

**Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care:
Gender, Class, and Women who Care(s)?**

Geraldine Nolan

13316929

University of Dublin, Trinity College

**Supervisors: Dr Andrew Loxley
Dr Maija Salokangas**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of Dublin Trinity College for the
degree of Doctorate in Philosophy**

September 2021

Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them.
Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best
leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will
say 'We have done this ourselves'. (Lao Tzu, 604 BC)

Declaration

I hereby declare that this is entirely my own work and it has not been submitted as an exercise for the award of a degree at this or any other University. I agree that the library may lend or copy this dissertation on request.

Geraldine Nolan

Geraldine Nolan

Summary

Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care: Gender, Class, and Women who Care(s)?

The Irish Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector in the last decade has undergone considerable change in philosophy, policy, and legislation, along with greater accountability and financial constraints. The increased responsibilities required of practitioners have created a substantial government interest in ECEC leadership and the introduction of various prescribed leadership roles for the practitioner. Conversely, it is difficult to establish what principles underpin and support these roles, as there is a shortage of leadership research and training in the sector. The precarious nature of the ECEC workforce and their relationship with sector leaders also appear to remain problematic. This study set out to explore how leadership was conceptualised in the sector, how it was practised in the settings, the supports in place for leadership, and the potential leadership could hold in drawing together the diverse group of Irish practitioners to address their working conditions. To capture the varied perspectives, 50 ECEC participants including practitioners, lecturers, representatives of professional organisations, and the government, were interviewed (a qualitative interview study). This study was informed by theoretical and empirical knowledge of the field, a social feminism perspective – dual system theory (Eisenstein, 1979), my previous research (Nolan, M.Ed., 2015), as well as my experience as an ECEC practitioner. The following questions guided the study:

1. How is leadership understood in the sector, and how is it practised in ECEC settings?
2. What interventions currently exist to support leadership, including policies, literature, and training?
3. How do ECEC stakeholders relate to each other and the wider educational and political arena?
4. To what extent, if at all, do gender and class (other factors) influence the stakeholders' understanding and practise of leadership in the setting?
5. How do ECEC stakeholders conceptualise and articulate their ideas for developing leadership or alternative strategies to address the practitioners' working conditions?

Clarke and Braun's (2013a, 2013b) process guided analysis of the interviews. It emerged that the participants in the study understood leadership as a relational, context-specific, and socially-constructed activity. The government representatives described the prescribed leadership roles (pedagogy, inclusion, governance, room leader) as the purpose of ECEC leadership. The remaining participants found it challenging to articulate the purpose of ECEC leadership. They suggested that while these leadership roles were accredited with being critical and prestigious, they had emanated from a network of diverse and disjointed government departments and organisations and were primarily concerned with management. Managerialism had become the new leadership, and the purpose of ECEC and leadership had become blurred in this neoliberal climate. Arguably, this form of leadership may be contributing to the low status and poor working conditions attributed to the sector.

It became apparent that the gendered (nice women who care — an insignificant force) and classed (women as carers — useless subjects) assumptions in the interviews (dual system theory) revealed the source of power over and constraint on the practitioners' relationship with leadership — the contested notion of care. The practitioners' classed and gendered conceptualisation of care (physical, social, and emotional) as a value position was considered necessary for the child, relationships, and leadership. This understanding of care seemed incompatible with the commodified, educationalised, and intellectualised opinion of care expressed by the remaining participants. Furthermore, the lack of recognition and respect for “care” as an axiom and fundamental mode of praxis in ECEC had marginalised practitioner knowledge and weakened their confidence in articulating and positioning care as central to the purpose of ECEC and leadership.

In summary, the participants proposed that a form of leadership underpinned by research, critical thinking, knowledge, and networking, could identify, and address the varied issues in ECEC, including the practitioners' working conditions. While the practitioners acknowledged the value of such interventions, their focus was on developing an active and collaborative process, with a shared language underpinned by their experiences, everyday knowledge, and values, with the intention of reconceptualising care. They considered care to be the antidote to the neoliberal care[less] sector, the missing link in prioritising the child over affordable childcare and highlighting the importance of their work and working conditions. As such, it was difficult to ascertain whether the practitioners' description of a collaborative process involved leadership or leadership was part of a set of collaborative and participatory tools (Adler & Heckscher, 2017; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Freire, 1986; Kemmis et al., 2014) to do the work of questioning and reimagining ECEC and developing their working conditions.

Acknowledgements

To my wonderful supervisors, husband, children, participants in the study, and my loyal canine friend Rooney, who sat under my desk for the duration of this process.

I thank you all from my heart.

Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Summary	iii
Acknowledgements	vii
List of Appendices	xiii
List of Tables	xiv
List of Figures	xv
List of Abbreviations	xvi
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 The researcher: Positioning myself	4
1.2 The objective of the research and the research questions	7
1.3 Significance of the research	7
1.4 Research design	8
Chapter 2 Theoretical conceptualisations of ECEC: The case of Ireland	9
2.1 Terminology and definitions	11
2.2 Theoretical conceptualisations of ECEC	12
2.2.1 ECEC as sites of learning and development (Ages and stages) _____	13
2.2.2 ECEC as sites of collaborative learning and communities _____	15
2.2.3 ECEC as sites of power and possibilities _____	19
2.2.4 ECEC as sites of creative and experimental learning _____	22
2.3 ECEC in practice: The case of Ireland	23
2.3.1 Types of Irish ECEC services _____	23
2.3.2 Sessional services _____	24
2.3.3 Early Start _____	24
2.3.4 Afterschool and Breakfast club _____	25
2.3.5 Full-time services _____	25
2.3.6 Community and private ELC services _____	25
2.4 ECEC Support services	27
2.5 Training and Qualifications	27
2.6 Pay and working conditions of the ECEC workforce	29
2.7 Summary	30
Chapter 3 Policy: From the beginning - 2009	33
3.1 The framework for chapters 3 and 4	36
3.2 The Irish education system and ECEC	40
3.3 The evolution of Irish social policy	42
3.4 Irish Social Policy: Twentieth Century	43
3.4.1 The New State, the Catholic Church and social policy _____	43
3.4.2 Children in care and the care of children _____	44

3.4.3 [Un]intended consequences: Care and education divide _____	45
3.5 Quantity: Increasing the number of childcare places	46
3.5.1 Quantity: The European influence since 1973 _____	47
3.5.2 [Un]intended consequences of EU funding: Cultural and professional divide __	48
3.6 Reactive policy and the repercussions for ECEC	51
3.6.1 The Madonna House Report 1996 _____	51
3.6.2 [Un]intended consequences: Blame and mistrust of childcare workers _____	51
3.7 Quality ECEC policy and the international influence.....	53
3.7.1 Quality: OECD influence on Irish ECEC policy _____	53
3.7.2 [Un]intended consequences: Quality as human capital and high returns _____	55
3.7.3 [Un]intended consequences: Managerialism as quality (control and assurance)	59
Chapter 4 ECEC policy 2011–2019	63
4.1 Reactive ECEC Policy and the repercussions for ECEC.....	65
4.1.1 Universal Free preschool year _____	65
4.1.2 [Un]intended consequences: Mentoring and [dis]empowering the practitioner _	70
4.2 Equality: A strategy for ECEC	72
4.2.1 Equality, diversity, and inclusion _____	72
4.2.3 Equality for children or gender equality for parents _____	74
4.2.4 [Un]intended consequences: No care and no care[er] _____	77
4.3 Workforce development – no development	79
4.3.1 [Un]intended consequences: ECEC staff turnover and the blame game _____	81
4.4 Leadership – where is it?	83
4.5 Summary	88
Chapter 5 Literature Review	91
5.1 The literature review process.....	93
5.2 Defining and tracing the evolution of educational leadership	93
5.2.1 Educational leadership _____	96
5.3 Leadership research in the field of ECEC	97
5.3.1 The first wave: Leadership roles and leadership for advocacy _____	198
5.3.2 The second wave: Contextual leadership _____	100
5.3.3 The third wave: Pedagogical to postmodernist perspective _____	103
5.4 Critical deficits in ECEC leadership research.....	106
5.4.1 Gender: The pink ghetto _____	107
5.4.2 Class: The silent influencer _____	108
5.4.3 Care: Who cares? _____	110
5.4.4 Power: Women and care _____	113
5.4.5 Professionalisation of the Irish sector _____	114
5.5 Towards a theoretical framework	116
5.6 The way forward.....	123

5.7 Summary	125
Chapter 6 Research Design	127
6.1 Aim and research questions	129
6.2 The research approach.....	132
6.3 A qualitative interview design.....	137
6.4 Samples and Sampling Strategy.....	137
6.4.1 Sample selection.....	138
6.4.2 Sample size and access to the field	139
6.5 Introducing the participants.....	139
6.6 Research methods.....	146
6.6.1 Generating the data	146
6.7 The pilot study	147
6.8 The process: Semi-structured interviews	148
6.9 Data analysis	149
6.9.1 Becoming familiar with the data and generating initial codes.....	151
6.9.2 Searching for themes	153
6.10 The researcher's positionality.....	161
6.11 Ethical considerations	163
6.12 Limitations of the study.....	163
6.13 Summary	164
Chapter 7 Findings 1	165
7.1 The themes and subthemes	168
7.2 Theme 1	170
7.2.1 Leadership: What is it all about?	171
7.2.2 Leadership: To what end?	172
7.3 Theme 2	175
7.3.1 Reactive policy	176
7.3.2 Practitioner empowered/powerless	178
7.3.3 The ECEC exodus	182
7.4 Theme 3	183
7.4.1 Affordable childcare	185
7.4.2 Accountable childcare	187
Chapter 8 Findings 2.....	189
8.1 Theme 4	191
8.1.1 The young child – who cares?	193
8.1.2 No support or leadership for care.....	194
8.1.3 No relationships in care	196
8.2 Theme 5	199
8.2.1 The practitioner: Victim or villain	199

8.2.2 Leadership and voice: Capacity or no expectation_____	200
8.2.3 Class evasion _____	203
8.3 Theme 6	205
8.3.1 Leadership: “The only way forward” _____	205
8.3.2 Responsibility _____	206
8.3.3 Critical consciousness _____	208
8.3.4 Relationship and care _____	210
8.4 Summary of themes.....	212
Chapter 9 Discussion.....	215
9.1 The purpose of leadership	219
9.1.1 Leadership for inclusion, pedagogy, and governance _____	2211
9.1.2 Quality as the purpose of leadership _____	223
9.1.3 Leadership in practice: Management, managing, or managerialism _____	225
9.2 The power of gendered and classed assumptions.....	228
9.3 The problem with care	231
9.4 The possibility of leadership.....	238
9.5 Summary	239
Chapter 10 Conclusions and Recommendations.....	241
10.1 The research questions	243
10.2 The questions answered	244
10.2.1 Research question 2 _____	244
10.2.2 Recommendation: To move from reflective practice to critical participation _	245
10.2.3 Research question 3 _____	246
10.2.4 Recommendation: To move from individual to integrated systems _____	247
10.3 The question partially answered.....	248
10.3.1 Research question 4 _____	248
10.3.2 Recommendation: “Change in mind-sets towards... care” _____	249
10.3.3 Recommendation: A gender/class detoxification _____	250
10.3.4 Recommendation: A political detoxification _____	251
10.4 Research question that requires further research.....	252
10.4.1 Research question 1 _____	252
10.5 Final recommendations	257
10.5.1 The purpose of ECEC/ECEC leadership_____	257
10.5.2 One voice_____	258
10.5.3 Feminist research: Gender, class, and race _____	259
10.6 Reflective statement to include the strengths and weakness of this study	261
References.....	265
Appendices.....	336

List of Appendices

- Appendix A: Letter from the Department of Education and Science (2002)
- Appendix B: Balancing the books
- Appendix C: Conceptual framework mind map
- Appendix D: Towards a theoretical framework
- Appendix E: Theoretical framework mind map
- Appendix F: Towards a definition of leadership
- Appendix G: Ethical approval
- Appendix H: Pilot study
- Appendix I: Interview information sheet
- Appendix J: Consent form
- Appendix K: Interview Schedule
- Appendix L: Interview Log
- Appendix M: Transcribed Interview – question 1
- Appendix N: Interview memos
- Appendix O: Deductive and inductive coding
- Appendix P: HypeRESEARCH
- Appendix Q: Frequency of initial codes
- Appendix R: Refining and recoding codes
- Appendix S: Cuts across the data (2018)
- Appendix T: You know what you display
- Appendix U: Weighted codes
- Appendix V: HypeRESEARCH theory builder

List of Tables

Table 1: Theoretical perspectives of ECEC

Table 2: Irish early prevention and intervention programmes

Table 3: The policy review process

Table 4: OECD Policy Documents: The Influence on Irish ECEC Policy

Table 5: Leadership theories

Table 6: Research Design

Table 7: Case Study Design

Table 8: Sample Selection Criteria

Table 9: List of Participants in the Study

Table 10: Themes and Sub-themes

Table 11: Trustfulness and Transferability

Table 12: Themes and Sub-themes revisited

Table 13: Participants' Abbreviations and Symbols

Table 14: The interview questions

Table 15: Discussion Themes

Table 16: Summary of Recommendations

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Te Whāriki ECEC framework

Figure 2: The Aistear ECEC Framework

Figure 3: The Irish quality and qualifications framework

Figure 4: Staff working directly with children - number and percentage

Figure 5: International comparison of ECEC wages

Figure 6: The Heckman Curve

Figure 7: Workforce Development

Figure 8: Who is Responsible for ECEC?

Figure 9: Theoretical Lens

Figure 10: Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care

Figure 11: ECEC Leadership

Figure 12: Reflective Journals

Figure 13: Analysis Journal

Figure 14: Printed Interviews

Figure 15: Manual Coding

Figure 16: Side Lined Codes

Figure 17: A framework for reporting qualitative research

Figure 18: Analysis of the data

Figure 19: Review of the thesis

Figure 20: Significant Findings and Contributions to the Knowledge Base of the Sector

List of Abbreviations

ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
ACP	Association of Childcare Professionals
ACS	Affordable Childcare Scheme
ADM	Area Development Management
AIM	Access and Inclusion Model
ALARA	Action Learning, Action Research Association Ltd
CE	Community Employment
CECDE	Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education
CCC	City/County Childcare Committees
CCS	Community Childcare Subvention
CoRe	Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care
CPAR	Critical Participatory Action Research
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSRs	Country Specific Recommendations (European Commission)
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DES	Department of Education and Science
DHS	Department of Health and Science
DJELR	Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
DOHC	Department of Health & Children
EC	European Commission
ECCE	Free preschool scheme
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
ECI	Early Childhood Ireland
ECRP	Early Childhood Research and Practice
ELC	Early Learning and Care
EOCP	Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme
EPNoSL	European Policy Network on School Leadership
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
EYEI	Early Years Education Inspectorate
EYEPU	Early Years Education Policy Unit
FETAC	The Further Education and Training Awards Council
DL	Distributed Leadership
HCT	Human Capital Theory
HE	Higher Education

HSE	Health Service Executive
ILF	International Leadership Forum
ILP	International Leadership Project
ILRF	International Leadership Research Forum
LINC	Leadership for Inclusion
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMC	Office of the Minister for Children
OMCYA	Office for the Minister of Children and Youth Affairs
PAR	Participatory Action Research
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NCPP	National Centre for Partnership and Performance
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEARI	Network for Educational Action Research in Ireland
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NEYAI	National Early Years Access Initiative
NPM	New Public Management
NVO	National Voluntary Organisation
NZME	New Zealand Ministry of Education
QAP	Quality Assurance Programme
PD	Professional Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
QRF	Quality and Regulatory Framework
QRIS	Quality Ratings and Improvement Systems
SAEN	Special and Additional Educational Needs
TASC	Think-Tank on Action for Social Change
TEC	Training and Employment Childcare programmes
UNCRC	United Nations Children's Rights Charter
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Chapter 1 Introduction

Five years ago (2015), when I decided to pursue this course of study, early childhood education and care (ECEC) was a topic of considerable interest internationally (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), 2011; European Commission, 2015; Heckman, 2015; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2015). This focus had created numerous changes in ECEC philosophy, policy, legislation, and regulations, along with increased accountability and financial constraints (Dahlberg & Moss, 2008; Moss, 2014; Penn, 2011). These changes had created responsibilities and challenges for leaders in ECEC settings, often far beyond their training and expertise (Hujala, 2013; Stamopoulos, 2012). There was little training, and leadership research was considered sparse, inadequately theorised, and difficult to locate (Hujala, et al., 2013). There was a paucity of leadership capacity in the sector (Goffin, 2013; Campbell-Evans et al., 2014). Simultaneously, the ECEC workforce was considered marginalised, with poor working conditions, low status, and limited critical capacity to address or contest policy reforms (Fenech et al., 2010; Australian Productivity Commission, 2011) even in countries with relatively well-developed ECEC (Eurofound, 2014). At this time (2015), there was a robust leadership discourse in the Irish ECEC sector, with the Department of Education and Skills (DES, 2013) and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA, 2013) calling for development of leadership capacity. However, there appeared to be little training available for aspiring ECEC leaders, and research on Irish ECEC leadership remained scarce (Cafferky, 2013). Simultaneously, ECEC was recognised as a marginalised sector (Madden, 2012) with poor working conditions, low status (Moloney & Pope, 2013), and limited critical capacity to address (or contest) policy reforms (DES, 2010; 2013; Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR), 2002). Leadership in 2015 was in the early stages of development within the Irish sector. Given this situation, I considered it an opportune time to look in more depth at how leadership was conceptualised and practised, and to explore the potential leadership had to bring the diverse group of practitioners together with the common purpose of developing their working conditions.

As I write this introduction in 2020, internationally little has changed. ECEC continues to be a topic of interest internationally (ACECQA, 2018; Heckman, 2017; European Commission, 2019; OECD, 2020a, 2020b) and nationally (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (DCEDIY), 2020), and practitioners continue to face leadership responsibilities often far beyond their training and expertise (Gibbs et al., 2019). There have been calls to develop practical leadership training for ECEC staff (Modise, 2019). There is a paucity of leadership capacity in the sector (Nicholson et al., 2018). The continued requests internationally to define the roles associated with ECEC leadership

suggest leadership may continue to be a confused and challenging activity in ECEC settings (Inoue & Kawakita, 2019; Klevering & McNae, 2018; Sims et al., 2018).

Moloney & Petterson (2016) have described a similar situation in Ireland, and nationally (Walsh, 2017; Urban, 2017) and internationally (OECD, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c) ECEC remains a marginalised sector with poor working conditions and low status (Rogers, 2019). However, there has been a change in the Irish sector, and there are now three government-assigned leadership positions, including room leader (Tusla, 2018), leadership for inclusion (DCYA, 2016b), and leadership for learning, charged with the responsibility for meeting the educational-focused inspection of this aspect in settings (DES, 2016a). The motives underpinning the implementation of the room leader role, as well as the focus on leadership for learning and leadership for inclusion remain tenuous (pp, 196-198). Correspondingly, it remains unclear how these emerged roles and foci are impacting on the practitioner. As such, it could be argued that this study on leadership and workforce development may be even more relevant than it was in 2015.

1.1 The researcher: Positioning myself

I have spent over 30 years working in the pre-primary and primary education sector and have studied extensively in the area (BA (Hons) (UCC); PGCE (St Andrews, Glasgow); Montessori Diploma AMI (Sion Hill, Dublin); BA (Hons) ECCE (Carlow IT); M.Ed. (Distinction) (TCD)). For many years I was a member and the chairperson of the Irish Montessori Education Board (IMEB) advocating for recognition for the sector and the practitioner; after a lengthy legal encounter with the Department of Education and Science, the Montessori Method was recognised as an educational approach similar to the primary school (Appendix A). However, as with many things in politics, this was short-lived. In recent years I have, in a similar manner to Moloney & Pope (2013), increasingly witnessed a “disheartened, disillusioned, frustrated and disenfranchised ...[Irish] ECCE workforce” (p.10). Many talented, committed, and enthusiastic ECEC students have passed through my setting, taking up precarious positions with limited working conditions, who became over time disheartened and discouraged. This trend has been ongoing. Currently, a practitioner with a four-year honours degree has little job security, limited pathways for promotion, low pay, and inadequate health or pension benefits (Neylon, 2014; Urban et al., 2017; DCEDIY, 2020, July 15). A recent survey (SIPTU, 2019a) revealed a “profession living in poverty”. Low pay and a lack of basic entitlements predominate, where “84% are unable to cope with unexpected expenses, like replacing a washing machine. Just 11% get paid maternity leave from work, even though 98% of educators are women” (p. 5).

This situation was (and continues to be) challenging to witness. However, the limited progress we made in lobbying for the sector (IMEB), and the realisation that there is an “arrogance” in presuming that people require emancipation, and no-one is ever wholly emancipated from the socio-political context (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000) forced me to look at this issue differently. As such, I thought it might be more beneficial to find a means for the practitioners to address their situation. This was the impetus for my return to college (2013) to explore, document, and disseminate potential strategies to address the sector's working conditions. The return to college was embedded in the practical desire to look at working conditions in the sector rather than a theoretician's theoretical desire to create theory.

During my M.Ed. studies, the engagement with educational leadership literature helped me explore these issues at a deeper level, and, as sometimes happens, served as an introduction to my Ph.D. research. I became intrigued by the potential leadership could have as a vehicle to enable the practitioner in this endeavour. I wondered about the assertion that the practitioner lacked the critical capacity to address the sector's changes (contest or implement). I admit, I initially concurred with this assumption. I considered it a significant issue, as without the competence to critically question (look at both sides and what informs) or support and implement the recent changes in ECEC policy, regulations, and frameworks it would be difficult for practitioners to address the shortcomings in their employment situation in a meaningful way.

Without the capacity to advocate for their sector, there was/is the potential that ECEC practitioners would remain disenfranchised, with poor working conditions. All of which may have far-reaching negative implications for ECEC children and adults. However, the findings in this study revealed the very insightful, considered and honest understandings of leadership and the sector. The participants could be credited with prophesying the issues surrounding caring professions and how society has conceptualised care, which have come to the fore during this pandemic (2020). For decades, feminists have argued that women in caring roles are well placed to observe first-hand the social system's failure to meet human needs. Women in caring roles are often the ones left with the impossible task of making up the difference between capitalism's financialised agenda and what people need to live (Fraser, 2016; Weinbaum & Bridges, 1976). Thus, it comes as no surprise to read in a government report that “The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed how integral childcare provision is to essential workers and to a functioning economy” (Oireachtas, 2020, p. 1).

I was fascinated by the visceral dislike of “leadership” in the literature (Cuthbert et al., 2013; Ozga, 2000) and a similar response from my friends and peers. Leadership was considered a buzzword with no meaning, an authoritarian approach to managing people, and a self-important label. At the same time, I realised from my M.Ed. Studies that

leadership may have followed the path of neoliberal hegemony (Blackmore, 2013; Ward et al., 2015) and may be more about power, distributing workloads (Lumby, 2013; 2019) and a title than a moral act built around the moral good (Sergiovanni, 1996). Similarly, I am aware the idea of leadership may also be equated with authority and conquering, or equally with a mind-set of “who does she think she is?”, and may not suit our culture? Likewise, I was cognisant that, for many, leadership is just a catchword. As a researcher, I was familiar with the sentiment that somewhere along the way, leadership became the go-to answer when positive organisational outcomes could not be causally determined, and leadership has become “the great dumping-ground for unexplained variance” (Hansen et al., 2007, p. 544).

I also acknowledge that leadership may not be suitable or necessary (Meindl et al., 1985; Vecchio, 2007) and accept the possibility that leadership may not be a distinctive phenomenon. We could end up interpreting other factors as leadership. Moreover, leadership may be an occasional context/situation-specific activity rather than a permanent state in the relationship (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). However, rather than reject the idea of leadership, this study aimed to explore the emancipatory potential of leadership, “to look at what could be” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, p. 373) and how the “could be” may offer practitioners the means to address their working conditions.

Leadership described as the unwillingness to accept the status quo (Goffin, 2013) has sustained me and became my one-liner response to my study topic's negative comments. Equally, the idea that a happy workforce could only benefit the children in education and care settings sustained me until a new title was introduced into the sector. The complexity of terminology describing ECEC has been noted (European Commission, 2014; Nicholson et al., 2018) as internationally the terms include childcare, early childhood care and education (ECCE), early childhood education and care (ECEC) and early childhood education (ECE).

It should be noted that ECCE in an Irish context also refers to the Irish free preschool scheme (ECCE scheme). However, on November 19, 2018, the *First 5: A whole-of-government strategy for babies, young children and their families* (Government of Ireland, 2018) was published, and the title of the sector was changed (without consultation with ECEC stakeholders) from early childhood education and care to Early Learning and Care (ELC) with ELC and School-Age Childcare being described as services. The omission of the child and education from the title, and the possibility that the government's understanding of care as a service within this document may have become a guise to cloak the primary goal of ensuring full employment and replacing the population (decreasing fertility rates) (Nolan, 2020) does not sit easily with me. As such, in this study, the abbreviation ECEC is used.

1.2 The objective of the research and the research questions

The limited nature of leadership research in ECEC, the perceived lack of critical and leadership capacity, and issues in practitioners' working conditions provided a starting-point for this research. The study looked to: Explore the conceptualisation and understandings of ECEC leadership and the potential ECEC leadership could hold in drawing together practitioners to develop their working conditions; and explore social feminism, trying it out empirically in early childhood education with the possibility that it may emerge as a relevant form of research within the contemporary educational research landscape.

More specifically, the following questions emerged from the above objectives:

1. How is leadership understood in the sector, and how is it practised in ECEC settings?

2. What interventions currently exist to support leadership, including policies, literature, and training?

3. How do ECEC stakeholders relate to each other and to the wider educational and political arena?

4. How have/have not gender and class (other factors) influenced the stakeholder's understanding of leadership and leadership practice in the setting?

5. How do ECEC stakeholders conceptualise and articulate their ideas for developing leadership or alternative strategies to address the practitioners' working conditions?

1.3 Significance of the research

This study has the potential to begin to address the limited nature of Irish ECEC leadership research. Similarly, as Ireland is about to engage in a significant reform of ECEC (DCEDIY, 2020, July 27), this study can act as a catalyst to advance understandings and explanations of ECEC leadership and generate usable knowledge. This knowledge could support training, policy, and the leadership roles already in situ, facilitate further research and assist the ECEC practitioner in commencing the process of advancing leadership or other strategies to address their working conditions. Without this knowledge, there is the possibility that the status quo will continue, and the practitioners will remain subordinate professionals in the broader political and educational arena. This situation has the potential to impact the welfare of all the ECEC stakeholders negatively.

1.4 Research design

Fifty participants were selected using a purposive or purposeful sampling approach (Merriam, 1998). The participants spanned the sector's layers — practitioners, representatives of professional bodies, lecturers, and government representatives. Semi-structured interviews with the 50 participants were transcribed verbatim and manually coded, and then coded with the aid of a CAQDA Software package — HyperRESEARCH. A socialist feminist perspective — Dual Systems Theory (Eisenstein, 1979, 1999) guided the study and provided conceptual tools for the analysis. The analysis involved a critique of the material existence (economic and sexual) and ideology (the stereotypes, myths, and ideas which define their roles) surrounding the practitioners and their engagement with leadership, to reveal the dynamic power systems/structures determining their situation and potential emancipation (Eisenstein 1990, p. 115). Clarke and Braun's (2013a, 2013b) understanding of thematic analysis also framed the analysis, and an adaptive approach took account of the existing theoretical framework and any new ideas that emerged. Several cyclical and iterative analysis stages culminated in identifying and displaying six final themes and subthemes (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014), discussed in the last two chapters.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The dissertation has been divided into nine chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the study, context, and aim of the research. It also presents the research objectives and argues for the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 describes the theoretical conceptualisations of ECEC and outlines how ECEC is currently put into practice. The various settings, the support structures, the qualifications, staffing, and pay are all clarified.

Chapters 3 and 4 provide an analysis of Irish social and ECEC policy (1635 – 2019) to underpin and inform the study.

Chapter 5 offers a critique of the relevant literature on early childhood leadership

Chapter 6 critically discusses the methodology and research design of the study.

Chapters 7 and 8 outline the key findings which emerged from the data analysis.

Chapter 9 presents a critical discussion and interpretation of the data findings.

Chapter 10 concludes the thesis with answers to the research questions and recommendations for future policy, research, and practice.

*The presentation of the thesis has followed the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition (2019) citation and style guide.

Chapter 2 Theoretical conceptualisations of ECEC: The case of Ireland

This chapter provides information on the theory and practice of Irish ECEC. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first defines ECEC and describes retrospectively the prominent theoretical perspectives associated with ECEC and their impact on how ECEC is conceptualised. The second section of the chapter describes the critical features of the current Irish ECEC system, consisting of types of provision, staffing, support structures and the employment conditions in the sector including staff training, qualifications, and pay.

2.1 Terminology and definitions

Internationally, ECEC refers to a range of "processes and mechanisms" that support and safeguard children's development during their early years and "encompasses education, physical, social and emotional care, intellectual stimulation, health care, and nutrition. It also includes the support a family and community need to promote children's healthy development" (UNICEF, 2012, p. 4). Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is the term most often used in international policy documents and research to define all care and education provisions for children before compulsory school age (Urban et al., 2011). More recently, the Irish government has renamed the sector Early Learning and Care System (ELCS) (Government of Ireland, 2018), and this has necessitated a new definition of ECEC:

Any regulated arrangement that provides education and care from birth to compulsory primary school age – regardless of the setting, funding, opening hours, or programme content – and includes centre and family day-care; privately and publicly funded provision; pre-school and pre-primary provision. Includes centre-based ELC and regulated home-based ELC but excludes grandparental care and the early years of primary school. (DCYA, 2018, p.23)

The UNICEF definition suggests ECEC is concerned with the child's holistic development and the Irish description appears to be more concerned with governance and accountability. The term "early years practitioner" in an Irish context consists of those working with children from 0-6 years.

2.2 Theoretical conceptualisations of ECEC

Theoretical conceptualisations of ECEC draw on and relate existing child development theory to the ECEC context. Throughout history, the education and care of young children have been impacted by theoretical perspectives (Developmental – Post humanist) of prominent historical figures (Froebel - Hillevi Lenz Taguchi). This chapter is descriptive in emphasis and table 1 retrospectively outlines the prominent theoretical perspectives associated with ECEC and their impact on how ECEC is conceptualised. However, due to time and space limitations, the primary focus of this section will be on the theorists who have influenced and continue to influence how Irish ECEC is conceptualised and practiced. This section will be divided into four segments 1) ECEC conceptualised as sites of learning and development (Developmental theories – ages and stages), 2) ECEC as sites of collaborative learning and communities (Socio-cultural theories), 3) ECEC as sites of power and possibilities (Critical, Poststructuralist theories) and ECEC as sites of creative and experimental learning (Post humanist theories).

Table 1

Theoretical perspectives of ECEC

Theoretical perspectives	Theorists	ECEC conceptualised as sites of	Implications for practice
Developmental	Piaget Froebel Steiner Montessori Forest Schools	Learning and development - Stages of development	Educators respond to and plan activities in relation to children's developmental stages
Socio - Behaviourist	Pavlov Skinner Bandura	Shaping children's behaviour	Educator-directed activities coupled with rewards and reinforcements
Socio- Cultural	Vygotsky Bruner Bronfenbrenner Malaguzzi Te Whāriki Aistear	Collaborative learning and development in the context of children's communities	Educators and more knowledgeable others scaffold and transform learning in response to children's prior understandings
Critical Post-structuralist	Habermas Freire Foucault Bourdieu	Power and possibilities	Educators challenge whose values and knowledge perpetuate particular truths about ECEC, the assumption is that it then becomes possible to create more inclusive and just forms of ECEC.
Post humanist	Hillevi Lenz Taguchi,	Creative and experimental learning	Educators work in ways that transgress beyond the binary divide - between mind and body, intellect and emotion, nature and culture, and theory and practice.

Adapted from Nolan, A., & Raban, B. (2015). *Theories into practice understanding and rethinking our work with young children.*

<https://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/shop/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/SUND606sample.pdf>

2.2.1 ECEC as sites of learning and development (Ages and stages)

Developmental theorists focus on explaining how children change and grow throughout childhood, how they learn and develop at specific ages, often referred to as ages and stages (Pope et al., 2011). The key proponents of this theory and those who have impacted how ECEC is conceptualised include Froebel, Steiner, and Montessori. Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), a nineteenth-century German educator, developed the idea of a

kindergarten, where children's holistic learning occurred when they were immersed in nature, experiencing the beauty, inner connection, and knowledge of the natural world through play (Froebel, 2001). The children are offered gifts and occupations as tools to develop a connection with the natural world and support their learning and development. The gifts included small, crocheted balls on strings for babies and a series of progressively more complex boxed blocks in the shape of a cube split up into various geometric configurations. The occupations comprised weaving, sewing, paper folding, clay, and sticks for woodwork and construction (Tovey, 2016).

The Froebelian Approach to education holds a prominent position in Irish education. Froebel's notions about user activity and play in preschool education complement many principles of early childhood education used in contemporary schools internationally (Provenzo, 2009) and align with Aistear the Irish curriculum framework for all children from birth to 6 years (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA, 2009)). Within Aistear ECEC is conceptualised as supporting children's learning and development through play and activity and children "use their bodies and minds in their play" (NCCA, 2006, p. 54). Research outlines that 67% of ECEC services have a play-based curriculum (Pobal, 2020, p.63). The Froebel Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education at Maynooth University was formally established on 1 September 2013. Formerly known as the Froebel College of Education, it is the first teacher education college in the state's history to become fully incorporated into a university campus (Maynooth University, 2021).

Similarly, Rudolf Steiner (1861- 1925), an Austrian artist, philosopher, and playwright in the twentieth century, sought to understand and theorise how children learned and developed. Schools are called Steiner Waldorf because the first school was opened in 1919 for children of workers at the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory (Pound, 2014). Children are understood to move through different stages of development. Attention is paid to the whole child's physical, emotional, intellectual, and cultural needs, emphasising their spiritual development and educating the head, hands, and heart. The children's love of learning is encouraged through the absence of competitive testing, rewards, and academic placement (Steiner, 2007). Steiner advocated for a later start (7 years of age) to formal education, the benefits of which include self-motivation and enjoyable life-long learning (Palmer, 2020). The absence of testing and delaying formal learning has influenced how ECEC is conceptualised and practiced in Ireland. There are over 1,000 Steiner Schools and 1,600 Kindergartens worldwide. Many schools continue through to secondary level. In Ireland, there are "10 Steiner Waldorf Kindergartens, seven primary schools (three of which are supported by the Department of Education) and one secondary school" (Dublin Steiner School, 2021). It is estimated that approximately 2% of ECEC services follow a Steiner approach (Pobal, 2020).

Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952), the first female Italian physician and anthropologist, devoted her life to understanding how children learn and develop socially, intellectually, physically, and spiritually. By observing children, she proposed that children have universal patterns of development. Montessori described the child's early years from birth to six as the first plane of development. It is the period when they have the most significant capacity to learn (*The Absorbent Mind*) (Montessori, 1949). Montessori proposed that children are born with an ability and readiness to learn — they are driven to become independent learners through the freedom to choose learning activities (Sensory-motor activities and didactic materials) in a prepared environment. During the children's "sensitive" periods (stages of development), they are more susceptible to certain behaviours and can learn specific skills more easily (Montessori, 1992). The Montessori notion that the hands are the instruments of man's intelligence sits firmly with how Irish ECEC is conceptualised currently, where children learn and develop through age-appropriate hands-on materials (NCCA, 2009). The Montessori approach to education is firmly rooted in Irish ECEC, with estimates that over 42% of ECEC services follow the Montessori philosophy (Pobal, 2020).

It could be argued that Forest Schools fall under the method approach to the early years. The forest school approach to education is considered a pedagogical technique which uses particular methods to deliver learning objectives by a trained Forest School leader (Park et al., 2010). The Irish Forest School Association was founded in 2016 and there are 22 forest schools throughout the country. The characteristics of the forest school include, regular sessions, woodland setting, community, holistic development, opportunity to take risks, and qualified practitioners (Irish Forest Schools Association, 2020). Forest Schools have been accredited with a wide range of health and social outcomes (Park et al., 2010).

2.2.2 ECEC as sites of collaborative learning and communities

The socio-behaviourist theorist (Classical behaviourism (Pavlov) and social learning theory (Bandura)) asserted that learning was teacher-directed and occurred because of social and physical conditioning (Nolan & Raban, 2015). Conversely, Socio-cultural theorists assert that children learn and develop in the context of their communities (Vygotsky, Bruner, Bronfenbrenner, Malaguzzi, Rogoff). It would seem this perspective has shaped the conceptualisation of Irish ECEC. In the Irish ECEC curriculum framework *Aistear* (meaning journey) learning, and development are inextricably intertwined. They are embedded within the milieu of social relationships, the family, neighbourhood, community, society, and public policies (NCCA, 2009). "Children's early learning and development, therefore, is a matter for the whole of society." (French, 2007, p.5)

Another socio-cultural theorist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Russian psychologist, outlined the primary role culture played in the young child's cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky looked to culturally specific tools and the notion of the zone of proximal development, the gap between what a person can do with help and what they can do on their own to explain children learning and development. With the help of more knowledgeable others, children can gradually learn and increase their skills and scope of understanding. Vygotsky (1978), in contrast with the developmental and behaviourist theorists, advised that teaching based on the present level "does not aim for a new stage of the developmental process ... only "good learning" is that which is in advance of development" (p. 89). Likewise, Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) claimed (Ecological systems theory) that children's learning and development was bi-directional, context-specific, and occurs within a complex system of relationships that includes child, family, and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Bronfenbrenner described the environments shaping the child's development as systems. The four systems contained the microsystems (Activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the child). The third mesosystem (The interrelations between two or more micro settings). Ecosystems (settings that affect or are affected by the developing child but do not involve the child as an active participant); and the macrosystem (the cultural and societal beliefs and values) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Irish ECEC has drawn from these perspectives and acknowledges that children develop during many different interacting systems (Hayes et al., 2017).

The writings of Loris Malaguzzi (1920–1994) and the creation of the pre-schools in Reggio Emilia, a city of 140,000 outside Milan (Italy), epitomise the socio-constructivist model where both children and adults construct their knowledge through interactions with others and the environment. The schools started by parents after WWII are now supported by the government. Both Malaguzzi and Aistear (NCCA, 2006) conceptualise ECEC as an environment where a child's positive image as a competent and confident participant in their learning and play is an integral part of learning and early development. The New Zealand model of ECEC Te Whāriki (2006) also draws on this theory: where children are "competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2017, p.2). The name 'Te Whāriki' comes from the Maori language and means 'woven mat.' Learning and development are analogous with weaving, woven from the foundational principles, strands, and goals. Children learn through an interconnected system of others and the environment. The practitioner weaves "their own

mat" as Te Whāriki does not set any regulations for content or methods (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2017, p.2).

Figure 1

The Te Whāriki ECEC Framework



Veazey, V. (2020). Te Whāriki:

What is New Zealand's early years curriculum? <https://www.family.co/blog/te-whariki-new-zealand-early-years-curriculum>

The Te Whāriki model influenced Aistear (NCCA, 2009) and, similarly, interweaves four themes to describe children's learning and development: Well-being; Identity and Belonging; Communicating, and Exploring and Thinking.

Figure 2

The Aistear ECEC Framework

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (2009). *Aistear the early childhood curriculum framework*. <https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/introduction/full-print-version-aistear/https://ncca.ie/media/1112/how-aistear-was-developed-research-papers.pdf>

Aistear is the Irish curriculum framework for children from birth to six years. It offers information for adults to enable them to plan and provide enjoyable and challenging learning experiences for children from birth to six years to grow and develop as competent and confident learners within collaborative and supported relationships with others (NCCA, 2009). Aistear (NCCA, 2009) describes the importance of learning (knowledge, dispositions, skills, values, attitudes, and understanding) supported through partnerships with parents, interactions, play, and assessment in young children's lives.

There are twelve principles under three categories 1) children and their lives in early childhood: 2) children's connections with others 3) how children learn and develop. The Aistear guidelines emphasise building partnerships between parents and practitioners, learning and developing through interactions, supporting learning and development through assessment, and learning and developing through play (NCCA, 2009, p. 6).

2.2.3 ECEC as sites of power and possibilities

For most of the 20th century, ECEC has drawn on theories of child development. These theories of learning and development have theoretically underpinned learning programs for young children. Conversely, several academics (Bloch, Swadener, & Cannella, 2014; Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Penn, 2011; Stuart, 2013; Urban 2008, 2019) have questioned the developmental and psychological theories underpinning ECEC. They questioned the power dynamics and taken for granted assumptions concerning ECEC including ECEC the economic gains from investing in children (OECD, 2001, p.43) and the story of quality, and high returns (Moss, 2014, 2015a, 2015b) (Section 3.2.3.) Similarly, ECEC academics look to Freire (Vandenbroeck, 2020), Foucault (MacNaughtan, 2005), and Bourdieu (Vuorisalo & Alanen, 2015) and their conceptual tools to understand how power works in and through ECEC. In uncovering whose values and knowledge perpetuate particular truths about early childhood education, the assumption is that it then becomes possible to create more inclusive and just forms of ECEC.

Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian educator, academic, and social theorist who proposed that knowledge was a product of human practices and could transform the world. He created and implemented a literacy program in Latin America and Africa to support people to reach their full potential and be liberated (Freire, 1970). Freire influenced many fields including, philosophy, pedagogy, literature and social sciences, and literature. He fought his entire life to give people access to an education that would empower them to grow and develop to their full capacities. The premise of his theory proposed that students need to become critical co-investigators through continual dialogue instead of passive listeners. (Freire's theory is further developed in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.3). Poststructuralist theorists (Foucault and Bourdieu) propose that there is no single way of viewing children or childhood. There should be various perspectives concerning ECEC, learning and development, and conceptualising ECEC (Cannella, 1997, 2000). Pierre Bourdieu described the acquisition of different forms of capital (social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital), the development of individual habitus - lifestyle, values, dispositions, and expectations of certain social groups and how habitus operates in relation to the various fields of education, business, and politics. Bourdieu (1996) quoted from his paper *Understanding*:

I don't, myself, just reflect everything. I always try to see the behaviour of individuals, how they behave, where they come from, what their interests are, and I manage to understand (Steelworker and trade union official, Longwy, as cited in Bourdieu, 1996, p. 17).

This quote reflects the key concepts of Bourdieu's theory - field, habitus, and capital and provides a framework to understand how social inequalities occur and may be sustained over generations (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986) proposed that educational institutions take the habitus of the dominant group as the natural and only proper sort of habitus and treat all children as if they had equal access to it. The experiences of individuals may depend considerably on habitus and characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, class, and ability to influence children's learning and development. Equally, a child's identity, aspirations, and ultimately capabilities are developed in and through interaction with different fields, indicating the vital position and interconnectedness of home, community, and society in the child's learning and development (Webb et al., 2002). (Bourdieu's theories are further developed in section 6.4.2). The understanding that social inequalities occur and may be sustained over generations conceptualises ECEC as a site of early Intervention and prevention.

The first educational-based prevention and early intervention programmes were developed in Ireland in disadvantaged urban communities in the 1970s. Rutland St was state funded in 1969 to provide support for pre-school children. The Atlantic Philanthropies funded 52 prevention and early intervention programmes, including large-scale projects in the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme. These projects were co-funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (i.e., Childhood Development Initiative, Tallaght, Preparing for Life, Northside Partnership, and youngballymun, Ballymun). The government jointly funds the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme with Atlantic Philanthropies, totalling €29.7m in 13 areas over 2013-2016 (*The 13 areas and an overview of the early prevention and intervention measures are presented in Table 2). These measures were premised on the positive benefits for prevention and early Intervention and promoting positive outcomes for children, families, and communities (Harvey, 2014).

Michele Foucault (1926–1984), a French historian and poststructural philosopher provided conceptual tools (genealogical inquiry and discourse analysis) to examine the relationship between power-knowledge-truth and how systems and institutions such as ECEC generate specific knowledge and practice and shape children in particular ways (Foucault, 1980). Examining the interaction between power, truth, and knowledge, it becomes possible to see how things are and how they could be (Mc Naughton, 2005). Thus, ECEC becomes sites of power and can be conceptualised as sites of possibility, where an alternative avenue for early childhood education can be posited, focusing on social justice and human agency (Cannella, 1997). Reconceptualisation is considered "multidirectional and multidimensional, resulting in constant critique and new insights from which new transformative actions can emerge" (Cannella, 2000, p. 216). The post humanists build on

critical theory and provoke a relevant re-evaluation of existing models and propose questioning the key terms, 'child,' 'families' and 'communities (Burman, 2018, p.1599).

Table 2

Irish early prevention and intervention programmes

Year	Prevention and early intervention programmes	Overseen/initiated by
1960 – 1980's	Rutland St was state funded in 1969 to provide support for pre-school children. 16 family centres of the charitable Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) were established. Other voluntary organisations provided prevention and early intervention programmes.	Department of Education & Skills ISPCC Barnardo's
1990's	The Family Resource Centre programme – 107 centres	European-funded national pilot scheme to combat poverty, 1975-80. Since 2014 under the remit for Tulsa.
2000's	The Atlantic Philanthropies funded 52 prevention and early intervention programmes (PEI)	Atlantic Philanthropies & Department of Children and Youth Affairs
2013	The Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme	Atlantic Philanthropies & Department of Children and Youth Affairs
2014	Evaluation commenced of 40 PEI	

ABC Programmes

1. Ballyfermot/Chapelizod, Family Matters,
2. Ballyfermot/Chapelizod Partnership
3. Ballymun, youngballymun
4. Bray, Supporting Parents and Early Childhood Services (SPECS), Bray Area Partnership (BAP)
5. Clondalkin, Blue Skies Initiative, Archways
6. Dublin Docklands and East Inner City, Early Learning Initiative, National College of Ireland
7. Dublin Northside, Preparing for Life, Northside Partnership
8. Finglas, Better Finglas, Barnardos

9. Grangegorman, Grangegorman ABC Programme, Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
10. Cork, Young Knocknaheeny, Northside Community Health Initiative (Cork) Ltd (NICHE)
11. Limerick City, ABC Start Right Limerick, People Action Against Unemployment Ltd. (PAUL Partnership)
12. Louth, The Genesis Programme, Louth Leader Partnership Midlands, HSE Midlands Area
13. Tallaght West, CDI Tallaght, Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative Ltd.

The Atlantic Philanthropies investments in children and youth and the promotion of prevention and early intervention services was premised on the understanding that effective practice could inform and influence policy and practice and develop capacity and infrastructure for the sector (The Atlantic Philanthropies, 2013). There has been a strong focus on research and the collection of evidence and rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of services in the Prevention Early Intervention Initiative (PEII). There were 41 evaluation studies, including 15 Randomised Control Trials, 11 quasi-experimental, four qualitative ones, and 11 others, including action research and case studies (Harvey, 2014). The Centre for Effective Services (CES) created the Capturing the Learning series, gathering data and information from evaluations conducted in the PEII. CES produced six outcome reports. The findings from the evaluations suggested that there were seven areas of importance, including supporting parents, focusing on the first three years of life, key life transitions, and children's learning (Atlantic Philanthropies, 2013).

