are embedded within open systems (that is, systems within systems), this article discusses how interactions in early childhood involve a set of complex, yet systematic, processes which can only be understood as they unfold. Contextualised against the dominant discourse of 'normalisation' in early childhood, this article uses aspects of complexity theory such as non-linearity, emergence and recurrency to focus on the ways in which layers of social justice are embedded in the values and processes experienced in early childhood systems. Drawing on the philosophical roots of transformative education, it focuses particularly on the use of complexity theory to frame concepts of children's power, agency and participation. It discusses how the proactive praxis of social justice might emerge from within early childhood systems.

Introduction

Underscored by the principles of equity, human rights, participation, inclusion, democracy, power, responsibility and freedom (to name a few), the concept of social justice is as difficult to define as it is to construct and deconstruct. With such a heavy and diverse network of terms functioning under the all-encompassing amalgam of 'social justice', it is not surprising that the growing cluster of social justice education literature has accrued in its wake an overflow of analytical writings on 'ableism, adultism, ageism, anti-Semitism, classism, heterosexism, racism, sexism' and various other 'isms' (Adams et al, 2009, p. 525). Early childhood development (ECD) [1] – that is, the period during which a young child under eight years holistically develops – is particularly relevant to social justice, given that attitudes towards difference emerge in these early years (Connolly, 1998; Dau, 2001; Connolly et al, 2007). This relevance is further reinforced when one considers that education [2] has long been thought of as an arrow for social transformation (Dewey, 1937, 1966; Horton & Freire, 1990; Freire, 1993). ECD has received particular attention in this regard, from economic research suggesting that ECD programs can compensate for the ill effects of poverty and cultural deprivation (Frost, 1968; Cunha & Heckman, 2006; Heckman et al, 2010), to neurological and biological studies highlighting the longevity of the early years impacts on later development (Kagitcibasi et al, 2009; see also the *Lancet*, volumes 369 [issue 9557], 378 [issue 9799]). Amongst these findings (and a range of others from various disciplines), a wealth of interest and investment has materialised. Adding social justice to this already overflowing crucible (or melting pot) of things

that early childhood education ought to accomplish may seem somewhat tautological, given that research has already positioned ECD as a veritable springboard for benefitting children, families, societies, economies and politics. However, it is argued here that focusing specifically on high-quality social justice education in the early years is significant for addressing the immediate and longitudinal spirits of democracy, participation, inclusion, sustainability and equity (Pelo, 2008).

The paradigm in which this 'interest' and 'investment' in ECD has been encompassed has come with a certain form of (market-based) accountability (Moss, 2009), along with a desire for achieving predetermined outcomes (Kamens & McNeely, 2010; Lingard, 2010). This paradigm (based on the dominant discourses surrounding education) and an alternative counterpart (based on complexity theory) are the central concerns of this article. Within this broader arrangement, Fleener's (2008) thinking has been adapted to frame the guiding question, which asks: 'What kind of education can capture the complexity of social justice as it unfolds, without reducing the diversity of this worthy concept or oversimplifying the interconnectedness of its relationships to broader political, sociocultural and ethical branches?' This question subsumes two sub-questions, the first of which asks: 'What sort of knowledge has contributed to the current understandings of social justice in the literature?' The second asks: 'How is this reflected in the social, political, ontological and ethical purposes and practices ascribed to ECD systems?'

Social Justice

In answering the question about the sorts of knowledge that have contributed to the current understandings of social justice in the literature, it is necessary to review the social origins of social justice. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle have been credited with conceptualising social justice as being about the public's 'common interests' (Griffiths, 2003). Rawls (1971) built on this notion through his distributive theory of justice by focusing on the equal distribution of resources and goods throughout society. Rawls based his analysis on societal reciprocity (the social contract), and used 'income and wealth to index relative social positions' (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 107). Nussbaum (2006) and Young (1990) suggest the need to move beyond Rawls' material parameters and their Marxist foundations, arguing that injustice is more complex and influenced by a dynamic mixture of socio-economic, political, cultural and historical factors.