2.2.4 ECEC as sites of creative and experimental learning

The Posthuman paradigm theorises the child and childhood within the context of the "Anthropogenic" (Somerville & Green, 2015, p.16), moving from "human centeredness" to relationships with all earth-dwellers (Murriss, 2016, p. 193).

In this vein, ECEC becomes conceptualised as sites of creative and experimental learning that incorporate body and material artifacts as a part of learning environments (Lenz Taguchi, 2011). Hillevi Lenz Taguchi (1962 -) A Swedish professor of education describes the theoretical shift towards posthumanism as an "ontological turn." A turn that has the potential to "give direction for how we produce knowledge (epistemology), but also for how we understand the world, matter, and materiality, and how we understand ourselves (ontology) ... onto-epistemological world view" (Lenz Taguchi, 2009, p. 42). Takes a relational materialist theoretical approach requires looking at what might be rather than what is, was, and should be (Lenz Taguchi, 2011).

Lenz Taguchi (2011) critiques the social–constructivist model, which she asserts takes a one-sided social class position and neglects the “materialised positionings and expressions of gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality in learning practices” (Lenz Taguchi, 2011, p. 36). Lenz Taguchi (2011) further counsels that contemporary teaching and learning practices take-for-granted that learning takes place inside the individual student. This culminates in the ignoring of vital force and importance of the material in learning. The result is the over-emphasis of the human language as the only way to understand learning. Learning in a relational materialist approach can be understood as “emerging from what happens in distributed networks and assemblages consisting of both human and non-human matter and organisms that interact with each other” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, cited in Lenz Taguchi, 2011, p.46).

2.3 ECEC in practice: The case of Ireland

This section will provide information on current ECEC practice in Ireland, the types of ECEC provision, the support structures, and the working environment in the sector, including training, qualifications and pay. The information supporting this discussion has been garnered from Pobal (Pobal,2021). Pobal invite ECEC settings to participate in a yearly service profile survey. As such the information provided does not represent the entire ECEC sector but is based on the response to the survey (2019/2020) and published in 2021 (Pobal, 2021). A total of 4,5406 services with an active contract for the 2019/20 school year were invited to complete the service profile survey. A total of 2,964 services (65%) completed the service profile survey. Of those services, 30% were community and 70% were private, 38% were based in rural areas and 62% were based in urban areas (Pobal, 2021, p. 18). Currently, ECEC services have been divided into four main categories, full-time, part-time, sessional services, and school-age childcare.

2.3.1 Types of Irish ECEC services

The types of ECEC services available in Ireland have been renamed Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School-Age Childcare (SAC) services (DCYA, 2019) and include:

Sessional services – provide ELC services for a set period during the day

Sessional a.m. (e.g., Free preschool year 9am–1pm)

Sessional p.m. (e.g., Free preschool year 2pm–5pm)

Part-time services - provide ELC services for a total of more than 3.5 hours and less than 5 hours a day

School-age childcare – provide Breakfast club/Afterschool care

Full-time services - provide all day care (All day Nursey/Creche) (Pobal, 2020).

2.3.2 Sessional services

Most sessional services provide ELC for three hours per day to accommodate the Free Pre-School Year Programme (ECCE scheme) introduced in January 2010 (DCYA, 2010). The ECCE programme is a universal two-year preschool programme comprising of 3 hours a day, 5 days a week, over the 38-week school year. It provides children with their first formal experience of early learning prior to commencing primary school. The programme is available to all children who have turned 2 years and 8 months before September as long as they don't turn 5 years and 6 months at any point during the preschool year. ELC services taking part in the ECCE programme provide an appropriate preschool educational programme which adheres to the principles of Siolta, the National Quality framework for early years education and care (CECDE, 2006). The programme is provided in both community and private crèches (Gov.ie, 2019). Currently, 84% (2,459) of ELC settings offer morning sessional services and 25% (730) offer sessional services in the afternoon (Pobal, 2021). The sessional services can be further divided into Montessori, Steiner and Forest preschools, Naoinri preschools, and Early Start. The Montessori, Steiner and Forest preschools follow their philosophy and are in the main privately owned. The Naíonra is an early immersion setting for children aged 3-5 years. The children speak and learn (play) through the Irish language. The Naíonraí are supported through Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta an all-Ireland voluntary organisation. Naíonraí follow the Irish language version of the Aistear curriculum framework (NCCA, 2009). The organisation Gaeloideachas provides services and supports to 180 naíonraí and 5515 children outside the Gaeltacht. The naíonraí employ 500+ naíonra teachers, 103 of whom hold Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge qualifications in Irish language proficiency (Gaeloideachas, 2020). Of the 243 services (including Gaelteacht naíonraí 140 (58%) are private and the remaining 103 (42%) are community, with 53% of services located in urban areas and 47% in rural areas (Pobal, 2021, p.50).

2.3.3 Early Start

The Early Start Pre-School Programme a preventative intervention scheme and was introduced in 1994 in eight pilot schools in disadvantaged urban areas. It expanded to 40 schools (1965). The pre-schools are currently funded by the Department of Education and Early Start implements the Aistear framework (NCCA, 2009). Early Start seeks to enhance the overall development of young children and to prevent school failure by trying to

counteract the effects of social disadvantage. Parental involvement is one of the core elements of the programme in recognition of the parent/guardian as the prime educator of the child and to encourage the parent/guardian to become involved in his/her child's education (DES, 2020).

2.3.4 Part time services

Part-time services, provide ELC services for a total of more than 3.5 hours and less than 5 hours a day. It may include a sessional pre-school service for pre-school children not attending the part-time day care service (Flood & Hardy, 2013). In 2019/2020 39% (1,504) of ELC offered part time services.

2.3.4 Afterschool and Breakfast club

Many ECEC services 21% (814) offer Breakfast clubs and in 2019/2020 90 providers offered school-age childcare only and no other service types (Pobal, 2021, p.86).

2.3.5 Full-time services

Children from 3 months to 6 years are catered for in full-time services (All day care and nursery/creche). The Health Service Executive (HSE) under the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 over see the food preparation, sanitation and sleeping arrangements. 32% (893) of ELC services offer full time education and care from 6 months to school going age (Pobal, 2021). Most full-time services are privately owned and funded by parental fees. Community creches are government funded and there are several large employers who run chains of day care and many colleges and universities provide crèche facilities at subsidised rates for their staff and students. These services typically operate from 8am–6pm to facilitate working parents (Flood & Hardy, 2013). In the Irish context ECEC services have been further subdivided into community and private ELC services.

2.3.6 Community and private ELC services

Over twenty-five years ago the EU (1995) and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR, 1999, 2000, 2002) provided €436.7 million to develop childcare services to address parents' needs in employment and training (DES, 2004). This support involved providing 100 percent grant assistance to “a community/not-for-profit consortium of private and community groups” towards building, renovating, upgrading, or equipping

community-based childcare facilities. The EOCP also provided support towards staffing costs for community-based childcare in disadvantaged areas (DJELR, 2002, p.19). A Capital Grant Scheme was also available to self-employed and commercial childcare providers with more than 20 childcare places to build, renovate, upgrade, or equip childcare facilities with a maximum available grant of €50,790 (DJELR, 2002). The tradition of community and private ELC continues today. The majority of ELC services are run by private (for-profit) organisations; in the period 2019/20 74% (3,476) of all services were private, with community services accounting for the remaining 26% (1,241).

There are more services in urban areas 65% (3,070) and 35% (1,620) in rural areas (Pobal, 2021). Services in urban areas are predominately private, with 77% of urban services being private compared to 68% in rural areas. Community services continue to meet the needs of the families and children in disadvantaged areas where only 3% of community services were in affluent areas compared to 11% of private services. “These proportions were reversed in disadvantaged areas, where 14% of community services were located compared to 4% of private ones” (Pobal, 2020, p.48). Community services have a propensity to open for longer hours and days than their private counterpart. Thirty one percent of all services open for more than 40 hours a week during term. Of these community services are more likely to open between 41 and 50 hours (22%) while private services are more likely to open for over 50 hours a week (15%) (Pobal, 2021, p. 46). A quarter of community services operate between 44 and 49 weeks (235) contrasted with 7% of private services (Pobal, 2020, p.58).

On average, staff in community services have been working for longer in the service than their colleagues in private facilities. For example, almost half of staff in community settings (49%) have worked there for five years or more, compared to 43% of staff in private services (p.76). The staff in private settings tend to have higher qualifications (National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Section 2.5) Level 6 qualification on the NFQ or above. Over two thirds of staff in private services (73%) have NFQ Level 6 qualification or above, compared to 63% of staff in community services. This difference may be associated with community services’ higher levels of staff who are on employment schemes or government funded programmes, whose qualifications are lower – 31% of all staff on employment schemes/other government funded programmes have an NFQ Level 6 or higher, in comparison to 71% of direct employees. (Pobal, 2020, p.80). One in six staff in community services are connected to an employment scheme/government funded programme, with 74% on the Community Employment programme's (CE scheme). The CE scheme designed to assist the long-term unemployed to return to work by offering temporary and part-time work within local communities, including community based ECEC settings. The higher

numbers of staff on schemes/ programmes in community services correspond to the opportunity for community services to access a broader range of employment schemes/programmes (Pobal, 2021).

2.4 ECEC Support services

In 2001 the EOCP created 33 City/County Childcare Committees (CCC) and supported 7 National Voluntary Childcare Organisations (NVCOs). Funding was made available to the NVCOs to help their members improve their services. The NVCO's included Barnardos, Childminding Ireland, Children in Hospital Ireland, Forbairt Naíonraí Teo, Early Childhood Ireland, Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association, and St Nicholas Montessori Society of Ireland. These supports continue today with publications, resources training, and information services available to the practitioners and parents in the ECEC sector (Government of Ireland, 2020).

One of the NVCOs Early Childhood Ireland (ECI) is considered to be the leading membership organisation in the sector, with over 3,800 members who support 120 000 children and their families. ECI provides a range of supports which include quality enhancement, communications advocacy, and publications, HR supports training, information for the sector that employs over 25,000 people (ECI, 2020). The EOCP also established 33 CCCs and employed staff to provide information and advice on operating an ECEC setting, provide training for practitioners, offer guidance to parents on local childcare facilities, and coordinate childcare development locally. The CCC in each county or city are supported by voluntary members representative of the key stakeholders in the ECEC sector. These included representation from the Local Development Partnerships, National Voluntary Childcare Organisations, Statutory sector, the Social Partners, Parents and Providers of Childcare (DJELR, 2002). The CCC's place specific emphasis on supporting and implementing strategic plans to target disadvantaged families (DES, 2004).

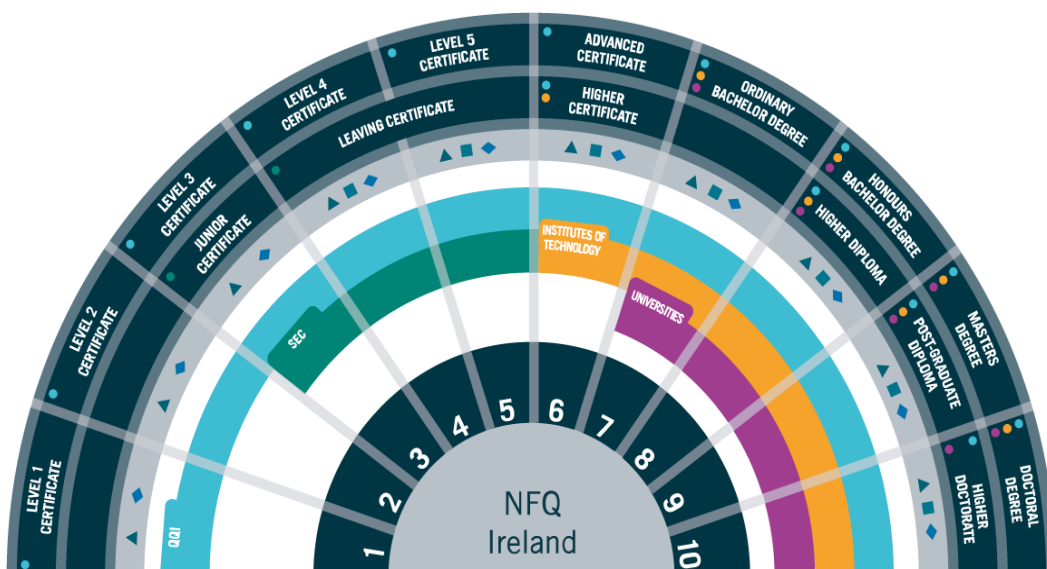
2.5 Training and Qualifications

There are several Irish third-level educational institutions providing training for ECEC students. These comprise of universities (including the National Universities of Ireland Galway, Maynooth, Cork, Dublin City College, and the Technological University Dublin), private colleges (including the National College of Ireland, and Portobello College Dublin), and Institutes of technology (including Carlow, Cork, Galway, Sligo, and Waterford). These educational establishments align with the NFQ and provide training for ECEC students from

level 5 to level 10. The National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) was established in 2003 and updated in 2020. The NFQ describes the qualifications in the Irish education and training system and is a 10 level “single national entity” (Quality & Qualifications Ireland, 2021). The framework outlines what each qualification “says about what learners know, understand and are able to do. It also sets out qualifications pathways from one NFQ level to the next” (Quality & Qualifications Ireland, 2021).

Figure 3

The Irish quality and qualifications framework



Quality and Qualifications Ireland. (2021). *National framework of qualifications (NFQ)*. [https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)

Under the “Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (2016)”, all staff working directly with children of pre-school age and employed by services must hold a minimum of an NFQ Level 5 qualification, as of December 31st, 2016. Under the ECCE scheme (Free preschool years) (DCYA, 2010) higher capitation grants are awarded to ELC settings which employ staff with higher qualifications in the role of Pre-school Leader (NQF Level 7 qualification, and three years of post-qualification experience). The Pobal sector profile survey 2019/20 reported the number of staff working directly with children with qualifications at NFQ Level 5 or higher was 15,926. The proportion of staff qualifications at NFQ Level 6 or higher was 69% (11,592). This was up from 67% (2017/2018). The quantity

of staff with no formal qualifications was 5%, down by 1% from 2017/2018 (Pobal, 2021, p.79).

Most staff in the sector (61%) work primarily with children aged 3+ to 5 years. The lowest proportion of staff (4%) work primarily with babies. The most qualified staff (NFQ Level 7 and above) are working with children aged 3+ to 5 years. Conversely, 86% of staff working with babies have qualifications at NFQ Levels 5 and 6. Staff working in school-age childcare tend to have the lowest qualification levels, with 23.4% not having any relevant formal qualification; nevertheless, 58.4% have either an NFQ Level 5 or 6. (Pobal, 2021, p.82). Table 4 outlines the number and qualification level of staff working with children.

Figure 4

Staff working directly with children - number and percentage

Qualification level	Community		Private		All	
	Number of staff*	% of staff	Number of staff*	% of staff	Number of staff	% of staff
Total staff	6,359	38%	10,497	62%	16,856	100%
NFQ Level 5 or above	5,810	91.4%	10,116	96.4%	15,926	94.5%
NFQ Level 6 or above	3,976	62.5%	7,616	72.6%	11,592	68.8%
No relevant qualification	519	8.2%	346	3.3%	865	5.1%
NFQ Level 4 Award	30	0.5%	35	0.4%	65	0.4%
NFQ Level 5 Award	1,834	28.8%	2,500	23.8%	4,334	25.7%
NFQ Level 6 Award	2,658	41.8%	4,452	42.4%	7,110	42.2%
NFQ Level 7 Award (Ordinary Degree)	420	6.6%	1,021	9.7%	1,441	8.5%
NFQ Level 8 Award (Honours Degree)	822	12.9%	1,954	18.6%	2,776	16.5%
NFQ Level 9/10 Award (Masters/PhD)	76	1.2%	189	1.8%	265	1.6%

Pobal. (2021). *Pobal annual survey of the early years sector 2019-2020*.

<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/annual-early-years-sector-profile-report-2019->

2.6 Pay and working conditions of the ECEC workforce

Working conditions in the Irish ECEC sector have been described as precarious (ECI, 2020b; Pembroke, 2017; Oireachtas, 2017), which is defined as jobs that involve "uncertainty, low income, and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements" (ECI, 2020b, p.17). The average hourly wage of staff working with children in the ELC and SAC sector is €12.45. This amount is the average wage based on the data for 13,058 staff who work with children. In 2019/20, 50% of ECEC staff earned below the 'living wage' rate of 2020 (€12.30 per hour). The living wage refers to the level of earnings that makes it possible for full-time employed adults (without dependents) to have a minimum acceptable standard of living.

(Pobal, 2021, pp.72-73). A SIPTU report (SIPTU, 2019) proposed that 60% of ECEC staff earn less than the living wage. The annual salary for practitioners in Ireland would need to be more than double to reach the average of other similar EU countries. The SIPTU report indicated that workers in the ECEC sector in Ireland are paid far less than their counterparts in other countries. The report outlined that "Using figures from the OECD, ... the average annual salary of 'pre-primary teachers' in Ireland is the equivalent of US\$22,697. This wage is far behind the OECD average of US\$38,677 and even below that of Brazil, US\$24,785, and Hungary US\$24,245"(SIPTU, 2019).

Figure 5

International comparison of ECEC wages

Average Annual Salary of Pre-Primary Teachers: 2019 (US\$ PPP)			
	Annual Average Salary		Annual Average Salary
Netherlands	59,814	Costa Rica	37,092
Australia	59,736	EU23 average	36,711
Belgium (Flemish)	55,350	Finland	35,293
United States	54,088	Lithuania	33,630
Belgium (Walloon)	53,646	Slovenia	32,192
Denmark	49,079	Chile	28,183
Portugal	48,971	Greece	27,338
Norway	45,854	Poland	27,329
England (UK)	44,157	Brazil	24,785
Iceland	43,111	Hungary	24,703
France	43,047	Czech Republic	24,245
Sweden	40,627	Ireland	22,697
Israel	40,029	Slovak Republic	20,391
OECD average	38,677	Latvia	19,635
Italy	38,492	Estonia	19,574

SIPTU. (2019). *Rewards and recognition: An international comparative analysis of pre-primary wages*. <https://bigstartireland.medium.com/1-the-oecd-has-only-recently-begun-publishing-teacher-salaries-at-pre-primary-level-f7266edae518>

2.7 Summary

The prominent theoretical perspectives associated with Irish ECEC and their impact on how ECEC is conceptualised were outlined in this chapter. Specific reference was made to the socio-cultural theorists, who assert that children learn and develop in the context of their communities (Vygotsky, Bruner, Bronfenbrenner, Malaguzzi, Rogoff). This theoretical conceptualisation has shaped the New Zealand ECEC model Te Whāriki (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2006, 2017), and both have influenced the Irish ECEC and shaped the

curriculum framework Aistear (NCCA, 2009). The poststructuralist theorists (Foucault and Bourdieu) proposed that there is no such thing as one way of viewing children or childhood and Bourdieu's understanding of how social inequalities may be sustained over generations conceptualises ECEC as a site of early Intervention and prevention, which underpins the Rutland St, and Childhood Development Initiative, Tallaght; Preparing for Life, Northside Partnership, youngballymun, and Area Based Childhood (ABC) initiatives. The section culminated in the possibility of ECEC as sites of reconceptualization and transformation – sites of creative and experimental learning

The critical features of the current Irish ECEC system, including types of provision, staffing, support structures, and the employment conditions in the sector, including staff training, qualifications, and pay, were discussed. ECEC services have been divided into four main categories: full-time, part-time, sessional services, and school-age childcare. The day-to-day practice in these settings was described, along with the hours, the rural-urban and community private divide. There are more services in urban areas, 65% (3,070) and 35% (1,620) in rural areas (Pobal, 2021). The majority of ELC services are run by private (for-profit) organisations (74%), and services in urban areas are predominately private (77%). Over two-thirds of staff in private services (73%) have an NFQ Level 6 qualification or above, compared to 63% of staff in community services (pobal,2021).

Community services tend to be in disadvantaged areas, with only 3% of community services in affluent areas. Community services tend to open longer hours and weeks, with a quarter of community services operating between 44 and 49 weeks (235) contrasted with 7% of private services (Pobal, 2021). On average, staff in community services have been working for longer in the service than their counterparts in private facilities. One in six staff in community services are connected to an employment scheme/government-funded programme and tend to have lower qualifications than their private counterpart. ECCE staff working with children under three have lower qualifications in the sector, and Staff working in school-age childcare tend to have the lowest qualification levels (Pobal, 2021). Several support structures are in place to support the sector, including NVCO's and 33 City/County Childcare Committees (CCC).

Similarly, numerous third-level educational institutions offer training for ECEC students from level 5 to level 10 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Working conditions in the Irish ECEC sector have been described as precarious - the average hourly wage of staff working with children in the ELC and SAC sector is €12.45, with 50- 60% of ECEC staff earning less than the living wage. The annual salary for practitioners in Ireland would need to be more than double to reach the average of other EU countries.

Chapter 3 Policy: From the beginning - 2009

This chapter discusses Irish social and ECEC policy from the seventeenth century to 2009, and Chapter 4 covers policy through the years 2010 to 2019. The rationale for these chapters' rests on the assertion that "history matters" if we are to understand how and why Irish ECEC developed in the manner it did (Pierson, 1993, 2004). While history was once the battleground of the feminist struggle, today it is often seen as irrelevant, with little cognisance that the achievement of a "better" future depends mainly on understanding and utilising past decisions to inform current and future challenges (Bennett, 2006). Nevertheless, this chapter's objective is not only to describe the historical evolution of the sector, but also to question and challenge the policies that are directly related to women and children. It is important to the integrity of this thesis to question policies that have contributed to the conceptualisation and practise of ECEC and ECEC leadership and influenced ECEC workforce development. Path-dependency, understood as "increasing returns", and a "self-reinforcing process" provides the means to shift from description to explanation in these chapters. Path dependency may explain how governments become locked into the policy (Pierson 2000, pp. 251-252) and cannot change direction due to the resources already invested in the course of action (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). However, I acknowledge that the evolution of public policy and the people, context, and events surrounding this development are so multifaceted that one framework cannot fully explain this process (Weibler et al., 2012).

Consequently, path dependency, understood as states behaving as usual, may not only suggest a static state, but also suggest that the government determines all. To provide a balance between an "all-determining" state and the notion that through a "determined struggle, everything is possible" (Dobrowolsky & Saint-Martin, 2005, p. 4), I have looked to the idea of [un]intended consequences (Nitecki & Warmouth, 2019; Zhao, 2018). The Irish government and the international organisations, including the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic and Development (OECD), may, in good faith, be developing ECEC policy. Nevertheless, these policies may have repercussions. While these can appear as unintended, they may be detrimental to ECEC, ECEC leadership, and workforce development. Hence, the term "(un)intended" is utilised in this analysis (Nitecki & Warmouth, 2019; Zhao, 2018).

Nevertheless, I concur with Rutten (2006) that I would like to think I am explaining. I may even think I am "sophisticated and knowledgeable" mentioning "path dependence", "locked in" or "irreversibility". I and others may be using this "fancy talk" ... "jargon to hide the fact that we are merely describing, not explaining" (p. 300). Equally, several political and social theories are described and employed in the two chapters to facilitate the teasing out and explanation of ECEC policy, including neoliberalism, managerialism, and network

governance. I do not claim to be an expert in these areas, and respectfully suggest that these and other areas in the study require further research and more analysis. Nevertheless, the themes and theories mentioned above can operate as useful lenses through which to observe, explain, and understand ECEC policy processes.

3.1 The framework for chapters 3 and 4

A narrative overview of the literature and policy (Green et al., 2001) relating to the historical evolution of the Irish ECEC sector (Seventeenth century – 2019) was undertaken to gather information. Policy and literature reviews have the potential "to improve the understanding of ... provide a context" for the topic in question (development of the Irish ECEC sector) (Kastner et al. 2012, p. 1). The specific objective was to retrospectively review Irish social and ECEC policy and the prevailing national and international influences (social, political, economic, and cultural) to provide a context for this study. The review was underpinned by the notion of Path-dependency (Pierson 2000, Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004) and the [un]intended consequences of these policies (Nitecki & Warmouth, 2019; Zhao, 2018) for the ECEC sector.

The eligibility criteria for inclusion in the review (1739 – 2009) included policies and literature directly related to women, children, and care. The retrospective review was conducted in chronological order and commenced with accessing Irish literature and policy documents from the library resources at Trinity College Dublin Library from the seventeenth century – 1990 (Table 3). The resources included publications from renowned authors in the field of Irish social policy (Dowling, 1971; Dukelow & Considine, 2009, Coolahan, 1981; 2017; Quinn, 2005; Titley, 1983; Walsh, 2016), ECEC policy (Hayes, 2001, 2007, 2016; Horgan et al., 2015; Urban et al., 2017; Walsh, 2016, 2017) and peer-reviewed electronic journals in a bid to strengthen the quality of the review (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006). Similarly, a systematic review of the national grey literature databases (Table 3) including (History online (history hub i.e.), Irish government open data portal (gov.ie), Irish History Online (ria-ie), Irish Research data portal (rian.ie), Irish Statute Books (irishstatutebook.ie)) was undertaken to identify policies and literature published during this period.

The keywords searches included: The construction of Irish social policy, Irish social policy past , Irish social policy present, Irish social policy seventeenth – twentieth century, Women and Irish social policy, Children and Irish Social policy, History of Irish women and children, Irish women and the Constitution, Irish women, children, and the Catholic Church, Irish Church, State and childcare, Irish mothers, and children, Women in workhouses, Children in workhouses, Children in care, Women and gender; Women's work, Unpaid work,

Gender inequality in Ireland, EU gender equality policies, EU funding gender equality, OECD and ECEC, OECD --Quality and ECEC, OECD gender equality, work-life balance, Irish education policy.

This process was followed by accessing various library sources (Including Early childhood education and care, Women and gender, Education policy, Early years equality, diversity, and inclusion) directly related to the development of ECEC and progress of work force development and leadership (2010– 2019). National and international. Databases across many disciplines, from history and politics to education, sociology (gender, class), leadership, and children's development and rights, were accessed (including Children's rights (childrensrights.ie) European education and culture executive agency (necea) National childhood network (ncn.ie) Database of SEN research and policy in Ireland (ncse.ie) National Women's Council of Ireland (nwci.ie) and

OECD ECEC (data.oecd.org) (oecd-ilibrary-org.elib.tcd.ie)). The International leadership research forum (ilrfec.org), the Oireachtas papers on ECEC workforce (Oireachtas.ie) and peer-reviewed electronic journals were accessed to locate material on ECEC leadership and workforce development.

Table 4

The policy review process

<p>1. Research topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The historical evolution of Irish ECEC 	<p>5. Databases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •barnardos.ie •citizensinformationboard.ie •cecde.ie •childrensrights.ie •cypsc.ie - Children and young peoples service committees •eacea.ie - European education and culture executive agency •ebshost-com.elib.tcd.ie •earlychildhoodireland.ie •education.ie - early years education policy unit •eric.ie •gov.ie •historyhub.ie •independent.ie/life/archives •ipa.ie •irishtimes.com/archive •irishstatutebook.ie •jstor-org.elib.tcd.ie •ncca.ie •ncn.ie -national childhood network •ncse.ie - database of SEN research and policy in Ireland •nwcs.ie - National Womens Council of Ireland •oecd-ilibrary-org.elib.tcd.ie •oireachtas.ie •sagepub-com.elib.tcd.ie •ria-ie.elib.tcd.ie •rian •stella.catalogue.tcd.ie •tandfonline-com.libgate.library.nuigalway.ie •tulsa.ie <p>Other sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •oecd.org - ECEC, gender/data •ProQuest Databases •researchgate.net •theirishhistory.com •unesco.org
<p>2. Specific objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Retrospective review of Irish social and ECEC policy • Describe the development of ECEC policy over time and the prevailing national and international social, political and economic influences on ECEC policy and the unintended consequences of these policies 	
<p>3. Specific criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Explore policies directly related to women, children and care. 	
<p>4. Identify sources</p> <p>Trinity College Dublin Library sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Early Childhood Education and Care - Lecky Lower (372.2; Request Usher stacks) •Education policy - Lecky Lower (370 -379) •Gender, Men, Women, Women's Occupations- Lecky Upper Floor (301.414 – 301.427) •Women and gender - Berkeley, 2nd Floor (155) •History - Berkeley Library, Second Floor Stall 33-34 Ireland 1171-1900 (941.53-941.58) Ireland (1801-) (941.58 -942) •Irish social policy -Lecky Upper (309) •Political Science, Methodology, Political Ideologies -Lecky Upper Floor (320.9415 – 320.946) •Sociology- Lecky Upper Floor (300-301) <p>Other sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Applied Social Sciences Index & Abstracts (ASSIA) •academic search complete •data.unicef.org •google search.com •google scholar.com •ilrfec.org - International leadership research forum 	

Noyes & Lewin (2006) suggest that the purpose should inform the data extraction method of the review. The resources were read and reread to identify the period (17th – 2019) and garner information directly related to women, children, and childcare during this period (the purpose). This process charted the historical evolution of the sector (17th – 2009). While all the ECEC policies associated within a time frame listed in the boxes above each section were read, the limitations of time and space necessitated that specific policies were selected for analysis. The selection process was premised on policies with "gaps and contradictions" an "unrealised potential for change" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 231). The synthesis of the sources facilitated the recognition of three chronological and consecutive themes: the quantity (childcare places), quality (economic returns, quality assurance, quality control), and equality (inclusive, affordable ECEC and gender equality), depicting the history of ECEC and Irish social policy as linear. However, this process is much messier and is as much about "repetition and regression as ... progression" (Considine & Dukelow, 2017, p. 27).

This chapter commences with defining terminology and a contextual description of the Irish education system with respect to early years education and care. This is followed by an outline of how social policy was strongly influenced by the Church, the Constitution, and the New State, and its impact on women and children from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. The integration of Ireland into the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973 saw a focus on developing childcare places to facilitate full employment (Quantity theme). The influence of the European Union 1995 (DJELR, 1999) and the OECD (2001) on the sector moved the focus from the quantity of childcare places to a discourse of quality (Quality theme).

Chapter 4 commences with an examination of the policies 2010 – 2019. The introduction of the free preschool year (ECCE scheme) (DCYA, 2010) has its origins in the quality discourse emanating from the OECD. The ECCE scheme forms a bridge between the chapters and the sector, transitioning from the focus on quality to equality in social and ECEC policy and discourse. It would seem that the management of the quantity, quality, and equality (the economic rationales for ECEC) themes could be considered the primary purpose of the sector with little consideration of the needs of the child, the working conditions of the practitioner, genuine support for parents and leadership in the sector. The chapters conclude by examining the ECEC policies on workforce development and leadership and summarising the two chapters.

3.2 The Irish education system and ECEC

Access to education is considered a fundamental right under the Irish constitution, and Ireland has a long history in educational provision, which predates the foundation of the State in 1922. The system comprises four areas: Primary Education (8 years from the age of 4 or 5), Secondary Education (5 to 6 years from the age of 12 or 13), Further education, and Higher Education (Lillis & Morgan, 2012). The Department of Education and Skills manages Irish education policy at primary and second levels, including national curricula and examinations. It manages the further education and higher education sectors through several state agencies with a legislative foundation (e.g., The Higher Education Authority and various quality assurance agencies). Attendance at primary and second levels is compulsory until fifteen years of age and is free in most schools. A significant further education sector exists, and more recently, a formal Early Childhood Education sector has been developing (Lillis & Morgan, 2012).

However, while early childhood education can be traced back to 1815, children were cared for at home until they attended formal education. It was not until the 1970s that significant numbers of women entered and remained in the workforce (Fallon, 2007). In 1815, John H. Synge set up a Pestalozzian elementary school in Roundwood, County Wicklow. Lady Powerscourt established the first infant school on her estate in Ennis Kerry, County Wicklow, in 1826. By 1862 Eleonore Heerwart had opened a kindergarten and school in Dublin to work with middle-class children (O' Connor, 2012). However, it was not until the introduction of the national school system in 1831 that most Irish children received a formal education (Lillis & Morgan, 2012).

It was estimated that there were over 48,000 3–5-year-old children in the system (the 1830s) (Fallon, 2007). In 1837, Samuel Wilderspin introduced the first system of infant education to Ireland. In 1852 Young, his son-in-law was commissioned to prepare a manual on the theory and practice of teaching infant classes. The Powis Commission (1868) followed and highlighted the limited nature of infant education, and a system of payment by results was introduced in 1872 to improve primary education. However, a sum of money paid to the teacher for each child who passed the exam focused on teaching, not learning. By 1881 plans were underway to introduce kindergarten into the infant programme in the Model Infant School in Marlborough Street, Dublin, along Froebelian lines. The Revised Programme (1900) advocated the abolition of the Payment by Results system and paved the way for Froebelian kindergarten philosophy and practice in the education of young children (Walsh, 2005). The Froebelian approach included a more hands-on and activity-based curriculum emphasising schools as an exciting and humane place for children (Walsh,

2005). However, the programme's implementation was hampered by the Irish Free State in 1922, and the focus turned to teaching children in Irish to revive cultural nationalism and the Irish language (Walsh, 2005).

Nevertheless, the Revised Programme for Infants (1948) (Department of Education 1948) and An Naí-Scoil continued the emphasis on activity-based, child-centred curriculum, as had been advocated in the Revised Programme of 1900. Moreover, children were taught through both English and Irish. In 1969, the Department of Education and the Van Leer Foundation initiated a pre-school intervention project in Rutland Street, Dublin. In 1994 and 1995, forty Early Start pre-schools attached to primary schools for children in areas of disadvantage were established and continue to be funded by the Department of Education and Science (DES). With the increased participation of women in the workforce from the late 1970s childcare became increasingly popular. The following sections continue the historical evolution of early childhood education within Irish social and ECEC policy, focusing on policies directly related to women, children, and care.

3.3 The evolution of Irish social policy

The understanding of social policy in this thesis rests on the possibility that meeting the needs of society may not happen, as a policy can often be the means to “regulate the lives of the population” (O’Donoghue Hynes, 2012, p. 286) and be more about economics than citizen wellbeing (Miller & Hevey, 2012). As such, policy is understood as the “aims or goals, or statements of what ought to happen ... to improve human welfare and to meet human needs for education, health, housing, and social security” (Blakemore & Griggs, 2007, p. 1). One of the earliest Irish social policies that referred explicitly to children occurred in the Seventeenth Century.

The seventeenth – nineteenth century

- 1735 "Foundling hospitals" for abandoned children
- 1831 National school system
- 1845 The Great Famine
- 1847 "Blemished women" - Industrial and reformatory schools
- 1889 Children's Charter
- 1908 The Children's Act

The year 1635 witnessed the passing of the Act for the Erecting of Houses of Correction and Punishment of all “Rogues, Vagabonds, Sturdy Beggars, and other Lewd and Idle Persons”. The Construction of Workhouses Acts (1703, 1735) required incorporating “foundling hospitals” for abandoned children within a Protestant context. In response, Catholic orphanages were constructed to ensure Catholic children were “rescued” from the proselytizing efforts of Protestants (Considine & Dukelow, 2009, p. 3). This was the first sign of providing care for children, notwithstanding that these institutions appeared to be more about putting children to work than care. Following the Act of Union in 1800, when Ireland and Britain became one political entity, the Poor Law (1838) became the first system of state intervention and the basis of modern social policy, with its move away from workhouse provision towards cash payments in the form of pensions and national insurance. A more multi-layered and “less grudging” role of the state in providing welfare and social services ensued (Considine & Dukelow, 2009, p. 85). A national school system was set up in 1831 and a Board of Commissioners for National Education was created (Dowling, 1971).

The Great Famine (1845–7) necessitated the Irish Poor Relief Extension Act, 1847. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Catholic Church provided social services for the poor, but

only for women of “unblemished character” (Considine & Dukelow, 2009, p. 21). Blemished women were sent to the Magdalene homes, industrial and reformatory schools; these institutions were funded by the state but managed by religious groups. The Prevention of Cruelty to and Protection of Children Act was introduced in 1889, which enabled the country to address child abuse, begging, and child labour. The following National Insurance Act, 1911, was based on the male breadwinner model of social security and is considered the source of the inequalities between men and women in the social security system today (Considine & Dukelow, 2009; DES, 2004). The Children's Act 1908 turned the attention from children's punishment to children's welfare, and the act was not replaced until the 1991 Child Care Act (O'Brien & Prangnell, 2015).

3.4 Irish Social Policy: Twentieth Century

1937 – 1989

- 1937 Irish Constitution — role of women, children and care
- 1940's report on industrial schools
- 1944 Children's allowance paid to fathers
- 1951 Catholic Church rejected the Mother and Child Scheme
- 1965 Commission of Inquiry on Mental Handicap
- 1967/8 Free post-primary education
- 1967–1970 Kennedy report on industrial schools
- 1968 Local Authority (Higher Education Grant)
- 1968 Report on Care of the Aged
- 1989 UNCRC adopted by the United Nations General Assembly

3.4.1 The New State, the Catholic Church and social policy

The First Parliament of The Irish Free State (1923) had difficulties with a new cabinet, limited resources, and Britain resuming political control. These challenges resulted in practical decisions, with little reference to the political, social, or economic consequences (Corcoran, 2013). With the establishment of the Irish Constitution — Bunreacht na hEireann — (Irish Statute Books, 1937), the family was considered the most important social structure in Irish society (Article 41.1.1). The child had no rights within this document as “*parents were responsible for their children's religious and moral, intellectual, physical, and social education*” (Article 42.1). The State could only intervene in the family in “*exceptional cases*” (Article 42.5), and the gendered nature of care as a woman's work (patriarchy) was outlined (Article 41.2.2): women were not to engage in labour to the neglect of the family

(Ireland, 1937). This understanding manifested in what was called a marriage bar/ban. A marriage bar requires that women working in specific jobs leave that job when they marry. Marriage Bars were typical in Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These countries abolished the bar in the 1950s. Conversely, the Irish marriage bar was in place until the 1970s (Mosca & Wright, 2019). Others suggest that the bar was more about economics than the constitution. In 1932, the Irish government, facing an economic downturn, introduced a marriage ban which required that female primary school teachers resign on marriage (Redmond & Harford, 2010). In their research, Mosca & Wright (2019) found that women affected by the Marriage Bar had shorter working lives and lower individual incomes but higher wealth. A total of 19.5% of women aged 65 and above interviewed reported they had to leave a job because of the bar. This implies that in 2011, up to 57,000 women were not qualifying for a (full) state pension because of the Marriage Bar (Mosca & Wright, 2019, p.23).

The Catholic Church had a strong influence on the Constitution and established itself as centre stage for welfare issues such as poverty, health, and education (Ó Buachalla, 1985; Colohan, 1981; Titley, 1983; Walsh, 2016). However, they appeared to be more interested in upholding Catholic morality than care for the vulnerable. Women and children fared less well than men under Catholic guidance (Considine & Dukelow, 2009). For example, during the 1930s, children were housed in industrial schools with adoption and fostering denied, and “conditions included neglect, abuse, and starvation” (Considine & Dukelow, 2009, p.29).

3.4.2 Children in care and the care of children

The 1940s Report on industrial schools highlighted the continuing poor conditions for children (Ferguson, 1996) however, the state was “loath to intervene” (Gilligan, 2014, p. 157). Women had been advocating for a children's allowance from the 1920s in the interest of child welfare and recognition of women's contribution to society. However, when introduced (1944), the payment was made to the household's father. This stipulation remained until 1974. The lack of concern and support for women and children continued into the 1950s when the Catholic Church rejected the Mother and Child Scheme (1951), which would have provided free health care for both (McCord, 2013). However, the 1960s saw an increase in the state's role with the 1967/8 free post-primary education and the 1968 Local Authority (Higher Education Grant) to support the less-well-off to attend third level education (Considine & Dukelow, 2017).

Conversely, the only policy reference to young children and care was the lack of care and the abuse of children in care as outlined in the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Report, carried out 1967–1970 (Kennedy report) (Kennedy, 1970)

The Report recommended the abolition of the institutional system of residential care and outlined the continuing abuse of children in Church and state care. It was nearly 40 years after the Kennedy report (1970) that a comprehensive report on child abuse in Church and state care was published, the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (The Ryan Report) (Child Abuse Commission, 2009a, 2009b). While the Report recommended giving “greater effect to the voice of the child”, it would seem that the priority afforded to children in the system and society continued to be marginal (DCYA, 2014a). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) was ratified by Ireland in 1992, but it was not until 2012 that a referendum on the child's constitutional rights was held. However, the turnout in the referendum of only 33.5% of the voting population, and the passing of the motion at 58% of that turnout (Considine & Dukelow, 2017, p. 73) suggest that there may be limited interest in the rights of the child in Irish society. Moreover, the state's continued attitude of distancing itself from interfering in the private sphere of childcare has been an underlying factor in the government's creating and maintaining a division between education and care (Hayes, 2016), or avoiding their responsibility to the child.

3.4.3 [Un]intended consequences: Care and education divide

The supposition that the child's care was the concern of the family and the reluctance to intervene in “family matters” may have contributed to the structural and practical division of care and education within ECEC (Hayes, 2001, 2016). An example of this split can be observed in the responsibility for *Síolta*, the National Early Years Quality Framework (CECDE, 2006). While the Early Years Policy Unit was created to oversee the implementation of *Síolta*, the responsibility is divided between the DES and the DCYA. The publication of two policies in the same year also demonstrates this division: one paper — *Ready to learn: White paper on early childhood education* outlines the vision for early education (published by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), 1999) and the other concentrates on early childhood care — *The National childcare strategy* (published by the DJELR, 1999).

While the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) was established in 2005 to coordinate government departments and policy-making for children, childcare and educational services in Ireland remain separated and “complicated and difficult to navigate” (European Commission, 2015, p. 60). This divide may be responsible for the

many fragmented and reactive ECEC policy initiatives that followed (Hayes, 2016). Hayes (2012) has suggested reconceptualising care as nurture to blur the divide and elevate the educative role of caring to a nurturing pedagogy. Within this framework, “nurturing and fostering learning” replaces the custodial notion of care as minding (Hayes, 2012, p. xvi). Nevertheless, the Constitution may not be solely responsible for the education and care divide, as there are only two countries that combine both (Slovenia and Sweden). Three states (Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand) have partially integrated education and care (Moss, 2017).

In sum, historically, the shared values of the Church, the Constitution, and the New State informed and shaped Irish social policy, resulting in limited policy, support, rights, and protection for women and children. In 1973, Ireland joined the European Union (EU), which had a significant influence on Irish social policy.

3.5 Quantity: Increasing the number of childcare places

The development of ECEC policies can only be understood in the context of international organisations (Campbell-Barr & Nygard, 2014).

1973 –2002

- 1973 Ban lifted on Irish married women working
- 1973 Deserted wives' benefit,
- 1973 Unmarried mothers' benefit
- 1973 Prisoners' wives' benefit
- 1975 EU directive – Equal Pay
- 1976 EU directive – Work Conditions
- 1996 EU directive – Parental Leave
- 1997 Employment Equality Act
- 1997 Unfair Dismissals Act
- 1981 Maternity (Protection of Employees)
- 1983 Working Party on Child Care Facilities for Working Parents
- 1985 Minimum Legal Requirements and Standards for Daycare Services - not published
- 1987– 2006 Seven social partnership agreements
- 1990 New Opportunities for Women programme
- 1995 European Childcare Network – highlighted lack of Irish childcare
- 2002 EU Barcelona Objectives – childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children over three and to at least 33% of children under three years of age.
- EOCP National and EU funding to increase quantity of childcare places

3.5.1 Quantity: The European influence since 1973

During the 1970s, Irish women's economic potential and the EU legalisation on the discrimination of women created the need for Irish childcare services (DJELR, 2003). The European Union emphasised gender equality, commencing with the 1957 Treaty of Rome, and several directives followed. However, these legal directives were often resisted and neglected by the Irish government (Considine & Dukelow, 2017). Nevertheless, in 1973, the bar on Irish married women working was removed. Under the Civil Service (Employment of Married Women) Act 1973 and the Employment Equality Act, 1977 women were given a statutory right to remain in paid employment after marriage (DES, 2004, p.9)

The increased attention given to women's rights in the 1970s was short-lived, and the economic recession of the 1980s was considered a “bleak one” for women, with the resurgence of the Catholic Church as a strong voice of dissent on sexuality, contraception, and divorce (Considine & Dukelow, 2017, p. 57). During this time, the social partnership process in Ireland led to a narrower focus on economic policy, the government were referred to as *An Bord Snip* and cuts to health and education were widespread (Considine & Dukelow, 2017, p. 58). In this economic climate, many initiatives to address the childcare issue never came to fruition, including the Department of Health's (1985) *Minimum legal requirements and standards for daycare services* report (Hayes, 2001). The state's inattentiveness towards childcare was not reflected in society; two surveys carried out in 1981, and 1986 (Fine-Davis, 1983; Fine-Davis, 1988) found that 81% of non-employed married women and 83% of married men were in favour of tax concessions for childcare costs (Fine-Davis, 2007, pp. 11-12).

The 1990s saw a move away from the more hostile social, political, and moral tribulations of the 1980s to a more open contemporary society. The right to divorce (1996) and further legalisation on contraception (Family Planning Amendment Act, 1993) emerged, and the number of women entering the workplace grew by 90% (Considine & Dukelow, 2017, p. 60). It was also a time of unprecedented interest in the early years. Ireland ratified the UNCRC (1992), and it has been argued that this set the groundwork for successive policy developments in ECEC. The EU (1995) had highlighted the limited availability of Irish childcare and advised creating more childcare places to facilitate women in the workplace (DJELR, 1999). The Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme 2000 to 2006 (EOCP) was developed and funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR, 1999, 2000, 2002) and the EU. The EOCP was envisaged as a facilitator of labour force participation and thus employment of parents by increasing the quality and quantity of childcare places available in Ireland (OMCY, 2007, xii). A total of €436.7 million was

allocated to develop childcare services “to address parents' needs in employment and training” (DES, 2004). The economic rationale for increasing the number (quantity) of childcare places was reiterated in the Barcelona European Council (2002) objectives, which advised that all member states should provide childcare for at least 90% of 3–6-year-olds and 33% of children under three to facilitate female labour force participation (European Commission, 2013). A new Childcare Programme 2006 – 2010 replaced the EOCP. It came into effect on 1 January 2006 and was managed by the Childcare Directorate and implemented by Pobal (formerly ADM Ltd). This programme offered a new capital grant scheme for private sector childcare providers (DJELR, 2006).