More recent constructions of social justice have drawn on post-Enlightenment, feminist, postmodern and critical theorists (such as Hume, Nussbaum, hooks, Mouffe, Foucault, Lyotard, Derrida and Freire) to focus on how oppression and injustice are reinforced by the power cached in reason, reality, language and ideology. In applying this thinking to ECD, Dahlberg et al consider the 'dominant discourse', suggesting that if

there is no single reality, only many perspectival realities, then ... Claims to represent can be understood as tools that project power by privileging one particular construction or perspective over others, and as forms of normalization by constructing standardized categories and criteria against which people and things are judged. (Dahlberg et al, 2007, p. 25)

Foucault discusses how the dominant ideology presents itself as a 'regime of truth' that is universally acknowledged and therefore unquestionable (Giroux & McLaren, 1991; MacNaughton, 2005). This, as Derrida claims, perpetuates asymmetrical power relations that privilege some whilst leading to the exclusion of those considered as 'other' (Eg a-Kuehne & Biesta, 2001).

Taking these notions into account, for the context of this article the term 'social justice' is used to refer to the active struggle for transformation against all forms of discrimination and oppression. It is an ethical, political, cultural and ontological undertaking. This does not signify social justice to mean 'equality as normalisation' – that is, the concept does not convey equality as the making of the 'other' into the 'same' through the assimilation of all in one (Fielding & Moss, 2012). Rather, it is about willing the complexity of diversity and difference within and across the social ecology. Coming back in a somewhat circular fashion to the importance of social justice to education, Freire and Gramsci unpack how such 'truth' and 'othering' are reincarnated by superstructures (churches, schools, the media) and relations (family, teachers, peers), which thereby continue the treadmill of exclusion, inequality and power imbalance in society (Freire, 1993; Mayo, 1995).

The Dominant Discourse of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Extending on this thinking, Dahlberg and Moss (2005) suggest that the globalised expansion of interest and investment in ECD has led to its 'institutionalisation' and to the prominence of a singular dominant discourse. This discourse, spoken in the Anglo-American language of developmental psychology, assumes objectivity, universality and normality (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). It uses 'divide and rule' approaches that consider neither the situation nor the temperament of children or their contexts. Child development approaches, or developmentally appropriate practices, isolate children's development into compartments (such as physical, intellectual, social and emotional), which can then be separately measured and ameliorated. As Cannella describes it:

Child development is a discourse that has been constructed within a particular social, political, cultural, and historical context by one group of people with power over other groups. Used to legitimize the surveillance, measurement, control, and categorization of a group of people as normal or deviant, the discourse is linear and deterministic. Child development is an imperialist notion that has fostered dominant power ideologies and produced justification for categorizing children and diverse cultures as backward and as needing help from those who are more 'advanced'. (Cannella, 2002, p. 158)

Such analyses give rise to the importance of counter-hegemonic discourses that empower robust hope (Britt & Rudolph, 2013). A complexity-based paradigm challenges the assumed objectivity and universality of childhood. It acknowledges that education is not, and cannot be, neutral or predetermined, and instead portrays ECD as a 'local, relational and diversely multifaceted affair, of which the sum is greater than the addition of its parts' (Hayden et al, 2013, pp.218-219). Complexity further acknowledges the imbalance of power and the non-linearity of social justice endeavours by regarding the unpredictable and intractable nature of human interaction.

Complexity Theory: an overview

Complexity theory in the human sciences focuses on the ways in which relationships make up connected networks or systems. It unpacks the intricacy of interconnections in the world, and questions the nature and influence of collective behaviours. It looks at 'how autonomous agents can come together into more sophisticated, more capable unities and how, in turn, those grander unities affect the actions and characters of the agents that comprise them' (Davis & Sumara, 2005, p. 454). It is therefore primarily concerned with the investigation of complex adaptive systems. Complex adaptive systems are self-organising and open systems – that is, subsystems within systems. They are learning organisms and, as such, are not without a history. These systems have no centralised control; actors engage in non-linear interactions without the complete or absolute knowledge of the interplay amongst others (Mitchell, 2009). Complex adaptive systems also have emergent and recurrent properties. Emergence is a reflection of the unpredictable and uncertain nature of complex adaptive systems. Emergence is based on the understanding that:

The ability to reduce everything to simple fundamental laws does not imply the ability to start from those laws and reconstruct the universe ... At each level of complexity entirely new properties appear. Psychology is not applied biology, nor is biology applied chemistry. We can now see that the whole becomes not merely more, but very different from the sum of its parts. (Anderson, 1972, p. 393)