The EU has had a significant impact on Irish social policy, emphasising gender equality and full employment, and it continued/continues to influence ECEC policy (European Commission, 2011, 2015). More recently, the European Commission (2018, 2019) outlined the need to work towards a European Education Area by 2025 with inclusive education based on shared values at its core. The EU funding (EOCP) was applauded; however, the notion of EU values informing Irish ECEC policy may have had [un]intended consequences.

3.5.2 [Un]intended consequences of EU funding: Cultural and professional divide

While the EU capital and support was welcomed, the report on the progress of the EOCP outlined the tension between the EU economic rationale for funding ECEC (full employment) and the Irish desire to provide childcare for young children (DJELR, 2003). This tension highlighted the difficulty Ireland and other cultures might have had with reconciling international social policy aspirations with their values and “cultural traditions of childrearing and education” (Hagemann et al., 2014, p. 10). The more recent document *Right from the start* (DCYA, 2013) exposed the continuing tension between national and international aspirations for childcare. The Irish advisory group consisting of a cross-section of ECEC stakeholders proposed that the purpose of ECEC was to: “ensure a generation of children, and successive generations, who are happier, healthier, safer, learning more, developing better and coping better with the adversity that life throws up” (DCYA, 2013, p. 1). The lines that followed argued that ECEC would “break cycles of poverty and disadvantage and remove barriers of inequality... reduce anti-social behaviour, dependency, and alienation. It could help to build a stronger economy” (DCYA, 2013, p. 1). The last lines could be taken directly from OECD (2006, 2010, 2016) which argued that ECEC can bring:

a wide range of benefits, including social and economic benefits... more equitable outcomes and reduction of poverty; increased intergenerational social mobility; higher female labour market participation and gender equality; increased fertility rates; and better social and economic development for society at large. (OECD, 2016, p. 109)

And while we do not know if the expert group included these lines or they were added, nonetheless, the language, tone, and above all the understanding of the child as the cure for all of society's ills appears to be fundamentally flawed and naïve (Moss, 2015b). This understanding seems to be incongruent with the ECEC advisory group's cultural knowledge of the child's development and, as such, may be incongruent with Irish ECEC stakeholders in general.

The EU-funded EOCP created 33 City/County Childcare Committees (CCC) and 7 National Voluntary Childcare Organisations to support and implement strategic plans to target disadvantaged families (DES, 2004). Children from underprivileged backgrounds could only be facilitated in community settings under the Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) plan. This situation may have created a class divide between the community and private settings; This funding approach continued until 2016 when the CCS was extended to private providers with the Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSPlus). Nevertheless, the differential funding model continues today; while all services (community and private) receive the same capitation per child (ECCE scheme), the recent funding for upgrading fire facilities within ECEC settings has been limited to community settings (SIPTU, 2019b).

We can't create a two-tier system where funds are directed at community services only, and this government must reinforce its commitment to all early childhood education providers, many of whom are on the brink of coping financially. (ECI, 2014)

This community/private divide was further embedded with the Community Employment programme's (CE scheme) introduction, designed to assist the long-term unemployed to return to work by offering temporary and part-time work within local communities, including community-based ECEC settings, to the exclusion of private settings. The scheme antidotally was described as hair or care for unemployed women.

The scheme's disadvantages included the difficulty of providing continuous, well qualified, and experienced ECEC staff, and the portrayal of ECEC as suitable employment for unskilled and unqualified workers, and a passage into other work (Start Strong, 2010, p.2). This programme also “contributed to maintaining low salaries in the sector” (DES, 2004,

p.45). Currently, one in four community ECEC practitioners are part of the Community Employment programme (Pobal, 2019).

The ECEC sector continues to provide an entry into more lucrative work, with many level 8-degree graduates using the degree to access inspector and specialists' roles in the sector (Urban et al., 2017) and as a means to become primary school teachers. "Primary school teaching is the career goal of many of our early childhood graduates" (Portbello Institute, 2020). The practitioner in general, but the community practitioner in particular, was considered to be challenged academically, with records of poor academic achievement (DES, 2010; Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2014), and had difficulty with administration tasks (DJERL, 2004, p. 59) and understanding policy language (Goodbody, 2011).

It appears that the notion of an ECEC class structure had developed in policy, and Start Strong (2012) confirmed this proposition, advising:

At root, 'childcare' is a low-status occupation that is seen as appropriate employment for unskilled and unqualified workers ... the prominence of the Community Employment scheme within the sector has encouraged this view, that childcare is an entry-route into the wider labour market rather than being a profession in its own right. (p. 2)

However, the DJELR (2004) could be accused of "individualising" the problem, blaming the practitioner when the causes may be cultural, economic, and social (Osgood, 2005, p. 301). The lack of social, cultural, and financial resources has been found to pose difficulties for working-class students entering, adjusting to, and participating in education, yet with support they can and have succeeded with such endeavours (Reay et al., 2010; Walkerdine, 2011).

3.6 Reactive policy and the repercussions for ECEC

1997-1999

- 1997 The Partnership 2000 Expert Group on Childcare
- 1998 Strengthening Families for Life
- 1998 National Forum on Early Childhood
- 1998 Report of National Forum for Early Childhood Education (DES)
- 1999 White Paper: Ready to Learn
- 1999 Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children
- 1999 The Revised Primary School Curriculum guidance for ECEC
- 1999 National Childcare Strategy Our Children Their Lives

3.6.1 The Madonna House Report 1996

The ECEC sector entered the policy arena in 1991, yet the childcare services in Ireland continued to be unregulated until January 1997. The implementation of the regulations may have been hastened by the Madonna House Report (Department of Health & Children (DOHC), 1996) and gives credence to the claim that Irish policy responses to ECEC have been reactive and “broken” from the beginning (Hayes, 2012). The Madonna house was a residential care centre for children of unmarried mothers in Co Dublin run by the Sisters of Charity and the South eastern Health Board. The house closed in 1995 amid allegations about child abuse and demands for compensation from survivors. The Child Abuse Commission outlined how a staff member of Madonna House abducted a child from Madonna house and drowned him in a hotel room in Wales. The Minister for Health, Charles Haughey, rejected a call for a public enquiry into the matter, stating that it “would serve no useful purpose. Yet, the Health Board highlighted the need to examine residential care staffs’ qualifications and training (Child Abuse Commission, 2009c, paragraph 321).

3.6.2 [Un]intended consequences: Blame and mistrust of childcare workers

The Madonna House report (DOHC, 1996) outlined the abuse of children. However, the TV programme 'States of Fear' (1999) revealed that a section of the report outlining the management failures of the Sisters of Charity and the Eastern Health Board had not been published (Keenan, 1996). A government apology ensued. A letter to the *Irish Times* (May 17, 1996) highlighted the state’s willingness to divest their responsibility to the care worker, and a sense of mistrust and blame towards childcare workers emerged in the media:

Sir, -

The question of accountability and where it rests needs to be clarified in relation to the 'abuse of children in the care of the State'. In *The Irish Times* (May 10th) Owen Keenan states that the Madonna House Report shows (and I quote) 'that only two out of the 41 child care staff were professionally qualified and more than 50 per cent of the staff had no qualification'. Who is at fault in this situation? There is a danger that the finger might be pointed at childcare workers, but how can professional child care workers influence practice when totally unqualified persons, working as child care workers, remain in the vast majority? (Graham, 1996)

The Ryan report outlined the "fear, upset and anxiety among conscientious professional child care workers as a consequence of the government's inaction" (O'Sullivan, 2009, Vol 4, Chapter 4, paragraph 4.31). However, while several papers and forums followed the Madonna House report (DOHC, 1996), it was not until 2015 that child protection was legally addressed with the Children First Act (Government of Ireland, 2015). The year 1997 witnessed the establishment of the Expert Working Group on Childcare under the Partnership 2000 for Inclusion, Employment, and Competitiveness (1996 – 2000) (Government of Ireland, 1996). The aim of this was to create a National Childcare Strategy. The National Children's Office was established in 2000, and this was followed by the launching of the 10-year National Children's Strategy: *Our children – Their lives* (DOHC, 2000). The strategy was described as one of two halves. During the first years, the resources and infrastructure relating to children were developed, but the years 2007 – 2010 witnessed "a slow-down in progress and reduced investment" (Children's Rights Alliance, 2011, p. 3).

In sum, the EU provided the impetus and funding to provide extra childcare places to facilitate parental training and employment. The grant may have created a tension between the EU's economic aspirations and the cultural understanding of ECEC, between the community and private settings, and the children who attend them. The community employment scheme may have added to this professional divide and may be responsible for the community practitioner's low remuneration and positioning as challenged administratively and academically. The Madonna House Report is thought to have initiated an ECEC blame culture and expedited the introduction of ECEC regulations. The emphasis on policy to this point had been focused on the quantity of childcare places. However, latterly the focus has begun to move towards the notion of ECEC quality.

3.7 Quality ECEC policy and the international influence

2001–2009

- 2001 Children's Act
- 2002 Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education 2003 Children's Ombudsman
- 2004 Insights on Quality: Audit of Policy, Practice/Research (1990–2004)
- 2004 (CECDE) Making Connections – International Policies
- 2004 NCCA Towards a Framework for Early Learning
- Atlantic Philanthropies investment in early prevention and intervention
- 2004 CECDE Insights on Quality and Making Connections
- 2005 NESB Benefits of Early Childhood Education
- 2005 National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCP) on the Workplace of the Future (NCP, 2005)
- 2004 CECDE Educational Disadvantage, for Children with Special Needs
- 2006 Síolta (CECDE, 2006)
- Síolta Quality Assurance Programme (QAP).
- 2006 Early Years Education Policy Unit (EYEPU)
- 2006 Office for Minister of Children
- 2008 CECDE disbanded
- 2009 Aistear The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (NCCA, 2009).

3.7.1 Quality: OECD influence on Irish ECEC policy

Questions have been raised as to how the OECD, whose mission is the growth of market economies, has emerged as an increasingly “influential global authority for education” in general (Trohler et al., 2014, p. 4) and the ECEC in particular (Moss, 2016). Currently, a pilot scheme for introducing a PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) for five-year-olds is in progress (OECD, 2020a; Urban, 2018).

In 1998, the OECD education committee launched a thematic review of 12 countries and found that access to and quality of ECEC needed to improve (OECD, 2001). While it is impossible to arrive at a universally agreed definition of quality (Elwick et al., 2018), quality is often linked to a “discourse of certainty and mastery, linearity and predetermined outcomes, objectivity and universality” (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008, p. 22). Nevertheless, quality has become the dominant discourse in ECEC and the OECD papers' focus (2001, 2006; 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015a, 2017). The influence of the OECD quality discourse on Irish ECEC policy has not been documented. However, in Table 3, I have traced this development, and it would seem that the Irish system has responded to and mirrored the philosophy (quality) and the time-frame of the OECD Starting Strong papers. Table 3 charts this association

Table 3

OECD Policy Documents: The Influence on Irish ECEC Policy

OECD Policy	Purpose	Irish ECEC Policy
<i>Starting Strong I</i> (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising the quality of provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1999 Expert Working Group on Childcare – quality ▪ 2001 CCC's established – raise quality provision
<i>Thematic review of Irish ECEC</i> (DES, 2004)	<p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality learning/development ▪ Full employment ▪ Universal access to ECEC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curriculum Framework – Aistear ▪ Quantity childcare places ▪ Free preschool year (DES, 2010)
<i>Starting Strong II</i> (2006) OECD (2010a; 2911) Quality comparative studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access, quality, disadvantage, facilitate women in labour market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Siolta: Quality Framework (CECDE, 2006)
<i>Starting Strong III: (2012) ECEC quality toolbox - 5 quality levers:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality goals and regulations ▪ Designing and implementing curriculum and standards ▪ Working conditions ▪ Engaging families and community ▪ Research and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Siolta Quality (CECDE, 2006) ▪ Aistear (NCCA, 2009) ▪ DES 2002, 2010 ▪ DCYA 2018 First 5, A Whole-of-Government Strategy 2019-2028 ▪ ECEC Research Unit, (ERC) • Growing up in Ireland Study (research/data) • Tusla inspection
OECD (2015a) <i>Starting Strong IV</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring ECEC quality 'quality matters most' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DES (2016) Education Focused Inspection Monitoring the quality of children's learning experiences and achievements (p.7) ▪ <u>Tusla (2018) Quality and Regulatory Framework Monitoring</u>
<i>Starting Strong V</i> (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transitions between ECEC and primary education 	<p>NCCA (2016, 2018) Consultation transitions ECEC to primary school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ O'Sullivan & Ring (2016) Transition process
<i>Quality framework 2018/2019</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality guidelines regulate and monitor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2018 Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF) (Tusla Early Years Inspectorate).

Starting Strong I and II (OECD, 2001, 2006) focused on the voice of the child, parent, and the community in ECEC policy, program, and assessment. The OECD focus was mirrored in creating the Irish Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (2000, CECDE) and *Síolta* (CECDE, 2006) the early years Quality Standards Framework. The understanding outlined in Start Strong II that quality was context-specific was replaced in Starting Strong III (2012) by a standardised tool kit, regulations and goals, along with parents as consumers responsible for high quality learning at home (OECD, 2012). This development prompted Urban (2014) to describe Starting Strong III as “Starting Wrong” (p. 83). Starting Strong IV (2015a) followed, and the prominence of monitoring and evaluation positioned quality as a potential control technology (Paananen et al., 2015). This shift was emulated in Irish ECEC policy, where quality became associated with regulations and inspections in the form of the Education Focused Inspection (DES, 2016a, c) and the *Tusla* (2018) Quality and Regulatory Framework.

Moss & Dahlberg (2008) have advised that quality has become embedded in ECEC policy through the neoliberal story of quality and high returns. Accordingly, the quality discourse has gained access to ECEC through two channels 1) The overriding dominance of cognitive development and increased economic returns (Human Capital Theory) (Heckman, 2008, 2011, 2017) and 2) the change from government to governance, within the growing hegemony of new managerialism (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008; Paananen et al., 2015).

3.7.2 [Un]intended consequences: Quality as human capital and high returns

The OECD thematic review of Irish ECEC (DES, 2004) acknowledged Irish ECEC was —

Based on well-established early educational approaches, including Montessori, Steiner, Froebel, and High scope, all include an educational component. The contribution of these providers and their umbrella organisations – such as IPPA, the Early Childhood Organisation, and the Montessori schools ...these organisations developed and delivered training, provided advice, information, and support, and worked for policy change in the various fora. Without the work of such organisations, there would have been little childcare provision for policies, programmes, and funding to engage within recent years. (p.18)

Yet, the OECD advised it was necessary to align policy with new understandings of how young children develop and learn, have a stronger focus on quality and governance, and redirect policy to *universal access to ECEC* in the interest of gender equality and full

employment (OECD, 2004, p. 79). We are not alone; in 2004, the OECD review of Higher Education (HE) in Ireland revealed an analogous pattern. This review described the successful nature of the Irish higher education system and the “strong capacity to respond to the changes in the social, economic, and cultural environment” (p. 29). In a similar manner to ECEC, the HE was paradoxically asked to change “their strong capacity for change to meet the changing needs of the evolving society in which we live” (OECD, 2004, p. 41). The consistent mantra that what has served us well in the past will not serve us well in the future has been recognised with unease (Blackmore, 2013; Lynch, 2009). There is a concern that education policy has become more reactive than proactive in the neo-liberal policy environment (Starr, 2019).

The introduction of *Síolta*, the ECEC National Quality Framework, a quality assurance programme of 16 standards, the aim of which was to enrich the quality of early childhood experiences for children aged from birth to six years (Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education, 2006 (CECDE)) met the OECD (2004) requirement for a stronger focus on quality. *Aistear* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2009 (NCCA)) emerged as the new curriculum framework and promoted a “socio-cultural perspective” on how children learn and develop. This perspective proposed that children have a right to learn within the context of the “whole society” (French, 2007, p. 1) and the means to achieve this was through the emergent and inquiry-based curriculum (McLachlan, et al., 2013; NCCA, 2007), a curriculum that arises from children's interests (McLachlan et al., 2013; NCCA, 2007). However, the literature in the field (Bubikova-Moan et al., 2019; Walsh et al., 2010; Wood, 2014; Wood & Hedges, 2016) and the DES have recognised the challenges of implementing this approach (Duignan, 2019).

Conversely, the Irish policy paper *Better outcomes, brighter futures* proposed that the child's development was paramount to ensure economic returns to the State:

Research in Ireland and internationally is increasingly pointing to the returns that can accrue from investing in the early years – from supporting children's early cognitive, social and emotional development, to enhancing school readiness and to generating longer term returns to the State and society. (OMC, 2013, p. xi)

Simultaneously, Minister for Children Frances Fitzgerald (House of the Oireachtas, 2013) focused on the role of neuroscience, genomics, and economics in providing a “more complete and complex picture of childhood development” (p. 1), thereby aligning cognitive development and economics. While many ECEC academics have questioned the association of cognitive development and economic returns (Campbell-Barr & Nygård, 2014;

Cannella, 1997; Penn, 2011), internationally, the link remains “unchallengeable” (Stuart, 2013, p. 52). Moss (2014, 2015a, 2015b) described this as a “story of quality and high returns” (2016a, p.10) and the “secret to success in neoliberalism's highly competitive global market” (Moss, 2014).

Neoliberalism has been described as a “juggernaut” impacting ECEC (Moss, 2014, p. 6). Nevertheless, neoliberalism is a contested phenomenon and considered one of the most perplexing puzzles of our time; there is no political party and no fixed professional economics centred on this ideology (Mudge, 2014). Alternatively, Poststructuralist critics, even those that use the term, are wont to argue with some justification that the concept of neoliberalism is too often “inflated” or “overblown” (Collier, 2012; Dean, 2012). How do we engage with and think around something that is everywhere and nowhere? Or how does one engage with or hope to critique a shadow (Mudge, 2014, p. 87).

Harvey (2005) portrayed neoliberalism as a theory of political, economic practices, where the State is confined to creating conditions to support the markets. Society will be best advanced by “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by substantial private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). The hegemonic nature of the neoliberal political, economic philosophy has permeated all areas of social life (Peck, 2013), including ECEC (Moss, 2015a; Sims et al., 2018) and has become incorporated into the “common sense way” of how people interpret and understand the world (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). The neoliberal view is that economic growth can be achieved with cost-effective, efficient “quality” services that meet public demands (Massey, 2013). This view sits firmly with “the story of markets” and ECEC. However, Moss (2014) argues that “the story of quality and high returns” is broader in ECEC (p. 3). The story views children as future human capital, adaptable, competitive future workers, and consumers – Human Capital Theory.

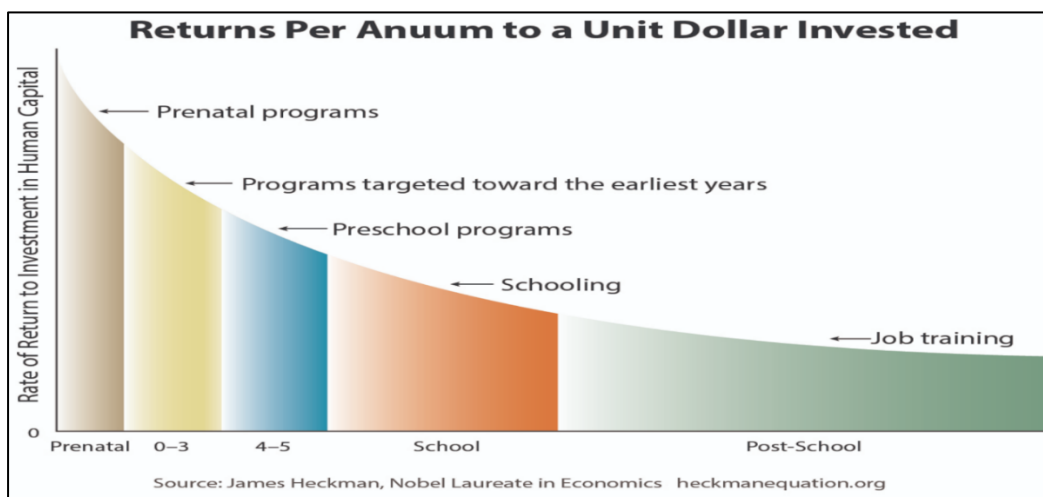
Human Capital Theory, a productivity argument for investing in disadvantaged young children, as a cost-effective measure to boost economic productivity and reduce future social costs, is associated with James Heckman (2008, 2011, 2017; Heckman et al., 1997). This theory underpins the EU, OECD, and Irish ECEC policy documents. It is premised on the Perry Preschool Project (1962), a longitudinal study (40 years) of children who attended preschool, which found that they were more likely to have graduated from high school and to earn more than non-participants were. The researchers claimed a \$7.16 return for each dollar of investment (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1997).

However, this small sample size (58 children) and other programs' inability to replicate the study outcomes, suggest the study may be at best contestable (Bartik, 2011) and at worst flawed and of questionable value (Burke & Sheffield, 2013; Olsen & Snell,

2006). The theory's promoters failed to mention that the Perry Project offered transportation for children to attend school. The project had a ratio of 4/5 pupils per teacher; the teachers made afternoon visits to the children's homes to support the parents, and provided parent classes (Heckman, 1999). It could be argued that any ECEC approach with all these resources would be effective. Nevertheless, the Minister for Children, Frances Fitzgerald (2013) referenced the Heckman theory to describe the economic value of investing in the 3–5-year-olds. It is interesting to examine the picture of the Heckman curve that the Minister referred to. The graph (Figure 6) vividly demonstrates that the greatest return on investment is in prenatal and with children under three years of age, yet this age group is ignored in research and policy (French, 2019; Hayes, 2001, 2016; Nolan, 2020).

Figure 6

The Heckman Curve



The Heckmanisation of the early years continues (Van Laere, 2017) and has migrated from the USA. His ideology can be observed in many policies and economic discourses throughout the world (Stuart, 2013). Conversely, Heckman issued a cautionary note that “this research needs to be deepened and broadened to create effective policy” (Heckman, 2011, p. 2). Nevertheless, the story of quality and high returns is considered the recipe for success in neoliberalism's competitive global market (Moss, 2014). However, it should be noted that other approaches/models exist for the delivery of ECEC services (Chapter 2, pp. 24-35) that are safe, caring, places of learning and creativity and where staff are afforded dignity and respect.

Nevertheless, a neoliberal turn in ECEC social policy has been noted internationally (Moloney et al., 2019), including the UK (Hammond et al., 2015; Moss & Dahlberg, 2008; Paananen et al., 2015), the USA (Nitecki & Warmouth, 2017) Australia (Sims et al., 2018) and the Nordic countries (Børhaug, 2013; Kamali & Jönsson, 2019; Moen & Granrusten, 2013; Spolander, 2019). Conversely, there is little information on how the neoliberal turn has influenced ECEC leadership. It would seem that in the broader educational field, leadership has swum in the same waters as neoliberal hegemony (Blackmore; 2013; Courtney et al., 2017; Gunter, 2011; Lumby, 2013, 2019), where the school is considered a corporate business, and the school principal /leader an entrepreneur (Gunter et al., 2018). Starr (2019) argues that neoliberal changes to policy have had a strong impact on education, education institutions, leaders' practice and lives. These changes have besieged the education landscape with multiple conformity, and accountability mechanisms to keep control over education institutions and obtain the information required to observe and monitor (Starr, 2019).

Simultaneously, school leadership has been described as a moral act central to the democratic and economic health of the next generation (Palestini, 2012; Sergiovanni, 1996). However, the attempt to marry "the dual goals of a healthy and just democracy ...[and] a productive economy", has resulted in what Wright (2001) describes as a "bastard leadership", and has failed to lead to the sought-after democratic and economic ends (p. 274). While the rhetoric and discourse may be similar, "bastard leadership can only be understood as a form of managerialism" (Wright, 2001, p. 280). Bastard Leadership "represents a capture of the leadership discourse by the 'managerialist' project and the question must be asked about the ends towards which one is leading a school, what are these ends and who stipulates them" (Wright, 2003, p. 140).

3.7.3 [Un]intended consequences: Managerialism as quality (control and assurance)

Neoliberalism has become associated with deregulation, privatisation, and a move from an inept interventionist government to public choice, competition, and free markets (Harvey, 2005; Rhodes, 1997). This withdrawal has been facilitated by a network-style of governing, from "government to governance", and refers to the move from the top-down direction of state organisations to governance in and by networks. The State has been rolled back to create the minimalist State and rolled out to extend its influence by outsourcing and incorporating others in public governance (Rhodes, 2017, pp. 11-12). Incorporating others is considered a form of contracting out and managing public services through networks (Cohen & Eimicke, 2010). The shift from publicly-funded and governed education services to an

increased involvement of private and semi-private entities (Ball, 2009; Blackmore, 2011; Blackmore & Sachs, 2007) required a new governance mode to decentralise and yet maintain control. New managerialism, the “organisational arm of neoliberalism”, became such a mode and is firmly embedded in the principles of market dynamics, accountability, and enhanced productivity (Lynch, 2014, p. 1).

The change in the relations between the State and ECEC internationally has been reported as increased levels of responsibility, accountability, and competition with excessive administrative tasks (Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016; Osgood, 2012). The idea that management and a disciplined workforce will be more efficient and cost-effective has prompted Ozga (2000) to describe managerialism as the “official version of leadership” (p. 355) and O’Reilly & Reed (2010) to describe “leaderism” as an evolution of managerialism.

Moreover, managerialism has been accredited with prioritising administrative efficiency and cost-effectiveness over relationships, collaboration, care, and solidarity in ECEC (Osgood et al., 2017; Hammond et al., 2015; Sims et al., 2018), in the broader educational (Apple, 2018; Ball, 2012; Lynch & Grummell, 2018) and leadership literature (Blackmore, 2013). As such, a society that values the definitive neoliberal citizen who is a flexible and autonomous worker “unencumbered by care responsibilities” becomes a *careless* one (Lynch et al., 2012, p. 83).

However, neoliberalism and managerialism, and new public management (NPM), a “potpourri of ideologies” (Pollitt, 1990, p. 4) or a “hybrid” of neoliberalism and managerialism (Shepherd, 2018, p. 1668) all remain contested phenomena (Shepherd, 2018). At the risk of adopting an oversimplified view of neoliberalism, managerialism, and network governance, while also recognising that all play out differently in different contexts, it could nevertheless be argued that Irish ECEC policy has also been shaped by a neoliberal turn (Moloney et al., 2019). In Ireland, the education system is described as unique among European countries. A complex system of governance with strong historical and more recent private involvement has resulted in schools that are “neither strictly public nor strictly private – a hybrid” (Skerritt & Salokangas, 2020, p. 6).

Conversely, the Irish ECEC sector is considered a fully privatised model, where “currently deprivatisation” and growing state involvement is occurring (Skerritt & Salokangas, 2020, p. 94). The perceived shift from a privatised model to state involvement may suggest a return to the historical pattern of Irish state engagement in education (Path Dependency). As such, the notion of deregulation, privatisation, and network governance may not apply to the Irish ECEC. However, the repercussions of conflating child development and affordable childcare policies have not only created confusion and demonstrated “how one policy issue can influence another in an unhelpful way” (Hayes, 2001) but also blurs the complexity of the

ECEC sector. For over four decades, the Early Start programme (40 centres) and the Rutland Street Project, both pre-primary initiatives in designated areas of urban disadvantage, have been overseen and financed by the Department of Education. Similarly, community creches are, to a large extent, supported by state funding. Therefore, the sector is a complex “hybrid” of state-funded, private, community, and voluntary ECEC settings which provide all daycare, sessional (free preschool year (child development), and after-school care.

Nevertheless, with the introduction of the free preschool year (DES, 2010), government funding progressively underpins ECEC provision (Rodgers, 2019). The state funding has been accompanied by increased accountability, regulations (Tusla, 2016), inspections (Tusla, DES, Pobal), and concurrent administration tasks. These appear to be premised on the belief that standardisation and accountability through the mechanisms of quality assurance measures (governance), including curriculum frameworks and inspection systems (quality control), will result in raising ECEC quality, accessibility, and affordability (Elwick et al., 2018; OECD, 2015a). It could be argued that Irish ECEC has become part of the government's public management ethos, with changes to improve performance (Ball & Youdell, 2007; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

The conceptualisation of network governance as a mode of governance involving multiple centres (Rhodes 1997, p. 109) and the dispersal of power across networks of actors (Fairtlough, 2007) appears to be congruent with Irish ECEC. There are 10+ government departments associated with Irish ECEC, each with their mission, goal, and ethos, with no unified identity or voice (Urban et al., 2017; Walsh, 2016). There has been a dispersal of power from the state departments to Tusla, the education-focused inspectors, Pobal, and the network of professional organisations and specialists in the sector. This culture of accountability and standards in Irish ECEC is considered a form of managerialism (Hammond et al., 2015). Managerialism has increased responsibility and administration (Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016; Osgood, 2012) and created a disciplinary culture, which has limited the practitioner's decision-making and control (Fenech & Sumsion, 2007; Osgood, 2010). In short, it could be argued that quality has infiltrated International and Irish ECEC through the shift from government to governance, within the growing hegemony of new managerialism (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008; Paananen et al., 2015).

The decade 2000 - 2010 also witnessed the demise of "the Celtic Tiger" (15 years of growth and development in the Irish economy). The first eurozone country to enter recession was Ireland in 2008. The Irish government nationalised several banks and accepted support in 2010 from the Troika formed by the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund in 2010 (Boulet, 2015). Between 2008 and 2010, the

combined effects of the cuts in welfare rates and increases in taxes meant that most people experienced a fall in income of around 10 percent (Boullet, 2015).

In response to the financial crisis, five successive national budgets in Ireland implemented a range of austerity measures, beginning in 2009. An emergency supplementary budget was published in April 2009, followed by national budgets for 2010, 2011, and 2012 (Lillis & Morgan, 2012).

Allen (2009) asserted that policies were used to keep wage increases down and win agreement for neoliberal objectives wrapped in the vacuous language of 'social inclusion, but when the crash occurred, the employers' and the government's agenda changed. Their solution lay in outright wage cuts to restore 'competitiveness' (p. 202). It could be argued that this assertion influenced children and ECEC. The Children's Rights Alliance Report Card 2009 gave the Irish government a C-grade for children's material well-being. While acknowledging 'marked increases in child income support,' the report noted the absence of essential public services: childcare, housing, health, and education (Children's Rights Alliance, 2009, p. 18).

Similarly, the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education (CECDE) was set up in 2002 for three years and extended for three years in 2005. Its role was to coordinate provision and policies covering nurseries, creches, playgroups, childminders, pre-schools, and infant classes of primary schools. Minister Andrews announced the closure of the CECDE as the end of a "successful fulfilment of the remit." At an annual cost to the exchequer in the region of €1 million (Andrews, 2008) may have been more about rationalisation and recession (Guerin et al., 2018) than successful completion of their role.

Chapter 4 ECEC policy 2011–2019

4.1 Reactive ECEC Policy and the repercussions for ECEC

This chapter examines the period 2010 –2019 (August). It would seem that in this period, there have been more policy initiatives than in the previous hundred years. The chapter discusses policies relating to the ECCE scheme, inclusion, affordable childcare, gender equality, and work/life balance. Many of these policies have been considered to be reactive in nature, and may have contributed to the limited policy concerning workforce development and leadership, both of which are discussed in detail at the end of this chapter.

2010 – 2016

- 2010 DES ECCE Scheme (Free preschool year)
- 2011 DCYA Revised Children First National Guidance for the Protection & Welfare of Children
- 2011 DCYA decreased capitation and increased child ratio from 1:10 to 1:11
- 2012 Minister for children announced will develop Ireland's first Early Years Strategy
- 2013 May 28th Breach of Trust TV documentary
- 2013 September Right from the Start. Expert advisory group on the Early Years strategy (DCYA)
- 2013 Final Report on the Development/Implementation of the Síolta Quality Assurance Programme Early Years(DES)
- 2014 Better Start – National Early Years Quality Support Service
- 2014 Tusla (Child and Family Agency)
- 2014 The Prevention and Early Intervention Programme and its replacement the Area-based Childhood Programme
- 2014 The National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI)
- 2014 Better Outcomes Brighter Future (DCYA, 2014b)
- 2014 The National Policy Framework for Children & Young People 2014 – 2020
- 2015 Nationalisation of the Tusla Early Years Inspectorate (2015 Inspectorate)
- 2015 Child & Family Relationship Act 2015
- 2015 Children First Act
- 2015 Aistear Síolta Practice Guide (NCCA, 2015)
- 2015 Early Years Education Inspectorate (EYEI) at the Department of Education and Skills
- 2016 Revised Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations
- 2016 Education focused Inspections
- 2016 Second ECCE year.

4.1.1 Universal Free preschool year

Urban (et al. 2017) has highlighted that:

For any external observer, one of the most intriguing features of the Irish early childhood sector is the amount of policy initiatives and projects in the sector, and the

number of actors developing and launching these initiatives. Experience in other countries shows that more initiatives don't necessarily lead to sustainable change, improved outcomes, or more effective use of resources. (p.70)

The introduction of the free preschool year (ECCE scheme) (DCYA, 2010) has been described as on such reactive policy (Hayes, 2012, 2016). The ECCE scheme has its origins in the quality discourse emanating from the OECD (2004) and signals the transition from a focus on quality to the split direction of equality. Equality as 1) equal access to ECEC for children 3 –5 years, and 2) gender equality – affordable and accessible childcare for parents. The 2008 league table of ECEC in Economically Advanced Countries (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2008) found that unlike Ireland, most countries offered a free preschool year, and 80% of staff were qualified (p. 2). Consequently, Budget 2009 (April) announced a free preschool year (ECEC scheme) to provide for 15 hours per week free preschool, to benefit children in the critical developmental period in the year (38 weeks) before they start primary school (DYCA, 2012). The concept of a free school year was welcomed as a “step in the right direction” towards universal childcare for all children (Kiersey & Hayes, 2010, p. 8).

However, the introduction of the Irish ECCE scheme was accompanied by some criticism. The scheme was conceived without a “clear strategic debate on what we as a nation want for our children” (Hayes & Bradley, 2008, p. 41), and the rationale underpinning the scheme was unclear (Kiersey & Hayes, 2010, p. 8). It may have been a cost-saving bid during the country's economic crisis (Hayes, 2010). Giving credence to the claim, Irish policy responses to ECEC have been subject to constant change and fragmented implementation and have been reactive and “broken” from the beginning (Hayes, 2012, 2016; Houses of the Oireachtas, 2017).

The scheme replaced the Early Learning and Childcare Supplement (Budget 2006), which granted €1,000 yearly to parents of children to the age of six years (€6,000) and thus reduced the cost for the government from €6,000 to €2,400 (ECCE scheme). As such, it was seen “as intelligent use of limited resources” (OMCYA, 2012).

In practice, the scheme's introduction came as a surprise to preschool practitioners who had to change work practice. It was also a blow to parents who had to forego direct payment of €1,000 annual Early Childhood Supplement. (Neylon, 2012, p. 5)

Hayes (2006) cautioned that this payment would neither strengthen the early years sector nor improve quality- there was no guarantee that parents would choose to spend the payment of €1,000 annually on ECCE. There were questions concerning the payment of the €1000 early childcare supplement to parents who did not use paid childcare. During a Dáil Éireann debate (Tuesday, 26 May 2009), Deputy Enright outlined how the Government “simply gave parents a few more quid to use howsoever they wished and ignored the opportunity to develop a long-term system that would serve generations”. (Oireachtas, 2009). It could be argued that the limited value placed on caring for children in their homes (Federici, 2012; Fraser, 2016) is evident here. Nevertheless, Deputy Enright expressed concern about the financial implications of the withdrawal of the early childcare supplement on many families, particularly middle- and low-income families (Oireachtas, 2009). Conversely, Children’s Rights Alliance chief executive Jillian van Turnhout announced “the country would benefit from the decision to replace the Early Childcare Supplement with a free year for pre-school children” (Irish Examiner, 2009).

The ECCE scheme grant was paid at a weekly rate of €64.50, or €75 where the pre-school leaders hold degree-level qualifications in Early Education, was cut by approximately 3%, to €62.50 and €73 respectively in September 2012, when demographic changes meant that the number of children entering the scheme had increased. In compensation, services were allowed to take in 11 children per adult instead of 10, arguing that this would have a negligible effect on quality (DCYA, 2011). The ECCE Scheme ensured that funding was paid directly to ECEC services in capitation grants for children attending their services. It also increased the number of children aged 3 to 4 attending pre-schools. The scheme also had the corollary effect of subsidising more minor services, many of which were in danger of closing following the economic downturn and consequent decrease in employment rates in Ireland from 2008 onwards (Murphy, 2015, p.291).

Research (Javornik & Ingold, 2015; Yerkes and Javornik, 2019) suggests that public provision of childcare services has higher affordability levels, accessibility, and quality than private provision countries. While this line of thinking may be reminiscent of Human Capital theory (Heckman, 2017), the difference lies in the understanding that equitable universal childcare is dependent on competitive salaries for educators, high staff/child ratios, state responsibility and governance, and consistent data collection (Yerkes and Javornik, 2019).

However, the ECCE scheme was introduced without any meaningful consultation with ECEC service providers, who ceased to be self-employed and became government employees, sub-contractors with limited rights and entitlements, and an inadequate capitation grant (ACP, 2015; ECI, 2015; Moloney & Pope, 2013) to meet the running cost of an ECEC service (Appendix B). The promised increase in qualifications and remuneration

has not occurred, and ECEC practitioners “lack maternity pay, sick pay and private pension entitlements...not able to save” (SIPTU, 2019a, p. 10). In 2016 (despite a trebling of public investment in childcare programmes between 2011 and 2016) Ireland spent the second-lowest amount on education for three–to-five-year-olds in the OECD, as a percentage of GDP. In comparison, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland each spent 1% of GDP – more than double Ireland’s spend of 0.4% (Oireachtas, 2020, p. 4). Attempting to resource both the ECCE scheme and the affordable childcare scheme on this limited budget would suggest one of these areas or both would be under-resourced. It would appear that the ECCE scheme is under-resourced, and the TASC (Think-Tank on Action for Social Change) has concluded that the ECCE scheme is driving ECEC working conditions down (Pembroke, 2017). In addition, the focus of State investment into the ECCE scheme is exacerbating the difficulties faced by providers in the sustainable delivery of non-ECCE childcare services. This is pushing struggling services towards an ECCE-only model (ECI, 2018a, p. 2).

The “real winners” of the ECCE scheme were considered the “disadvantaged and marginalised children in our society who do not currently benefit from preschool” (DES, 2009). However, there were several measures in place to support the disadvantaged child and their families, including the Community Childcare Subvention (2008), and Childcare Education and Training Support (2010) (Taylor, 2012). Moreover, research has shown that while gains may accrue to disadvantaged children in ECEC, the gains may fade early in elementary school (Bailey et al., 2014; Burke & Sheffield, 2013; Hillman & Williams, Campbell et al., 2018). Similarly, McKeon, Haase & Pratschke (2015) questioned the Irish ECCE scheme's effectiveness in a study of 448 children in 70 early years settings (2012–2013). They proposed that the ECCE scheme was sound in principle. Still, a significant skills gap by social class background remained unchanged or even widened over that year, and the family and the period before the free preschool year was where investment was required (McKeown et al., 2015, p. 7).

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) was established in 2011 to organise policy and provision for children and coordinate the preschool inspectorate's fragmented nature (Neylon, 2014). Nevertheless, on May 27, 2013, a Prime Time Investigates exposé *A breach of trust* (Prime Time, 2013) revealed “grave concerns over the quality of childcare” in three Dublin crèches (Hillard, 2013). In response, the difficulties at the management level and the lack of investment in the early years, specifically in the workforce, were highlighted. Conversely, the Minister for Children suggested a stronger inspection regime and low qualifications (Carroll, 2013). All of which speak to the notion of path dependency (Pierson 2000) and is reminiscent of the Madonna House (1996) scenario (see pp, 46-47). The Minister failed to mention that the government's promise to support the

practitioner's up-skilling to meet the free preschool year (DCYA, 2010) had plateaued at level five. However, Better Start, the National Early Years Quality Support Service was created, "to develop ECEC quality for children" comprising of 30 early years specialists. There was no obligation on the ECEC services to avail of this mentoring service, but they were urged to do so (DCYA, 2014c). This was not the government's first attempt at introducing mentors into the sector. With the introduction of the Siolta quality standards (CECDE, 2006), a Siolta Quality Assurance Programme (QAP) was devised where a Siolta coordinator was assigned to a group of ECEC settings (one practitioner from each school) who wished to partake in the programme. However, Goodbody Economic Consultants (2011) in their evaluation of the QAP, questioned the inadequate period of training of the mentors, the emphasis on documenting practice over facilitating understanding and independent decision making, and concluded that the practitioners became reliant on the coordinator.

In 2014, Tusla (the Child and Family Agency) became the state agency responsible for improving children's wellbeing and outcomes. In January 2015 Tusla became the National Inspectorate for Preschool Services and produced a revised inspection tool for ECEC. By March 2016, the Department of Education and Skills announced the new Early Years-Focused inspections (DES, 2016c). However, the promised support with training and qualifications did not emerge. A government report explained that the "rapid introduction of higher qualifications ... is likely to increase cost, heighten supply, and reduce accessibility and affordability for many parents" (Inter-Departmental Group Working Group, 2015, p. 48). This report, while challenging to locate, mirrored the OECD reports (2006, 2012).

Similarly, amidst the voices of dissent within the government and the ECEC sector, a second free preschool year was introduced. It was described as—

ill-thought through and deceptive and did not recognise the real investment needs of the sector... the populist measure was easy to say but comes without any rigorous thought on investment in an area in need of substantial reform. (Hayes, see Hillard, *Irish Times*, October 15, 2015)

In sum, it would seem that the introduction of the ECCE scheme may have been well-intended. However, the [un]intentional repercussions include the scheme may not meet the disadvantaged child's needs, may be targeting the wrong age-group, and has increased the practitioners' responsibilities with no improvement in their working conditions.

4.1.2 [Un]intended consequences: Mentoring and [dis]empowering the practitioner

An evaluation of the Síolta Coordinator mentoring role outlined the challenges of mentoring including a heavy reliance on their Coordinator (Goodbody, 2011, p. 102). In addition, and at the cost of 1,829,373.38 euro (2010–2012), “it may not be cost-effective” (DES, 2013, p. 22).

Nevertheless, Better Start (2014) introduced a group of early-year specialists, described as experts in the field. Their role was to “provide quality early years mentoring support to ECEC settings” (Rogers, 2014a, p. 2) develop ECEC quality (Better Start, 2015) and to “empower pre-school providers to deliver an inclusive pre-school experience” (Better Start, 2018; DCYA, 2016b). However, a survey of ECEC practitioners (DES, 2016b) found:

three other aspects of Education and Play were identified by practitioners where they felt poorly prepared for practice. These include the knowledge of Aistear and its use (44%); Síolta and its use (50%) and the use of ICT as a learning support (49%). Given the centrality of Aistear and Síolta in the delivery of high-quality education to children in pre-school, this is of particular concern. (p.37)

While the intention behind the introduction of the specialists may have been admirable, there may be [un]intended consequences from such a move.

As there is no concise definition of mentorship within education (Hobbs & Stoval, 2015), it is difficult to “know if we are talking about the same thing?” (Roberts, 2000, p., 145). Therefore, mentor education cannot be studied in full without problematising how mentoring and mentor education are understood and defined (Aspfors & Fransson, 2015, p. 76). It would seem that Better Start has merged the notion of coaching and mentoring and refer to Childline (2011) as the approach (coaching) underpinning the model (Rogers, 2014, p. 23). Mentoring is often understood as a holistic term that suggests an ongoing supportive relationship (Kram, 1983, 1985) “focused on the individual's development, whereas coaching is more concerned with the improvement and on-the-job performance” (Morgan & Rochford, 2017, p. 10). This may explain why the specialist mentorship model was confined to supporting the sector's quality and curriculum frameworks and did not address the lack of managerial/leadership skills, nor the development of the individual/workforce revealed in the *Breach of trust* exposé (Prime Time, 2013).

Wong and Waniganayake (2013), after an extensive exploration of mentoring in ECEC, questioned “how effective mentoring is” in ECEC (p. 173). Similarly, a link between the complexity of the ECEC workforce and the challenges of mentoring has been

documented (Langdon et al., 2016; Pavia et al., 2003). There appears to be limited information on the skills, knowledge, and understanding required to be a mentor (Hammond et al., 2015; Langdon et al., 2016). Moreover, internationally practitioners have described professional development in the shape of mentors as authoritarian, and they requested input into the content of such courses (Hadley et al., 2015; Colmer et al., 2014). Besides, empowerment culture can be particularly harmful to leadership in schools as it promotes the view that “we’ll not think about this because the ‘leadership’ will empower us for what they want us to do. We’ll just wait until we are told” (Wright, 2001, p. 287).

Mentoring in the literature has faced additional critique, not least because mentoring working-class women through the lens of middle-class values may not be appropriate or effective and can “contribute to inequity ... mentoring roles may often translate in practice into seniority of position” (Hammond et al., 2015, p. 140). Olin Wright (1997) outlined how the specialists and the managers in institutions and organisations have a “contradictory location within class relations” and constitute the “expert class” (pp.13-16). While the expert class lacks production means, they have control over knowledge (a critical resource in contemporary economies) and skills.

The notion of specialists continued in 2016 with the Access and Inclusion Model (DCYA, 2016b) and the Aistear Siolta Initiative (DES, 2016d) (68 Aistear Siolta mentors drawn from the National Voluntary Organisations and the CCCs). An evaluation of the Aistear Siolta Initiative found “it is a very expensive and potentially unsustainable model” (DES, 2018a, p. 52). The system was considered fragmented, with too many government actors involved:

national coordinators in separate organisations, the lack of direct line management and monitoring of mentors to ensure consistency of approach, absence of supervision and support to evaluate mentor capacity, knowledge, and skills. (DES, 2018a, p. 53)

The Early Years Specialists (Access and Inclusion) was set up to “provide expert educational advice” and returned to the notion of “coaching” ECEC practitioners (Better Start, 2016). The Better Start Early Years Learning and Development Unit was established to build early-year settings to provide high-quality, inclusive programmes to all preschool children. The DCYA allocated a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) fund to develop the AIM Hanen Teacher Talk and Lámh training, adding First Aid response training, and to develop “proper CPD infrastructure for the future development of CPD supports and funding” (ECI, 2018a).

The “proper expert-led approach to CPD” appears to be a continuation of the specialist mentor model. In the past, this model framed practitioners as being in deficit, encouraged dependency upon specialists, was not cost-effective, and did not acknowledge that adults are more willing to engage in learning that they selected themselves (Blaschke, 2012; Knowles, 1970, 1984;). The words “locked in” and “irreversibility” come to mind (Pierson, 2004). Stamopoulous (2012) proposed that professional organisations need to take a role “in guiding the profession forward” (Stamopoulous, 2012, p. 47). However, how much self-governance a professional body that is semi-funded (NVO) or funded (CCC) by the government has in making decisions and advocating for the sector requires attention.

4.2 Equality: A strategy for ECEC

2016 – 2017

- 2016 DCYA Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter Guidelines ECEC
- 2016 Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)
- 2016 National Síolta Aistear Initiative (2016), which is guided and overseen by a steering group from the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and Better Start
- 2016 Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 (DCYA, 2016).
- 2016 Early Years Regulations services required to be registered with Tusla.
- 2016 NCCA Proposals for Structure /Time Allocation in a Redeveloped Primary Curriculum Consultation
- Children First Guidance 2017
- 2017 Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) programme
- 2017 Training and Employment Childcare programmes (TEC) (childcare programme to support parents train/return to work
- 2017 CCS programme Resettlement, Relocation Transition programme to support children and families experiencing homelessness

4.2.1 Equality, diversity, and inclusion

In 2016, Minister Zappone launched the Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Charter Guidelines for ECEC and advised that equality was not about “treating people the same” and that equality of participation was particularly crucial in ECEC (DCYA, 2016a, p. vi). The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) followed on June 21, 2016, to support access to the free preschool year for children with a disability. (DCYA, 2016b) This model was financed by the DES from a dormant account, funding up to 900 places per annum on the Leadership for

Inclusion (LINC) programme. To facilitate the inclusion model, the ECEC setting received an extra two euro per child in the classroom.

4.2.2 [Un]intended consequences: Inequity, uniformity, and leadership confusion

Research has recognised and described the expanding role of the ECEC practitioner to include an emphasis on “families, stakeholders, and communities” (Waniganayake, 2014, p. 66). However, the introduction of Leadership for Inclusion could be considered a strange development for a sector already having trouble implementing the sector’s frameworks and meeting the ECCE scheme’s increased workload. Nonetheless, this is not an unfamiliar dynamic in education; for example, Farell & Ainscow (2002) asked a similar question concerning English primary schools. They questioned the rationale behind government decisions to promote inclusive education for children with special and additional educational needs (SAEN) into an educational system that is not serving children successfully.

AIM delivers support to children with (SAEN) on seven different levels. The number of children requiring the top-level-seven support has increased by 134% between 2016 and 2017, which indicated that the children’s needs are at the upper level of the model and require specialist attention (speech therapist, psychologists). The Better Start Access AIM specialists offer “expert advice, mentoring, and support” (DYCA, 2016) to the level 6 graduates of the Leadership for Inclusion (LINC) course, a one-year part-time course. The practitioners in the sector have voiced their concerns that the inclusion of children with SAEN “into regular services is unfair, to expect every child to react in a uniform way” (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2017, p. 20). The requirement that children should have access to different teaching methods to meet their individual needs and individual educational plans (National Council for Special Education (NCSE), 2014) appears to have been overlooked and speaks to the neoliberal notion that “equity” is limited to equal access to a system of education (Harris et al. 2003, p. 164).

Equally, the neoliberal ideology positions social actors (practitioners) as responsible for issues (cognitive development, disadvantaged children, the inclusion of children with SAEN) that are “often outside their understanding and control” (Ball, 2012, p.35). All of which have more to do with social policy than ECEC (Taggart et al., 2015, p.20). Moreover, the inclusion model may be reminiscent of the Salamanca Statement, where “Regular schools with this inclusive orientation ... improve the efficiency and, ultimately, the cost-effectiveness of the entire educational system” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 1994, p. 10). Within the Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Charter Guidelines (DCYAA, 2016), management and

leadership are considered essential to implement these guidelines. However, what follows are four contradictory explanations of leadership:

Leadership is one process

Leadership is two distinctly different functions ... organisations need both

Leadership requires managers and leaders to be successful

The role of management is to provide Leadership. (DCYA, 2016a, pp. 68-69)

Equally confusing is the dual role of equality in the sector.

4.2.3 Equality for children or gender equality for parents

2017–2019

- 2017 Crowe Horwath- Independent Review of Costs of Providing Quality Childcare
- 2017 Programme Support Payment available to all Early Years services who sign up to deliver measures to make childcare more affordable from September 2017.
- 2017 Affordable Childcare Scheme (ACS) (DCYA)– ICT lacking
- 2017 More affordable childcare
- 2017 Working group to develop draft professional award criteria and guidelines
- 2017 Early Childhood Research Centre University Roehampton report on occupational role profiles in the early years sector
- 2017 Practice Guide 68 Aistear Síolta mentors (10 hours)
- 2017 DCYA and DES Action Plan on School Age Childcare
- 2017 Childcare Support Bill
- 2018 Quality and Regulatory Framework (QRF) (Tusla Early Years Inspectorate).
- 2018 Network Funding to organisations under the Quality and Capacity Building Initiative
- 2018 December: Childcare Support Act (Commencement) Order 2018, bringing into force key amendments to the Child Care Act 1991 in relation to the definition of school-age service.
- 2018 A Whole-of-Government Strategy for Babies, Young Children and their Families 2019–2028
- 2019 Early Years (Pre-school) Regulations and DCYA Childcare Programmes Qualification Requirements
- 2019 Children First Guidance Addendum

The period 2017– 2019 witnessed a dramatic increase in social and ECEC policy, focusing on high-quality, affordable childcare to facilitate gender equality and full employment. The OECD thematic review on social investment in Ireland (2015b) proposed that affordable childcare and gender equality were not addressed. By 2017, the Irish

government had committed to various measures to address these failures, including expanding paid leave for the first year of a child's life, extra paternity leave, and a new affordable childcare bill was being prepared. Furthermore, the thematic review outlined that Ireland had not reached the Barcelona (2002) target of 33% of under-threes in formal childcare (European Commission, 2016, p. 10).

The European Commission (Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs, 2016) and the OECD documents (2011, 2015b) recommended increasing affordable, high-quality childcare “to address skills shortages ... improving Ireland's overall attractiveness as a location to work and live” (OECD, 2011, p. 5) and “encouraging voluntary participation of women in the workforce” (OECD, 2015b, p. 33). Accordingly, the Irish National Competitiveness Council (2018), the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) (2018), reiterated this request. Simultaneously, the Council of Ministers adopted the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011–2020), and Ireland currently chairs the Commission until 2020 (DJELR, 2017 p. 7). The *Irish National strategy for women and girls 2017–2020: Creating a better society for all* (DJELR, 2017) was developed during this period and focused on increased childcare investment to facilitate gender equality (p. 3). However, the economic undertones are prevalent in this document and reiterate the OECD estimate that achieving “gender parity would add a 0.6 percentage point to the world's annual GDP growth rate. The OECD has calculated the economic gain for the world at US\$12 trillion” (DJELR, 2017 p. 7), giving credence to the claim that gender equality policies may be more concerned with economic objectives than any real concern for women's ambitions (Blackmore, 2013; Morel et al., 2012) and lack any real concern for the care needs of the child (Nolan, 2020).

Amid the robust discourse on affordable childcare and gender equality, the Affordable Childcare Scheme (ACS) was announced in Budget 2017 to coordinate the existing financial ECEC supports and introduce a universal and a means-tested target component. However, the ICT system in place could not process the affordable scheme, and in the interim, the More Affordable Childcare scheme was implemented (2017). The ECEC providers were not consulted, and the lack of ICT meant increased paperwork for ECEC (settings) (Walsh, 2017, pp. 83-84). Many service providers refused to implement the scheme (DCYA, 2017). The minister responded by offering a €3.5 million second Programme Support Payment directly to ECEC providers who would implement the scheme (DCYA, 2017). The Childcare Support Act (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2018) followed, and was underpinned by the policy document the Affordable Childcare Scheme (DCYA, 2016c), which stated that “a child-centred approach should be adopted when designing the scheme” (p. 14). This sentence is the only reference to child-centred in the document (Moloney, 2017, p. 6). The policy document and impending Act (2018) appeared to be more concerned with

affordability for parents and market activation than the child, or the staff entrusted with implementing this policy and their working conditions (McArdle, 2017; Moloney, 2017). The focus on affordable childcare continued and was extended to affordable after-school care for children (5–12 years) to facilitate women's participation in the workforce (DCYA & DES, 2017).

The collaboration of the DCYA and the DES on afterschool care could be described as a positive event. However, the lack of training and the increased responsibility of caring for the school-aged child bestowed on a sector already struggling with the ECEC frameworks and the AIM model of inclusion would have to be questioned. The emphasis on affordable childcare continued the assumption that ECEC could solve society ills (disadvantaged, social exclusion) and ensure gender equality in the workplace (OECD, 2004, 2006, 2016). It would appear that the government may not have considered the compromises required when introducing the universal free year(s) (2010). The Irish government looked to address child development (DES), child welfare (HSE), disadvantaged children (DCYA), and affordable childcare to facilitate gender equality and full employment (DCYA, POBAL).

Conversely, the House of Lords (2015) Select Committee on Affordable Childcare Report (UK) recognised the “trade-offs” inherent in a universal system with the dual rationale of promoting child development and affordable childcare, which will ultimately affect the purpose and outcomes of ECEC (2015, p. 6). However, the following quote suggests the DCYA had considered this tension in 2015 and yet continued to offer a second free year (DCYA, 2016d).

There is an inherent tension between the objectives relating solely to child development, as compared with those that relate solely to the issue of affordability and activation. Certainly, taken to their limits, both overarching objectives have the potential to have contra-indications for the other. (DCYA, 2015, p. 48)

Hayes (2001), nearly 20 years previously, noted the repercussions of conflating child development and affordable childcare policies, and concluded that the merging of these two policy areas “confuses and clouds the issue and reflects the way one policy issue can influence another in an unhelpful way” (p. 79). Internationally, Moss (2017) also recognised this phenomenon:

Clearly, all educational services for children should take account of the fact that most parents are employed and need their children to be in a safe and secure environment whilst at work. This need matters and should be accommodated. But it should not be a defining feature of early childhood services, else we risk distorting the identity of these services by giving too much prominence to 'childcare for working

parents', which is just one of many purposes that early childhood services provide, and not one of the more salient and interesting ones. (p. 13)

There is an irony here in that the focus of State investment into the ECCE scheme is currently intensifying ECEC providers' problems. To achieve sustainability, ECEC settings are moving towards an "ECCE-only model" (ECI, 2018b, p. 2), reducing the number of all-day care facilities. Similarly, the support to parents for all daycare has been limited. Unfortunately, from the perspective of children and childcare providers, it is underpinned by a paradoxical ideology, where affordability and quality are dichotomous concepts. Childcare is being presented as a service/commodity for parents, rather than being premised upon the needs and rights of children, or the needs and rights of early childhood educators (Moloney, 2015). However, services are struggling to balance the accounts on the ECCE scheme capitation (Wayman, 2018). (Appendix B).

It would seem that the current drive to address equal access for preschool children (ECCE scheme) and affordable all-day childcare for parents continues the confusion. Adding the discourse of gender equality into the mix has fused three different phenomena, to the detriment of resourcing the child, working conditions, leadership in the sector, and holistic support for working parents.

4.2.4 [Un]intended consequences: No care and no care[er]

This analysis set out to explore policies about women and children from the 17th to the 21st century, to understand how ECEC evolved and why it is as it is today. What emerged was a formidable triad of the child, woman, and care, where it becomes difficult to speak about one without the others. The focus of social policy up to the late 20th century was on the male breadwinner and their contribution to the country's economic health. Conversely, women, and children's care was considered a private issue. Currently, the focus of social and ECEC policy is primarily concerned with economic productivity. It would seem that the care of the child and support for women with children to fulfil their career ambitions [gender equality] have been silenced and marginalised in the interests of economic progress (Fraser, 2016; Lynch et al., 2012). Care has been identified as the biggest obstacle to gender equality and is described as a struggle and a burden (EU, 2017; OECD, 2014). The unequal distribution of unpaid care work between women and men represents an infringement of women's rights (UN, 2013) and a "brake on their economic empowerment" (OECD, 2014, p. 1).

Every minute more that a woman spends on unpaid care work represents one minute less that she could be potentially spending on market-related activities or investing in her educational and vocational skills. A decrease in women's unpaid care work is related to a ten-percentage point increase in women's labor force participation rate (for a given level of GDP per capita, fertility rate, female unemployment rate, female education, urbanization rate, and maternity leave. (OECD, 2014, pp. 2-3)

Many academics have admitted that the OECD and EU may [un]intentionally have become public patriarchy, a paternalist international organisation, whose directives seem to be less interested in care (Bruneau, 2018; Fraser, 2016; Lynch, et al., 2012) and more interested in using women “for reproduction, unpaid carers, and low-paid carers than achieving gender equality in the home and the workplace” (Lorber, 2012, p. 65). It was also asserted that failure to recognise care as a public good would result in long-term economic and social damage to the economy and the sector (Fine-Davis, 2007).

The early Starting Strong papers (OECD, 2001, 2006) described their focus as the “children's best interests and the important goals of equity and social integration” (OECD, 2001, p. 4). The OECD (2014, 2015) papers on gender equality make slight reference to the child, and it is not easy to find a specific reference to or a definition of care (Nolan, 2020). While there has been a shift in the responsibility for the upbringing of young children from the family domain to public early childhood institutions (Urban, 2008, p. 135), there appears to be no mention of what this care involves. Equally, the pressure on women to conform to a model that promotes “a careless society” has received little attention in policy (Lynch et al., 2009; Lynch, 2010; Lynch et al., 2020). Could this be “rejection by omission”? (St Pierre, 2002, p. 25) Or is it avoidance? It could be considered avoidance, as the most embittered feminist battles are centred on childcare (Fraser, 2016). Osgood (2010) proposed that the emotional labour ECEC practitioners (and parents (mainly mothers)) engage in provokes fear in *government* as it is assumed to be hyper-feminine, uncontrollable and difficult to regulate. The progressive omission of the child and the absence of care from social and ECEC policy, and the closure in 2000 of the Gender Equality Unit (DES), the Higher Education Equality Unit (UCC) and the merging of the Equality Authority with the Irish Human Rights Commission (Lynch et al., 2009) suggest that the government prioritises cognitive development and full employment over the care of children, and any real concern for gender equality (Blackmore, 2013).

As such, care is viewed as the key barrier to women's freedoms and the fulfilment of their rights (OECD, 2014; UN, 2013). This understanding positions “childcare (in contrast

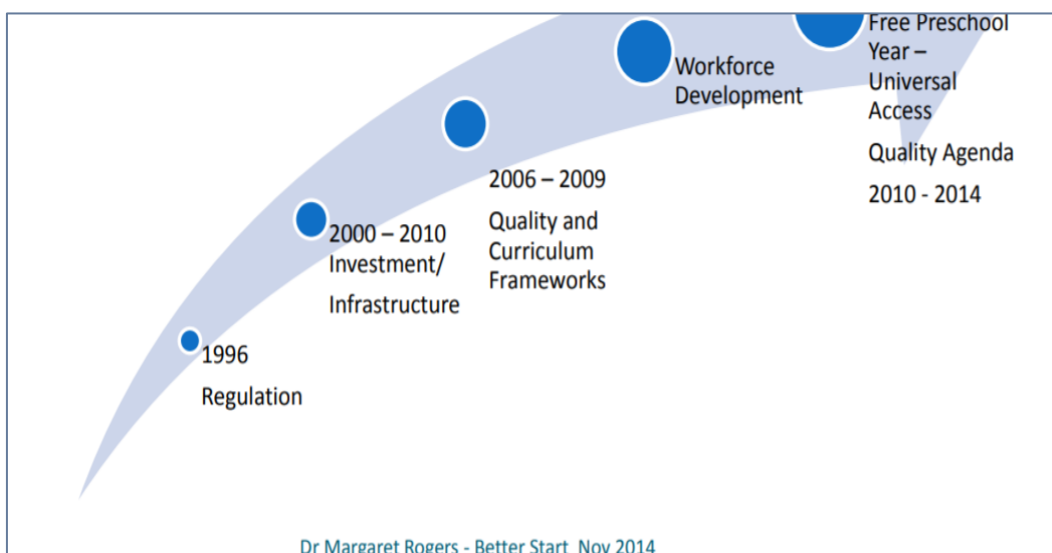
to living alongside children) as labor to be measured, priced, and delegated rather than valued and enjoyed” (Alderson, 2017, p. 309). Equally, care as burden positions the individual with no care responsibilities (most often men or fathers) as the ideal type of neoliberal entrepreneurial citizen, “who is unencumbered by care responsibilities and is free to play the capitalist games in a global context” (Lynch et al., 2012, p. 83). It would follow that those involved in the care of children and their working conditions do not feature in the capitalist game and, as such, do not merit any attention in social and ECEC policy.

4.3 Workforce development – no development

The phrase “one look is worth a thousand words” is attributed to Frederick R. Barnard (1921) describing the effectiveness of graphics in advertising (Ratcliffe, 2016). One look at this image (Figure 2), from a presentation by Dr. Rogers, head of Better Start (Rogers, 2014) exposes a void regarding workforce development. While there is the possibility and the most likely option is that this omission is an error; nevertheless, it could be argued that this omission may signify limited interest, lack of interest, or that the date to be interested in workforce development has yet to be finalised.

Figure 7

Workforce Development



Rogers, M. (2014b). *Better start: Working together for children*.

<https://docplayer.net/60649368-Working-together-for-children-dr-margaret-rogers-better-start-nov.html>

Working conditions matter in ECEC (EU, 2018, p. 59).

However, after decades of requests for improved working conditions (Bertram & Pascal, 2020; European Commission, 2015; International Labour Organisation 2014; OECD, 2006; The Social Research Centre, 2014), little recognition or progress has been made in Irish ECEC (Walsh, 2018). Nationally (Pembroke, 2017; LR&S, 2020) and internationally (Eurofound, 2014; OECD, 2019b), it has been acknowledged that practitioners have inadequate training opportunities, low pay, and little job security/career progression opportunity even in countries with relatively well-developed ECEC. The [un]intended consequences of this status quo have resulted in Irish practitioners leaving, and graduates unwilling to work in the sector (Urban et al., 2017, Oireachtas, 2017).

The model framework for education, training, and professional development in the early childhood care and education sector (DJELR, 2002) was the first policy document to examine workforce development. This report reiterated the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group Report (DJELR, 1999) that practitioners have not been well-paid or well-regarded and that the low occupational status had “led to difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff” (DJELR, 2002, p. 8). The objective of the second Model Framework (DES, 2010) was “to determine the existing educational attainment of the workforce and the needs of the workforce” (p. iv). However, two pages into the document, the needs were ignored: “issues such as the status and the terms and conditions of employment of people working in the sector ... are outside the scope of this policy document” (p. 2). Nevertheless, the first Framework proposed that training and a structured career path would “lead to improved status for the sector and attract and retain high-calibre staff” (DJELR, 2002, p.6). Similarly, the DCYA (2010), with the introduction of the Free Preschool year (ECCE scheme), recognised that “there will be a need to build towards appropriate qualifications/levels over time” (Andrews, 2009).

The following year, the international CoRe report explicated a vision of a graduate-led workforce, where qualified practitioners are paid a “salary in line with that of primary school teachers” and at least 1% of GDP being allocated to ECEC (Urban et al., 2012, p. 49). However, by 2018, the Irish ECEC workload had increased, and the sector’s support to up-skill was not forthcoming. The number of practitioners trained to NFQ Level 8 (2017/2018) was 14.2 %, an increase of only 2% from 2015 (Pobal, 2018) a long way off achieving the EU (2011) recommended 60% graduate-led ECEC workforce by 2025, and even a long way off the level of training required for leadership. Ireland continued to expend 0.1% of GDP, significantly below the European average of 0.8% and the 1% benchmark of UNICEF (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2017, p. 13). While the calls for better-paid working

conditions for ECEC staff continued (Pembroke, 2017), a practitioner with a degree or Masters in ECEC continues to earn, on average, €12 per hour. After 20 years in the sector, the practitioner can expect to earn 11.07 – 15.20 euros per hour (Pobal, 2019, p. 139). Urban et al. (2017) sustained the request to address the sectors working conditions. The Department for Children and Youth Affairs announced a Workforce Development Plan (WDP) for the sector (DCYA, 2019a). A steering group and stakeholder group was established. However, one would have to question the integrity or value of a plan without representation or input from the ECEC sector on the steering group (DCYA, 2019b), as Urban (2020) outlines:

It is questionable whether a high-level steering group for the reform of the early childhood workforce should have been established without representation from that workforce.
(p.95)

4.3.1 [Un]intended consequences: ECEC staff turnover and the blame game

Currently, international (OECD, 2019b) and Irish ECEC settings are experiencing a “*crisis*” in staffing and retention problems (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2017, p. 13) and high levels of burnout for those who remain in the Irish sector (Oke et al., 2019). Of workers leaving the sector, 57% have cited low pay as the reason for departing (ECI, 2015). The OECD (2019a) have described eight measures to combat the phenomenon, including the following:

Better pay and better qualifications, more practical experience from day one, alternative pathways into ECEC, better working conditions, and promoting training and professional development all contribute to boosting the appeal and status of ECEC careers. (OECD, 2019a, p.4). Austin et al. (2011) proposed that if quality ratings and improvement systems (QRIS) decouple higher qualifications and fiscal reward, and disregard the ECEC work environment, the exit of the most qualified ECEC staff will continue, and the much-sought-after quality will continue to be compromised (p. 13). Similarly, the crucial role of secure attachments and the negative repercussion of high staff turnover on children's social and emotional development has been noted (Austin et al, 2011; Murray & Palaiologou, 2018). The low pay and low status relative to the high level of responsibility inherent in the job can also restrict leadership (Waniganayake, 2014). However, the increased public investment required to address this situation is “an action the government seems unwilling to do” (Urban et al., 2017, p. 50). As happened in regard to the Madonna House affair, a discourse of blame has emerged in the sector. Moreover, the conflating of discourses and policies

regarding the ECCE scheme and all-day child care have added to the confusion. Both have overshadowed the issue of working conditions in the sector or have become a means to avoid resourcing the workforce.

As we have seen, Irish practitioners, in a similar manner to their UK counterparts, continue to be positioned within policy and public discourse as “deficient and need further reform” (Osgood et al., 2017, p. 64). However, the Irish practitioner also appears to be enmeshed in a discourse of blame. Maeve Sheehan’s article is a case in point:

Outcry from parents over rising childcare costs as research shows average fees increased by €5 a week... when Minister Zappone launched her much-welcomed €20-a-week universal childcare subsidy for hard-pressed parents last September, and she appealed to crèche providers not to spoil things by hiking their prices”. (*Independent*, February 26, 2018).

The understanding that most settings offer the ECCE scheme (15 hours weekly) and do not provide all-day care (ECI, 2018a) appears to be missing in ECEC discourse and policy. It has added to the adverse effects of conflating affordable childcare, gender equality, and child development policies. It could be argued that the government’s continued blurring of these lines has had the [un]intended consequence of redirecting the blame for inadequate and costly childcare for parents onto the practitioner and positioned the practitioner as the principal barrier to gender equality. The child’s social, emotional and physical needs, and development of the ECEC working conditions, appear to have gotten lost in the blame game.

Recently, Minister Zappone, Minister for Children at the time, requested that ECEC employers “provide more favourable working conditions that will attract and retain staff” (DCYA, 2018, p. 111). Both of these sound bites (Sheehan, 2018; Zappone, 2018) suggest the service provider has taken advantage of the parent and the practitioner. These accusations could be considered disingenuous, as they fail to acknowledge that except for a recent €20 subsidy for parents (DCYA, 2019b) there has been no support, training, or financial resources for the under-threes. The vast majority of parents in Ireland pay the full cost of childcare for this cohort (OECD, 2014; DCYA, 2017). The fee that the ECEC service provider charges does not cover the cost of running a “baby room” (ECI, 2015; 2018a). Moreover, the Government has described how their capacity to introduce measures to improve terms and conditions of employment is constrained by the fact that the State is not the employer. ELC and SAC services are owned and managed by a combination of independent centre-based providers, of which 74% are private and 26% are community-based. (DCYA, 2019b, p.2).

Yet, there is no recognition that service providers have been contracted and paid a capitation “funded” by Tusla under the “*Family Agency Act 2013, Section 56*” (Tusla, 2013, p. 5). The capitation is inadequate and there is a “tendency for many owner/managers to use their own salaries to supplement the operational costs of their businesses” (ECI, 2016, p. 4). Yet, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs recently instructed that they are powerless to advance the terms and conditions of the workforce as “the State is not the employer” (2019, p. 2). Services are not permitted to charge a top-up to parents availing of this scheme. It could be argued that constraining a service's income in this fashion, places the responsibility on the government to guarantee staff are paid adequately. “Such a limit directly impacts revenue” (Urban et al., 2017).

The Programme for a Partnership Government (Government of Ireland, 2016) commissioned Crowe-Horwath to undertake an independent review of the cost of delivering quality childcare (September 2017). It was to be overseen by the DCYA and delivered in a 10-month timeframe and includes an analysis of the current State funding for ECEC schemes and their impact on salaries, terms, and conditions for ECEC professionals (Walsh, 2017). However, to date, this report has not materialised. Meanwhile, the government's unrelenting answer to the “ongoing issue of staff wages and I am fully aware that retaining qualified staff remains a concern for many services” (Pobal, 2018, p. 1) is no answer.

However, Moloney & Pope (2013) found that remuneration alone was not sufficient. The practitioners requested respect and recognition for their work, and what we now have is a “disheartened, disillusioned, frustrated, disenfranchised” ECEC workforce (Moloney & Pope, 2013, p. 10). Similarly, leadership appears to be absent in ECEC policy.

4.4 Leadership – where is it?

It was not until 2006 with the introduction of Siolta that leadership became part of the ECEC discourse. Siolta (CECDE, 2006) became a blueprint for ECEC settings development and was adapted from the New Zealand Early Education Model Te Whariki (New Zealand Ministry, 2011). The Te Whariki and Australia's national quality framework (Quality Area 7) engaged with leadership. Siolta on the other hand is described as “a tool for management, strategic planning and policy development” (CECDE, 2007a, p.2). Leaders must reflect, learn and “model what leaders do and gain acceptance of their role” (CECDE, 2007b, p. 5). Conversely, Managers coordinate, communicate with, and “inspire individuals and teams” (CECDE, 2007b, p. 5). The terms manager and management, not leadership, are repeatedly used in policy (CECDE, 2006; DES, 2010, Tusla, 2018).

Nevertheless, a discourse of leadership has emerged in the sector. One of the measures of a high-quality ECEC setting is strong leadership, consistent long-serving staff (Rodd 2006; Stompolous, 2012; Waniganayake, et al., 2012; Taggart et al., 2015) and strong leadership at all levels of the sector (Urban et al., 2012). However, there is an absence of “clear leadership at political / Department level” (Urban et al., 2017, p. xx). ECEC leadership has emerged as a confusing array of roles (pedagogy, inclusion, room leader, and governance).

Recently, a discourse of coordination has emerged in the Irish ECEC sector; TUSLA is a national Initiative with centralised management and coordination (Rodgers, 2014). The DCYA was established “to take the lead and be the main coordinator to support the sector (Troy, 2015). In the leadership for inclusion LINC document, the practitioner is described as an inclusion coordinator, not a leader. (LINC, 2016). The introduction of the new children’s strategy, *First 5 big steps 2019-2028*, positions Minister Zappone as coordinator where the delivery of the strategy “is not the responsibility of one Department or one Minister. It is the responsibility of the whole-of-Government and whole-of society” (Government of Ireland, 2018, p. 5). As Figure 8 indicates, it is difficult to pin down who is responsible for ECEC?

Consequently, while leadership and managerialism tied roles to responsibilities, coordination appears to abandon the notion of responsibility and accountability and becomes coordination of the status quo. Responsibility for the sector seems to have been surrendered to a network of everyone and no one. It is not easy to see who is accountable and responsible for the ECEC sector at the government level (Urban et al., 2017; Walsh, 2017). Equally, there is virtually a total absence of political accountability for the OECD and its influence on ECEC policy (Wasmuth & Nitecki, 2017).

Who is Responsible for ECEC?

Figure 8

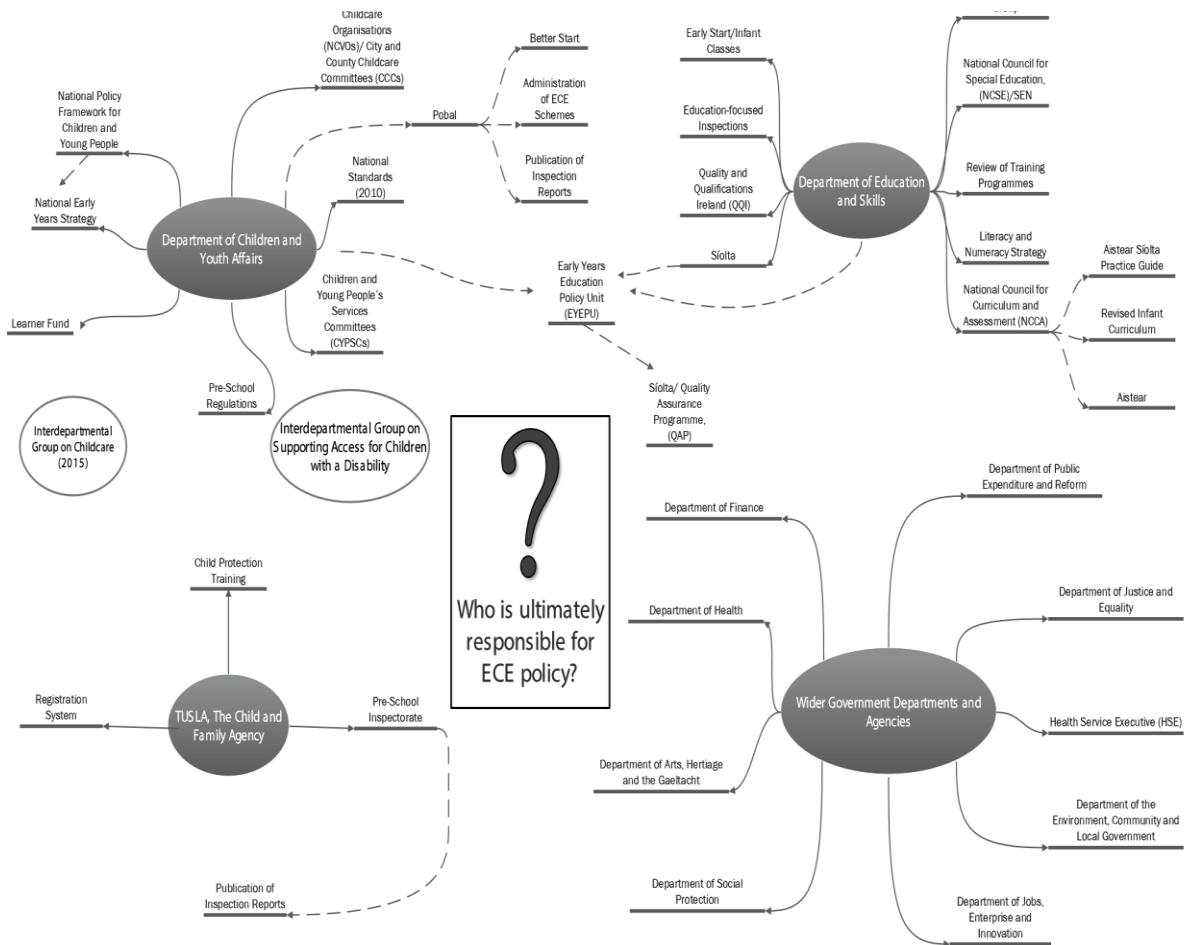


Figure 6: Who is ultimately responsible for ECE policy in Ireland?

Walsh, T. (2016). Recent policy developments in early childhood education (ECE): A jigsaw with too many pieces? *An Leabhbh Óg*, 10, 69-94.
http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/12836/1/TW_recent.pdf

The recent disclosure that the government failed to delineate “the roles and responsibilities for the key participants and failed to make clear in the “inspection regime what is actually expected of practitioners” (DES, 2016b, p. 49) reinforces the notion that responsibility and accountability are absent in the sector.

Moreover, with the onset of Covid-19 (since March 2020) working conditions in the sector appear to have become more precarious. The DCEDIY (2020) dispatched over 25 press releases and reports and had five meetings with an advisory group on the planned reopening of closed childcare services between April and July 2020. While acknowledging that this is a challenging, unprecedented, and uncertain time for the state, it is a similar experience for the practitioners in the sector. The only concrete information emanating from

all the communiques is that there is no road map on how to open ECEC safely and sustainably. Of the 75 million euro aid announced for the sector, a school with 12 – 40 children will receive 4,000 euros to help with extra staff, hygiene facilities, and outdoor play areas to reduce the risk posed by COVID-19 (DCYA, June 3; DCEDIY, June 10, 12, 15, 2020). Simultaneously, the Oireachtas has asked the sector to speak with one voice, as there were too many opinions and organisations representing the sector (June 2020).

While the Ombudsman for children Dr Niall Muldoon amongst others expressed “grave concern” over the proposed abolition of the Department of Children (Halpin, June, 2020), the ministry and Minister for Children were removed; the responsibility now resides with Minister Roderic O’ Gorman in the Department of Children Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. During the Minister’s first month in office, he announced a review of the ECCE scheme (free preschool years) capitation grant and acknowledged that graduate remuneration in the Irish sector is only marginally higher than that of non-graduates. He advised that a crucial concern impacting on staff retention is the relationship between staff remuneration and turnover (DCEDIY, 2020, July 15). However, the workforce development plan initiated last May, with a planned delivery date of 12 months (DCYA, 2019a) will not be available.

The development plan had the potential:

to set out plans to raise the profile of careers in the sector, establish role profiles, career pathways, qualifications requirements, and associated policy mechanisms along with leadership development opportunities, and work towards a more gender-balanced and diverse workforce. (DCEDIY, 2020, July 15)

The ECEC stakeholder representation on the steering group responsible for this plan appears to have been limited (DCYAb, 2019) and continues in this manner. Similarly, proposals for the 2020/21 programme for the school year were not available but “will be updated when there is confirmed information on the contracts and the funding package” (DCYA, July 2020). Minister O’ Gorman (DCYA, 2020, July 27) further announced a review of the childcare operating model and this review was cited as the reason for no added expenditure for ECEC in the 2021 Budget (Children’s Rights Alliance, 2020). However, this pattern was established in the 2020 budget, where the government’s interest in early years was limited to one line in the Budget speech (ECI, 2019). All of which echo Mahon & Bailey’s (2015) claim that the numerous reports on childcare provision and its merits are often delaying tactics

In short, there is an array of leadership roles in the sector; however, leadership appears to be absent in training, policy, and the job description of the practitioner running an ECEC setting (manager). Conversely, recent policy developments (Government of Ireland, 2018) have witnessed the emergence of the word “caring” and the importance of care and attachment in the first year of the child's life. However, the decision to include young babies in policy may be more about increasing fertility rates than meeting the needs of young children or supporting gender equality. The OECD (2003) *Babies and bosses* (Ireland) had flagged that the failure to assist parents in finding their preferred work and family balance (gender equality) had implications for both labour supply and family decisions and fertility. Fraser (2016) had warned that when society concurrently “withdraws public support for social reproduction and conscripts the chief providers of it into long and gruelling hours of paid work, it depletes the very social capacities on which it depends” (p. 31).

The 2.1 children per woman needed for population replacement is not occurring (OECD, 2019b p. 1). The discourse of every minute a woman spends on care reduces their value in the labour market (OECD, 2015b) has been replaced by the notion that getting “family-friendly policies are a key driver of economic growth” and will enhance equity between men and women, and stem the fall in birth-rates” (OECD, 2018)

The Irish *First 5: A whole-of-government strategy for babies, young children and their families* (Government of Ireland, 2018) outlined “the family-friendly policy”, developing strong and supportive families and communities, with the aim of “balancing working and caring ... for parents” (p. 4). Evidence of the importance of attachment and limiting children's hours in ELC settings and having them spend time with parents, especially in the first year, in a “caring, nurturing and playful home environment” is prioritised (2018, p. 13). All of which appears to be at odds with the Barcelona targets (EC, 2002, 2013). The notion of caring occurs throughout the document (Government of Ireland, 2018) but is limited to the infant under one year. Similarly, the document has limited the potential adverse effects of prolonged periods in centre-based ECC to young children under one. The argument that from the age “of 2–3 onwards, children do better in high-quality Early Learning and Care services than if they remain solely at home” was delivered in the strategy (p. 38). It would seem that the objective of ECEC is to facilitate full employment, gender equality, and universal access to ECEC and now includes replacing the population. On November 19, 2018, the Government of Ireland (2018) was published, and the child (1-5 years) was sidelined in the childcare policy script. On that same date, the child disappeared from the Irish sector title: without any consultation with participants, the sector was renamed Early Learning and Care (ELC) (DCYA, 2018).

A RTÉ programme 'Creches, Behind Closed Doors' carried out an undercover investigation of two crèches in Dublin (2019). Dr. Mary Moloney of the University of Limerick described the lack of staff training and inadequate management procedures in these crèches (Gallagher, 2019, *Irish Times*, Wed., July 24, 2019). However, Minister Zappone replied:

My Department has introduced a minimum qualification for all staff working with children in crèches or pre-school services; we established a national Quality Development Service where experts are available to mentor and advise Early Learning and Care practitioners... Tusla was given new powers in 2016, and I have substantially increased Tusla's funding, which has enabled it to nearly double the number of inspections since 2014 ... a review of the Regulations for early years services. (McCurry, 2019, *The Irish Independent*, Fri., July 26, 2019)

Therefore, the pattern continues (path dependency) – no support to address the training and management (leadership) deficit within the ECEC settings, and in its place, more regulation, and inspections. The difficulty for the Irish practitioner working in this continually changing policy landscape, where the philosophies on children's learning and development change or remain unclarified to facilitate the political need of the moment (full employment, gender equality, increased fertility levels) has not been documented. Nor have the potential repercussions of these policies on the holistic development of the child and the practitioner.

4.5 Summary

To conclude, the policy analysis revealed that throughout the history of Irish social policy, women and children fared poorly under the guardianship of the Church and the Irish State. The notion of care as a personal responsibility has resulted in limited policy to protect children in care and uphold the child's rights. This perception has also positioned care as gendered, women's work with no monetary value, and created a division between care and education in the sector. The European funding to provide childcare places (Quantity) was welcome support to provide childcare and full employment. However, it has created a shift in cultural values and a two-tier professional and class system between the community and private services and their users. The critical policy decisions appear to be reactive and influenced by the OECD, the EU recommendations, and media revelations. While the media have exposed malpractice at management and state level, the state continues to respond with blame towards the practitioner and increased regulation and inspections and ignores

the need for improved training and qualification levels to address management and leadership weakness. While there are many confusing references to leadership (room leader, leadership for inclusion, and education-focused inspection on management and leadership), it is management, and not leadership, that is prominent in ECEC policy.

The introduction of the word “quality” to the ECEC lexicon draws heavily on children's developmental outcomes, presents quality as an imperative, and links the sector to the neoliberal quest for high economic returns. The drive for quality control, managerialism, and network governance has witnessed “quality” emerging as a control mechanism in the sector. All of these factors have led to constant policy change and coordination.

Several anomalies have been noted in the approach to quality; while the government introduced two free preschool years, research would suggest this model has had a limited impact on improving children's outcomes and disadvantaged children's participation. These initiatives may be targeting the wrong age-group, and they challenge the sustainability of ECEC services. The scheme has also resulted in limiting the rights and remuneration for the ECEC workforce and may be partially responsible for the sector's staffing crisis.

While the State's auxiliary organisations were charged with supporting the practitioners in their implementation of Siolta and Aistear, neither of these frameworks has been rolled out. While the DYCA and DES introduced specialist mentors to improve ECEC practice and inclusive leadership (coordination), it would seem this approach is not cost effective, may have led to a power imbalance, the imposition of middle-class norms, and positioned the community practitioner as deficient and lacking ability. There is no mention of the practitioner's demographics and how these may be informing their understanding and practice of ECEC.

The discourse of ECEC as the site of gender equality has tied affordable childcare, gender equality, and child development into an unhealthy relationship with the emergence of blame culture and negative consequences for the care of the child, the working conditions of the practitioner, and the resources to support parents. The decline in fertility rates has necessitated a change in the positioning of care, with the OECD, the EU (European Parliament, 2017) and the Irish government more recently promoting policies on caring for young children in the home, and work-life balance. There is limited policy on workforce development and a sentiment that workforce development will be addressed over time/sometime, which appears to mean no time soon. Furthermore, there is a crisis of staffing in the sector as staff turnover rates remain high. Similarly, while there is a strong rhetoric of leadership in the sector, the lack of leadership in policy may indicate the government's unwillingness to resource, train, and support leadership, and the strong

influence of a managerial ideology in the sector. In short, there has been extensive policy developments with no evaluation or audit of the policy reforms to assess their suitability and effectiveness. The [un]intended consequences of this oversight or the desire to continue as before (path dependency) has culminated in a sector that is not fit for purpose: it denies children's rights to high-quality early childhood experiences, neglects families' rights to reliable and affordable services, perpetuates unacceptable working conditions for educators, and fails to address the needs of a fast-changing and diverse society (Urban, 2019, p. 35).

Chapter 5 Literature Review

This chapter commences with an outline of the literature review process, a definition of leadership and a summary of the evolution of Leadership and Educational Leadership to provide a historical context for the emergence of ECEC leadership. An outline of ECEC leadership research internationally and nationally follows, describing how the definition of Leadership in this study is situated within this research. The chapter culminates with a synopsis of ECEC leadership influences and the gaps in ECEC leadership literature. Finally, a description of a theoretical framework for the study is presented.

5.1 The literature review process

The literature review was conducted similarly to the policy review (Section 3.1). A narrative overview of the literature was undertaken to gather information and "to improve the understanding of ... provide a context" for the topic in question (Leadership in ECEC) (Kastner et al. 2012, p. 1). The eligibility criteria for inclusion in the review (leadership, educational leadership, and ECEC leadership) were established and became the keywords searches in the databases (academic search complete; google search.com; google scholar.com). These searches revealed thousands of results. While withstanding that I did not access all of these results, the resources were primarily from nonpeer reviewed articles, blogs, and promotions to study leadership. The journal articles were primarily from Nordic, Australian, and English researchers in the field. The Irish and international literature from the library resources at Trinity College Dublin Library proved limited. All of which gives credence to the assertion that international research on leadership in ECEC is considered sparse and difficult to locate (Nicholson et al., 2018; Strehmel et al., 2019). The - International leadership research forum (ilrfec.org) proved to be the best resource for sourcing leadership research from other parts of Europe and Africa. The McCormick Centre for Early Childhood Leadership provided comprehensive information on the topic in the USA. The synthesis of the sources from the IRLF, the USA, and the peer-reviewed journal articles suggested that ECEC leadership research followed three chronological and consecutive waves which are outlined below. Similarly, the resources on leadership and educational leadership were synthesised and a brief overview of both is included in the following section.

5.2 Defining and tracing the evolution of educational leadership

While it is difficult to find a definition of leadership in the literature, it may be futile to look for a single leadership definition. It is considered a personal issue and relative to one's culture, context, and place (Fink, 2005). Nevertheless, there is an onus on a researcher 'to

provide “statements about how the author is going to use a term ... about what meaning is to be associated with it” (Hammersley, 1998, p. 80). My working understanding of leadership has been influenced by ECEC leadership research (Hujala, 2002; Karila, 2002; Nivala, 1998; Nivala, 2002) and the critical theorists in the broader educational leadership field (Alvesson & Spicer, 2003, 2012; Blackmore, 1999, 2011, 2013; Lumby, 2013) and has gone through many iterations and continues to evolve (Appendix F).

Similar to other ECEC leadership researchers, I recognise that leadership involves a common interest or purpose (Jarvilehto 1996, as cited in Nivala, 1998, p. 53), and leadership could be defined as a purposeful activity (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008; Raelin, 2011). However, the question ‘What is the purpose of leadership?’ is seldom asked (Burns, 1978; Sinclair, 2007; Sims et al, 2015) or answered (Blackmore, 2013). I concur that leadership is a context-specific phenomenon where the goals and the mission of the setting became the priority of leadership (Nivala, 2002; Hujala, 2004) what Blackmore (2013) describes as a ‘shared purpose’ (p. 51). However, I would argue that leadership is more than an activity with purposeful action (Robinson, 2011); it is a praxis. Praxis may be defined as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1986, p. 36). While I am open to the notion that leadership may not be a distinct phenomenon (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012), this stance is not an act of rebellion or a signal to end leadership, but a means to understand leadership more comprehensively (Endres & Weibler, 2020). Nevertheless, ECEC Leadership is understood:

As both a position and a relational process. A context-specific social practice, a purposeful activity – “praxis” (critical reflection and action upon the world to transform it (Freire, 1986, p.36)) that is attentive to power and has the potential to bring people together to act on a shared purpose, which is aligned with the shared values/mission of their organisation and/or their sector and bring about change.

Traditional views of Leadership have come mainly from a construct where the leader is viewed as the "hero," displaying traits of aggression, competition, and independence (Blackmore, 1999). This idea has evolved from one of the first studies of Leadership, Galton's (1869) *Hereditary genius*, and his "great man theory" (McCleskey, 2014, p. 117). Robert Karz (1955) was one of the first proponents to suggest that personality traits influence leadership emergence and effectiveness. The notion that personality traits (trait theory) such as self-confidence can empower leaders to inspire followers was deemed deficient in continuity and consistency (Bass, 2008).

In the 1960s/'70s, contextual and contingency theories developed; Fiedler (1971) proposed that leader-follower relationships, task organisation, and the leader's positional power decide the success of the type of Leadership applied. Mitchell et al. (1970) questioned Fiedler's theory (1971) and suggested the model neglects essential aspects of the situation which impact leader influence, including the loyalty of followers. Meanwhile, during the late 1970's/80's, the interest in Leadership escalated with the emergence of The New Leadership (Neo-Charismatic/Transformational/Visionary) and servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant Leadership is based on the premise that the leader is a servant first (Greenleaf, 1997). Critics suggested that Servant Leadership as a theory was unrealistic and failed to consider "differing levels of competence among individuals" (Lee & Zemke, 1993, p. 3) Transactional Leadership focused on getting the job done, and Burns (1978) conceptualised Leadership as transformative, where one or more engage in raising another to a greater morality and motivation. Bass (1985) and his associates developed Transformational Leadership, describing the benefit of leading through inspiration, strong relationships, and a sense of belonging (p. 8). Conversely, sceptics asked the question, was Leadership necessary, or did it exist? (Meindl et al., 1985).