Emergence is what happens when interactions between elements form an unforeseeable 'newness'. Recurrency, or the notion of having recurrent properties, is also a prevalent factor in complex adaptive systems. Recurrency can be described by positive and/or negative feedback processes within a system that subsequently impact the elements and the interactions between them (Waldrop, 1992; Fowler, 2008). Similarly to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) thinking, this lens implies that childhood exists within the lived complexity of history, culture and society, and that therefore micro-environments have the potential to significantly influence macro-environments, and vice versa (Hayden et al, 2013). Coming back to the central concerns of this article, this thinking lends itself to uncovering answers to the second sub-question regarding how social justice is reflected in the social, political, ontological and ethical purposes and practices ascribed to ECD systems.

To the Crucible: social justice, ECD and complexity

Since complexity theory is concerned with the investigation of complex adaptive systems, the first step in applying complexity thinking to the social justice–ECD lockstep is to ask how we can conceptualise social justice as a pedagogical and lived praxis in an ECD system. In addressing this, Cilliers (1998, pp. 3-5) has identified 10 criteria for defining a complex adaptive system. Whilst Cilliers (2010) has acknowledged that his is not a 'be all and end all' list, it does address the prominent components of complexity thinking and proposes a basic framework highlighting the properties of a complex adaptive system. These criteria have been rearranged in the left-hand column of Table I. In the right-hand column, I have adapted these criteria for the analysis of ECD as a complex social justice undertaking (see Table I).

Criteria for complex adaptive systems	ECD as a complex social justice undertaking
1. Complex systems consist of a large number of elements.	Children, practitioners, families, educators, medical and allied health professionals, and others within the broader community would constitute an ECD network of elements within this context.
2. The elements in a complex system interact dynamically.	As a community is interconnected, various flows of information ripple throughout the human network. Stakeholders exchange information and build connections with others in formal, informal, non-linear and multidirectional ways across a short range. Concurrently, it is through these interactions that social justice travels (in the form of action, knowledge and change).
3. The level of interaction is fairly rich.	The quality of human relationships within an ECD network is determined by various factors. However, as these networks consist of an array of interdependent individuals, the interactions between these individuals are rich, as individuals must capitalise on resources to provide optimal opportunities for young children's development and the broader community. As not all interactions are equal, those who are excluded may not get the same access as others.
4. Interactions are non-linear.	Whilst there are various hierarchies of roles, positions and social statuses in an ECD network, the range of interactions amongst people within an ECD network is also non-linear – for example, children learn from educators whilst also teaching them (Freire, 2005). Therefore, entities emerge unexpectedly through non-linear interactions. The power of different people lends to the weighting of positions and inequality across society.
5. The interactions have a fairly short range.	Individuals within an ECD network access local relationships, resources and practices that support development. Additionally, individuals are dependent on one another for gaining access to knowledge and resources, and advocating for change and social justice.
6. There are loops in interconnections.	Feedback and communication flow throughout the ECD system both formally and informally as individuals act on the information available to them and, consequently, communicate knowledge with others. As people can only act on what feedback and resources they have and receive, this raises equity issues.
7. Complex systems are open systems.	The ECD system operates within a larger system of the community, province, state and nation, and internationally. As Bronfenbrenner (1979) indicated, macro-level changes and occurrences therefore have a potentially significant influence on young children, their families and communities.
8. Complex systems operate under conditions that are far from equilibrium.	Communities change, evolve and survive as complex entities with their own culture and ethnicity, and practices for social justice in educating and caring for young children shift accordingly.
9. Complex systems have histories.	An ECD network will have certain social origins that influence the inherent values attached to how it is understood within and across contexts (Rizvi, 1998). Similarly, people in different systems will understand differently the meanings and connotations attached to social justice, but those forming one ECD network will likely have shared experiences and intersubjective understandings of constructs.

10. Individual elements are ignorant of the behaviour of the whole system in which they are embedded.	Individuals within an ECD community operate based on the knowledge available to them locally. As such, no one individual knows the extent or entirety of the interactions forming the broader system.
---	---

Table I. ECD as a complex social justice undertaking.

As described in Table I, social justice is a culture that develops within and through ECD systems, where the ECD system (like all human systems) is made of relationships that are embedded in the social infrastructure of a community (which is then set within a broader society and so on). Social justice is inherently a human and emergent set of values. It arises as a result of the networked interactions amongst actors within the context of a system's history and society. As such, there can be no singular linear trajectory for 'achieving' a socially just and democratic society – these ideals cannot be plucked out of one society and replicated in another, nor can they be imposed on young children (or anyone else for that matter). The underlying meanings attributed to these value-based processes are influenced by various factors (including context, sociocultural history, background and demography) and therefore have diverse meanings within and across groups of people (Dahlberg et al, 2007). These phenomena, like 'many phenomena, can only be understood at the level of their emergence' (Davis & Sumara, 2010, p. 857). The application of a complexity lens to relational ECD systems is therefore useful in unpacking how interconnected, non-linear and unpredictable elements influence social justice and democracy.

So What? Social Justice as the Art of Participation, Inclusion and Equality in ECD Praxis

Various analysts have argued that critical and transformative ECD is central to the development of social justice and democracy (Dahlberg et al, 2007; Moss, 2007, 2009; Fowler, 2008; Fielding & Moss, 2012). This aligns well with complexity thinking, as it implies that people with people and people to people (Eyben, 2011) cause the pulse of social justice to beat in human systems. As human systems are learning systems of which young children are a part, education becomes the bridge through which such people-to-people learning exchanges and transformations occur. In accordance with the perspective of Rix et al (2010), the functionality of ECD in the emergence of social justice, then, might be the engendering of spaces for participation, inclusion and equality. Accordingly, social justice as a pedagogical praxis can be understood as that which occurs within the crucible (or melting pot) of relationships in which participation, inclusion and equality are sought in the occasions, spaces and experiences of learning, regardless of the conditions confronted (Freire, 1998).

Participation and Emergence

Participation in ECD as a social justice endeavour may be conceived as the active protagonism of agents (children, families, educators and others) working to transform the world. As complex systems are endogenous,

the knowledge, experiences and perceptions of those within the system also actively influence the system ... [this emphasises] the importance of participation and dialogue in localising and personalising experiences in order to organically engender spaces for human possibilities ... [which] explains how concepts of democracy and social justice evolve. (Hayden et al, 2013, p. 219)

Accordingly, following Rinaldi's (2005) perspective from Reggio Emilia, a complexity lens propagates the importance of participation through 'truly listening' (Hewett, 2001) to young children's voices and viewpoints.

The praxis of participation can provide an opening for children, families and practitioners within and outside of ECD settings to engage in the political aspect of social justice. This may be through subtle interactions (such as educators' daily interactions with children and families) or broader collective interactions (such as those that foster thoughtfulness with regard to the purpose of education and educators). Underlying both these minute and grand threads of social justice in ECD systems is the broader ethic of listening to those who are 'othered'. According to complexity thinking, collective and community participation is specifically relevant, given that human systems involve a number of people interacting and reinteracting extensively, and, at times, these relatively simple local interactions can result in unexpectedly magnified outcomes (emergence).

In this manner, participation as a social justice undertaking engenders an understanding of the politics of agency. Participating, very actively, is a verb that is woven by 'thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risks involved' (Freire, 1993, p. 73). Education, in this sense, is itself a process of participatory action research (Horton & Freire, 1990) that critically confronts and troubles injustice. This process of education as participatory research in and of itself forwards social justice, as it politicises education through the importance of children engaging in critical thinking, thereby advancing their thinking (by thinking for themselves) as opposed to replicating the thinking of others (Hewett, 2001).

Inclusion and Recurrency

Building on this idea of education as participatory research raises the importance of recurrency or recurrent feedback elicited from young children, families and others within the system. If, as Freire notes, education is not (and cannot be) apolitical (Shor, 1993), it cannot be the transfer of objective knowledge, as all knowledge has a social origin that privileges particular ideologies. Freire (1998) continues that, for an authentically transformational and socially just education to occur, there must be recognition and resistance of the power of 'neutral' and 'objective' forms of knowledge. Accordingly, valuing the diversity and multiplicity of local knowledge is significant in striving towards inclusive education. As Freire suggests:

Why not discuss with the students the concrete reality of their lives and that aggressive reality in which violence is permanent and where people are much more familiar with death than with life? Why not establish an 'intimate' connection between knowledge considered basic to any school curriculum and knowledge that is the fruit of the lived experience of these students as individuals? Why not discuss the implications, political and ideological...? (Freire, 1998, p. 36)

In a similar manner, Cologon (2010, p. 45) argues that 'inclusion is really what teaching is'. This sentiment is imbued with the relational sense of belonging, respect, diversity and self-determinism that makes inclusion 'a framework within which all children [and adults], regardless of ability, gender, language or cultural origin, can be valued equally with respect and provided with equal opportunities' (Prosser & Loxley, 2007, cited in Cologon, 2010, p. 45). If inclusion is teaching, then perhaps this teaching is accepting, socially relevant and critically engaging in that it uses problem-posing education (Freire, 1993) to open spaces for meaning-making via the analysis of reality.

Inclusion as a social justice endeavour links to recurrency, as complex systems are open systems. It is important to discern children's voices in the immediacy of shaping their local ECD environments and programs, as positive feedback amongst actors influences and is influenced by understandings from local happenings. Feedback that stems from the bottom up has the potential to influence broader systems, raising awareness of young children's salutogenic capacities, power, agency and participatory rights. This thereby shapes social justice goals and challenges pervading notions of ability in these contexts. Specifically, where pervading notions of ability compartmentalise (divide) children into beings who (do or do not) require 'investment' or 'intervention' (Hayden et al, 2013), the importance of eliciting feedback from those who are 'invested in' is paramount, as 'one does not liberate men by alienating them' (Freire, 1993, p. 52). Moreover, using a complexity-based framework to become immersed in and draw out local narratives by multiple local stakeholders within the system can afford transparency and local understanding that combats technical constructions of 'investment' and 'intervention'.

Equality and Power through Non-linearity

Rather than oversimplifying and reducing children's differences and relationships (Fleener, 2008), the valuing of difference and diversity can disrupt the 'regimes of truth' that support the top-down enforcement of knowledge as power. Equality – that is, the reciprocity of humanisation for all people via the respectful and meaningful praxis of valuing difference and diversity (Freire, 1985) – emerges from the deconstruction of power. Fowler (2008) has suggested that, by using complexity-based frameworks over other linear frameworks, it is possible to critically analyse the imposition of top-down interventions that disempower and silence the 'other'.

As traditional education views equality as conformity through education (MacNaughton, 2003), it purveys the acceptance of inequality, the current status quo and the importance of authority (Sullivan, 2006). In understanding that, within ECD systems, all relationships are capillaries and passages for power, alternative forms of education that value creative alternatives, curiosity and grit shape education as the praxis of liberation (Freire, 1985). Viewing children's engagements with power and authority as political acts that interrupt and resist the dominant discourse and status quo characterises the non-linear nature of social justice as being of equality and education. Equality as a social justice praxis 'invites students to question the system they live in, and the knowledge being afforded to them, to discuss what kind of future they want, including their right to elect authority and to remake the school and society they find' (Sullivan, 2006, p. 42).

According to this way of thinking, education adopts the features of critical thinking and of children as co-researchers with agency who learn endogenously (from the bottom up). It respects the rights of learners to 'name the world' (Freire & Macedo, 1987) whilst building on their autonomy and contextual knowledge and values. This creates a space for resistance against the unjust elements of society, and therefore challenges the perceived linearity of oppressive relationships (such as the teacher–student relationship). Resistance as a theory for transformational pedagogy in ECD systems is particularly relevant against the backdrop of standardised testing and discourses that promote power imbalances through classroom competition, as opposed to collaboration (Freire & Macedo, 1987). All social justice education deals with power. This highlights the importance of engaging educators in discussions of counter-hegemonic discourses, such as those of resistance, in order to engage with unknown, complex alternatives for education that are creative and critical (Fielding & Moss, 2012).