Relational (LMX) theory emerged (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), focusing on the necessity of trusting and respectful relationships between leader/follower as a prerequisite for successful Leadership. A critique of Relational (LMX) Theory suggested the model required additional testing concerning how leadership relationships develop (Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). Avolio et al. (2003) further developed this idea of trusting relationships and described Authentic Leadership. Authentic leaders were concerned with self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive modelling, which would foster authenticity in followers (Avolio et al., 2003). Gardiner (2011) questioned this model and asked, "how authenticity manifests itself differently depending upon a person's place in the world" (p.99).

The Information-Processing School of Leadership became concerned with emotions, cognition, and information processing (Gardner et al., 2010). Finally, Contemporary Leadership described models of Leadership based on evolution (Van Vugt & Ahuja, 2011) and biological Leadership (Sinek, 2014). Simultaneously, trait and behaviour theories continue to resurface with the notion that whether an "organisation will succeed depends on the leaders' actions, and behaviours" (Atkinson & Mackenzie. 2015, p. 42). It would seem that while diverse leadership theories and models continue to materialise, Leadership remains challenging to define and practise (Day & Antonakis, 2012). Moreover, MacBeath has suggested, "we need rethinking not simply of what leaders are or do; but of what we understand by the very notion of leadership itself" (2010, p. 41). This is the context from which educational and ECEC Leadership has evolved.

Table 5:

Leadership theories

Time period	Leadership theories	Critique
1950	Trait theory (Katz, 1955)	Deficient in continuity and consistency (Bass, 2008)
1960	Contextual and contingency theories (Fiedler, 1967, 1971)	Theory too rigid neglects aspects of the situation (Mitchell et al., 1970)
1970	Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977).	Does not acknowledge "differing levels of competence among individuals" (Lee & Zemke, 1993, p. 3)
1980	Transactional Leadership (Burns, 1978) Transformational leadership (Bass, 1985)	Was leadership necessary, or did it exist (Meindl et al., 1985)
1990	Relational (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995)	LMX needs to be further tested concerning the way leadership relationships develop (Liden et al., 1993),
2003	Authentic leadership (Avolio, et al., 2003).	Does authenticity manifest itself differently depending upon a person's place in the world" (Gardner, 2011, p.99). (Gardner, 2011)
Current theories	Evolution theory (Van Vugt & Ahuja, 2011) and biological leadership (Sinek, 2014).	

5.2.1 Educational leadership

Numerous texts and models have emerged on educational leadership, and definitions of leadership proliferate (Brundett & Rhodes, 2014). The literature describes instructional leadership, co-leadership, democratic leadership, situational leadership, and collaborative leadership, shared leadership and distributed leadership. Leithwood et al. (2010) have suggested that these theories appear to be little more than a "range of adjectivalisms that acquire the status of elixirs or solutions... in an intensely competitive leadership marketplace" (p. 18). Equally, for nearly two decades, researchers have questioned how, why, and by whom these leadership models have been configured (Gunter & Ribbins, 2002). The question of what type of knowledge traditions (positivist scientific, behaviourist science, values, experiential, critical science) are being prioritised or excluded

has been asked (Gunter, 2016, p. 45). However, despite the proposition that leadership may be discursively overworked and theoretically underdone in policy and much of the literature (Blackmore, 2013), and the limited nature of critical studies in the field (Gunter, 2016), the advice that school leadership is critical to increasing students' performance continues to pervade (Day et al., 2016; Heck & Hallinger, 2014; Leithwood & Mascal, 2008). School leadership has become a priority in education policy agendas across many countries, and there are numerous reports from the OECD (2006, 2008, 2015c, 2020b) and the European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL).

Distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001) seems to be the model of choice in schools (DES, 2018b). However, critics have suggested that distributed leadership may be more about the delegation of the workload rather than democratic decision-making and suggest that there may be no causal relationship between leadership and student performance (Lumby, 2013, 2019).

5.3 Leadership research in the field of ECEC

Internationally, research on leadership in ECEC is considered sparse, inadequately theorised, and difficult to locate (Nicholson et al., 2018; Strehmel et al., 2019). The subject of leadership “attracts few researchers” (Rodd, 2013, p. 4). The search for the meaning of leadership in the ECEC sector has been fraught with ambiguity (Stamopoulous, 2012), and the diversity of organisational settings has made it challenging to develop “common understanding and theoretical perspectives for leadership” (Hujala et al., 2013, p. 31). Scievens in 2003 described the state of ECEC leadership knowledge as “a rather muddled collection of literature that doesn't fit together well” (p. 29).

Furthermore, a recurrent debate commenced in the 1990s that focuses on the relationship between leadership and management (Bloom, 1997; Rodd, 2006). Rodd distinguished between the two: leaders inspire, build teams, and are future-oriented, linked with the articulation and realisation of visions. On the other hand, management is present-oriented, concerned with implementing the centre's mission or day-to-day work, where managers coordinate, control, and plan (Rodd, 1996, 2006). Alvesson & Sveningsson (2003) have described the repercussions of this division, where the grandiose aspects of leadership are actually “mundane acts that are given an extraordinary meaning” (p. 1435). As such, leadership is equated with higher status and kudos.

This review frames ECEC leadership literature in three waves. The first wave: Leadership roles and leadership for advocacy (5.3.1), the second wave: Contextual leadership (5.3.2) and the third wave of ECEC leadership research: Pedagogical to

postmodernist perspective (5.3.3). The wave analogy can illustrate some critical periods, themes, and theoretical perspectives in the evolution of this area of knowledge and the development of the field of research. Calvino (1986) has described the difficulty of isolating a wave as complex features concur in shaping it and the other, equally complex ones are originated by the wave itself. Nevertheless, the first wave of research on ECEC leadership commenced in the late 1970s and was concerned with understanding the role and characteristics of leadership in the ECEC sector.

5.3.1 The first wave: Leadership roles and leadership for advocacy

In the 1970s, Katz, Caldwell, & Spodek began to explore ECEC leadership. During the 1980s and 1990s, Vander Ven, Jorde-Bloom, Kagan, and Pugh continued exploring leadership (Hujala et al., 2013). By the 1990s, researchers were concerned with early childhood practitioners' reluctance to identify their role's leadership aspect. There was a call for the leadership roles to be delineated (Rodd, 1997) and the first wave answered this call. This important work was conducted mainly in the English-speaking countries of the United Kingdom (Rodd, 1997), Australia (Hayden, 1998), and the United States of America (Bloom, 1996). Leadership was examined as a micro-phenomenon, with leaders as the unit of analysis. In 1997, Rodd interviewed 79 ECEC directors and found that leadership responsibility was "being bolted on" (1997, p. 46). Bloom found that managers were aware of the need to be visionary and motivational; however, they did not practise these activities but were more concerned with managerial tasks (1997). Hayden (1998) in Australia had similar findings.

Waniganayake et al. (2000), in their study of leadership, supported Rosemary et al. (1998) assertion that the lack of a delineation of the roles associated with leadership could become an advantage, as it would give the practitioner numerous opportunities to determine, learn, and practise their leadership potential in the setting. However, three years later, they developed a hierarchical ladder of roles and responsibilities, from technical issues at level one (budget, policy) to level 7 cultural aspects (politics, activism). Leadership continues to be predominantly situated in an individual with formal tasks (Aubrey, 2011; Fenech et al., 2009; Ho, 2012). The call for the delineation of leadership roles has been incessant (Bloom, 1997; Rodd, 2006; Hujala & Eskelinen, 2013). Recent research advises that these roles remain ambiguous and challenging (Klevering & McNae, 2018; Sims et al., 2018).

The late 1990s signalled an interest in what has been termed leadership for advocacy (Beane, 2016), leading with long-term planning and vision towards a shared purpose, which can reform public regulations and policy (Kagan & Hallmark, 2001).

Advocacy roles include the practitioner addressing children's and families' needs, accessing services for children with special needs, and advocating for the profession (Liebovich & Matoba Adler, 2009, p. 26). ECEC is considered to have its origins in activism rooted in social justice principles (Hard et al., 2013). Nevertheless, leadership for advocacy is "proving inadequate to stop the 'regime'" of standardised testing and distributing these results for comparison (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010, p. 110). This standardisation continues with the International Early Learning and Child Well-being Study (IELS) – "Baby Pisa" (Pence, 2017, p.54). Baby PISA currently involves a pilot study of 3,000 5-to 5.5-year-olds in England, Estonia, and the USA. Data is collected on children's characteristics, and four early learning domains are also assessed: Emerging literacy skills, merging numeracy skills, self-regulation, and social & emotional skills. Children's skills will be evaluated through direct and indirect assessment methods (Jacobson, 2019; OECD, 2020a; Urban, 2018).

The OECD's lack of consultation with the global early childhood community has been questioned internationally (Pence, 2017; Urban, 2018), and many ECEC stakeholders are calling for more information on how "Baby PISA" will be delivered in the USA (Jacobson, 2019). The Global Childhood International (2017), a nonprofit early education advocacy and training organization, posed the question practitioners and academics have been asking in the USA - how the standardised assessment of young children across countries will account for cultural and historical contexts and why is there a need for direct assessment of young children; however, little progress has been made to advocate and thwart this process (Jacobson, 2019).

However, there are difficulties with developing advocacy leadership, as many practitioners may have handed over the responsibility of advocating for the child's rights to independent advocacy services for children's rights (Hard, et al., 2013). More significant numbers of individuals are now enlisted in democratic think tanks to work with the state as civil society actors (social investment state). They may have less time to monitor the effects of changes and engage in advocacy (Dobrowolsky & Saint-Martin, 2005). In addition, there is the notion that women who work with children are "nice ladies", who wish to appease people and would not be seen to be good at "fighting for our profession, at saying no, at asserting ourselves, at dealing with conflict" (Stonehouse, 1989, pp. 66-67).

Nonetheless, research has advised that a culture of advocacy needs to be developed in the sector (Mevawalla & Hadley, 2012; Blank & Schulman, 2014; Kagan & Hallmark, 2001; Woodrow, & Busch, 2008). This is found in congenial relationships and individual groups merging into a larger collective to bring about change (Bown & Sumsion; 2016; Taylor et al., 1997; Urban et al., 2012). Such a culture would enable the practitioners to think

critically, and articulate “clear, informed, and convincing advocacy messages that have the potential to influence policies” (Hollingsworth et al., 2016, p. 1673).

The notion of critical capacity has been considered necessary for ECEC practitioners to successfully advocate for their knowledge base alongside other disciplines (Nolan et al., 2012, p. 398). Others agree but suggest that being critical is not about taking up an oppositional position but is more concerned with opening up dialogue and discussing knowledge claims and knowledge production (Alvesson & Willmott, 2012; Gunter, 2001). Critical thinking, critical awareness, and critical reflexivity are often associated with what Freire described as “*conscientization*”, the ability to understand and reflect on how the everyday reality is constructed, then use this insight to act, intervene and ultimately transform the situation (Freire, 1970, p. 17). Interestingly, the term “conscientization” translated into Portuguese means both critical consciousness and consciousness-raising. Consciousness raising dates back to the second wave of feminism. Participation in small groups offered people the means to come together, talk, prepare and advocate for women's issues, including working conditions (Sarachild, 1968). This approach was premised on celebrating women's differences but finding points of contact that could become the basis for solidarity and action (Kennedy & Lapidus, 1980).

In the context of critical consciousness, ECEC academics frequently promote the essential practice of reflexivity (Bleach, 2014; Cheeseman, 2007), and critical theorists continually bemoan the absence of critical reflection in education (Ball, 2009; Blackmore, 2013). Yet pre-service and in-service educational professional development often fails to address this issue (Blackmore, 2013; Carr & Kemmis, 2005). Because of this, Thornton, Gunter & Blackmore (2016) “propose that Educational institutions require intellectual work to do the work of leadership ... this requires among other things, a set of critical thinking tools” (2016, p. x). These tools need to evaluate policy, question why specific issues are centre stage, develop the capacity to call power relations and hegemonic dimensions into question (Brookfield, 2016), and challenge ECEC policy rather than just passively implementing it. Similarly, the act of researching has been considered a form of advocacy (Hiebert et al., 2002). Tseng et al. (2018) described how participants should have a voice in both the production and use of research (p. 3). Research has the potential to incite, inform, and answer relevant political and theoretical questions for ECEC (Buysse & Wesley, 2006).

5.3.2 The second wave: Contextual leadership

The International Leadership Forum (ILF) involved a group of ECEC researchers with a desire to develop a conceptual framework of leadership based on contextual elements of

different societies, and they suggested leadership was instrumental in developing shared understandings and goals in the settings /sector (Hujala 2002; Nivala, 2002; Scrivens, 2000, 2002). They conceptualised leadership as “a situational socially constructed and interpretative phenomenon” (Hujala & Puroila, 1998, p. 8). The contextual approach to leadership suggested that the setting's goals and mission become the priorities of leadership, and this thinking continues (Hujala, 2013; Halttunen, 2013). Hujala (2004) was instrumental in devising and utilising the contextual model to investigate leadership in Finnish ECEC (p. 52). The findings from her focus groups suggested that the duties and tasks related to leadership were not exact, and leadership was associated with the leader's position (Hujala, 2004). There appears to be a juxtaposition of theoretical perspectives here, where on the one hand, leadership is associated with a modernist understanding of a role and simultaneously as a contextual phenomenon (postmodernists). This pattern has continued in research (Hallet, 2013; Hard, 2006; Hard & O'Gorman, 2007, 2011; Hujala, 2013). Nivala (2002) described “leadership confusion” in the sector, and it would seem that leadership continues to be a confused and challenging activity in ECEC (Ang, 2012; Inoue & Kawakita, 2019; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011).

Rodd (UK) joined this group of researchers (ILF); conversely, Bloom (USA) did not. There appeared to be a shift in interest between the USA on the one hand and Europe and Australia on the other. Bloom (USA) proposed that too little attention and support had been given to the organisational climate and leadership practice. She founded the McCormick Centre for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University, Chicago. For over 25 years, Bloom (she passed away in 2018) published an extensive list of books and articles, delivered workshops and training with the emphasis on providing knowledge and practical tools to support the ECEC directors in their role as leaders. During this period, the ILP invited ECEC to expand the theoretical and methodological leadership questions being asked and suggested employing ethnography and biography as methodologies that acknowledge the importance of context in the collective creation of leaders and leadership organisations (Karilia, 1998). On the other hand, Rodd endorsed action research as a methodology “to transform and extend 'theoretical' understanding of ECEC” (1997, p. 67). Action research has been described as the tool to give voice to all participants (Bleach, 2014, p. 185) and promote mutual learning, analysis, and knowledge construction. (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p. 1670).

The second wave also witnessed two significant studies unrelated to the ILP. Carol Aubrey and associates in the United Kingdom (2007), and Louise Hard in Australia (2005) sought to understand how ECEC leadership was understood and enacted, and to identify the influences, including gender (Hard, 2006), impacting on leadership. Both Aubrey and

Hard included the followers' perspectives and broadened the research approaches to mixed methods (Aubrey, 2011), symbolic interactionism, and standpoint feminism (Hard, 2004).

In 2007, Aubrey, Godfrey and Harris (Aubrey et al., 2013; Aubrey, 2011) undertook the most critical study in the field, employing a mixed-method research perspective to examine what leadership meant to participants in 12 diverse early childhood settings. They surveyed 132 staff and governors and interviewed 12 early childhood leaders (Aubrey et al., 2013). They both noted that no single leadership approach or model could be applied across such a diverse sector. They suggested a more “flexible leadership” approach (Aubrey, 2013, p. 26), or leadership distributed across the setting (Hard, 2006).

Hard (2004, 2006) outlined that the gendered understanding of leadership as a male pursuit had limited leadership in the sector. This view continued in her later work, a collaboration with the Icelandic academic who found similar findings in Iceland (Hard & Jónsdóttir, 2013). The participants in Hard’s studies (2004, 2006, 2011) advised that in ECEC settings there is care and niceness on the surface (culture of niceness), but underneath there is what the nursing profession call horizontal violence where nonphysical hostility in the form of undermining, criticism and infighting is prevalent (Hard, 2006). Within this culture there is no room for debate and difference, a “culture of compliance” emerges with no aspirations for leadership (Hard, 2011, p.8). In concurrence, Granock and Morrissey (2007) advise that ECEC is characterised by a tendency to pull down those seeking to enact leadership. Blackmore and Sachs (1998) have also recognised this phenomenon in formal education. Conversely, Rodd (2006) found misunderstandings; quarrels and bickering were strategies to deal with the underlying problems of low status, pay and qualifications.

The Australian researchers Jennifer Sumsion and Sandra Cheeseman concluded the third wave of research, Sumsion (2006) questioned the silence of activism and politics in ECEC and interrogated the legitimacy of leaders spending time responding to the effects of the market-based economy instead of contesting it. Cheeseman (2007) lamented the “deafening silences of pedagogical voices in policy and recommended that pedagogical leadership should influence and shape early childhood policy agendas” (p. 244).

In sum, the second wave of research sought to move past the delineation of leadership roles and reconceptualise ECEC leadership as a socially constructed, situational, and interpretive phenomenon. Ethnography, biography, and action research were advanced as methodologies suited to ECEC leadership research, and leadership was considered central to developing shared understandings and goals within the setting/sector. The knowledge that ECEC is defined by the broader social and cultural context infiltrated the researchers at the latter end of this wave, as did the notion that leadership could be distributed across the setting.

5.3.3 The third wave: Pedagogical to postmodernist perspective

In recent times, the Early Childhood Research and Practice (ECRP) in the USA has focused its research efforts on leadership training and qualifications with a particular emphasis on leading for change (Bloom et al., 2013; Douglass, 2017; Goffin & Washington, 2019) and whole leadership (Abel et al., 2017). In Africa the limited nature of training and support for ECEC leadership has been documented and calls for the government to intervene have been made (Modise, 2019; Fortidas, 2019; Ramgopal et al., 2009). In Eurasia and Australia, the International Leadership Research Forum (ILRF) (formerly the ILP) along with the European Early Childhood Education Research Association have moved the study of leadership into the realm of conceptualising ECEC leadership (Stamopoulos, 2012; Thornton & Cherrington, 2014). However, defining effective leadership practice associated with quality and outcomes for children became the primary concern (Ang, 2012; Aubrey, 2011). It extolled pedagogical and distributed leadership as the form of leadership most likely to achieve this end. However, while these models appear to have travelled from the broader field of educational leadership, there has been limited examination of what underpins and informs these models (Davis et al., 2015).

Pedagogical leadership is described as the most essential model of leadership for ECEC and defined as a journey of inquiry, an exploration suited to ECEC (Waniganayake & Semann, 2011), and “the activity of leading, developing and implementing a curriculum” (O’Gorman & Hard, 2013, p. 77). In this vein, leadership, in a similar manner to the first wave of leadership, is understood as a micro phenomenon (Moen and Granrusten, 2013; Halttunen, 2016; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011), an approach to learning, and not as a foundation for solutions (Andrews, 2009, as cited in Heikka, 2013). This narrow view of leadership continues to prosper internationally (Heikka et al., 2019; Fonsén et al., 2019). Moreover, despite the word “pedagogy” being firmly embedded in Finnish and Australian policy frameworks, their national curriculum documents remain limited in explaining and implementing (Heikka, 2013).

Male and Palaiologou (2015) advised that the amalgamation of pedagogy and leadership is an ambiguous and relatively unexamined concept that requires a further explanation beyond the seeming “present-day determinism’ that pedagogical leadership is simply about supporting teaching and learning” (p. 2). The question of who shapes what arises, echoing Cheeseman's (2007) assertion that pedagogy should be shaping leadership behaviours and practices rather than the other way round (Male & Palaiologou, 2015, 2016).

Adding to the confusion is the realisation that there are cultural differences in defining the term. In the United Kingdom, pedagogy refers to how subjects are taught in schools. In

Germany and Denmark, the term goes beyond learning and teaching to include the social, cultural, and environmental context (Cameron, 2004). Freire's work illustrates the limited understanding of pedagogy. It demonstrates how pedagogy can move beyond just teaching and learning to include Pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire 1970, 1986), A pedagogy for liberation (Shor & Freire, 1987), Pedagogy of hope (Freire, 1994), Pedagogy of the heart (Freire, 1997), Pedagogy of freedom (Freire, 1999), A pedagogy of indignation (Freire, 2004), Pedagogy of commitment (Freire, 2014), Pedagogy of process (Freire, 2016a) and Daring to dream: Toward a pedagogy of the unfinished (Freire, 2016b).

Distributed leadership also took centre stage during this period. This idea has evolved to include leadership stretched over all participants and the broader local community (Aubrey, 2011; Hard & Jonsdottir, 2013; Heikka & Hujala, 2013). It would seem that ECEC theorising has fallen in line with the acceptance of distributed leadership in school leadership (OECD, 2008). However, many distributed leadership authors consider this model of leadership a diagnostic set of tools to understand and describe how leadership is practised in schools, and not a blueprint for doing leadership (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006). Critics describe the growing workloads, accountability, disempowerment, and exclusion of staff out of “the leadership script” (Lumby, 2013, p. 582) and the lack of attention to power relations, and the fact it is not critical, with no critique of policy (Harris, 2013; Young, 2009). A similar criticism could be levelled at the researchers Heikka & Waniganayake (2011), who appear to ignore the question of power and fail to identify the absence of empirical research on distributed leadership (Leithwood et al., 2010). While Waniganayake et al. (2012) acknowledged that it was necessary to conduct more research on distributed leadership, they suggested that distributed leadership could bring about better consistency, interconnection, and coherence in service delivery (2013).

Marit Bøe and Karin Hognestad (2015) studied six leaders in Norwegian schools. They advocated for a hybrid leadership framework that involves a mixture of solo actors, teams, dyads, and other multi formations (Gronn, 2008). However, is this model of leadership just another version of distributed leadership (considering that Gronn is one of the original authors of distributive leadership)? While on the one hand, Gronn (2002) looks to sociology and political science, referring to “distribution of power” and “distribution of influences”, on the other hand, Woods and Gronn (2008) acknowledge that many forms of distributive leadership now exhibited in schools/organisations reveal a “democratic deficit” in that they stop short of advocating the principles of “self-governance, protection from arbitrary power, and legitimacy grounded in consent” (p. 433).

Both distributive and hybrid models appear to ignore what Conger (1990) calls the dark side of leadership, the struggles around power and influence. The question therefore

arises, can the practitioner (the follower) with less power, remuneration, and limited resources exercise the same authority as the manager/leader? Moreover, it seems to be taken for granted that staff's leadership role can be legitimised by the leader's confirmation that distributed leadership happens naturally and that every staff member wishes to and can lead (Torrance, 2013).

In short, the third wave of leadership outlined a discourse of distributed leadership, pedagogical, and hybrid leadership among ECEC researchers, with little critical research examining these models. Recently, two Irish ECEC leadership books have been published (Moloney & Petterson, 2016; Moloney & McCarthy, 2018). The addition of these two books to the ECEC sector is welcome. Nevertheless, while Moloney & Petterson (2016) have included the word leadership in their title, they honourably and explicitly express the book's aims to support managers, managing their settings. There are only two leadership sources, Fenech (2013) and Lindon & Lindon (2012) informing this book. Lindon & Lindon (2012) suggest that a "leader ... can be defined simply as someone who has followers" and advocate for distributed and transformational leadership (p.4). However, unlike Moloney & Petterson (2018), they acknowledge the difficulties of power relationships concerning distributed leadership but offer no advice on managing this difficulty. The second book, by Moloney & McCarthy (2018), is aimed at practitioners trying to navigate the expectations of the AIM scheme. They state that "inclusive education offers the best educational opportunities for children with disabilities" (Moloney & McCarthy, 2018, p. 5), which appears to be a powerful statement and has been contested (see pp. 64-65 above).

Nonetheless, the discourse of pedagogical and distributed leadership continues, with a repetitious exploration of distributed leadership (Heikka, & Hujala, 2013; Heikka et al., 2013; Heikka, 2013, 2015), pedagogical leadership (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; Hujala et al., 2013) and pedagogical distributed leadership (Heikka et al., 2019) and could be described as academic amnesia and research *deja vu* among researchers on leadership (Hunt & Dodge, 2000, p. 435).

The third wave of leadership research involved a shift from leadership as the binary (leader/follower) hierarchical, ordered, and progressive phenomenon (modernist perspective) to a postmodernist understanding of leadership, which involves "a circular process involving ambiguity, multiple contests, and uncertainty" (Nicholson et al., 2018, p. 1). This wave included a small group of postmodernist researchers (Cartmel et al., 2013; McDowall Clark & Murray, 2012; Nicholson & Maniates, 2016; Stamopoulos, 2012). Within this paradigm, new approaches to leadership research have emerged and include Bricolage (Cartmel et al., 2013) and cultural-historical activity theory as a framework (McDowall Clark & Murray, 2012). However, there appears to be little support or guidance for a postmodern

perspective on ECEC leadership. The postmodernist view seems to overlook how the practitioner can simultaneously embrace “leadership as a nonlinear and a circular process involving ambiguity and uncertainty” (Nicholson et al., 2018, p. 5) while meeting the prescribed standards and outcomes of regulation and inspections (Ho, 2012). Besides, there are questions: is postmodernism just another compartment of neat ideas? (Butler, 1992), and does this limit leadership to two binary theoretical positions? Besides, the postmodernist perspective denies the depth of self, and is derisive towards reason. This makes it difficult to see how groups of women could join in collaborative strategies towards emancipation (Gordan, 2016). Leadership during this wave was also considered a prerequisite for quality ECEC environments. This corresponds to the discourse of quality in the sector, a discourse to standardise, measure and classify (Moss, 2019, p. 17) systematic of a neoliberal turn in ECEC policy nationally and internationally (described in the previous chapter).

In sum, leadership has been understood in terms of a leader and follower, a micro phenomenon (first wave), and a socially constructed, situational, and interpretive phenomenon (second wave). More recently, leadership is considered primarily concerned with children's learning (pedagogical leadership) and is best distributed democratically across the setting. However, there is little mention in the literature of the confusing nature of pedagogical leadership, the power relations within distributed leadership, and the impact of race, gender, and class on leadership. Simultaneously, a group of researchers has moved from the binary notion of leadership to leadership as a nonlinear ambiguous phenomenon with many meanings (postmodernism). However, the difficulty of aligning a postmodern perspective within a climate of prescribed standards and inspections has not been addressed.

5.4 Critical deficits in ECEC leadership research

The literature on leadership overlooks the child, gender, ethnicity, and power; a similar pattern was observed in the previous chapters on ECEC policy. It could be argued that as in the case of ECEC policy (Kamali & Jönsson, 2019), there has been a neoliberal turn in leadership research. The continued quest for and examination of an effective and efficient leadership model (distributed leadership) to meet the sector's quality concerns has taken precedence over the child, care, the practitioner, and leadership. The omission of power and any concern for the practitioner demographics (gender, race, class, age) would also suggest that the leadership literature is more interested in outcomes than in the practitioner tasked with engaging with leadership. Equally, the only mention of how leadership is practised is through a distributed lens. In the broader educational literature,

Spillane (2006) explained that most accounts of leadership pay scant attention to the practice of leadership – more attention is paid to the what of leadership – the people, structure, and roles – rather than the how (practice) (p. 5). Therefore, research on leadership practice rather than leadership competencies has been advocated (Crevani, 2018; Carroll et al., 2008).

Waniganayake (2014), in her research, mentioned that power might not be addressed in distributed leadership but proceeded to recommend distributed leadership. She also noted the absence of the child's voice in leadership research and “the absence of gender, sex and culture in research” and yet she did not address any of these areas (Waniganayake, 2014, p. 73). Lumby (2013) has pointed out that those who promote distributed leadership while remaining silent about gender, race, and other characteristics that may prevent inclusion in leadership may be actively perpetuating inequality (p. 591). Equally, this group of prominent researchers from the International Research Forum has given little attention to leadership outside of the settings and the role leadership could play in addressing the sector's difficulties, including the working conditions. Furthermore, feminist and critical research does not feature in their work. Waniganayake et al. (2012) outlined several approaches to theorising ECEC, including instrumental, critical, humanistic, and scientific, with no mention of feminist theory (Davis et al., 2015). In a similar manner there appears to be an absence of a conversation on leadership and the professionalisation of the Irish sector. The following sections will discuss these omissions and the potential they have to influence the conceptualisation and practice of ECEC leadership.

5.4.1 Gender: The pink ghetto

Nationally (ECI, 2012; 2015) and internationally (Dunlop, 2008; Hard, 2006; Hard & Jónsdóttir, 2013; Rodd, 2013), there is a concern that ECEC practitioners may not be willing to engage with a male-orientated business model of leadership. However, the evidence implies that women are capable of leadership (Glass & Cook, 2016; Zenger & Folkman, 2012), and in a sector (ECEC) that is primarily made up of a female workforce, the gendered barriers to leadership appear minimal (Rodd, 2015). Consequently, the practitioners' relationship with leadership may be more than how they view leadership from a female lens and more to do with the gendered structural ordering of society and the sexual division of labour and society, which form the basis of patriarchy (Eisenstein, 1979). Postfeminists claim that gender is no longer an “issue” (Osgood & Robinson, 2017, p. 35). However, terms such as childminders and “little more than glorified babysitters” perpetuate the sector's discourse (Bleach, 2011, p. 1). ECEC is referred to as the “pink collar ghetto” (Mastracci, 2004, p. 32)

and there is an assumption that being female is both qualification and reward for working in the sector (Campbell-Barr & Garnham, 2010). Gender is considered to influence ECEC leadership (Andrew, 2015; Hard, 2004) with the gender composition of ECEC rendering them an insignificant force, similar to how women are often viewed in the “highly gendered senior and policy echelons” (Sumsion, 2006, p. 2).

Davis et al. (2015) propose that education has historically been situated as women's work within and through western patriarchal societies. They argue that, “ECEC as women working with the youngest of children is viewed as the example and norm of this intersection between education and the ‘natural’ work of women” and has prompted the workforce's feminisation (p. 133). It would appear that parents, government policymakers, and society assent that childcare is women's work (Dill & Kohlman, 2012; Campbell-Barr & Leeson, 2016; McDowall Clark & Murray, 2012; Taggart, 2011). The perception is that little training (and leadership) is required to fulfil the role (Balfour, 2016). Lumby (2013) noted that race and gender blindness are the default position in most writing on educational leadership theory (p. 585). Interestingly, both Waniganayake (2014) and Lumby (2013) do not mention class.

5.4.2 Class: The silent influencer

The notion of class is considered a crucial analytic strategy for examining society. While class is often connected to income and occupation, class also identifies the economically important attributes that shape the individual's opportunities and choices in a market economy – their material conditions. The interconnection between these two reflects class understanding in this study.

Accordingly, Bourdieu (1986) proposed that class involved more than people's economic capital (wealth, income) and encompassed access to different capital forms. These forms included cultural capital (education, language, taste) and social capital (networks), and all influence a person's way of being and acting in the world (habitus) (Bourdieu, 1986). This perspective sits firmly within this study. From this perspective, class prioritises different values, ways of behaving, and communication, all of which may influence leadership (Martin et al., 2017). Nevertheless, Beck (1999) confined class to the “first modernity” where the distribution of goods was the principal social dynamic and locus of class conflict (p. 1). Bourdieu's notion of the distribution of different forms of capital in a social space was not considered necessary in a globalised world.

The second modernity was more concerned with environmental and modernisation risks. In the risk society, class becomes irrelevant and ultimately risk has an equalising effect (Beck, 1999). Curran (2018) described the difficulty of deciding whether Beck considered

class as no longer essential or rather that its effects were no longer recognised (p. 32); either way, class becomes irrelevant. Atkinson (2007a, 2007b) and Olin Wright (2015) asserted the distribution of risk could not replace the distribution of goods, which are fundamentally crucial to life chances and exploitation. The dissolution of class (Pakulski & Waters, 1996) may not have occurred. Nevertheless, the dying or death of social feminism (Holstrom, 2002; Gordan, 2016) and the erasing of class in feminist research (Adair, 2005) has prompted calls to include class in the feminist analysis (McLaughlin, 1997; McRobbie, 1982; Reay, 1998; Skeggs, 1997, 2002; Studdert & Walkerdine, 2016).

Thus, it may come as no surprise that Andrew (2015) has noted the silence around issues of class in ECEC research and advised that the “classed and gendered histories” of ECEC practitioners need to be explored as a prerequisite to leadership (p. 3353). There is an irony here in that the classed nature of childcare is invisible in policy and public discourses, and “yet the vast majority of childcare professionals are working-class women” (Osgood, 2005, p. 290). Childcare in the UK (Osgood et al., 2017), Australia (Andrew, 2015) and the USA (Whitebook et al., 2018) is recognised as a predominantly working-class occupation. While there are no demographics on the Irish practitioner, ECEC is considered a low-status domain for unskilled and unqualified workers (Start Strong, 2010).

The “absence of gender, sex, and culture” in ECEC leadership research has been noted (Waniganayake, 2014, p. 73), and Davis et al. (2015) described the need for gender and race in ECEC research. Similarly, Lumby (2013) has pointed out that those who promote distributed leadership while remaining silent about gender and race may be actively perpetuating inequality (p. 591). However, there is no mention of class. In a predominantly female sector (ECEC), the effect of gender can vary significantly among women in different class positions. Therefore, it could be argued that class awareness is a crucial part of any analysis of gender.

Martin et al. (2017) advised class is a neglected subject in educational leadership research, and found class had a significant impact on leadership practice and understanding. They further reported that most studies have looked at the leader's (as a position of authority) relationship with social class and have neglected the leadership process, distinct from occupying a leader role (p.49). Barling & Weatherhead (2016) found exposure to poverty during childhood results in a lower likelihood of leader emergence later in life. Conversely, Belmi & Laurin (2016) claimed that individuals with lower social class are less likely to seek top positions, as they are generally more concerned with others than themselves. Similarly, Piff et al. (2010) described how lower-class individuals proved to be more generous, trusting, and helpful than their upper-class counterparts, and more egalitarian in their relationships with people (p. 771), which would seem to suggest that

lower-class individuals may be averse to becoming leaders but may affiliate with leadership as a relational process.

Bell hooks (2000) proposed that race and gender are often used as screens to deflect attention away from “the harsh realities class politics exposes” (p. 7), and a willingness to speak about class takes courage and may be considered the “first act of resistance” (p.155). Simultaneously, avoiding a discussion on class and where we “stand” deprives the individual of a working-class background (who is described as in deficit in terms of middle-class norms) of the source of their low socio-economic status and the means of understanding their situation (Hooks, 2000; Skeggs, 2011; Walkerdine, 2011, 2015).

Bev Skeggs (1997, 2002), a feminist sociologist, has explored the gendered and classed identities of a small group of working-class white women who lived in the north-west of England. She began working with these women when they enrolled in “a caring course” and followed them for over 12 years and described them as resilient, complex, good humoured, and sharp (2002). The women chose care as their value, their kudos, and put a strong emphasis on caring for the immediate group, looking out for each other, having fun, and berated middle-class women for not caring for their children. They used care to defend themselves against “devaluation”, and caring, whether paid or unpaid, became a means to value, trade and invest in themselves, an opportunity to make something of themselves ... “It enables them to be recognised, responsible and mature” (Skeggs, 2002, p. 56). Similar findings were revealed in research on working-class women and childcare (Vincent & Braun, 2011). Following this line of argument, it could be argued that the notion of care is relevant to a discussion on ECEC practitioners and leadership.

5.4.3 Care: Who cares?

The notion of care is a contested and ambiguous phenomenon. Care is viewed as a value based on ideas of exchange – what counts (economic) – and this is contrasted with care as moral worth, a value (ethic) – what matters (Skeggs, 2011). Culturally, care is viewed from a different perspective. For example, research suggests that in the UK, Pakistani and Bangladeshi families are unlikely to use formal childcare as there is a tradition of caring for children at home (Campbell-Barr & Garnham, 2010, p. 32). Equally, care's gendered ideology suggests that women do it naturally (Van Laere et al., 2012) and in their struggle to be recognised, working-class women choose care as their value (Skeggs, 1997). The gendered understanding of care is understood as a barrier to men working in the sector (Scurfield, 2019). Politically, childcare has been described as a vote-winning issue (Daycare

Trust, 2010), along with a “burden” and a hindrance to gender equality and full employment (OECD, 2014, p. 2). Choices around childcare are considered classed (McGinnity, Russell & Murray, 2015) and outside the sector, Fraser (2016) describes care's subordination to productivity as a crisis in care (p. 31).

While acknowledging that care is a socially constructed and context-specific phenomenon, it is challenging to decipher how care is understood in ECEC research and policy. Nationally (Moloney, 2015; Nolan, 2020) and internationally (Moss, 2016; Urban & Swadener, 2016), ECEC academics have called for a conversation and a public debate on how we understand and value our young children, their care and education. The OECD (2014) describes care as the “activity” that “provides what is necessary for the health, well-being, maintenance, and protection of someone or something” (OECD, 2014, p. 3). On the other hand, work is considered an activity that requires “mental or physical effort and is costly in terms of time resources”. Thus, care is separated from the mental and emotional, perpetuating the mind-body divide (Van Laere et al., 2014). Much has been written about the care and education divide in ECEC and its negative consequences, including the higher priority, investment, and qualification levels for education and the neglect of care and the under-threes (Bennett, 2003; Hayes, 2008; Van Laere et al., 2012).

While learning theories abound in ECEC research and literature (Pound, 2014), the opposite can be said of care. At best, the literature refers to the theorists Gilligan (1982) Noddings (1984, 1992, 2003) and Tronto (1993, 2013). These theorists have been employed as a foundation for arguing for a more relational and compassionate (care) (Taggart, 2014) and ECEC leadership (Muijs et al., 2004; Rodd, 2013). Murray & McDowall Clark (2012) describe “passionate care” and leadership (p. 46). Similarly, Siraj-Blatchford & Hallet (2014) describe a caring leadership underpinned by an ethic of care where settings are “remarkable and joyous” (p. x). In the absence of a definition of care and the need for passionate and remarkable care, the Irish family's traditional functions (care of the child) have been transferred from the private to public social institutions, including crèches, nurseries, and preschools (McDonald 2009, p. 89). Moreover, the practitioner has been described as a secondary caregiver in ECEC (Beaudin, 2017). The practical aspect of care as in who should support children with their physical and emotional needs has not been addressed and is described as the ‘Achilles’ heel’ of ECEC (Van Laer, 2017, p. 220).

The care of children has become enmeshed in the quest for full employment, the HCT discourse, which conjectures mothers as workers, and children as best served in ECEC with teachers as instructors of their cognitive skills, to “produce the future reservoir of productive workers” (Stuart, 2013, p. 54). The impact of the varied and inconclusive understandings of care and the relegation of care to education may have implications for

leadership. The question of creating a vision, an ethos, and a mission for the setting become embroiled in a debate as to the extent that ECEC should represent a home-like environment, and the “nursery nurse play a quasi-maternal role” (Colley, 2006, p. 15). Dahlberg et al. (1999) argued that positioning the nursery as a site of intimacy and closeness is conflating a public with a private sphere. A duty to care is described as labour as opposed to caring for the child, which involves an emotional connection (Cantillon & Lynch, 2016, p. 9). They both agree the childcare worker, nurse, and teacher have a duty to care, and while the relationship may come to and often does, to one of love, this is not the primary purpose (p. 9). Sarah Hrdy describes “grouping infants together – like bats in a communal nursery – for a certain number of hours every day under the supervision of paid alloparents (substitute parents)” who she acknowledges are “not kin but are expected to act like kin, is an evolutionary novelty, completely experimental process” (Penn, 2012, p. 1). The worry would be that in this experiment, we are losing sight of the child and childhood (Campbell-Barr & Nygård, 2014; Nolan, 2020).

Furthermore, ECEC stakeholders may have [un]intentionally become complicit in the relegation of care to education, intending to develop ECEC status. In nursing care, work is regarded as the antithesis to professional work (objective, rational expert), and the reconciliation of care and professionalisation has resulted in what Apesora-Varano (2007) described as educated caring (p. 254). A similar situation has appeared in Sweden, whereas a trait of professionalism for Swedish preschool teachers is a contentious issue and is in “a gentle process of getting silenced” (Lofgren, 2015, p. 7).

Löfgren (2015) also noted that children as confident and capable citizens who work with adults to develop the child’s spiritual needs (how to be in the world) or psychological needs (communication) has excluded care (physical needs) of the child and care has become intellectualised (p. 7). Conversely, mothering as a powerful position associated with discipline, wisdom, and guidance (Reay & Ball, 2000) and care whether paid/unpaid viewed as a means for working-class women “to be recognized, responsible and mature” (Skeggs, 2002, p. 56) may be worth exploring. These understandings can blur the line between care as emotional, irrational, and leadership as the opposite. Care conceptualised in this manner may be the starting point of viewing care an end in itself and not as an adjunct to education or a means to facilitate full employment and economic prosperity.

5.4.4 Power: Women and care

Feminist researchers contend that to understand women in leadership it is essential to engage with the concept of power and how it operates within and through society (Davis et al., 2015, p. 136). However, the notion of power, care and the potential of leadership as an emancipatory tool complicate the conversation. Feminists tend to ensconce their understandings of power within two camps, 1) power over (domination): how men have power over women and 2) power as empowerment: the power women have to act (Allen, 2016). The empowerment theorists have criticised the male domination theorists for overstating the ways women are victimised and argue that power resides in women's capacities to care, to nurture, and to mother (Hartsock, 1983; Held, 1993). Conversely, domination theorists condemn empowerment theorists for exalting traits like caring and nurturing and practices such as mothering that have themselves traditionally been mechanisms of women's oppression (Allen, 2016).

Many academics have viewed power (Allen, 1999; Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993; Butler, 1990; Young, 1990) through a Foucauldian lens, as have a small number of ECEC researchers (Fenech & Sumsion, 2007; MacNaughton, 2005; Osgood, 2012). They ascribe to the view that everything is dangerous and needs to be questioned, as uncritical acceptance degenerates into states of domination (Foucault, 1991, 1997). Equally, Foucault (1997) advised that we are often as much participants in, as products in, games of power, where people act on one another to gain advantage. However, while Foucault (1978) did not describe his work as a study of power, but as modes in which one becomes a subject (p. 294), his work has been considered gender neutral (Young, 1998; Bartky, 1990) and the panoptical model of self-surveillance may not expose all forms of female subordination, including emotional manipulation and economic pressure (Bordo, 1993, p. 27). Conversely, Chessman (2007) argues that ECEC practitioners who are in positions of authority have not perceived the idea of power as "central" to leadership (p. 78) and have not perceived how power relationships and numerous contexts intersect to influence their "complex identities" and how they enact leadership (Nicholson & Maniates, 2016, p. 67).

There is a recognition that it is in social circumstances where class, race and gender intersect with dominant ways of being that the effects of power relations become most obvious (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006, p. 67). This speaks to Crenshaw (1991) and the understanding that "the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately" (p. 1244). However, the notion of intersectionality as a framework for this study requires analysis.

5.4.5 Professionalisation of the Irish sector

Urban et al. (2017) established a connection between leadership and professionalisation but this link appears to remain under-researched in the Irish literature. In the Australian context, educational leaders are primarily oriented towards raising the status and capacity of their colleagues since they view this as a pre-requisite for high-quality outcomes (Martin et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, the terms' professional identity, professional, and professionalisation are used frequently in Irish ECEC literature (Bleach, 2012; Madden, 2021; Moloney, 2015; Walsh, 2017). These terms are often used interchangeably but have different meanings. Professional identities can be understood as the meanings that persons hold for themselves, what it means to be who they are. These identities have bases in having specific roles (role identities), in being members of groups (social identity) or being the distinctive biological entities that they are (personal identities). Research indicates that professional identity is contentious and problematic in Ireland (Moloney, 2010, Walsh, 2017) and internationally (Moloney et al., 2019). Irish ECCE is considered to have a low professional identity, and the value of professional development to facilitate the development of a strong professional identity has been reinforced by Irish academics (Bleach, 2011; Madden, 2012; Maloney & Pope, 2013; Neylon, 2014). However, there are limited national professional development programmes for ECCE practitioners in Ireland (Moloney et al, 2019).

The Cambridge dictionary (2020) describes a profession as "any type of work that needs special training or a particular skill, often one that is respected because it involves a high level of education." Barker (1992, p.73) asks what a profession is?

Moreover, is there a meaningful dividing line between occupations that are professions and occupations that are not, with some occupations falling on one side of the line and some on the other? Baker (1992) gives an example - medicine and law will count for professions while occupations requiring manual labour will not. Does this beg the question, is ECEC a profession? Similarly, in the Irish context Duignan (2012) asks who is the professional in early childhood care and education? Teacher, Nurse, Therapist (speech and language, etc.), Child Care Worker (dependant on the setting?) Childminder? Thus, it could be argued that professional identity and professionalism are socially constructed and context-specific phenomenon, where professional identity is constructed at the level of the individual, whereas professionalism is constructed by the community and the profession in question (Burke, 2004). Nevertheless, professionalisation can be defined as 'a social and political project or mission designed to enhance the interests of an occupational group' (Osgood, 2006, p.4).

The introduction of the Free Preschool Year (ECCE) scheme in 2010 and its extension to a second year in 2016 has introduced increased professional expectations of the ELC workforce (DES, 2019). Collectively, these developments have resulted in a much-increased workforce and a more complex policy and practice landscape for the sector (Walsh, 2016; Urban et al., 2017) (DES, 2019, p. 7). These reports, particularly the Urban, Robson & Saatchi (2017) research, underpin the criteria and guidelines necessary for professionalisation of the Irish ECEC. Urban and associates (2017) provide a solid research basis for developing specific role profiles and criteria for the profession in Ireland. They have posited a common core professional profile, which is framed in general terms, and provides detail of the knowledge, practices and values expected in the initial professional education of Level 7 and Level 8 courses. (DES, 2019, p. 16). In May 2019, the European education ministers stressed the importance of increasing the level of professionalisation among the ECEC workforce. This investment in the workforce, they advised is crucial since there is a positive correlation between better-trained staff and a better-quality service. Furthermore, the availability of highly qualified staff leads to higher quality staff-child interactions and therefore better developmental outcomes for children (European Commission, 2019, p.73).

Moloney et al. (2020), looking at professionalization through the lens of PLÉ (Play Learning Education, a group of Irish academics), outlined the critical characteristics of a profession. These characteristics include a Code of Ethics, Working conditions, Professional salary, Career pathways, licensure/Certification, Preservice and Continuous Professional Development (p.3). A link between professionalisation and workforce development has been drawn (Moloney et al., 2020). Two trade unions, including Impact and SIPTU, continue to improve working conditions and develop a pay model (Walsh, 2017). A Code of Professional Responsibilities and Code of Ethics for Early Years Educators (DCYA, 2020), has been published and yet there are many challenges - improving salaries and working conditions, will not be possible without significant and continuous State investment (Walsh, 2017). The diversity of contexts in which early childhood services are developed nationally and internationally also hinders the sector's progression as a profession (Moloney et al., 2019). However, approximately a hundred years ago, Dewey counselled that "Even if it could be proved that the present movement toward professionalism in education was historically inevitable, it would not follow that it is wholly desirable or advisable" (p. 419).