Understanding social justice as the judgement of values that emerge in contexts raises the importance of practitioners resisting the stranglehold of outcomes, accountability and the culture of distrust (Wrigley et al, 2012) in order to make space for social justice as an art of pedagogical praxis not only with students, but also amongst broader communities of learners (for example, amongst practitioners themselves). As Britt and Rudolph (2013) highlight, opening spaces for reimagining the possibilities of social justice through the local and practical meaning-making of difference and diversity in the classroom is a complex, but humanising, (ad)venture. As Giroux (2007) further highlights, the need for counter-hegemonic discourses that support thinking about equity and resist the restrictions of injustice in society is necessary now more than ever. Therefore, using the pedagogy of listening as the pedagogy of social justice through participatory research as education troubles the imbalance of power and the passages it uses to negate equality.

Conclusion

Whilst childhood is ubiquitous, it is a diversely complex phenomenon full of discourses, practices and perspectives which have not evolved ahistorically (Woodrow, 1999; Wong, 2007). The architecture of complexity theory implies that social justice education occurs 'with a richness or ecology of interactions that makes prediction with certainty impossible' (Fleener, 2008, p. 74). Accordingly, to use complexity theory in order to look back at the central guiding question of this article (that is, 'What kind of education can capture the complexity of social justice as it unfolds, without reducing the diversity of this broad concept or oversimplifying the interconnectedness of its relationships to broader political, sociocultural and ethical branches?') highlights the emergent nature of social justice in early childhood education. At the risk of providing an oversimplified answer to this inquiry, it could be said that the opening for one answer (of many possible answers) to this question lies in a relational and ethical education. Such an education would trouble the

power and politics of oppressive engagement by reflecting people as 'transforming rather than adaptive beings' (Freire, 1993, p. 102) who are creative, experimental, passionate and critical in their praxis and valuing of participation, inclusion and equality. As ECD is a uniquely situated 'meeting space' for various stakeholders, it is a prime environment for reflecting on and envisioning a future in which we can hope that social justice and democracy are a part of our lives (Pelo, 2008).

Notes

- [1] Early childhood development (ECD) is known by many terms, such as early childhood education, early childhood care and education, and early childhood education and development. ECD is used here in an inclusive manner to refer to all aspects of the sector – that is, education, care and development.
- [2] Whilst the term 'education' itself has had many historical debates with regard to its meaning (Moss & Urban, 2010), this article follows Fielding and Moss's (2012, p. 46) conceptualisation of 'education in its broadest sense', thereby situating the term 'early childhood education' within the broader understanding of education as 'fostering and supporting the general well-being and development of children and young people, and their ability to interact effectively with their environment and to live a good life'.

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Appendix 5: Publications and Presentations Associated with this Study

Journal Article:

Mevawalla, Z. (2013a). The crucible: Adding complexity to the question of social justice in early childhood development. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 14(4), 290-299. doi:10.2304/ciec.2013.14.4.290

Book Chapter:

Hayden, J., Mevawalla, Z., Britt, C., & Palkhiwala, S. (2013). Complexity theory, early childhood development and social justice: Creating a space for children's voices. In C. Basu & V. Anderson-Patton (Eds.), *Children and childhood: Practices and perspectives* (pp. 217-227). Oxford, UK: Inter-Disciplinary Press.

Peer Reviewed Conference Presentations:

Hayden, J., Britt, C., Palkhiwala, S., & Mevawalla, Z. (2012a). *The other side of the mirror: Children's participation in moving beyond prevailing discourses of children and childhood*. Paper presented at the Crossroads in cultural studies conference, Censier Campus, Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Paris, France.

Hayden, J., Britt, C., Palkhiwala, S., & Mevawalla, Z. (2012b). *Complexity theory, early childhood development and social justice: Creating a space for children's voices*. Paper presented at the 2nd global conference: The child: A persons project, Mansfield College, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom.

Hayden, J., Britt, C., Mevawalla, Z., & Palkhiwala, S. (2013). The Game-changers: Towards a redefined notion of quality ECE through the meaningful participation of children in research projects. Paper presented at the 65th OMEP World Congress, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China.

Mevawalla, Z. (2013b). Young thinkers without borders: Investigating the critical thinking of young children in an Indian urban context – implications for the praxis of social justice in early childhood. Paper presented at the Future of educational research conference, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.

Mevawalla, Z. (2014). *Resistance, defiance: Young children's critical consciousness and the role of opposition - possibilities for social justice*. Paper presented at the 24th EECERA conference: 'Us, them and me: Universal, targeted or individuated early childhood programmes', Crete, Greece.