This cautionary voice remains concerning professionalising the sector in the current neoliberal climate where professionalisation could lead to a standardised, hierarchical, and stratified sector and service (Davis et al., 2014) and could result in loss of moral purpose and valuable praxis being exhibited by this workforce (Osgood, 2006). Nevertheless, Arndt al. (2018) suggest it is possible to meet these challenges and "build individual and collective

professional identities that are grounded in diverse local contexts and a broader transnational professional (political) consciousness and collective voice” (p.97).

5.5 Towards a theoretical framework

Several influences converged in deciding on a theoretical framework for this research (Appendix C) including my previous study (Nolan, M.Ed., 2015), my experience as an ECEC practitioner, the findings from the policy and literature review chapters (Appendix D) and my affiliation with feminist theory. My M.Ed. research and experience in the field indicated that the gendered nature of care and the ECEC workforce contributed substantially to how leadership was understood and practised in the sector. The policy and literature review chapters revealed the gendered nature of the sector (98% female) (Pobal, 2018), the gendered structural ordering of society (patriarchy) and associated gendered ideology of woman as carers, and the absence of feminist research and perspectives in ECEC leadership literature (Davis et al., 2015).

Similarly, class and the link between class and care emerged as significant topics in the policy analysis. ECEC was considered a low-status occupation for unskilled and unqualified workers (Start Strong, 2010). The practitioners from community settings lacked economic, social, symbolic, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) (DJELR, 2000; DES, 2010). The link between working-class women and caring, whether paid or unpaid, as a means to value, trade, and invest in themselves (Skeggs, 2002, p. 56) reinforced the importance of class and gender in understanding the ECEC practitioner, their classed and gendered occupation and the influence on their relationship with leadership (Appendix C).

Bourdieu's (1986) critical theoretical concepts (habitus, field, and capital) offered the potential of a theoretical framework to guide this study. Exploring the interplay between structure and agency within the ECEC practitioner's habitus and field (ECEC) combined with capital could reveal how broader structural influences shape the conceptualisation and practice of ECEC leadership and why practitioners from different backgrounds behave in ways that are expected of them (Habitus). However, critics advise gender is often invisible in Bourdieu's theories (Lovell, 2000), principally, in the formation of social structural positions (via forms of capital) and dispositions (habitus) (McCall, 1992, p. 832).

While field plays a vital part in his class theory, Bourdieu is silent when it comes to gender (Huppatz, 2009). The notion of patriarchy and the classed and gendered understanding of care were central components of this study. While Bourdieu (1986) examined male domination exploring gendered habitus, his primary focus was not on current relationships between sexes, patriarchy, nor contemporary masculinities and femininities but

on gender divisions in 1960s Algeria (Reay, 2004, p. 436). However, how to theorise the relationship between structures of male domination and the intersubjective experience of women is considered a “central problem” in feminist theory also (McCall, 1992).

Nevertheless, the significant influence of feminist research on leadership in higher education, secondary and primary school institutions (Blackmore, 1999, 2010a, 2010b, 2013) and the absence of feminist research and perspectives on ECEC leadership (Davis et al., 2015) prompted me to explore feminist theory. I acknowledge my affiliation with Feminism and feminist theory. While Feminism is an umbrella term for a range of views, it is understood broadly in this study as “a movement to end sexism and sexist oppression” (hooks, 1989, p. 23). Central to my understanding of feminist theory and practice is that “patriarchal domination” shares an ideological foundation with class, racism, and other forms of group oppression (hooks, 1989, p. 22). The feminist practice involves respecting and listening to the voices of those from the margins unearthing subjugated knowledge (Harding, 1987; Hesse-Biber, 2012; hooks, 2000) and recognising their capacity and power to bring about change.

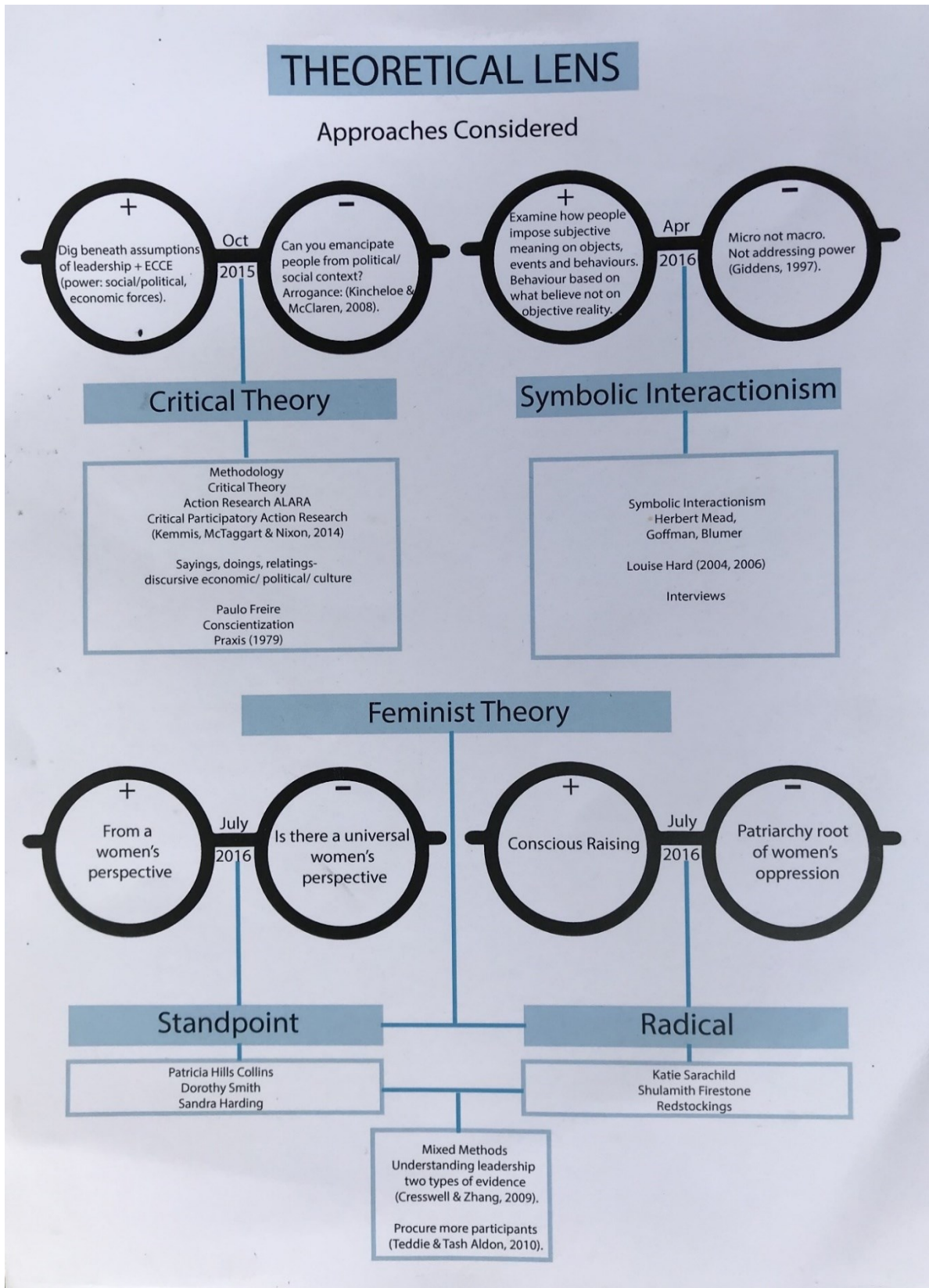
However, my affiliation with feminist thinking extends beyond attention to power imbalances and listening to women's voices. It moves to an understanding that Feminism is also a way of knowing, of making sense of the world, where knowledge is created in a relational process that requires dialogue, critical self-reflection, and interaction (Hesse-Biber, 2012). It is a way of being in the world, where women's lived experiences constitute their view of reality (Stacki & Monkman, 2003; Stanley & Wise, 1993; Undurraga, 2012). Also, I recognise that it is in social circumstances where class, race, and gender intersect with dominant ways of being that the effects of power relations become most obvious (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006, p. 67).

However, the notion of intersectionality as a framework for this study does not sit well with me on many levels, including the possibility that it has become unhooked and appropriated from its original origins and focus (Alexander-Floyd, 2012; Luft & Ward, 2009). It could be argued that positioning intersectionality as a framework for understanding how categories of difference interact in power relations has confined intersectionality to an overly academic contemplative exercise, “depoliticising” it (Bilge, 2013, p. 413). It has “re-subjugated black women's knowledge” (Alexander-Floyd, 2012, p. 1). My main problem with intersectionality is the potential insensitivity of appropriating a Black feminist tradition into a study that is attempting to explore leadership within another marginalised group (ECEC practitioners). My experience compounds the difficulty as a practising Montessori directress and the frustration and disappointment I encountered with the annexation, misinterpretation, and adoption of a mixed bag of theories and ideas in the name of Maria Montessori, which

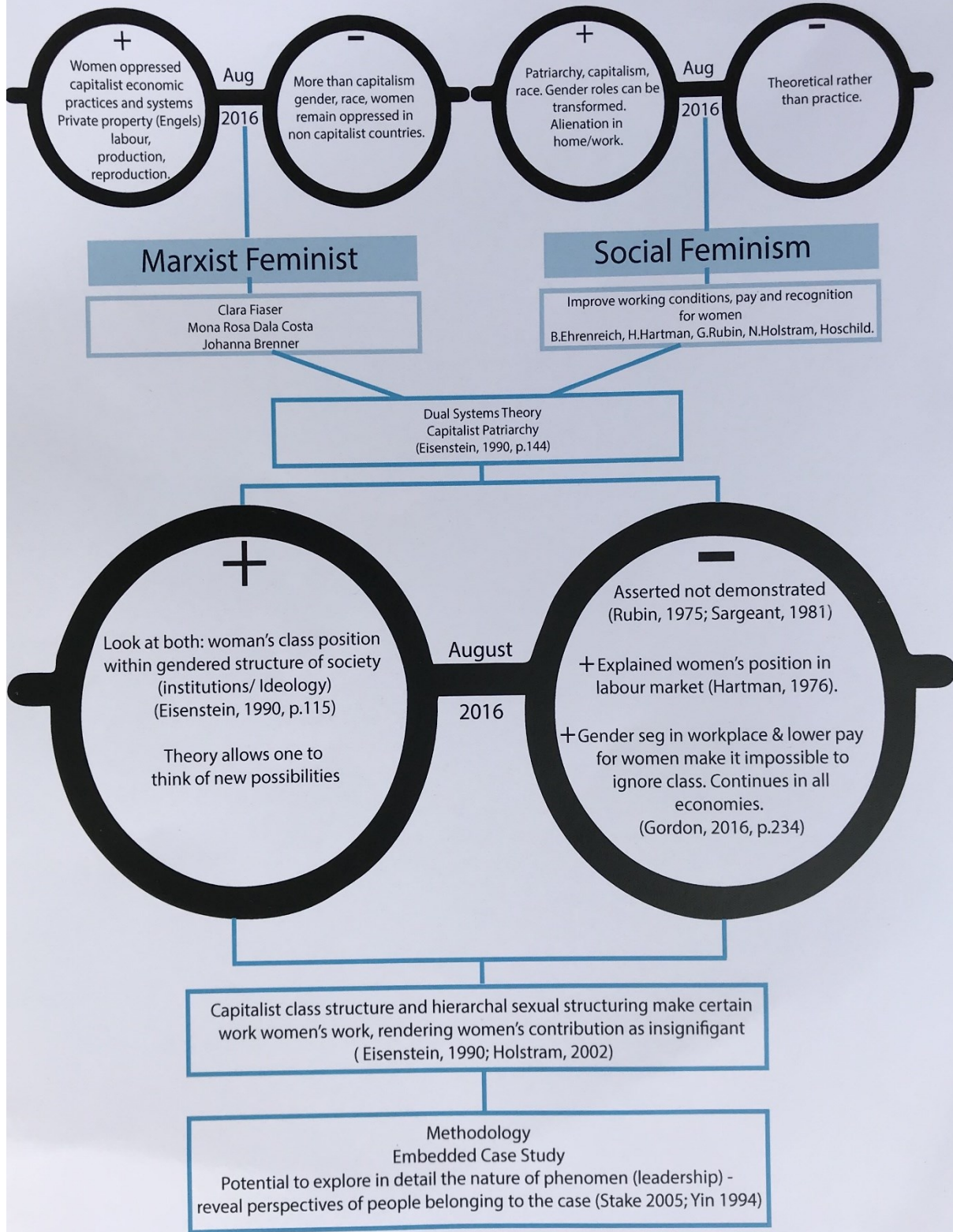
could be considered a first-world problem. Nevertheless, this experience has forced me to reflect on and question the choice of intersectionality. Besides, in the policy and literature review chapters, class appears as a significant issue, whereas the Crenshaw (1991) critique emphasised ethnicity and sexuality rather than class and tended to concentrate solely on positions of subjugation and subordination as opposed to analysing the sites and relations of dominance and privilege (Nash, 2008). As such, I looked to several feminist perspectives (Figure 9).

Figure 9

Theoretical Lens



THEORETICAL LENS



The perspectives explored included Standpoint Theory and how Dorothy Smith (1974) sought to write sociology from a woman's standpoint in *Women's perspectives as a radical critique of sociology*. However, I do not view gender as the principal root of all oppression, where women are considered the in-avoidable victim of evil men (Standpoint Feminism, Radical Feminism) (Eisenstein, 1997). I reject the notion that women's oppression is reducible to class oppression (Marxist feminist) (Holstrom, 2003). After much consideration, it is to Social Feminism that this study turns for a theoretical framework. While Social Feminism can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it is second wave Social Feminism that I looked for guidance. In the 1970s, Social Feminism emerged as a significant paradigm in feminist thought and strategy; its supporters criticised both Feminism and socialism. Feminism is criticised for not contesting capitalism and its unwillingness to scrutinise race and class issues and condemning socialism for its lack of attention to gender, sexuality, and domestic work (Philipson & Hansen, 1989). Social feminists such as Zillah Eisenstein (1979, 1990), Barbara Ehrenreich (1990), Heidi Hartmann (1979), Nancy Holmstrom (1981, 2002), and Nancy Chodorow (1978) sought to build theory, strategy, and practical resources to identify and deal with both capitalist exploitation and male domination (Philipson & Hansen, 1989).

This research project strongly connects with Social Feminism on many levels (1) Connecting with Social feminism's objectives to improve women's lives, working conditions and pay, and women's recognition. (2) I also affiliate with Nancy Holstrom's (2002) description of a Socialist feminist, "anyone trying to understand women's subordination coherently and systematically that integrates class and sex, as well as other aspects of identity such as race/ethnicity or sexual orientation, to use this analysis to help liberate women" (p.1). (3) Connecting with the idea that women can transform their situation (Philipson & Hansen, 1989).

Dual Systems Theory emerged as the quintessence of this understanding (Eisenstein, 1979; 1990) (Appendix E). Zillah Eisenstein (1979) is accredited with constructing the first comprehensive presentation of social feminist theory analysis (Kennedy & Lapidus, 1980). Eisenstein (1990) sought to build a theory of capitalist patriarchy and socialist feminism (Dual Systems Theory). To understand women's oppression and not just their economic exploitation, it was necessary to address both their sexual and economic material conditions in a real synthesis of the two, which she termed 'capitalist patriarchy' (Eisenstein 1990, p.114). This process involved examining how these forms of domination fuse and act together, revealing the "dynamic power relations" governing women's existence (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 1).

The argument that the current “brutal economic realities of globalization” make it impossible to ignore class and gender (Gordan, 2016, p.234) and the time is right for a favourable reconsideration of the socialist feminist perspective (Brenner, 2015; Bridges & Messerschmidt 2017; Lorber, 2012) sits firmly with this study. The reasons for excluding race are primarily based on my M.Ed research experience and the difficulty of gaining access to ECEC settings. Adding ethnicity to the research criteria would have made sourcing settings more difficult. Similarly, an attempt to address three criteria, gender, class, and race, could result in a very wide focus and a shallow dissertation.

Socialist feminist theory and Dual Systems theory have been criticised by some analysts (Barrett, 1980; Sargeant, 1981). While taking into account the ambitious nature of attempting to construct a ‘Marxist-feminist’ theoretical perspective and the infancy of the field, nevertheless, Eisenstein (1979) has been accused of oversimplification and sweeping generalisations (Barrett, 1980). Her work has been deemed a theory – not wholly developed and lacking clear definitions, an approach asserted not demonstrated (Sargeant, 1981). Therefore, this theory has its limitations, and the lack of material on working-class women could be considered a substantial weakness (Kennedy & Lapidus, 1980). Huppatz (2009) further advised interactions between gender and class are context-specific, and more complicated as women now occupy more roles, and requested a new approach to centralise gender and class intersections in feminist theorising (p. 125). I would argue that the focus on the ECEC practitioner is context-specific. In the absence of a new approach, Dual system theory (Eisenstein, 1979, 1999) has the potential to provide conceptual tools for the analysis. The tools to critique the material existence (economic and sexual) and ideology (the stereotypes, myths, and ideas which define their roles) surrounding the practitioner and their engagement with leadership to reveal the dynamic power systems/structures determining their situation and potential emancipation (Eisenstein, 1990, p. 115).

Nevertheless, Philipson & Hansen (1989) point out that the socialist feminist requirements for every activity to meet race, class, and gender criteria, ‘to be considered worthwhile’ (p, 26), is a process that is very self-conscious, often inflexible, and certainly stilted (p. 27). This study, on the other hand, will take a less rigid approach. It will employ the Dual Systems theory to guide, not command, how data is garnered and analysed, and justify the research.

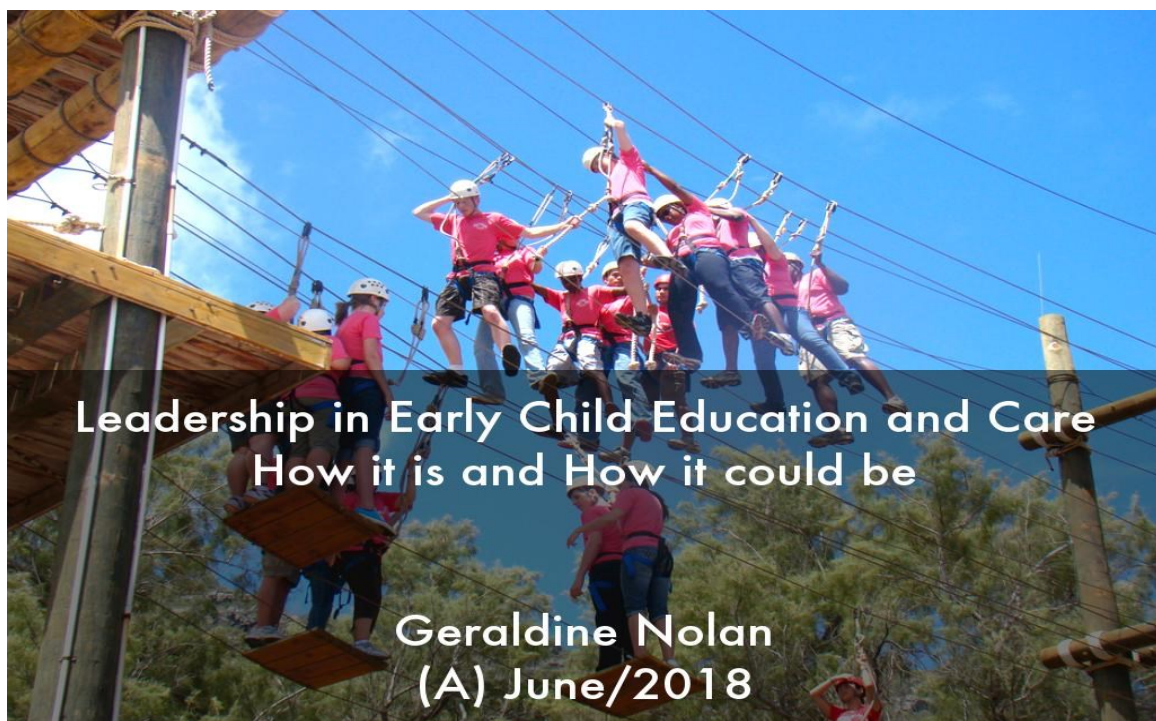
This study also provides the opportunity to explore social feminism, trying it out empirically in ECEC with the possibility that it emerges as a relevant lens for researching the contemporary educational research landscape.

5.6 The way forward

Feminist research is considered sparse in ECEC (Davis et al., 2015). This study begins to address this deficit by examining the views of ECEC participants and the structures and policies nationally and internationally that inform ECEC in Ireland, while simultaneously questioning the material existence (economic or sexual) and ideological reality (the stereotypes, myths, and ideas that define roles) (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 24) that influence ECEC leadership. The study will endeavour to cast light on the practitioners' circumstances and discover how they can improve their situation through leadership or other strategies. This study also provides the opportunity to explore social feminism, trying it out empirically in ECEC with the possibility that it emerges as a relevant lens for researching the contemporary educational research landscape. Figure 6 offers a link to a slide set presentation of chapters 2, 3 & 4 in this study. Figure 7 provides a graphic representation of this chapter, and the following section summarises this chapter.

Figure 10

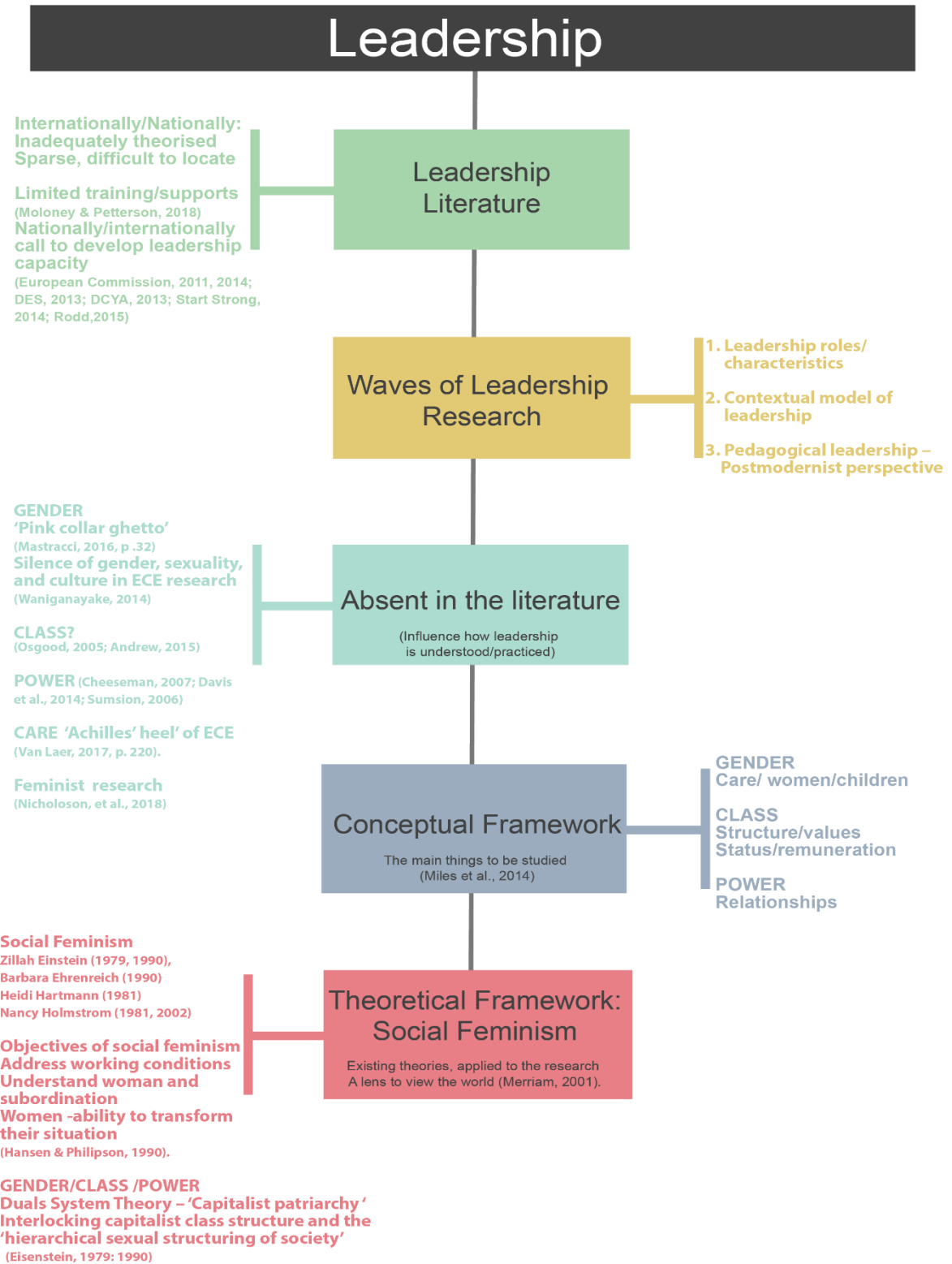
Leadership in Early Childhood Education and Care:



Link to presentation: <https://www.haikudeck.com/copy-of-copy-of-leadership-in-early-child-education-and-care-how-it-is-and-how-it-could-be---geraldine-nolan-trinity-college-dublin-uncategorized-presentation-b905bbe5a5>

Figure 11

ECEC Leadership



5.7 Summary

The first wave of research examined leadership primarily as a micro phenomenon (Bloom, 1997; Rodd, 1997) with leaders and their roles and characteristics as the unit of analysis (Hayden, 1998). ECEC academics have developed a contextual framework of leadership based on different societies' contextual elements (Nivala, 1998). However, there is much confusion and ambiguity about what ECEC leadership means (Waniganayake, 2014). Leadership research currently emphasises defining distributed, pedagogical (Heikka & Hujala, 2013), and hybrid leadership (Boe & Hognestad, 2015), with limited feminists research. The influences identified as having the potential to impact understanding and enactment of leadership include gender, class, care, and power (Conceptual Framework Appendix C). Social feminism was identified as the framework to explore how the practitioners' situation may be a consequence of sexual /economic circumstances and determine how these forms of domination interact, fuse, and influence ECEC and ECEC leadership (Appendix E).

Chapter 6 Research Design

This chapter presents the process of describing, critically evaluating and justifying the design choices made to investigate and answer the research questions (Robinson, 2011). The research methodology (A qualitative interview study), and the method of data collection (semi-structured interviews) are described and justified in this chapter. Detailed information on the selection of participants and the analytical processes is provided along with the justification for both. The ethical considerations, the researcher's positionality and limitations of the study are also discussed. Table 6 provides an overview of the approach, methods and instruments used to generate and analyse the research data.

Table 6

Research Design

Approach, Methods & Instruments	Key References, Guides & Texts
Qualitative interview study	Creswell, 2013, 2014; Creswell et al., 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 1998; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2017; Kvale, 1983, 1996; Patton, 2002; Tong et al, 2007
Semi-structured interview with 50 ECEC stakeholders	Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Atkinson, 2015 Devault & Gross, 2012; Gubrium & Holstein, 2001 Hammersley, 2009; 2017; Lee, 2008 Loxley, 2010; Powney & Watts, 1987; Tomlinson, 1989 Watts & Ebbutt, 1987
Data Coding	Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014 CAQDA Software packages HyperRESEARCH 3.75 and 4.0 (Hesse- Biber et al., 2010, 2016)
Analysis, and Interpretation	Braun & Clarke, 2006 Clarke & Braun, 2013a, 2013b Miles et al, 2014

6.1 Aim and research questions

This study set out to explore how leadership was conceptualised in the sector, how it was practised in the settings, the supports in place for leadership, and the potential leadership had to draw together the diverse group of Irish practitioners to address their working conditions. My theoretical and empirical knowledge of the field (policy and literature), previous research (Nolan, M.Ed., 2015), and my experience as an ECEC practitioner guided and informed the research questions. All of these sources described ECEC as a predominantly working-class, female profession. The notion of care and relationships are central to the sector. Moreover, the ECEC working environment, fragmented relationships in the sector (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2017) and the lack of leadership support are of paramount concern to the practitioners (M.Ed., 2015). Dual system

theory reaffirmed the importance of examining the “material existence (economic and sexual) and ideology defining” the practitioners' role and their engagement with leadership to reveal the dynamic power systems/structures determining their situation and potential emancipation (Eisenstein, 1990, p.115). All of which guided and informed the following research questions:

1. How is leadership understood in the sector, and how is it practised in ECEC settings?
2. What interventions currently exist to support leadership, including policies, literature, and training?
3. How do ECEC stakeholders relate to each other and the wider community?
4. How have/have not gender and class (other factors) influenced the stakeholder's understanding of leadership and leadership practice in the setting?
5. How do ECEC stakeholders conceptualise and articulate their ideas for developing leadership or alternative strategies to address the practitioners' working conditions?

6.2 The timeframe

This section gives a broad overview of the stages of the research process; however, these stages were not straightforward, and the following discussion describes the actuality of this process.

1. **Policy and literature review:** The Irish social policy and Irish/international ECEC policy and the ECEC leadership literature (nationally and internationally) provide a context for this study (September 2015–October 2016).
2. **Ethical Application submitted** (October 2016)
3. **Ethical Approval** (1 November 2016) (Appendix G)
4. **Access sought and gained** to various stakeholders in the ECEC community (November 2016)
5. **Pilot study conducted** with a practitioner and a professional organisation representative (November 2016)
6. **Information and consent letters** distributed to ECEC stakeholders (November 2016) consisting of:

7. **Letter to all the stakeholders** contained an introduction to the study information sheet, the interview questions, and an outline of the intentions of the study and consent form.
8. **Interviews with stakeholders** (November 2016 – August 2017): One-to-one semi-structured interviews took place between the stakeholders and the researcher.
9. **Data analysis:** Transcription and primary analysis of the data occurred after each interview, and detailed analysis occurred September 2017– September 2018.
10. **Keeping up to date with recent policy and literature to inform the findings** - July 2020.
11. **Writing up findings, discussion, and conclusion** (October 2018 – September 2020).

The research commenced with exploring and examining the social and ECEC policies concerning women, children, and care at a national and international level. This process was time-consuming. There is a tendency for ministers and government officials to give a media interview or sound bite and refer to a policy or interdepartmental report; however, locating these reports and policies was challenging.

Conversely, applying for ethical permission to conduct the study was less challenging. While one is always cognisant that research carries many ethical responsibilities and implications, the Ethical Application was straightforward, as the participants did not include children or vulnerable people, and consent to do the study was received in November (2016).

However, seeking access to the ECEC settings was, (M.Ed., 2015) and continues to be, a complicated process. The numerous reforms and inspections in the ECEC sector have created what one ECEC manager described as “intrusion overload”. This, coupled with the stringent guidelines on the adult to child ratio, made it difficult for the practitioner to leave the classroom for any activity, including an interview. As such, to gain access to ECEC settings and other organisations involved contacting people in my professional network. By the same token, while four stakeholders agreed to participate, it took repeated correspondence to finalise a date and a time. Two of the four stakeholders culminated in a telephone interview; one withdrew, the other stakeholder did not show up at the assigned date and time (120 km from my home) and had to be replaced.

Also, after completing the schools' interviews (saturation) I noted that there was no representative from the level 5 and level 6 cohort of practitioners. A request was made at an early year's conference for participants, and eight practitioners volunteered, two of whom had level 5 qualifications. The analysis took much longer than anticipated, and during this

period, it was necessary to reduce time on the computer (recurring eye infection). During the final stages of writing up the discussion chapter, the Corona Virus arrived in Ireland. Suffice to say, while the table presents a seamless timeline for the research, this was not the case. Equally, while this section reads like a litany of challenges, it was a fascinating and rewarding experience.

6.2 The research approach

This section describes the theoretical orientation, the rationale, and the justification for the research approach. Several approaches were considered (Action Research, Participatory and Critical Action Research, and Mixed Methods) and are described in detail. The section culminates in the rationale and justification for selecting a qualitative interview study.

I have observed over three decades of working with children and adults that individuals build their construction of knowledge (Epistemology) based on interactions with others and the environment (constructivist paradigm) (Blaikie, 2005; Denzin, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I conceptualise social reality as being created and constructed by people and “that reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality” (Merriam, 1998, p. 22). Therefore, the objective of this research is to understand the way people make sense of their reality, and their experiences of leadership. Equally, I situate my work within a feminist paradigm, which has already been described (pp. 94 - 100). Suffice to say this includes the intentional act of seeking out, respecting, and listening to the voices of all individuals but especially those who are considered on the margins, with a commitment to using research procedures to address issues of concern to women (Eisenstein; 1979; Hooks, 2000; Hesse-Biber, 2011), in this case, the practitioner, leadership, and their working conditions.

My choice of constructivism and feminism may seem an unlikely pairing, and there are many tensions between the two (Berg & Lie, 1995). Feminists and, in particular, the second-wave feminist (Eisenstein, 1979; Holstrom, 2002) advise that gender was not just a social construct; it was a “code for power”, hierarchy, and the oppression of women (Locher & Prügl, 2001, p. 116). However, there is also common ground between these paradigms, and both acknowledge the notion of gender and woman are socially constructed. The dialogue between feminism and constructivism, “feminist constructivism”, describes an “ontology of becoming”, and the “world is understood 'not as one that is, but as one that is in the process of becoming’” (Locher & Prügl, 2001, p. 113).

Both benefit one another (Berg & Lie, 1995; Davis, 2008). As a feminist researcher there is the potential to learn from a constructivist approach to be sceptical towards grand categories such as sex, patriarchy, and go where the power is (All layers of ECEC stakeholders) to see how power works (Harraway; 1988; Prins, 1995); to see how power influences the conceptualisation and practice of ECEC leadership. Moreover, feminism can ensure the research is more political and examine the perspective of the outsiders (Prins, 1995, p. 363).

My M.Ed. Thesis *Leadership in early childhood education and care: Perceptions, practice and possibilities* (2015) also influenced the design of this research. The thesis explored how leadership was understood and practised, and how to develop ECEC leadership in the settings. The research was carried out in five ECEC settings and involved semi-structured interviews with the five ECEC leaders/managers, a focus group discussion and spider map with 12 practitioners, and a focus group conversation and drawing activity with 26 children. The findings revealed that there was leadership confusion and conflicting accounts of how leadership was understood and practised in the settings. The children revealed the actuality of leadership and the power relations in the setting. However, in general, participants requested a space where they could set their own agenda, incorporate their experiential knowledge, values, vision and collaborate with other ECEC stakeholders to advance ECEC leadership.

The notion of action research was mooted (Nolan, 2015). As such, it was considered necessary to look at action research as a methodology for this study. The decision to choose action research was also determined by my worldview and the values, philosophy, and ideas that are important to me both as a person and a Montessorian. These values include choice, justice, collaboration, sustainability and inclusion, and a desire to bring the perceived marginalised voice (ECEC practitioners) to the centre (hooks, 2000).

Action Research is thought to have originated with Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist in the 1950s (Bradbury-Huang, 2010), working with people to overcome the terrors of the Nazi Holocaust. Lewin (1946) discovered that the collaborative approach between facilitators, a cyclical process of problem-solving, repeated cycles of fact-finding, planning, action, and reviewing brought about new interactions and positive outcomes. I joined the Irish *Network for Educational Action Research in Ireland* or NEARI. I attended their workshops and lectures by Jack Whitehead and Jean McNiff. Both are considered experts in the field of action research. Also, I enrolled in an online action research course (2015-2016) with Action Learning, Action Research Association Ltd (ALARA) and engaged with the discussion and academic output of the facilitator (Dick, 1990, 2000, 2002, 2015, 2016). ALARA is a global network of programs, institutions, professionals, and people

employing action learning and research to improve their organisations (ALARA, 2016). Both ALARA and NEARI provided in-depth information and examples of action research in action within organisations. However, I wondered whether this approach was somewhat limited to a mechanical sequence of steps and would meet the ECEC practitioners' need for a collaborative and supportive space (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 1988). The ALARA facilitator quoted Chandler and Torbert (2003) as identifying "27 flavours of action research" (Dick, 2015, p. 433); I decided to examine at least one or two of the other flavours.

Participatory action research (PAR) is understood as a liberationist practice underpinned by the notion of "Conscientization" (Freire, 1970, p.17). Many have viewed PAR as central to their liberation movements, including Budd Hall, Fals Borda (Columbia) and Anis Rahman in Bangladesh (Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991) Paulo Freire (1997), Marja-Liisa Swantz in Tanzania and Myles Horton and the Highlander Centre in the Appalachian district of the USA (Bradbury & Reason, 2008). PAR's essence aligns with my conviction that ordinary people, through critical reflection and continual dialogue, can expose the realities of the political and social inconsistencies of their situation. With this, they can act for social, political, and economic justice for themselves and their communities (Brydon Miller et al., 2011).

Another flavour for consideration was critical participatory action research (CPAR). Kemmis and McTaggart, working in the field of action research for nearly 30 years, (Kemmis 1989, 2009, 2010; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, 2000, 2005) Kemmis et al., (2014) were dissatisfied with how classroom action research did not generally take a comprehensive view of the relationship between education and social change. Conversely, they advised, CPAR provides a framework to critically explore and examine the micro activities and the social formation in which these activities occur (Kemmis et al., 2014, p.19).

I considered both PAR and CPAR as suitable approaches for the study. However, as Marshall (2001) points out, research is for them, for us, and for me. After much consideration, I acknowledge that much as I relished immersing in critical theory and emancipatory research (Freire, Fals-Borda, Giroux), my affiliation with these approaches may have been more about me, and required questioning. There is often a tendency towards evangelism and dogma in emancipatory research, with little recognition that the people, in this case the ECEC practitioners willing to participate in this study, may not be ready to or even wish to engage with this challenge. This was not my first time to think that I could enable or support another's "liberation". While the motive to advocate for the practitioner in the past (IMEB) may have been well-intentioned, how it was executed was at best naïve and at worst arrogant (Appendix A).

There was also a realisation one cannot generalise about women's social situations or experiences; one cannot *assume* that all women have the same understanding of gender oppression (Dill & Kohlman, 2012, p.156), working conditions, or leadership. Moreover, feminist action researchers argue that the ideals of liberation and transformation are often short-lived. In excluding women's personal experiences and narratives, both AR and PAR are considered androcentric. They are considered gender and race blind (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000) and often lead to hierarchical power relationships (Hailey, 2001).

Nevertheless, a commitment remains to explore CPAR as having the potential to provide a framework and the tools for ECEC [wo]men to identify and solve their problems. As such, (with much support from my supervisors), I realised that it was enough to start the conversation and begin the process of exploring what ECEC leadership meant to participants. The potential with this knowledge and experience is that action research in whatever flavour could become a sequel to this research.

The focus shifted to Mixed Methods Research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010, 2012). The methodology "theory and analysis of how research ought to proceed" (Harding, 1987, p. 2) would involve both a qualitative and quantitative strand (MMR). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) suggested several models. I chose the convergent parallel design as it offered the potential to understand "a construct... [ECEC leadership] from the perspective of two different types of evidence" and examine how the two data sets converge, deviate, support or relate to one another (Creswell & Zhang, 2009, p. 614). In this design, quantitative and qualitative data are acquired concurrently, and the analysis of each strand occurs independently. The integration of the data only takes place at the level of data interpretation. The mixed-method research design has also been accredited with increasing validity, reliability, and generalizability (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2012; Creswell, 2014). Conversely, adding a quantitative method to a qualitative project does not always advance the theoretical understanding of a given problem (Hesse-Biber, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The next step involved designing a questionnaire (Menter et al., 2011; Vogt et al., 2012). The professional body Early Childhood Ireland agreed to disseminate the questionnaire to a variety of ECEC settings across Ireland. However, after weeks of researching and planning a mixed methods research design, I discovered a list of ECEC setting, an official register of the number of practitioners working in the field remained elusive; therefore, it was impossible to choose a representative sample. The question of reflexivity or lack of it was evident here; after months of attempting to select a research approach, the representative sample was side-lined.

Nevertheless, the time spent researching action research and mixed methods design was not wasted. The knowledge garnered has provided a solid foundation for future research and for working with early years students. A case study design was also examined. The case study dates back to the early twentieth century; with its roots in the social sciences, it has become a means to explore and understand a bounded phenomenon in a real-world setting to develop descriptive and narrative meaning and insights into the phenomenon question (Merriam, 2009).

Merriam (1998), Yin (2014) and Stake (1995) give three different accounts on case study design (see Table 7). Stake and Merriam 's more flexible approach appeared to best fit my epistemological orientation and align less with Yin's assumptions (post positivists). Nevertheless, it was Yin's embedded case study design that had the most potential to represent this study.

Table 7

Case Study Design

Stake (1995, 2005)	Yin (2014)	Merriam (1998, 2009)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrinsic (studying a specific case) • Instrumental (more than one case). • Collective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive • Exploratory • Explanatory • Illustrative • Evaluative • Single or multiple cases • Embedded or holistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particularistic (focused on a particular phenomenon) • Heuristic (analytical – illuminates readers' understating of the phenomenon) • Descriptive (comprehensive discretion of phenomenon)

However, there remains confusion as to whether the case study is a method, a strategy, a methodology, a design, or just a convenient label applied to social research projects when no other term appears to be available (Cresswell, 2004; Gomm et al., 2000; Tight, 2013; Verschuren, 2003). Stake (2005) also recognised that "here and there, researchers will call anything they please a case study" (p. 445) or, as Merriam (1998) advised, "a sort of catch-all category for research" (p.16). Hammersley (2010) offered a solution and described a case study as a "means of investigating a relatively small number of naturally occurring cases", which can be contrasted with studying a relatively large number of cases (surveys), and also with the investigation of artificially produced cases (experiments) (p.1). Nevertheless, I was open to the possibility that leadership may not be a distinctive phenomenon (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003; Endres &

Weibler, 2020) and as such the case study was not suitable for this study and the focus shifted to a qualitative interview study (Cresswell, 2013, 2014; Creswell et al., 2007; Crotty, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, 2017; Kvale, 1983, 1996; Patton, 2002). It would seem that Hogan and associates (2009) are correct in their assertion that there is no one best way to conduct qualitative research, or that there is one methodological 'silver bullet' to enable us to answer exactly the research question we pose. They stress that formulating the right methodology to address a research question is a reflexive, iterative process, often involving trial and error until the proper approach is defined (Hogan et al., 2009, p.11).

6.3 A qualitative interview design

This study became a qualitative interview study. A qualitative interview study has been described as an approach to "gather descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the research topic "(Kvale, 1983, p 174). Qualitative interview research "attempts to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations" (Kvale, 1996, p. 1). The choice of research methodology is based upon the type and features of the research problem (Crotty, 1989) as such both definitions sit firmly with the aim of this study, to explore how 50 ECEC stakeholders understand and conceptualise ECEC leadership and explore their articulations on the potential ECEC leadership could hold in drawing together the diverse group of Irish practitioners to address their working conditions. The interview in practice is described in detail (Section 5.6.1).

6.4 Samples and Sampling Strategy

The research design has been described as a "rough sketch" or an "abstract drawing" that needs to be filled in and made more concrete by a sampling frame (Devers & Frankel, 2000, p. 264). Sampling, understood as "the selection of specific data sources from which data are collected to address the research objectives" (Gentles et al., 2015, p. 1775), appears to be how to fill in the frame. The case selection is considered one of the most "challenging" aspects of case study research (Yin, 2003, p.13). Robinson (2014) offered a sampling framework that has "four pan-paradigmatic points: setting a sample universe, devising a sample strategy, selecting a sample size, and sample sourcing" (p. 25).

Setting a sample universe involves establishing the target population and the criteria for inclusion in the study (Robinson, 2014). However, the idea of pre-specified criteria to

select participants is a subject of debate in the literature. Gobo (2004) initially advises that sampling should be addressed “sequentially in order to obtain representativeness”, (p. 436) and later suggests that “defining the sampling unit clearly prior to collecting data is important in order to avoid empirically messy and shallow research” (Gobo, 2004, p. 443).

Yin (2009) described the necessity of pre-described data collection techniques, data analysis methods, and a process for selecting cases (priori sampling). Three years later, Yin (2012a) discussed the need to attend to “sampling (or not)”, and Yin (2014) argued for the term “selection” and concluded the most desirable posture might be to avoid referring to any kind of sample (purposive or otherwise) (pp. 42-44). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that many researchers avoid the notion of sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). There were specific characteristics I wished to explore both in the people I hoped to study and the settings or organisations they represented. As such, my sample universe included representatives from all layers of ECEC stakeholders, and purposive or purposeful sampling was chosen to select the participants (Merriam, 1998).

6.4.1 Sample selection

One of the key objectives of the study was to access a broad range of participants (Maximum variation sample) looking for participants with specific experiences and particular expertise in the sector (Key informant sample) (Marshall, 1996, p. 523). Table 8 displays the criteria for selecting samples.

Table 8

Sample Selection Criteria

Maximum variation sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Practitioner •Lecturers •Professional organisations •Government representatives
Specific experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •THE PRACTITIONER •Gender (both men and women) •Class (community/private settings) •Geography (rural/urban setting) •Setting type (all day crèche/sessional service) •Qualifications, age (experience/expertise)
Key informants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Practitioners •Government DES, DCYA, Tusla, NCCA •Professional Organisation: CCC, ACP, ECI and voluntary •Educational Institutions: Universities, Institutes of technology and private colleges

Having established the sample selection criteria, the next stage involved determining a suitable sample size.

6.4.2 Sample size and access to the field

Baker & Edwards (2012) sought to solve the dilemma that student researchers experience when deciding on sample size and approached eminent theorists in the field to give their opinion on sample size for research. Adler and Adler (2012) advised graduate students to sample between 12 and 60, with 30 being the mean, and Ragin suggested that a glib answer is “20 for an M.A. thesis and 50 for a Ph.D. dissertation”. These assumptions reflect the theorist's philosophical tradition, and a suitable sample size for a qualitative study can be just one that “adequately answers the research question” (Marshall, 2001, p. 556). With this information in mind, the number of participants was estimated at a tentative 40-45. I considered this size an adequate and manageable sample to gather an array of views on leadership. The sampling size and cross-case analysis could increase truthfulness and transferability and address the absence of triangulation in the study. This figure left room to add a type of person (education, sex, experience) that may have been overlooked in the original sample universe, and recruitment could lead to other potential cases than was projected (Robinson, 2014).

Ozcan et al., (2017) examined 22 research articles and found only eight spoke about access and obtained entry by the authors' ties such as previous or current employment within the case setting, research or personal relationship, etc. Similarly, I notified a network of ECEC contacts who met the criteria of the study (Table 4) and emailed the relevant people to gain access to ECEC stakeholders.

6.5 Introducing the participants

The study involved a sample of 50 ECEC Participants (see Table 9), consisting of four government representatives (DES, DCYA, DCYA, Tusla) who represented the four central government departments overseeing the ECEC sector. There were three female representatives and one male, and all four had a master's degree or higher and held senior positions in their departments. Eight educational institutions were also represented, including universities, institutes of technology, and private colleges. Of the eight, seven had a Ph.D., and all eight representatives were female. Six of the representatives had over ten years of experience in the field. A representative from the two professional bodies, Early Childhood

Ireland and the Association of Childcare Professionals, seven City/County Child Care Committees, a professional organisation (philanthropic sponsorship), and a representative of the community employment programme (CE) participated in the study. All of this group had a BA or higher qualification, and they were all female. The types of settings, training and qualifications that these participants represented have been described in Chapter 2 (pp. 24-43).

Twelve practitioners and five ECEC owners/managers were also involved. Over 40% of ECEC settings continue to have a Montessori ethos, and 60% of services are urban-based (ECI, 2018c). The study sought to represent these types of settings to include rural and urban, all-day crèche, sessional services, and community or privately-owned settings, thus encompassing the diversity of ECEC settings within the sector. All of the participants in this group were female, except for E6, who was male.

Loxley (2010) advised that the term used to describe the interviewees could reflect the researcher's perspective and paradigm, their worldview. However, in this study, allocating names to 50 participants was not an option. The participants were asked to describe their role, setting type and location, the highest education attained, the time in their current position, and their sex. These criteria were added for cross-analysis in this study and future research.

Table 9

List of Participants in the Study

Stakeholder	Category	Role	Highest Education Attained	Time in current position	Age/Sex Female (F)/Male (M) Other (O)
A	Government Representative	Senior Education al Officer	Ph.D.	10 years+	F 45-54 years
A1	Government Representative	Early Years Advisor	Masters	4 years	F 25-35 years
A3	Government Representative	Senior Officer	Ph.D.	2 years	F 55-64 years
A4	Government Representative	Senior Regulator	Masters	4 years	M 45-54 years
B	Higher Education Institution	Lecturer	Ph.D. Candidate	3 years	F 45-54 years
B1	Higher Education Institution	Assistant Head of School	Ph.D.	10 years+	F 55-64 years
B2	Higher Education Institution	Head of Department	Ph.D.	6 years	F 55-64 years
B3	Higher Education Institution	Head of Department	Ph.D.	10 years +	F 55-64 years
B4	Higher Education Institution	Senior officer	Ph.D.	Year 1	F 55-64 years

B5	Higher Education Institution	Lecturer	Masters	10 years+	F 55-64 years
B6	Higher Education Institution	Head of Department	Ph.D.	10 years+	F 55-64 years
B7	Higher Education Institution	Associate Lecturer	Ph.D. Candidate	10 years+	F 35-44 years
B8	Higher Education Institution	Associate Lecturer	Ph.D. Candidate	8 years	F 35-44 years
B9	Higher Education Institution	Lecturer	Ph.D.	10 years+	F 55-64 years

Stakeholder	Category	Role	Highest Education Attained	Time in current position	Age/Sex Female (F) Male (M) Other (O)
C	Professional Org (State Sponsored)	Early Years Representative	Masters	2 years	F 35-44 years
C1	Professional Org (CCC)	Manager	Masters	10 years+	F 35-44 years
C2	Professional Org (CCC)	Quality Support Officer	BA ECEC	8 Years	F 45-54 years

C3	Professional Org (Voluntary)	Chairperson	P.h.D. Candidate	10yrs+	F 35-44 years
C4	Professional Org (CCC)	Development Officer	BA ECEC	6 years	F 35-44 years
C5	Professional Org (Charitable status)	Early Years Representative	Masters	Years 1	F 45-54 years
C6	Professional Org (CCC)	Childcare Committee co-ordinator	Masters	10 years+	F 35-44 years
C7	Professional Org (CCC)	Development Officer	BA ECEC	7 years	F 35-44 years
C8	Professional Org (CCC)	Manager	Masters Candidate	10yrs+	F 45-54 years
C10	Community Employment Programme (State Sponsored)	Manager	BA ECEC	10yrs+	F 45-54 years
D	Private sessional	Owner	BA ECEC	20 years+	F 45-54 years
D(a)	Private sessional	Practitioner	Level 6	10 years+	F 45-54 years
D1	Rural Community Crèche	Manager	Masters	20 years+	F 45-54 years

D1(a)	Rural Community Crèche	Practitioner	Level 7	10 years+	F 35-44 years
D1(b)	Rural Community Crèche	Practitioner	Level 6	8 years	F 35-44 years

Stakeholder	Category School	Title	Education Level	Experience in current position	Age/Sex Female (F)/ Male (M)/ Other (O)
D2	All day urban private	Manager	Masters Candidate	6 years	F 25-34 years
D2(a)	All day urban private	Room Leader	BA ECEC	5 years	F 25-34 years
D2(b)	All day urban private school	Practitioner	BA ECEC	4 years	F 25-34 years
D3	Private Urban Montessori	Owner	Montessori Dip	10 years+	F 45-54 years
D3(a)	Private Urban Montessori	Practitioner	Montessori Dip	8 years	F 35-44 years
D3(b)	Private Urban Montessori	Practitioner	Montessori Dip	3 years	F 25-34 years
D4	Urban Private	Owner	BA ECEC	10 years+	F 35-44 years
D4(a)	Urban Private	Manager	BA ECEC	4 years	F 25-34 years

D5	Urban Community Crèche	Manager	BA. ECEC	10 years+	F 45-54 years
D5(a)	Urban Community Crèche	Practitioner	Level 7	8 years	F 25-34 years
D5(b)	Urban Community Crèche	Practitioner	BA. ECEC	9 years	F 25-34 years
D5(c)	Urban Community Crèche	Practitioner	Level 6	10 yrs+	F 35-44 years
	Individual Participants				
E1	Urban Private Sessional	Room Leader	BA. ECEC	10 years+	M 45-54 years
E2	Rural Community Crèche	Manager	BA Business	10 years+	F 45-54 years
E3	Withdrew	Withdrew	Withdrew	Withdrew	Withdrew
E4	Urban Early years Centre	Early Intervention	Ph.D. Candidate	4 years	F 45-54 years
E5	Urban Private All day	Owner	BA Business/ BA ECECC Level 8 (student)	10 years+	F 45-54 years
E6	Rural Private/ Sessional	Owner	Masters	10 years+	M 55-64 years

E7	Urban Sessional	Practitioner	Level 5	4 years	F 35-44 years
E8	Rural Community Crèche	Practitioner	Level 5	10 years+	F 35-44 years

6.6 Research methods

Qualitative researchers can employ a broad range of methods in any study to include observations, interviews, and analysis of participants' words. The leading research in the exploration of leadership in ECCE (Aubrey et al., 2013) used a mixed-method research design, as it has been accredited with increasing validity, reliability, and generalizability (Cresswell, 2014). However, quantitative methods of data collection had been explored and had to be rejected in this study (p.112). Similarly, the focus group's experience (M.Ed., 2015) revealed some practitioners did not participate and would have preferred one-to-one interviews. As such, interviews were considered the most appropriate method for data collection. In short, interviews are often seen as one of the best ways to "enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton, 2002, p.341). One-to-one interviews could facilitate collecting large amounts of in-depth data and provide insights into the participant's experiences and attitudes concerning leadership (Ryan et al., 2009). Merriam (1998) presented techniques and procedures for conducting interviews: how to ask good questions, questions to avoid, probes, the interview guide, recording, and the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. All of these were studied in depth.

6.6.1 Generating the data

Theorists in the field have for over two decades debated the prominence and the validity of the interview as a method of data collection in what has become known as the radical critique of interviews (Hammersley V Silverman & Atkinson) (Silverman, 2003, 2013; Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Atkinson, 2015; Hammersley, 2009, 2017). Nevertheless, these and other theorists (Lee 2008; Loxley, 2010; Tomlinson, 1989; Watts & Ebbutt, 1987) concur that the act of interviewing demands close, formal analysis, looking for alternative explanations, and challenging the data.

There were three considerations when choosing the type of interview most suitable for this study: 1) the desire to provide a stress-free experience for the stakeholder, 2) the nature of the information that I wished to gather, 3) feasibility in terms of time (stakeholders led busy lives) and my level of experience. The participants in my M.Ed. study described their uncertainty and unease with discussing leadership and the benefit of having the questions beforehand. Having access to the research questions is considered to increase participants' likelihood of partaking in the study and reduces the power imbalance (Devault & Gross, 2012). Similarly, the less structured the interview, the greater the interviewee's burden to talk. This consideration also informed my decision to choose semi-structured interviews (Loxley, 2010). I attempted to find a balance (semi-structured) between facilitating the interviewee to express their ideas freely, which may not do justice to the research, and conversely, structuring the questions, eliminating the nuances and limiting information (Powney & Watts, 1987; Tomlinson, 1989).

With a specific list of written questions, semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate data-collection method to achieve the balance. They had the potential to ensure that each group answered the same questions, and cross-case comparison could occur (Yin, 1994). There was a consistent order of the questions and similar cues in the entire interview schedules, which increases the potential of "aggregate replies" (Bryman, 2012, p. 210). Nevertheless, there was a window available for the order of the questions to be modified based on the interview's "flow" (Robson, 2011, p. 280).

6.7 The pilot study

Yin (2003) asserts that a pilot study helps refine data collection plans concerning "both the content of the data and the procedures to be followed" (Yin, 2003, p. 79). Loxley (2010) suggested that thorough planning, preparation, and piloting help the researcher come to the interview "as ready as they can be" (p. 28). A pilot study was conducted with a practitioner and a professional organisation representative (November 16, 2016) in their chosen location. Both participants acknowledged the stimulating nature of the questions, which, they proposed, instigated a deeper awareness of their leadership responsibility and role in the sector. However, while this was very positive feedback, the experience appeared to be somewhat different. The participants continuously apologised for their lack of knowledge and confusion concerning the topic. Nevertheless, after much reassurance that it did not matter what they said, it was all valuable information, they were more at ease.

A general opening question on ECEC may be required to ease the participants into the interview. Dick (1998, 2016) referred to this as a convergent interviewing approach,

where a very broad question is asked (what is the purpose of ECEC?) to help relax the stakeholder and allow information to emerge not predetermined by the research questions. The item on class created some unease, and the practitioner asked what I meant by class. In response, I offered a wordy description of class status, class and economic position, and women and class, and the ensuing conversation with the practitioner was limited to my descriptions. Upon reflection, what I should have done was reflect back the question and asked what they thought it meant and could their understanding of class influence how leadership is understood and practised in these settings. The concept of leadership is an ambiguous one. The participants found it challenging to articulate their conceptualisations of leadership clearly; what ensued was a long meandering discussion on why there was no leadership, and the original question – how do you understand leadership? got lost in this narrative.

Consequently, in future interviews, it might be helpful to ask the question: “in a couple of sentences, could you summarise how you think leadership is understood and practised, and how leadership/other strategies could be developed? The practitioner suggested that having access to specific questions before the interview, especially in an area as new and confusing as leadership, was very helpful and would put participants' minds at rest in the future. The professional organisation representative proposed that it might be helpful to ask the participants to name a leader in ECEC. While these suggestions merited consideration, nonetheless, this could be considered a leading question and could be construed that leadership involves a specific role, rather than a collaborative process. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and summaries of both interviews were documented immediately after the interviews (Appendix H).

6.8 The process: Semi-structured interviews

An outline of the study's intentions and a consent form (Appendices I and J), along with the interview schedule, were sent to the stakeholders (Appendix K) before the interview. The intention was to provide the stakeholders with the interview questions, reflect on their understandings of leadership, and ask any questions they might have (Brundrett & Rhodes, 2014). The Interviews commenced in November 2016, and the dates are outlined in an interview log (Appendix L).

The interviews were in the main collaborative and informative. However, two/three of the interviews were confrontational, and the notion of “ready as you can be” came to mind (Loxley, 2010). In these interviews, it would seem that the topic was immaterial, the questions (especially class) irrelevant to the sector, and I (representing “them”) was

responsible for the difficulties in the sector. At best, I tried to hold the conversation and mirror back these claims and attempted to tease them out; at worst, the encounter appeared to have been futile. However, during the analysis, these interviews provided much food for thought, and on more than one occasion, what I considered antagonistic was very insightful. As a case in point, Lecturer B4 stated “no there is no need for leadership; let them sort themselves out; the primary teachers did it”. This statement came across as very dismissive of the practitioner and leadership; however, regardless of the tone it was delivered in, this statement was insightful and congruent with practitioners; they wished to sort out their issues and did not want further support from mentors in the sector.

Two of the interviews were conducted by telephone; the lack of visual cues in this interviewing mode made it challenging to decipher the participants' overall reaction to the questions. However, unlike the literature, the telephone did not shorten the interview; the interviews were longer (Irvine et al., 2013). This reinforces the assertion that people like to talk about themselves: they enjoy the sociability of the discussion and are pleased that somebody is interested in them (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 103). The interviews were transcribed verbatim (Appendix: M). next step involved analysing the data.

6.9 Data analysis

There is no clear and accepted set of conventions for analysing qualitative data (Robson, 2011). Yin (2009, 2012b) advised that data analysis involves constructing categories or themes, naming the categories and sub-categories, and developing systems for placing the data into these categories and data themes. Thematic analysis can “describe, understand, and explain what has taken place in the context of the selected case” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 101). Clarke and Braun’s (2013a, b) and Braun and Clarke (2006) understanding of thematic analysis reflected this process, searching across a data set “to find repeated patterns of meaning”, interpreting and making sense of the data, reporting themes found (Clarke & Braun, 2013b, p. 85). However, thematic analysis has been criticised for the lack of substantial literature on the subject. The analytical process's flexibility can result in a lack of coherence and irregularities (Holloway & Todres, 2003). However, establishing the epistemological position underpinning the study's empirical claims can reduce both (Holloway & Todres, 2003). As such, examining different research participants' perspectives, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating surprising insights aligns with my constructivist feminist position. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six stages for doing thematic analysis guided the study and included 1) becoming familiar with the data 2) generating initial codes 3) searching for themes 4) reviewing themes 5) defining themes

6) writing-up. It should be noted that while the process appears in stages, the analysis was not a straightforward process but more of a “recursive process”, where movement went back and forth throughout the phases (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). Reflective journals (Figure 12) and a specific analysis journal (Figure 13) served as the mechanism to document and reflect on this process.

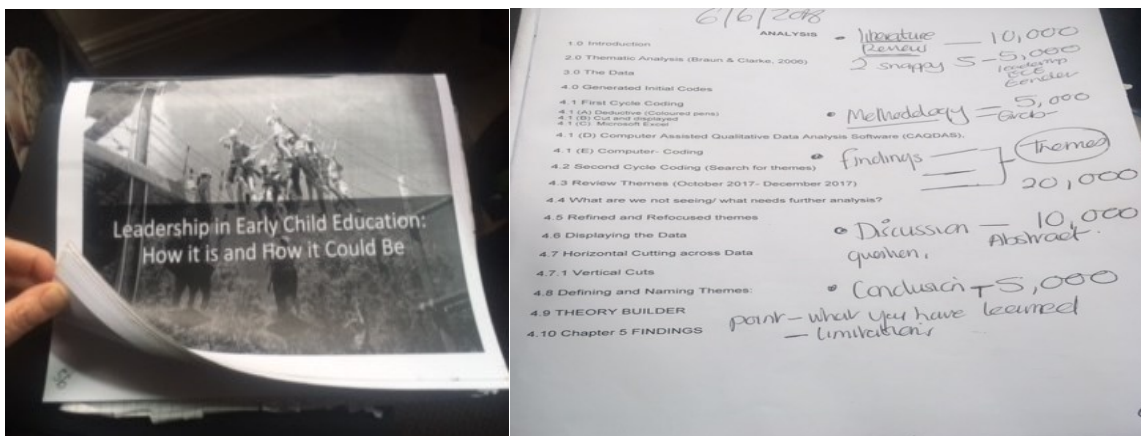
Figure 12

Reflective Journals



Figure 13

Analysis Journal



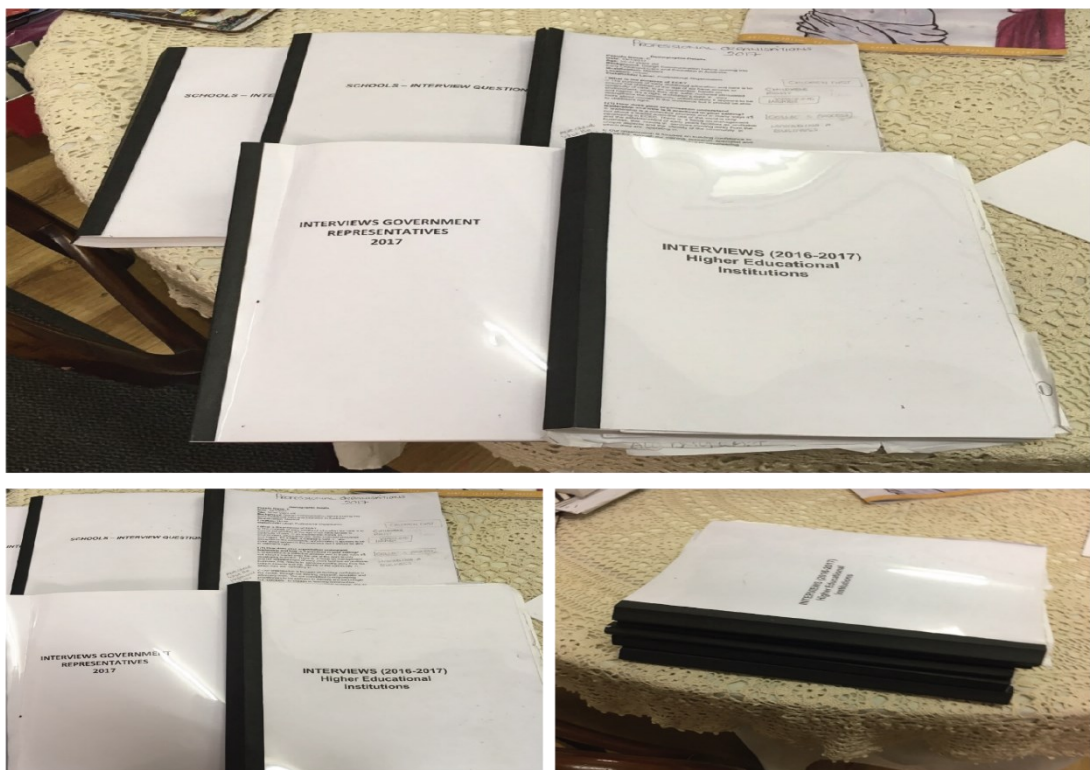
6.9.1 Becoming familiar with the data and generating initial codes

The analysis and interpretation were concurrent with data collection; memos were written and reflected on after each interview to evaluate the interview questions and the (Appendix N). The desire to analyse transparently and comprehensively necessitated using both a deductive and an abductive approach to coding (Blaikie, 2005). This approach included formulating predetermined higher-order codes (deductive), including class and gender (theoretical framework) and relationships, leadership supports, and leadership development (research questions) to begin the process of managing a large volume of data. The approach to the coding was also open to new insights (inductive), allowing ideas to emerge from the data (Silver & Lewins, 2014) (Appendix O). The interviews were transcribed verbatim after which—

- A) The interviews were printed and bound according to the different cases, and brush coding across the data set occurred (coloured highlighters) several times (Figure 14).

Figure 14

Printed Interviews



However, it was not easy to quickly compare the content of one interview with that of another.

- A) The transcripts were cut up with scissors, and the relevant words, phrases, or sentences were put into the established coding categories (Figure 15).

Figure 15

Manual Coding



- B) The ideas and patterns were interrogated, and themes were identified. While this was time-consuming, it provided an overall visual view of the data. The disadvantages related to codes removed from their context patterns and a tendency to squeeze the data into these themes.

- C) A Microsoft excel sheet followed as it was considered a “simple, cost-effective approach ... for organising, coding and classifying data” and does not require

advanced knowledge of the software (Bree & Gallagher, 2016, p. 2819). However, it was found to be time-consuming and required a high level of organisation.

- D) At this stage, it was considered best to set up a “container” for analysis, which could help with the data's organisation and the cyclical and iterative nature of qualitative research (Silver & Lewins, 2014, p. 113). After much study of the CAQDA Software packages, HyperRESEARCH 3.75 was selected. Sharlene Hesse-Biber and her partners at Boston College created this software (Appendix P). The underlying philosophy is that less time should be given to research mechanics and more time spent on the research itself.

6.9.2 Searching for themes

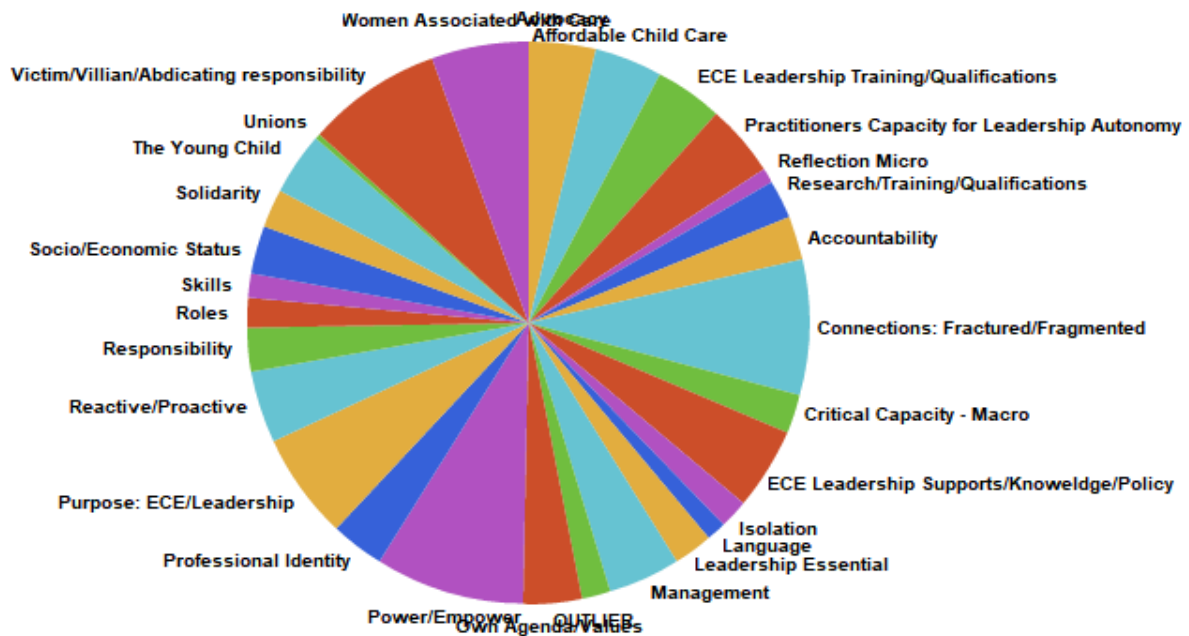
The initial codes from A and B were fed into the software and their frequency was tallied (Appendix Q). Second cycle coding involved working with the first cycle codes refining, recoding, and reflecting (Silver & Lewis, 2014, p. 193) (Appendix R). Horizontal cuts helped to examine the body of coded data in its entirety for general themes and vertical cuts across the provided patterns and relationships to be identified and visualised on a sequential level (Silver & Lewins, 2014, p. 200) (Appendix S). The themes were reviewed, and potential patterns were established.

6.9.3 Reviewing and defining themes

At this time, HyperRESEARCH 4.0 offered an opportunity to work with a more advanced software package, and the process was repeated, facilitating the depth of analysis. This software facilitated weighting the codes and provided a theory builder (Appendix V).

This study's codes and themes were then subsumed into more general classes through continual reiterations until the theme/category was “saturated” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 286). During this phase, several themes did not have enough data to support them, or the data was too diverse (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and as such, they were side-lined (Figure 16).

Figure 16

Side lined codes**Potential Themes**

1. Power/Empowered
2. Gender- Women and care, young child
3. Class – Victim/villain, socio- economic, capacity
4. Purpose - management
5. Fragmented relationships
6. Supports – Critical reflexivity, training, qualifications, research
7. Reactive/Proactive policy
8. Accountability

Question (Sideline)?

- Language?
- Unions – only 3 participants?
- Professional Identity (mentioned repeatedly by only 4 participants)?
- Merge critical reflexivity (Macro/micro)?
- Merge isolation with connections/relationships?
- Merge roles/skills?

The categories were exhibited on several content-analytic summary tables, which brought together all relevant and related data from the stakeholders' interviews into a single form. Miles, et al., (2014) have suggested that “good displays are a major avenue to robust qualitative analysis ... you know what you display” (p. 13) (Appendix T). Several cyclical and

iterative analysis stages culminated in identifying, defining, and displaying six final themes and subthemes (Figure 13). I returned to examine the original data and employed the software to weight the themes (Appendix V) and the theory builder (Appendix V) both confirmed the themes were grounded in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Table 10

Final Themes and Sub- themes

Theme	Sub-theme
Leadership: "For whom, for what and to what end"?	Leadership: What is it all about? Leadership to what end?
Better Before: "All way better before the free years"	Reactive Policy The Practitioner: Empowered/Powerless? The ECEC Exodus
Management not Leadership "Management is how leadership is now"	Affordable Childcare Accountable Childcare
Gender and Care "No care for women who care"	The young child - Who Cares? Careless supports Careless relationships
Class "Class is there, it is everywhere"	The Practitioner: Villain/Victim? Leadership: Capacity/No Expectation? Class Avoidance
Leadership "The only way forward?"	Purpose Critical consciousness Relationships Care

Qualitative analysis can be "evocative, illuminating, masterful, and wrong" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 293). This study looked to the methodological strategies associated with Trustworthiness & Transferability, that is, truth-value, neutrality, consistency, and

applicability that had the potential to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings and credibility of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Truth-value acknowledges that there are multiple realities. The researcher's experiences and beliefs can create methodological bias, and there is an understanding that the researchers will accurately present the participants' perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While the areas of "truth" and "lies" and trust are deeply problematic, researchers are required to explain how they work with the various issues at all stages and in all aspects of the research process (Loxley, 2010, p. 12). As such, the choices in this research design called into question how I was going to minimise bias. Truth-value is interlinked with the notion of neutrality, acknowledging the complexity of prolonged engagement with participants and that the methods undertaken, and findings are intrinsically linked to the researchers' philosophical position, experiences, and perspectives. Consistency refers to the research process's trustworthiness and the analytical procedures to the point that other researchers should be able to reach similar or analogous findings. Applicability asks can the research findings, in this case, be applied to different ECEC settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Yin (2014) and Merriam (1998) assert that trustworthiness and transferability need to be addressed from the onset of the study. With this in mind, each phase of this study was planned, reflected on, and evaluated thoroughly (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014). The aim was to align the research questions and purpose with the most appropriate research approach to provide a detailed description of how ECEC leadership is conceptualised by representatives in all of the sector's layers. There are various criteria used to establish trustworthiness (Patton, 2002) and Tong et al., (2007) devised the "COREQ checklist to promote explicit and comprehensive reporting of qualitative studies (interviews and focus groups)" (p 355). The checklist consists of items specific to reporting qualitative studies. The criteria included in the checklist acted as a guide for this study to report important aspects of the research, study methods, context of the study, findings, analysis and interpretations in a bid to increase trustworthiness.

Figure 17

A framework for reporting qualitative research

No	Item	Guide questions/description
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity		
Personal Characteristics		
1.	Interviewer/facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?
2.	Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials? <i>E.g. PhD, MD</i>
3.	Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?
4.	Gender	Was the researcher male or female?
5.	Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?
Relationship with participants		
6.	Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?
7.	Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? <i>e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research</i>
8.	Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? <i>e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic</i>
Domain 2: study design		
Theoretical framework		
9.	Methodological orientation and Theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? <i>e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis</i>
Participant selection		
10.	Sampling	How were participants selected? <i>e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball</i>
11.	Method of approach	How were participants approached? <i>e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email</i>
12.	Sample size	How many participants were in the study?
13.	Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?
Setting		
14.	Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? <i>e.g. home, clinic, workplace</i>
15.	Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?
16.	Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? <i>e.g. demographic data, date</i>
Data collection		
17.	Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?
18.	Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?
19.	Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?
20.	Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?
21.	Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?
22.	Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?
23.	Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?
Domain 3: analysis and findings		
Data analysis		
24.	Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?
25.	Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?
26.	Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?
27.	Software	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?
28.	Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?
Reporting		
29.	Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes / findings? Was each quotation identified? <i>e.g. participant number</i>
30.	Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?
31.	Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?
32.	Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?

Tong, A., Sainsbury, P., & Craig, P. (2007). Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups, *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 19(6), 349–357. <https://doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzm042>

However, there is no evidence to suggest that following a tick box framework increases Trustworthiness and Transferability. As such, the following were given priority. Defining (A qualitative interview study) being selective (50 stakeholders) and specific (Criteria p.145) in identifying the participants, site, and process to be explored. The method of data collection (Semi-structured interviews) and the analysis process (Thematic analysis and use of multiple methods to analyse the data) were rigorously undertaken. Creating a *time frame* (pp. 113-114), conducting a *pilot study* (p.130), and outlining the *study's limitations* (p.145) are all considered powerful tools to maintain intellectual honesty and support transferability in research (Yin, 2014).

In the interest of consistency, there was a similar data collection procedure for each participant, and a consistent set of initial questions for each interview undertaken (Yin, 1998). Transcripts were checked for obvious mistakes, and a concerted effort was made to ensure that there was no drift in definitions of codes or the application of them during the coding process. I was aware that the interviews could not provide a definitive “reality” and are more about performances than the notion of an authentic self (Denzin, 2001, p.6). This included my performance. In this knowledge, in a bid to address truth value, there was “a critical hesitancy” in accepting the data at face value, and I remained open to contrary evidence (Alvesson, 2003). Table 11 outlines the process of safeguarding transferability and trustfulness through each phase of the study.

Table 11

Trustfulness and Transferability

Process	Means of Establishing	
	Truth value/Neutrality	Consistency/Applicability
Research Approach	The inclusion of many ECEC voices (50 participants) Cross case analysis Limitations of the study	Clear link from policy/literature review, theoretical framework research questions to research framework Time Frame
Interview	Reflexive Journal How do my values and attitudes and beliefs enter the research process? Do I only ask questions from my perspective? How does my own agenda shape what I ask and what I find? (Harding,1993). Address protractive engagement with participants (Merriam, 1998, 2001) Pilot Study	Similar data collection procedure for each participant Consistent set of initial questions for each interview undertaken (Yin, 1998).
Analysis	Multiple methods to analyse the data Weighted (Codes counted numerically) Reflexive journal - the human instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Audit trail of code generation	Multiple sources of analysis – Coding by hand, software packages. Audit trail - Data retained and available for reanalysis by others? (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 278).
Phases of thematic analysis Braun & Clarke, 2006 Becoming familiar with the data Generating Initial Codes	Protracted engagement with data Document theoretical and reflective thoughts potential codes/themes Stored raw data in well-organised archives Kept records of all data transcripts, and reflexive journal (Nowell et al., 2017) A coding framework	Kept records of all data transcripts, and reflexive journal Weighting the codes charting a clear chain of progression
Searching for and refining themes	HyperRESEARCH 3.75 and 4 Mapping to make sense of theme connections detailed notes of development and hierarchies - concepts and themes. Analytic summary tables Miles, et al., (2014) “ <i>you know what you display</i> ” Theme names reflected the words of the participants	Findings contrasted with the broader literature, identified the findings were endorsed, contradicted, or added to the current body of knowledge on the subject

Yin's (2014) advice to maintain professional competence includes keeping up with related research. I continued to read and review the continuously-evolving reforms and policies in the sector (July 2020) to ensure that the participants' perspectives were considered and rooted in current policy and literature. Miles et al. (2014) point out that doing qualitative research with the occasional support of numbers is a productive way of keeping analytically honest, guarding against bias, and examining how reliable the insights are. Thus, the codes were weighted (counted numerically), noting the frequency of the data (W=). This *quantizing* of the qualitative data by turning qualitative codes into quantitative variables becomes what Hesse-Biber describes as a "heuristic feminist tool," capable of enabling analytical rigour (2012, p. 140) (Appendix U).

Lennie (2006) advises:

It is not your job to tell others what your story means for them – that is, it is not your job to generalise from your context to other peoples. If you tell your story well, others will be able to judge whether there are insights and strategies that might apply or be worth trying in their context. (p. 35)

As such, keeping "clear tracks" (p. 591) and a "decision trail" (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 34) throughout the study and this chapter should enable the reader to not so much recreate, but explore how the study progressed from the "initial research questions to the final conclusions" (Yin, 1994, p. 102). Reflective journals (Figure 12) were established. Reflective and analytical notes were written during the research to facilitate transparency in the research process (Lauckner et al., 2012). Piloting the instruments, weighting the codes, and charting a transparent chain of progression through this process and the decisions I made (similar to how this chapter was formulated) in these reflective journals helped to strengthen truth-value (Dodson et al., 2006). Nevertheless, I acknowledge there may [un]intentional bias, and I have documented where I think this may have occurred in the discussion chapter.

In short, the study, in line with feminist theory, focused firmly on reflexivity in the research process (Beckman, 2014; Worell, 1996). This process acknowledges that I ultimately chose the research approach, the sample, and the data-collection method as the researcher. I became the instrument for analysis, making decisions concerning coding, defining, and refining themes, all of which were influenced by my paradigm. The study commenced with this understanding and recognised that my experiences and lived reality could influence the research process.

6.10 The researcher's positionality

Blaikie proposed that good qualitative research should "show the hand of the researcher" (2005, p. 591). I was aware of the need to examine my lived experiences, beliefs, motives, and values along with my sex, class, race, and age, as they all had the potential to influence every aspect of this study. My background was primarily a Montessori one, where it became second nature to observe, reflect, and question all that I did. While I had/have no difficulty expressing these thoughts on paper, I had/have, however, some problems with others reading these thoughts. This probably emanates from my Catholic upbringing and my teenage years in boarding school, where it was considered a sin against God and humanity to talk about yourself. While I did not affiliate or adhere to the nuns' teachings, I have difficulty discussing my experiences, and writing in the first person does not come naturally.

There is also the notion that there are "potentially dangerous effects" of speaking for others through research (Bodwitch, 2014, p.1). To ensure I heard and represented the participants' voices in the study (and not my voice), I avoided what Pillow described as the "desire to be close to the subject, to write ourselves as close to our subjects" (Pillow, 2003, p. 182), which was not the motive behind this study. Nevertheless, I came to realise (after much reflection and prompting from my supervisors) that the idea of objectivity had "oppressive potential": it allowed the researcher to become detached from the responsibility of the effects of any assertions they made and allowed them to "see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation" (Haraway, 1988, p. 581). I read Sandra Harding's *Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity"?* (1993). I respected and acknowledged her argument that considering one's standpoint during all stages of a research process maximises objectivity for the researcher and ensures that the respondent's voice is listened to, represented, and understood throughout the research process.

Pillow asked that a researcher in a privileged position by class, gender, race, and nationality define him/herself (Pillow, 2003, p. 183). Harding outlined some questions to ask, including how to do my values and attitudes, and beliefs, enter into the research process. Do I only ask questions from my perspective? How does my agenda shape what I ask and what I find? (1993). As such, several reflective journals were created, where reflective and analytical notes were written during the research process, paying particular attention to the feminist practice of holistic reflexivity (Hesse-Biber, & Piatelli, 2012; Lauckner, et al., 2012) and along with discussions with my supervisors and colleagues helped me to acknowledge

my biases, values and beliefs and how they impacted on the study, in particular the analysis (Bolton, 2010).

Therefore, in the interest of transparency, I have worked in the ECE sector for over thirty years. I have had many similar lived experiences to the practitioners in this study. However, my role as self-employed/owner of a Montessori school and lecturer, coupled with my access to and completion of several third-level qualifications, diverges from many of the stakeholders' experiences. Consequently, I acknowledge that my assumptions and expectations of the stakeholder's understandings of leadership and their (un)willingness to question their situation and improve it may be coloured by my own experiences. My educational and lived experiences have equipped me with the knowledge and confidence to question and contest the economic, gendered, classed, and political ideologies that may be underpinning ECEC to develop the sector.

My age was also considered a factor that required reflection. It could be reasoned that I had the time, experience, knowledge, and economic position to pursue this vision, unlike many practitioners who are struggling to keep their schools afloat or those on minimum wage trying to survive. Similarly, my age positioned me as a member of an older generation compared to the majority of the practitioners and many of the professional organisation representatives. Therefore, I was cognisant that there might be a generational difference in values, beliefs, and expectations surrounding ECEC, gender, class, and care, and I was particularly alert to this during the analysis.

It has been recognised that the most alienated feminist battles are centred on childcare (Fraser, 2016), with many of these being intergenerational battles (Gordon, 2016). Similarly, many ECE stakeholders in government and professional organisations appeared to be removed from the everyday workings of ECE settings and did not have the first-hand experiences of the difficulties experienced by the practitioners and did not share my experience of this situation. These factors, along with my passionate desire to help develop the working conditions in the sector (my agenda), and my affiliation with critical theory and emancipatory research, required questioning.

I became aware that it was enough to start the conversation and explore what ECE leadership meant to the stakeholders. Therefore, the research questions reflected this understanding, moving beyond my agenda, values, and attitudes. The issue of placing myself as an insider in the research process could create a safe environment for the participants. However, I was also aware of the negative side of this where pertinent issues may be overlooked or taken for granted as "shared knowledge" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.142).

6.11 Ethical considerations

There is always the possibility of causing harm and stress to the research participants. Consequently, this study adhered to the School of Education and their Research Ethics guidelines (Trinity College Dublin (TCD), 2016). There was a precondition of voluntary consent from the stakeholders. The questions and an outline of the intentions of the study and consent were made available to all the participants prior to the meeting. The participants were advised on the issues of confidentiality, anonymity and the choice to withdraw from the study. Several steps to ensure the confidentiality of participants were employed including: the participants were only asked their sex, age and school address, participant codes were used to label data instead of using names and a separate list of code-to-name match-ups was kept in a safe place. The participants have been/will be given an alias when recording, presenting, or publishing data. The participants were at liberty to end the exploration at any time. The data was always protected and stored securely.

Trinity College Dublin's Policy on Good Research Practice (TCD, 2009) recommended that research data should be stored and protected by a password, and encryption (for electronic data). The Data Protection Commissioner advocated the use of encryption technology to protect data stored on remote devices because they are more prone to loss or theft, and normal username/password access may not be sufficient to protect against unlawful access to the information stored on the device. Alternatively, data can be kept securely under lock and key (hard copy) (TCD, 2009, p.24). In this study I utilised both.

6.12 Limitations of the study

The lack of a register of ECEC employees limited the scope of this study and prevented employing a mixed method research design. Nevertheless, investing the time (that a survey would have required) in semi-structured interviews, provided the opportunity for the ECEC stakeholders to have their voice heard" (Yin, 2012a). The difficulty of acquiring documentation on policy may have resulted in gaps in the policy analysis. Perhaps the biggest limitation is the absence of the voice of the parent and the child's voice. As the study progressed, it became apparent that care was a significant issue and the parents' understandings and the child's articulation on the subject would have added greatly to the study. The child's voice was included in my M.Ed. research and the children's contributions were noteworthy. The absence of race in the study is regrettable, but as described earlier, the challenge of gaining access to the settings would have been heightened by stipulating any of the following: gender, qualification level, age, race, and years of experience. Race has not received much attention in ECEC research and needs to be addressed. However,

despite the widespread use of race and ethnicity as quantitative variables in other disciplines, it is unclear whether researchers use them in their proper context, where often race and ethnicity represent biological facts not social experiences to explain the phenomenon under study (Ross et al., 2020). Finally, time was a limiting factor. There never seems to be enough time to read, interview, analyse and draw conclusions (PhD discussion forum, 2017). Conversely, to achieve great things, two things are needed: a plan, and not quite enough time (Bernstein, 1989).

6.13 Summary

This study proposed to advance understandings and explanations of ECEC leadership by listening to and interpreting the ECEC stakeholders' understandings and experiences of leadership. To do this, the study was underpinned by a feminist theoretical framework, Dual Systems theory (Eisenstein, 1979). A qualitative interview study comprising of semi-structured interviews with a sample of 50 ECEC stakeholders. The data garnered from the participants' interviews was transcribed and analysed. The ethical concerns were noted including anonymity, confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher's positionality was also addressed, acknowledging the life experiences, values and beliefs that could impact on the study and the limitations of the study were noted. Figure 14 provides a graphic summary of this chapter.

Chapter 7 Findings 1

The findings from the interviews with 50 representatives from the ECEC sector (Practitioners, Lecturers, Professional Organisation, and Government Representatives) are presented in this and the following chapter. The findings revealed participants 1) understandings of leadership, 2) how they perceived leadership was practised in ECEC settings and 3) their articulations of the supports in place for leadership; 4) the influences on, and 5) the possibilities for leadership development in an Irish context. During the analysis, six themes emerged (see Table 12).

Table 12

Themes and Sub-themes revisited

Theme	Sub-theme
<p>Leadership: “For whom, for what and to what end”?</p>	<p>Leadership: What is it all about? Leadership to what end?</p>
<p>Better Before: “All way better before the free years”</p>	<p>Reactive Policy The Practitioner: Empowered/Powerless? The ECEC Exodus</p>
<p>Management not Leadership “Management is how leadership is now”</p>	<p>Affordable Childcare Accountable Childcare</p>
<p>Gender and Care “No care for women who care”</p>	<p>The young child - Who Cares? Careless supports Careless relationships</p>
<p>Class “Class is there, it is everywhere”.</p>	<p>The Practitioner: Villain/Victim? Leadership: Capacity/No Expectation? Class Avoidance</p>
<p>Leadership “The only way forward?”</p>	<p>Purpose Critical consciousness Relationships Care</p>

7.1 The themes and subthemes

The first three of the six themes will be discussed in this chapter. The first theme was:

- 1) *Leadership “for whom; for what and to what end”* which outlined the difficulty participants (excluding Government representatives) had in marrying their understanding of the purpose of ECEC and ECEC leadership within the Government’s prescribed leadership roles and their ever-changing economic (quality, quantity, and equality) rationales for ECEC.
- 2) Participants considered both leadership and the sector to have been *Better Before* the introduction of the ECCE scheme (DCYA, 2010) and the corresponding regulatory and administrative requirements.
- 3) Consequently, participants stressed that *Management* (of these reforms) not *Leadership* was predominately practised in the ECEC setting.

The study involved a sample of 50 ECEC Participants (see Table 9), consisting of four government representatives (DES, DCYA, DCYA, Tusla). Eight educational institutions were also represented, including universities, institutes of technology, and private colleges. A representative from the two professional bodies, Early Childhood Ireland and the Association of Childcare Professionals, seven City/County Child Care Committees, a professional organisation (philanthropic sponsorship), and a representative of the community employment programme (CE) participated in the study. Twelve practitioners and five ECEC owners/managers were also involved.

Allocating names to 50 participants was not an option. The four government representatives had the letter A attached, and they became Gov A1 – A4. Similarly, the eight Higher Educational Institution Representatives were assigned the letter B (B1-B8) and the Professional Organisations representatives the letter C (C1 -C11). The term Practitioner (D and E) covers the overall group of participants working in the settings; the term Owner/Manager denotes when this latter group speaks independently of the main group of Practitioners. Table 10 exhibits the abbreviations and symbols identifying participants in the study.

Table 13**Participants' Abbreviations and Symbols**

Stakeholder	Abbreviation	Symbol
Government Representative	Gov	A
Higher Educational Institution Representative	Lecturer	B
Professional Organisation Representative	Prof Org	C
ECEC School	Qwner/Manager Practitioner	D
Individual Practitioner	Practitioner	E

Table 14**Interview Questions**

**The main question is in bold print and the bullet points underneath are possible topics for discussion*

1. How do you/your organisation understand leadership and how is it practised in early childhood care and education settings?

- How do you think leadership is practised in ECCE settings? Leadership/management?
- What can we do to build a better understanding of leadership (knowledge) and leadership practice (skills)?

2. How do international organisations or government departments and their policies inform and support ECCE leadership?

- Are there policies at international/national level to inform leadership training?
- Is there a requirement or guidelines for developing/implementing a leadership module? How does your organisation address leadership?
- Are there support structures or Irish literature available on leadership in early childhood education?
- Why is there leadership support for primary and secondary teachers and not for ECEC? Could this area be improved, how?

3. How do you /your organisation relate to ECCE settings and the wider educational and political arena?

- How much contact has your organisation with ECCE settings?
- Do you have any connection to national government/international organisations and do you have any input into the development of ECCE policies?
- Does your organisation have any connection/collaboration with other organisations?
- How can we improve relationships within/without the ECCE community?

4. How do the following influences impact on the understanding, relationships, and practice of leadership?

- Gender, class?
- Are there other influences that could be assisting the practice of leadership?
- Are there other influences that may be preventing leadership practice?

5. How would you/your organisation envisage and develop leadership?

What form should ECCE leadership take?

- How can we develop this form of leadership?
- If not leadership, what are the alternative interventions to address the difficulties being experienced by the ECCE practitioners?
- In three or four sentences, describe how leadership is and how it could be

Participants were asked the question: What is the purpose of early childhood education (ECEC)? as a device to help them settle into the interview. Prof Org C1 expressed the sentiment of many when she alleged that the purpose of ECEC “was anyone's guess” (683,707). Nevertheless, Prof Org C7 voiced the majority opinion “the purpose is to take care of children while parents work, we could talk all day about the benefits for children, but essentially this is what it is, affordable childcare” (305,457). This understanding was confirmed by Gov A4 who advised that “affordable and legitimate childcare choice for parents is paramount, and legislation is set out to meet the parent's needs” (2529, 2641). The majority of participants (excluding Government representatives) tentatively referred back to the purpose of ECE throughout the interviews, and this uncertainty framed their discussion on leadership, with most of the stakeholders only beginning to make sense of the purpose ECE leadership by the end of their interview.

7.2 Theme 1

<p>Theme 1</p> <p>Leadership: “For whom, for what, and to what end?”</p>	<p>Sub-theme 1</p> <p>Leadership: What is it all about? Leadership to what end?</p>
---	--

As mentioned above, participants were asked the question: What is the purpose of early childhood education (ECEC), as a device to help them relax into the interview. Most participants appeared to be challenged by this question and advised that they had never thought about it. As such, this question inadvertently influenced the questions on leadership and gave rise to a dominant theme, *Leadership: “for whom for what and to what end?”* (Lecturer B2: 5820, 5943).

The Practitioners, in general, placed the development and care of the child at the centre of ECEC. Lecturer B3 expressed the Lecturers’ understanding that the purpose of ECEC “is to support and facilitate the learning and development of the growing child” (262,514). The Professional Organisations asserted that the early years setting was primarily concerned with supporting and developing relationships with children, their families, and communities. Both groups referred to Siolta (CECDE, 2006) and Aistear (NCCA, 2009) as the source of their ideas. The Government representatives were split on the purpose of ECEC, with A, A1, and A3 speaking about children's learning and A4 referring to the function of ECEC “under the new Minister a social service just like the Nordic countries where child

care is seen as an assistance for families to go to work” (Gov A4:8755,8996). Prof Org C1 expressed the sentiment of many when she alleged that the purpose of ECEC “was anyone's guess” (683,707). Nevertheless, Prof Org C7 voiced the majority opinion: “the purpose is to take care of children while parents work, we could talk all day about the benefits for children, but essentially this is what it is, affordable childcare” (305,457). “I think ECEC could be called a convenience, affordable places for people to leave their children to go to work” (Lecturer B9: 987,1328).

This understanding was confirmed by Gov A4 who advised that “affordable and legitimate childcare choice for parents is paramount, and legislation is set out to meet the parent's needs” (2529, 2641). Most of the participants (excluding Government representatives) tentatively referred back to the purpose of ECEC throughout the interviews, and this uncertainty framed their discussion on leadership, with most participants only beginning to make sense of the purpose ECEC leadership by the end of their interview.

7.2.1 Leadership: What is it all about?

Participants (49) were able to articulate a clear description of the roles associated with leadership. However, E7 (Practitioner – level 5) advised that *she* did not “know very much about leadership ... I hope when I do levels 6 and 7, I will know more” (1087, 1179). The remaining participants agreed that creating a vision, teamwork, and developing trusting relationships were a vital part of leadership. Conversely, two participants did not view these roles as leadership; Practitioner E4 specified that it was the manager's role to support teamwork and create a vision. Gov A4 asserted that vision was fine, but vision never got anything done:

Visionary people have got a significant kicking, in that with this great vision they have misappropriated funds, so the issue has emerged really, that you can have vision but unless you know how to implement that vision, that involves Governance and responsibility, accountability, without these it is not going to happen. (13350-13653).

Despite the variation in their responses, nonetheless participants' understanding of leadership could be divided into three schools of thought. The Professional Organisation representatives described leadership as a democratic and collaborative relational process, which is “underpinned by ethical principles and values” (Prof Org C5: 410, 1031). Secondly, leadership was understood as an authoritative and regulatory process involved with

accountability and Governance; the Practitioners and Gov A4 voiced this view. Finally, most of the Lecturers viewed leadership as both a role and a relational process, embedded in a particular philosophy. Leadership was embedded in the philosophy of the United Nations Children's Rights Charter (UNCRC, 1989) and a Montessori philosophy where leadership is concerned with independent decision-making and responsibility. There was also the claim that with leadership, everyone was considered a leader (Gov A, A1, A3, and Lecturer B3). However, only two participants mentioned advocacy as a leadership role, with Professional Organisation C announcing that it was their role and mandate to advocate for the sector. When the remaining participants were asked specifically, was advocacy a leadership role, 44 participants conceded that it was a leadership role at a higher level of the sector: "Advocacy is a leadership role, but perhaps it is better left to the professional organisations who know how to do this well" (Prof Org C2: 4331, 4712).

7.2.2 Leadership: To what end?

The Government representatives were confident in articulating the purpose of leadership. Gov. A and A1 advised that leadership should be concerned with children's learning. "My department focuses on pedagogical leadership ... leading involves facilitating, supporting, and implementing the theories, goals, assessment outlined in Aistear and the practise guide" (Gov A: 1186, 1478). Gov A3 added the "area that interests us is ... [leadership for] inclusion and the Leaner fund and LINK to support this" (12143, 12271). Gov. A4 asserted that ECEC leadership involved overseeing the regulations, inspections, and ensuring good "governance and accountability to improve the quality of ECEC for parents and children. Leadership has to be regulated. If it is left to chance it will never happen" (13655, 13830). It was challenging to ascertain how the other participants understood leadership, as they found it difficult to articulate the purpose of ECEC leadership: "there is too much confusion about what we are doing" (Prof Org C10: 3225, 3756).

Leadership in the sector, we don't even know what the sector is, there is no sector, and there is confusion and a division between community and private, between Government departments, between colleges ... where would you lead to, who would you lead? (Lecturer B6: 15796, 16052)

The Practitioners, Professional Representatives, and Lecturers explained that the Government had created several leadership positions and leadership had become all about these roles, with no input from the ECEC stakeholders. The government had created; a room leader as a prerequisite for the ECCE scheme, leadership for learning (to be inspected

by the DES), leadership for inclusion (LINC) and leading out on regulation and inspections. Lecturer B4 continually pleaded throughout the interview to mention in the research that the Montessori Method had been excluded from the play-based approach to learning. The owner/managers (D, D2, D4 and D5) also expressed a concern that the leadership for inclusion model AIM was a cost-effective way to address the numbers of children requiring professional support (psychologists, speech and occupational therapist) and the “one size fits all” approach could not meet the individual child’s needs. Nor, they stressed, was it fair to place this responsibility on the Practitioners, who were finding it difficult to run the settings in the current climate. Many participants suggested (exception Gov A4 and Lecturer B4) level 6 was not an adequate qualification for leadership. However, Lecturer B4 advised level 6 was more than adequate for this form of leadership.

The owner/managers also outlined that leadership is just a false title:

Really, this leadership is just about getting people to do more work, its more work for us and really its management with a different name. it doesn't involve doing anything that makes the lives of the children and ourselves any better, it's all about getting more work out of us, and no extra pay and there is nothing in it for the child either. (Owner D:8393,8961)

The notion of the room leader was discussed by participants A, B5, B7, C1, C2, C10, D1, D2, E2, E5. They described the ECCE scheme and said that the requirement to have a room leader had caused discord and confusion in the sector. Manager E2 explained:

We don't use the word leader; it only causes misunderstanding as to who does what, who is the manager, is that the leader or room leaders? Some settings have room leaders, but we don't as it only causes hassle with the girls; they feel left out and hurt if they are not the room leader, and there is a bad atmosphere. (437,645)

They consented that the need to have some clarity on leadership had been expedited by the Government’s introduction of the education-focused inspections which sought to inspect and evaluate leadership for learning. While all of the Government representatives used the word “pedagogy”, the remaining participants did not and instead described “the emergent curriculum” or “leadership for learning”. The Lecturers, Practitioners, and Professional Organisations outlined the limiting nature of reducing leadership to learning and proposed that leadership had to be more than “inspected learning” (Lecturer B8). They also described the difficulties of understanding and implementing the prescribed emergent

curriculum. The Practitioners and Lecturers were the most vocal regarding the changing and confusing nature of ECEC leadership, and school owner D1 articulated:

It is the government's understanding of leadership that is the problem. The education-focused inspections talk about leadership, but no one knows what they want — what is their understanding of leadership... no one knows... We need to know what it is before we can do it, we have no job description, no information, there is no actual connection between what the Government is asking for and the information on the ground.

(3975,4175)

If we could just have some guidance on the leadership roles from the Department maybe we could have a common language for leadership, you know, a language we all understand and can work from. (Lecturer B5: 22802, 23057)

Professional Organisational representative C2 highlighted the irony of a sector awash with the term leadership. Yet, the Practitioner assigned to implement leadership for learning, inclusion, and Governance did not know what leadership involved:

All this leadership, it's all talk, all this talk about it, it's just noise ... if you don't know what it means, then how can you do it or how can we even be talking about developing capacity in the area. (1075,1452)

This comment could also be directed at the interview questions. However, the objective of this study was to establish how leadership was understood, and it was not until the final interview question that the stakeholder's conceptualisations of leadership became somewhat more explicit. Nevertheless, there was an underlying tension throughout the interviews between the Government (DCYA, DES, Tulsa) and the other stakeholders' objectives for ECEC and ECEC leadership:

At the end of the day, it's as simple as this, what we think, what we want, and do is not considered important and is definitely at odds with the Government. They want quality childcare that is affordable and can be managed and controlled, and we want resourced environments that meet the needs of all the children zero to five. A form of leadership could well be the way to achieve this, not leadership a la government, lets call it what it is - just more work for a manager, but we need a form that involves

genuine relationships, collaboration and working towards a shared goal. (Owner D4: 6039,6222)

In sum, leadership was considered a specific role in the setting, where the leader was responsible for pedagogy, inclusion, and governance (Government representatives). The remaining participants expressed confusion and discord about the current leadership roles in the sector, and there was a request to clarify the leadership roles and the requirements of the inspection of leadership. Participants seemed to be not only struggling with the purpose of leadership, but they were also challenged by the recent reforms in the sector, and they expressed the notion that it was all (including leadership) better before the introduction of the free preschool year (ECCE scheme).

7.3 Theme 2

<p>Theme 2 Better Before: “All way better before the free years”</p>	<p>Sub-theme Reactive Policy The Practitioner: Empowered/powerless? The ECEC Exodus</p>
---	---

“It ... [ECEC] was all way better before the free years, and now we struggle; it is not what we signed up for” (Prof Org C7: 2884, 3076).

In the interviews, participants said they were never asked about the purpose of ECEC or leadership in the past, and their views emerged quite strongly and organically. The owner/managers declared that the ECCE scheme and the accompanying policies, regulations, inspections, and administrative workload were reactive in nature and had changed the ethos and the working conditions of the settings. They questioned were they private owners, employers, providers of affordable childcare, employees, or subcontractors.

The Practitioners described how they had been disempowered and that Practitioners no longer wished to work in the sector.

We are trying to lead – funnily enough there was I think more leadership before the ECCE scheme. We were business owners having to make daily decisions, project forward, we had the leadership skills to keep our settings viable, welcoming and professional. Now we are reduced to ‘free preschool’. There isn’t much

professional about that. Nor is there much need to look for our way forward. We are no longer independent. (School Owner D 1264, 1808)

7.3.1 Reactive policy

Participants continuously advised that the Government tended to have a reactive rather than a proactive approach to the early years. They outlined examples of ineffective strategies and suggested that when there is a crisis, the Government “Jump in with some quick fix ...rather than looking at what needs to be done and addressing it” (Lecturer B7:5802, 6179). They described how the ECCE scheme was one such strategy and was a reaction to the international criticism of the sector from UNICEF and the OECD, (Lecturers) affordable childcare (Practitioners) and could be described as a standardising the approach to ECEC (Professional Organisations). Lecturer B5 explained that the reactive measures continued citing the TV programme Breach of Trust. This programme outlined the atrocities in the care of young children in the sector. She advised that—

The response to this from the Government was reactive, not proactive ... leadership in these schools was the weakest link, but instead of doing something about it, they decided to run out and throw another free preschool year at the sector. Nobody wanted this, nobody was ready for this, and nobody had discussed it with us. (11241, 12054)

Professional Org C1 explained the ECCE scheme was “all about building better qualifications, building better leadership, but there was never any direction on the issue and definitely no funding or resources” (7040, 734). Gov A admitted that resources for the sector were limited and that “the two ECEC frameworks were never rolled out, and if they had we could have put in place a good solid underpinning for Leadership” (6949, 7200). The owner/managers D, D1, and D5 advised that the rationale for the introduction of the scheme was to address disadvantaged children. However, they questioned whether children were benefiting, as underprivileged children need more than ECEC, and that resourcing housing and parenting could be more beneficial for the child (D5).

Lecturers B1, B2, B6, and B9 discussed the Irish constitution and the primacy of the family in the care and education of the child, making it difficult for the state to intervene in these matters; conversely, they asserted that it provides the government with an excuse not to interfere. The Lecturers further counselled that the reactive policies were not always in the best interest of the child or the adults in the sector. Gov A4 agreed with this claim and advised that “we are very good in this country to use legislations to solve problems rather than writing legislation to ensure best practice, best funding and best outcomes” (3746,

4378). Gov A4 also looked back at the historical context of policy decisions, and he discussed the reactive nature of the original Child Care Act 1991 and its inception; he advised that while —

The Act was primarily concerned with the early years; nevertheless, Part 8 of the Act was concerned with residential care, because the Act arose out of a huge scandal really around Madonna House and how people and care should be treated ... in other words, it was a reactive piece of legislation just as in you could see the Breach of Trust kind of sparked off another reactive response. (2721, 3060)

It would appear that amid the frequent policy developments, leadership seems to have been overlooked, Lecturer B9 explained —

No, this is the missing piece. We have lots of talk about policy, but there is no leadership piece... in 2017 at this moment there is no mention of leadership now either. Leadership is all over the place. (7604, 8044)

The Professional Organisations were the most animated on the subject of reactive policies. They suggested that if they had been allowed to continue to visit the settings, the foundations for leadership could have been built. They described how the introduction of the ECCE scheme had affected their independence and the resources to run their organisations:

Our job has become more about filling in forms and supporting those who have to fill in these forms ... We do try our best to keep the relationship with the services, but it's nothing like it was. (Prof Org C2 12297, 12818)

The administrative burden of the reforms was discussed at length, and it was declared that:

Politically the Government have to be seen to be doing something and the Government could be accused of taking advantage without taking the responsibility ... not sure to be honest if this is in the interest of the child. (Prof Org C6 10173, 10631)

The Practitioners were also very disgruntled about the recent changes and administrative work involved; they lamented the relationship they had with parents, the

county and city childcare committees, and the community in the past. However, while the Practitioners described in detail the ineffectiveness of these reforms, only five Practitioners, who were all school Managers/Owners (D, D3, D4, E5, E6), questioned the origins of these reforms, accrediting them primarily to the government and their desire for affordable childcare. Practitioner D2(b) expressed the disillusionment of many of the Practitioners working in the settings.

Oh, I don't know — what's it all about, can't we just be like everyone else, — do your job, get paid, and go home ... as far as I can see, nurses, waitresses, school teachers do their job and clock out — go home and are not being asked to jump through hoops. Its soul destroying — I have an honours degree 4 years it took me — I know what I am doing — I do a good job — but no one seems to believe this — I am constantly being questioned and inspected and all for minimum wage. (D2(b), 3525,4217)

The Higher Educational representatives pointed out that while the ECCE scheme necessitated the Practitioners up-skilling, yet, many students did not wish to be in college and “have difficulty understanding the relevance of policy and have an even bigger problem looking out beyond, looking out to the wider context” (Lecturer B6 4267, 4524). Conversely, Lecturer B warned that in the past, the Practitioner had the time and motivation to discuss issues concerning the sector; now they “are so busy ticking boxes and being micro-managed that they are not in this leadership space yet”. “You know our members are withered, so much change” (5626, 5981). Lecturer B1 echoed the voice of many of the Higher Education representatives in the study and asserted:

Leadership can be muddled when you are dealing with such a broad group, all require different forms of leadership ... they all have different power systems. Power has a big part to play in leadership and in this sector, who ultimately has the power? (1792, 2090)

The professional organisation representatives and Practitioners considered that the recent reforms had reduced their power to make decisions.

7.3.2 Practitioner empowered/powerless

Many ECEC managers and owners (D, D2, D3, D4, D5, E5 and E6) described the powerlessness they experienced in having to adjust and accept the Government's decision

to appropriate and control their settings, and they suggested that “the power continues, in the form of unannounced inspections” (Owner E6: 11815,12583). Manger E5 advised, “we don’t know what new reform is coming through the door or unannounced inspection from day to day. It is very difficult”, and further counselled:

I don’t think people realise what has gone on here, we had our own businesses, it was our choice to work for ourselves, if I wanted to work for the Government I would have done that, then just like that (flicked fingers) overnight we have no say in our settings. We are told, no – that’s too kind – we are *ordered* and told what hours to open, how many children to have, how many days and what we are to teach the children and don’t get me started on the grant you get to do this – it is a joke. You’re not allowed to work longer and try and top up the wages, you know as well as I do no other sector would put up with this. (3765, 4613)

Lecturer B4 furthered the conversation:

Well, I suppose the funding model in early childhood education can constrain leadership, but if you receive the money, you must play the game. (10575, 10891)

Statements about power and powerlessness were peppered throughout the interviews, and consistent references were made to the power and control the Government had to oversee all areas of the sector. E6 described:

When I look at my own experience at undergraduate, and as a masters student, there is very little about leadership. The powers that be decided that we would have an emphasis on management and managing the setting but did very little about leadership. (5186,5606)

Conversely, the Government representatives A3 and A4 declared that recent reforms were in the best interest of all participants and that the ECCE scheme have empowered the Practitioner to provide a quality service. The “free preschool year(s) had lifted the status of the Practitioner, and there is a better understanding of the importance of the integral importance for children” (Gov A3; 9409- 9558). Similarly, Gov A4 advised that the free preschool year “has saved the sector and prevented most settings from closure” (17071, 17179). Gov A, on the other hand, admitted that empowering the Practitioner had never been a priority:

There are many significant figures within departments working very hard and beginning to realise that there is a need to empower the early years Practitioner ... up to this, I'm not sure if this was acknowledged or if it was even a priority. (A1 13424,13660)

However, E5 voiced the concern of most Owner/Managers regarding the notion of empowerment:

Sending mentors out to the schools and calling them experts and specialists is an insult to all of us. These people are not experts; they are degree holders with three years working in the sector, this makes the Practitioner feel really angry and small, so they are not specialists? If you ask me, it is more like a public relations measure for parents than a help to us. (E5: 19145,19702)

What is their role ... [early years specialists] if they are the specialists than what are we? It's more of the same, no one knows what their role is and there is nothing only confusion, how can there be leadership when we are not the specialists, so does that make them the leaders? And all the talk about empowering us. What is that all about, it says more about us than them, we cannot be trusted to run our own settings, that's the truth of it. (E6: 4609,4882)

While the Government representatives discussed the Practitioners' situation in an empathetic manner, they appeared to be unaware of the responsibility or power they had to address this situation, or, on the other hand, they were intentionally avoiding the subject. In contrast, the other participants questioned what part they might have played in the disempowerment of the Practitioner:

What we have really is training programmes, professional development where training is done to them, the opposite to leadership, leaders have to do and have the space to do it. (Lecturer B3: 5359, 5504)

I'm thinking you know about Freire, empowering students, are we taking this away from them, is there within the university a place for developing critical skills around politics, advocacy within leadership and are we living up to this responsibility, you're leaving me with more questions than answers. (Lecturer B2: 27709,28012)

I think that we ran better centres in the main before all these reforms, the emphasis then was on interactions ...a sense of community. Perhaps there's a need and a responsibility to take a step backward and look to where we came from, and what we stood for, because we've lost our identity. (Prof Org C10 4043, 4452)

Nonetheless, Gov A3 continued to assert that the recent reforms had empowered, and continue to empower, the Practitioner. She described the role of educational forums, where all ECEC participants are invited to have a voice in the development of the sector. Many participants described these forums as public relation gestures or "tokenism". Prof Org C2 explained:

There are always power relationships within any group... to be called in to discuss something that has already got an agenda says to me that the power to make decisions, the power to set the agenda is not with us or the Practitioner. (14198, 14751)

Several Practitioners pointed out that it was impossible to attend forums in Dublin during work hours. The loss of funding for Start Strong from the Atlantic Philanthropies was lamented as they were described as the only professional body to represent the sector without bias. Additionally, the difficulty of sustainability was discussed: "There's a huge issue there with sustainability, and the big question is, can these services remain sustainable with the current funding". (Prof Org C4: 9465, 10148).

At the end of the day you have to manage very effectively to survive. There is also the many issues around special needs, children with special needs, their parents, there is so much paperwork involved with the free preschool the scheme. And aaah now a second year and children can present themselves at any time of the year, and there is no requirement to pay for the period that they haven't been in the school. If you have fee-paying children, even one, then you must pay rates and rates have increased, paperwork has increased, and it's difficult to remain sustainable, it's all so difficult to even think about leadership. (Owner D4:15148,16026)

The lack of sustainability was cited as one of the reasons for many Practitioners leaving the sector.

7.3.3 The ECEC exodus

“We also need to ensure that early childhood education is not deleted, that it would become almost non-existent” (Lecturer B8:18786, 19191).

Participants outlined that the consequences of the reactive reforms were twofold; firstly, many older experienced Practitioners were leaving the sector. Secondly, graduates were no longer applying for jobs in the settings, but were looking to the early years specialists’ jobs (mentors) and often they are using their degree as a stepping-stone to primary teaching. Gov A outlined this situation:

What we have now is a situation where people want to work in the support structures and not work on the ground with children ... graduates are looking for jobs in Better Start and to be honest, we’re just moving people out of sector, we are training them to go into specialist jobs. I suppose you could say there is a brain drain – who will be left to lead? (5893, 6217)

The Owner/Managers described the difficulty of securing and retaining staff, with many of the older Practitioners retiring early as it had become impossible to run a service on the capitation received from the Government. However, participants, in particular the Lecturers and Practitioners, signalled that this was not the only reason and Lecturer B5 advised that “it was all way better before”:

Years ago people had the courage and conviction to run their own business. They had the challenge of doing this, but they also had the feeling of having succeeded, and created something that they were proud of. Unfortunately, in the last five years, people who’ve been in the sector are leaving, and they were the leaders, because they couldn’t come to terms with losing their identity as self-employed people. (21324, 21729)

Gov A3 continued the dualistic pattern of both empathising with and simultaneously ignoring their responsibility to the sector:

I am aware that, that is a very difficult situation that a lot of early years Practitioners find themselves in because of the pay and the conditions and so here a leader ... listens to, understands and supports people, even in those restricted contexts and you know if that means ultimately that we have to support them to choose another path then they do. (6870, 7722)

As the interviews progressed, the Owner/Managers and Lecturers began to discuss what the Lecturer B9 described as “critical independent thinking and responsible decision making” (6105,6367). However, Gov A4 explained that any form of leadership that gave the Practitioner the control to make decisions could never work: “We thought, yes, they would be able to regulate themselves ... well, we couldn’t have got it more wrong”(2191, 2355). Gov A4 continued, “You need to hold them accountable for leadership... leadership needs to be regulated ... we need to set standards for the sector to follow” (14688, 14906).

Many participants voiced their concern for the child:

The child is the experiment, and there is the danger that all of this standardisation will result in little creativity or motivation to figure out new and exciting ways to meet the child’s needs and have a vision for the future. (B9: 9459, 9738)

Conversely, Gov A4 referred once to the child in the context of affordable and accountable childcare and it would seem that the management of both had become the focus of the sector, to the detriment of leadership.

7.4 Theme 3

<p style="text-align: center;">Theme 3 Management not leadership “Management is how leadership is now”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme Affordable Childcare Accountable Childcare</p>
---	---

Management was considered paramount in the sector to meet the demands of the constantly-changing policies and reforms. The management of affordable and accountable childcare emerged as two significant subthemes. “Management is how leadership is now” (Lecturer B8: 26317, 26440).

Leadership and management were described in terms of time, with management being accountable for the everyday running of the setting and leadership responsible for looking to the future and having a vision. While the vast majority of participants (n= 47) asserted that leadership was necessary for the setting, the term “management” not “leadership” was used in the sector to convey the level of administrative work in the settings. “Managers definitely spend 95% of their time on regulations, compliance issues, and the corresponding paperwork” (Prof Org C4: 1943, 2186). Nevertheless, there were outliers to this conviction; Prof Org C5 suggested “leadership is not going to be a priority for a lot of

settings because there are more important things to be doing than thinking about leadership” (8562, 8954). Also, manager E2 advised:

I am not sure we need to develop leadership; management is the here and now and if we are to have successful settings then we need to ensure that all the management procedures are in place and that we meet the regulations, the inspections, and the requirements under the Child Care Act for early years. I suppose if you want to talk about leadership it will take more training; you will have to approach it in a different manner to business. There will be more critical thought and more independent thinking, independent thinking. (2261,2834)

Leaving aside that the participant had a business background, and her job title and remit was to manage the setting. The findings from her interview revealed the prominent position of management and the connection between leadership, critical thinking, and training, which became a recurring theme. Participants, in general, agreed (exception Gov A, A3) that affordable childcare within a regulatory and standardised framework, and inspections, had become the primary focus of ECEC. Gov A4 agreed that this form of Governance should be the primary focus of leadership and would improve the quality of the settings.

The Lecturers B, B2, B5, B6, B7, and B9 disclosed that the OECD had brought the word “quality” into the ECEC lexicon, and while everyone had become obsessed with quality, no one knew what it meant. They stressed that it had become a means to standardise and control the sector, and may have more to do with getting women back into the workforce than the wellbeing of the child:

Quality is everywhere and if you ask me it has nothing whatsoever to do with the child, it’s all about getting everyone to work and if you think for one minute that it is about women and gender equality, you need to think again, women are run ragged, we see it all the time, trying to do it all and there is no support for them or the services taking up the slack. (B6 67,1186)

Several participants (D, D3, B5, B9) described how the needs of the child had become lost in this affordable experiment. While participants, in particular the Lecturers, outlined that it was management not leadership that was being practised in the settings, further analysis suggested that the Owner/Mangers/Practitioners did not consider what they were doing to be management, they were all “just about managing” to keep pace with the evolving and ever-increasing bureaucracy associated with these reforms.

What we're doing in early childhood education at the moment is fire fighting, yes fire fighting. So much work, so many regulations, so many forms and policies, at times we are all just winging it, just trying to survive. (Owner D4: 3027,3390)

It is difficult, you manage more than lead, and at times you wonder, are you making a difference. As a manager, I feel at times all I am doing at times is keeping the place afloat. (Manager D5: 11001,11189)

We are just about managing now... there is too much red tape and paperwork, too many organisations that we must answer to; there are way too many chiefs and not enough Indians. (Practitioner D(a): 2817,3118)

The Owner/Managers described how the two early years frameworks, the Tulsa regulations, the education-focused inspection, and the revisions to the Child Care Act all referred to management, not leadership. Gov. A4 acknowledged that

The crux of it really is that Breach of Trust ... [TV programme] was the lack of management, poor management, and no Governance, and that is the biggest failure ... and required attention. (10101, 10597)

This sentiment contradicted Gov A4's earlier claims that leadership needed attention. In sum, it appeared that managing the administrative workload associated with affordable and accountable childcare was prioritised over leadership. "It's all to do with management, managing staff, accounts, regulation, parents, and the inspectorate". (Professional Org C2: 2145, 2428)

7.4.1 Affordable childcare

"Sometimes, it's all about money". (B1 10377, 10409)

Affordable childcare was described as the main objective of ECEC by 48 of participants (excluding Gov A and Lecturer B3). Prof Org C2 voiced the views of these participants:

[ECEC] is concerned mainly with affordable childcare. It's all about how to make it cheaper for families and how to ensure that everybody can go back to work. There's

something wrong in this mind-set, and as I said before, it needs to be changed. (20336, 21013)

Gov A1 explained that the “whole emphasis is on votes and keeping parents happy, the importance of parents as voters cannot be underestimated... the general talk now is all about affordable childcare” (13234, 13445). Lecturer B5 agreed that ECEC has become part of a bigger philosophy “Money and market-driven childcare is what it is all about, affordable childcare, right up to Higher Education where it’s just about money, and it’s just about bums on seats” (16100,16279). The Owner/Managers proposed that the repercussions of this economic discourse included confusion amongst Practitioners. They asked were they carers, educators, substitute mothers, or providers of an affordable service for parents and emphasised the neglect of the child’s needs (particularly the under-threes). In addition, the limited remuneration of the Practitioner, and the lack of adequate financial support and training for supporting children with special needs were considered to be linked to the affordable discourse in the sector. The Lecturers B, B3, B7 B9 advised that while the emphasis was on equality for working women and children, “there was no equality for the Practitioner trying to survive on minimum wage, no chance at getting a mortgage or having a living wage” (Prof Org C7: 13122, 135). However, Gov A3 pointed out that the sector:

It is not considered a public good, not a full state system and it is difficult enough to get funding for what we need ... mainstream education is a public good. Therefore, money will be invested in this, in the primary and secondary school. (Gov A3:12401, 1027)

Gov A4 suggested that since the introduction of the ECCE scheme, the settings were now in a position to increase their staffs remuneration. However, School Owner D3 echoed the sentiment of the Managers/Owners.

Don’t believe what the Government says, it’s impossible to treat your staff with respect and value them on what we get from ECCE, their answer is run more sessions, run after schools. Working with small children is rewarding, but exhausting, asking people to work four sessions to make a living wage is not thinking about quality and quality relationships. (4831, 5217).

Several of the Professional Organisation and Practitioners accepted that the Government was “never going to pay ECEC adequately, they just couldn’t afford the bill”

(Practitioner E4: 6266, 6729). Monetary matters also permeated the issue of training and qualifications. It was recognised that the drive to up-skill Practitioners and the incentive of more money for a higher degree might not be in the best interest of affordable childcare. The term “race for the page” was used repeatedly, referring to the financial impetus to return to college to receive a degree to access the higher capitation (Prof Org C8: 14031, 14334). It was advised that the qualification was

Not worth the paper it’s written on as the Government has put all the emphasis on this piece of paper ... have ignored the real problem which is we are under-resourced underfunded ... there is too much confusion about what we actually doing. (Prof Org C10: 3225, 3756)

However, there was no confusion regarding the importance of managing the inspections, regulations, and accompanying paperwork – accountable childcare.

7.4.2 Accountable childcare

Many Lecturers argued that that the measures put in place to ensure accountability, including regulations, and unannounced and standardised inspection do not always ensure best practice. Practitioners often become disillusioned and disinterested and only do the minimum that is required of them. Gov A admitted that this might be true and acknowledged that instead of best practice—

Things that are not important become important, in other words, things like radiator covers become important, and things like reflection, advocacy, and policy become less important. (9016, 9342)

Conversely, Government representative A4 explained in some detail that the recent reforms in legislation and regulations and their accompanying inspections were aimed at “trying to evolve towards a culture of Governance and accountability – it is poor in the sector” (13655, 13830). Gov A4 further explained that “We are partisan, we have to be forced into doing anything we do, what is best practice – so we are looking at inspections to ensure this” (3746,4378).

Look, you could argue the sector is overregulated; you now have the Education-focused inspection, but in all of this, nothing will happen if they are not held accountable for leadership. (Gov A4: 19560, 20005)

On the other hand, most participants claimed that creating a vision, looking to the future (leadership) is impossible in a climate where management, over-regulation, and affordable childcare are the priority. These two contrasting opinions were sustained throughout the findings and were summarised by Gov A1. She counselled that the Government's interest was in management and Governance, and while there is "talk about leadership vision, moving forward and critical thinking, these are not things that we are investing in at the moment" (3999, 4110). It became apparent that while the Government representatives (A3, A4) continued to extoll the necessity of accountability, the Practitioners' concern was that there was a "huge gap at Government level". "Who are they accountable to and who ensures they make responsible decisions and where is their leadership?" (1799, 2117). Gov A confirmed that there was "some truth in this ... We still have no early years strategy, no coordination" (9016, 9342). As such, it was claimed that the sector was better before the ECCE scheme.

In conclusion, the first three themes included 1) Leadership "For whom, for what, and to what end?" 2) Better Before "All way better before the free years" and 3) Management, not leadership: "Management is how leadership is now".

The first theme outlined that leadership was considered a micro phenomenon involving a leader and specific roles. The absence of a conversation in the sector on the purpose of ECEC and ECEC leadership, coupled with the tension between how the Government's affordable and accountable rationales for ECEC and the remaining participants' education and care objective created difficulties for participants to marry both goals and articulate the purpose of leadership. 2) Participants (exception all Gov, Lecturer B4, Manager E2) considered ECEC to be Better Before the ECCE scheme and the corresponding administrative workload, which had necessitated prioritising 3) management, not leadership in the sector. The ECCE scheme and corresponding support structures were accredited with shifting the power to make decisions from the Professional Organisations representatives (CCC) and the Practitioners to the specialists, and ECEC graduates and experienced Practitioners were unwilling to work in the sector. Conversely, the Government representatives outlined how the ECCE scheme had empowered the Practitioner, increased the understanding of the child, and saved the sector from extinction.

Chapter 8 Findings 2

The first three themes presented in the previous chapter revealed how participants conceptualised leadership. The second three themes presented in this chapter expose the factors that have influenced participants' understanding of leadership, including Gender, Care, and Class. The final emergent theme was Leadership: The only way forward. This theme outlined the stakeholders' articulations on how to develop leadership in the sector.

8.1 Theme 4

<p style="text-align: center;">Theme 4 Gender and care "No care for women who care"</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme The young child - Who Cares? Careless supports Careless relationships</p>
--	---

Throughout the interviews, repeated reference was made to the gendered nature of the sector and the difficulties women, in general, and women who are considered "nice women who care" have with negotiating leadership. However, it was the gendered nature of care that was accredited with the subjugation of the child and the Practitioners (as women who care). While care is considered a contested concept with many meanings (p.97) three sub-themes emerged concerning gender and care, the young child – who cares, careless supports and careless relationships. All of which pivoted on the notion that care was something women do naturally, that it had no social or economic value in society and required no training or resources.

There was consent among participants (exception A4, B4, C8, and E2) that women in many occupations had difficulty having their voices heard and acquiring leading positions in their field.

We are treated differently in every job – being a woman means you have to prove yourself. Being a woman in ECEC is even harder; our job is linked to babysitting. It is considered a nice job for a nice woman – a second pay packet. (D1: 6329,6639)

Participants further acquiesced that women associated with care inevitably meant lower social and economic status, less respect and value in society. However, Gov 4 stated there was no connection: "No, I see young graduates emerging from college, they are service driven ... very business-like, full of drive, and that idea that women and care being less valued is not there" (18077, 18330). Equally, three women participants, Lecturer B4 and Room leader E2 proposed that there was no link between care and status, and Professional Org C8 reckoned that the gendered nature of care had no bearing on leadership:

Gender is not an issue. I think there probably remains a cohort of level seven Practitioners over 50 plus years of age, who spent time at home minding their own children and see this job as a continuation of that and don't see their work as very well valued. (13162, 13517)

However, while A4, B4, C8, and E2 declared gender was not an issue in ECEC leadership, they made several gendered statements describing women and emotive leadership (A4, E2) and the difficulties of all women working together (B4 and C8). The Practitioners outlined that the difficulties of women working together had more to do with the frustration of low pay. However, the practitioner's asserted it was not all about better pay, but more about being valued and having recognition and respect for their work and this included care, care was considered essential for the child, relationships with all of participants and society at large (Practitioner D5(a) advised:

This is what's wrong ... no one cares about the child or about us, there is nobody, no, no, not the Government, the parents they couldn't care less.... nobody cares about anything, anything anymore, you could say we don't even care about ourselves, this has to change for the sake of us all and we need to get together and do something about it, but what? (Manager D4. 3565, 4161)

Conversely, the Prof Org C described how they had despatched a submission through the National Women's Council of Ireland to National Women's Strategy 2017 to 2020. The submission advised "There may be discrimination of early years Practitioners ... their job is considered to be child caring, child nurturing, child minding" (Prof Org C: 15326,16008). In agreement, the Lecturers stated that care had impinged on their role in the academy, where they were considered less than Lecturers in other departments and it had reduced the status and working conditions in the sector. At the Government level, the challenge of acquiring funding from a state which does not value childcare as a public good was described. The gendered image of carers as "nice women" had also impinged on men wishing to work in the sector. Gov A1 explained:

Well parents are very nice, and men can look after my child, they ... [men] cannot work in the baby room, parents feel it's a bit strange, women's role is to care for the children, nurture the children and their toiletries, and it's not a man's job to do this. There is also the idea that this work is quite below a man, you shouldn't be doing this

it's not a man's job to have to go and take care of a child in the bathroom, it's beneath him. (18853,19490)

Similarly, the Practitioners advised that the women who go out to “break the glass ceilings, the mothers ... don't care about us” (Practitioner D3(a): 5249,5384).

I think working woman view us as a necessary service so they can get out to do the real work — important work, and they never seem to question the working conditions we encounter every day. Are these women supporting the women who care for their children? I don't know. (Practitioner D1:8393, 8961)

The status of the Practitioner and the teacher in primary school was further alluded to: “the woman working in the primary sector is integrally different; there is a sense of value about what they do ... higher status for those in formal education” (Gov A: 14632, 15387). Look at primary schools — the man teacher is treated like God, and he never gets the lower classes (B3: 10685, 10997). The limited value placed on the Practitioner was described as being directly related to the gendered notion of care, related to working with young children who require physical care.

8.1.1 The young child – who cares?

“Children are of little value” (Owner D: 6421, 6606)

It was noted earlier in Theme 1 that participants had difficulty articulating the purpose of ECEC. Nonetheless, they all concurred ECEC was an essential part of a child's educational, social and emotional development, but only the Practitioners/Owner/Managers and more so the Practitioners mentioned the child's physical (care) development. They were all, however, also cognisant of the mainstream opinion:

We know the early years are crucial in a child's development, and we know that care is important ... neither the Government or parents believe this — it's a babysitting service that is all, so there is no need to learn about leadership or anything else to mind babies. (Practitioner D(a) 3980, 4486)

The notion that “in our society children are disregarded” (Gov A1: 2113, 2438) and “the 0 to 3-year-old age group have no resources, no support, and minimum qualifications

are acceptable” (Lecturer B6: 14954, 15118) ran throughout the interviews. It was noted that a grant from the European Union (2004) had provided money for County and City Childcare Committees to support people who looked after children (0-3 years) in their homes. However, “the childminder service was removed due to resources, and we no longer have a role with child-minders. This is a disappointment as this is a very important area” (Professional Org C4. 9049, 9485). The Owner/Managers acknowledged that the absence of support for the youngest child had made their job very difficult. They had no guidelines; there was no training for Practitioners working with this cohort, and it was difficult to retain staff as the work was labour-intensive and isolated. Owner/Manager D3 also advised that working with the babies is considered the lowest rung on the ladder and providing a service for the under-threes was not cost-effective, and that all of the resources had gone into the ECCE scheme for the 3-5-year-old children. She further counselled that many all-day settings were reducing their hours and concentrating on the ECCE scheme.

However, while Gov A4 had proposed that the ECCE scheme had saved the sector and Gov A3 described how the scheme had “lifted’ the value of the child (3-6 years) (9408, 9559) neither Gov A3 nor A4 made any mention of the youngest children (0-3 years). There was a suggestion (Lecturer B9) that the current emphasis on the 3-6-year-old child was not in the interest of the child but had more to do with the economic capacity of the child than child development. Lecturer B2 further argued that “we have to develop a new narrative that looks at what children need, not the idea of their economic value” (21963, 22526).

Similarly, the Lecturers, Practitioners and the Owner/Managers questioned the effect that continuously changing policy might be having on the child.

You see, it all keeps changing to keep everybody happy, and what is this doing to the child? First, it’s about the welfare of the children, then the education with the free preschool year, it was all about diversity, now it’s the child with special needs, it’s always about money and affordable childcare... babies and the toddlers never get a look in at all. (D3(a):5249,5384)

8.1.2 No support or leadership for care

Several participants described the lack of support in the form of training, resources, and guidelines for the care of the youngest children (under three years). The Practitioners were very vocal on the subject of young children and care. They stressed that there was no recognition that a well-trained and consistent Practitioner was paramount for all children’s wellbeing (social and emotional development) but in particular for the under threes.

There is too much talk and training for the ECCE child, what about the care and development of the little ones, this is never talked about. It is impossible to find a Practitioner that has been trained to work in the baby or toddler rooms; these children have been forgotten about; this is what leadership should be about ... this needs to be called out. (18986, 19040)

You know what it's like, it's all about parents and work. I don't know if anyone understands that babies and toddlers, but especially babies, depend on a caregiver for their safety and security, there is no mass in training, paying or helping the early years Practitioner to work with this age group and the little ones lose out – it's not right. It is worrying that all they talk about is affordable childcare; this is not what we are about and not what we want to be linked with. (Practitioner (D4(a) 7604,7966).

The Practitioners discussed the weaknesses of leadership training, training in general and ECEC qualifications a total of 59 times, the Professional Organisations (33), and the Lecturers, who provide the training, only on 25 occasions (Appendix U), placing their emphasis on the number and diversity of training institutions “We have umpteen training colleges everywhere, but how credible are they and what are they teaching? This all impacts on leadership” (Lecturer B6: 13238, 13677). The Practitioners and Professional Organisations agreed with this assertion but were much more vocal about training having “no value and very content poor ...It is so poor and so unfair to the student who invests substantial amounts of time/money” (Practitioner E4: 4726, 4902).

When participants were asked to name a literary source that could support ECEC leadership (policy, theorists, book, or journal articles), no Government representative and only two Lecturers could name an ECEC leadership theorist. The remainder of participants admitted they were unsure whether there was policy or literature in the field. Gov A and A1, when asked about the supports for leadership, replied: “No, no, no we have little to nothing in the area” (Gov A: 7582, 7979) and there is “A lot of talk lately about leadership, developing leadership capacity, leadership in inclusion ... there are no policies, no frameworks, no literature in the area” (Gov A1: 10767, 10993). Conversely, Gov A4 recommended that the “quality standards and the new Preschool Regulations 2016 ... [Child Care Act] can and will assist leadership” (20095, 20179). In opposition, participants had a different view, with Lecturer B7 clarifying: “Examine the Childcare Act 2016. This will show you how much emphasis is on leadership in early childhood education – none” (444,669).

Gov A3 and A4 proposed that there was support for leadership in the policy frameworks Siolta (CECDE, 2006) and Aistear (NCCA, 2009) and with the Child Care

Committees (CCC). Participants contested this claim: Siolta is all about management, but inadequate on how to do it and the Child Care Committees only support the management of the ECCE scheme (Owner E5: 18986, 19040). Gov A3 continued and made specific reference to the support of the new leadership training for Practitioners, AIM (level 6), to assist in the inclusion of children with special and additional needs in ECEC. Yet again, participants refuted this claim and Lecturer C6 articulated:

AIM says you don't need a diagnosis to get support for a child, yet practically how, do we do this? As the HSE say they require a diagnosis if we are to get psychologist, a speech therapist, so this is really all Government talk, diagnosis is still the language, and we are left with the child who needs supports and trying to explain to parents what is going on. (10744,11427)

Participants (predominantly the Lecturers) questioned the likelihood of the state-funded professional organisations supporting and developing a form of leadership that encompassed questioning Government policy and advocating for improved environments for adults and children –

If you look at the professional organisations ... you realise that they can't bite the hand that feeds them and are aware that leadership is going to challenge the status quo, and a lot of people will be afraid to do that, especially the professional organisations, you could say a lot of the organisations and Government departments have no leadership themselves. (Lecturer B9: 8046, 8700)

8.1.3 No relationships in care

"It's like being alone at a great big private party – lots of groups and while you are part of it – you are alone and nobody cares". (Owner D: 7772, 8231)

There was a keen interest in discussing the fractured and fragmented nature of relationships within the sector and with other organisations. The sector was described as isolated from the wider educational, community, and political sphere: "We are a disparate and isolated group" (Lecturer B: 14278, 14314). There appeared to be a sense of disconnection from mainstream education and the loneliness of managing/leading a setting was also voiced (D, D2, D3, D4). The Lecturers outlined the power the regulatory and administrative authority, the Government, had over the Practitioner. "I know from being a manager, that it is the loneliest place to be. When the chips are down, it's your problem" and

she asked “Who is there to talk to?” (Lecturer B9: 8046, 8700). On the other hand, the Practitioners lamented the reduction in person-to-person interaction with the professional organisations, due to the changing nature of the CCC. Competition between schools was rife:

We have an individualistic sector, every man [sic] for themselves, there is no connection between organisations, Government departments, and the schools on the ground. Without connections and communication, leadership at any level cannot thrive. (Owner D3: 836986,7249)

The Lecturers described the difficulties they had with relationships; they had congenial relationships with Government at forums. However, they questioned the productiveness of these forums. The Lecturers considered their presence in academia as “invisible here in the university; no one knows us, except perhaps those in the building” (B2: 13629, 13752). Many Lecturers had limited contact with graduates: “Perhaps there is not enough contact. We could do more” (Lecturer B1: 7092, 7128). Similarly, intercollege relationships were “difficult because every college now is competing for students, the ECCE scheme saw colleges start or increase ECEC places, now there is a fight for students” (B6: 9091, 9357). The consensus among the Professional Organisations was that there were too many diverse groups within the sector, too many Government departments, wide-ranging training/training institutions, and an assortment of ECEC settings and philosophies.

The Professional Organisations representatives and Lecturers acknowledged the gendered nature of the sector and the gendered nature of care, “looking after children means that you’re a lovely person, this is all very nice” (B6.10670, 11261). However, they were adamant that there was a need to move beyond “just care” and to “look past the nice girl, I am good with children”. “We need to have people who know how to run a setting, how to lead a service... we have a long way to go to be recognised as managers and leaders, the link with care is preventing the professionalisation of all of us” (Prof Org C8: 18155, 18454). The Practitioners confirmed the silencing of care:

No one wants to talk about it, do anything about it ... [care], it is a dirty word, it’s a problem, you see, education is seen as the way to being recognised, and better pay, and care is seen as preventing it. So all you have now is early education and affordable childcare, and there is no interest in the young children. No respect either for the girls caring for them, no one wants to know, and no one wants to hear about it, it is the rock we are perishing on. (Manager D2: 6507, 6875)

There were several descriptions of the gendered behaviour of women in care, the word 'bitchy' was used on several occasions by the professional organisation "women are always falling out and backbiting, too many women together, not a good thing" (Prof Org: E8 2937, 3206). Conversely, the practitioners advised that working in a sector with little pay, respect or recognition culminated in a frustrated and exasperated workforce.

The Owner/Managers advised "people need to be trained to understand how to manage relationships and communicate with each other, this is where leadership could help" (E4 7989, 8967). Conversely, E2 Manager of a rural community crèche described the craic the Practitioners had working together. However, Manager E2 was an individual interview and as such, the other staff members were not available to confirm or contradict this account. Nonetheless, Manager D1 and Practitioner D1(a), both from a rural community crèche, advised that the relationships within their settings were supportive and friendly.

Throughout the data, the primary focus of the Professional Organisations was on relationships. It was no surprise that they discussed the topic on 67 instances (Appendix U). On the other hand, Lecturer B4 advised: "Not sure if we need to improve [relationships]... It's a relatively new system, the ECEC, we are developing every day, but there is good open communication at all levels". However, later in the interview, Lecturer B4 stated that "there are strong conflicts in the sector, and these may take time to resolve, we have a lot of female voices" (7568,7997).

In sum, gender was linked with the gendered notion of care, which was considered to have no social or economic value in society. Consequently, there was little need for training, supporting, or resourcing the youngest child (0-3 years), and those who cared for the child. Relationships across the sector were considered fractured, competitive, and challenging. The Practitioners considered the absence of care to be a problem in relationships with the child and the sector and wished to address this void. Conversely, the other participants described the need to move beyond the notion of care, as this was responsible for the limited recognition and professionalisation of the sector.

8.2 Theme 5

Theme 5 Class “Class is there, it is everywhere”	Sub- theme The Practitioner: Villain/Victim? Leadership: Capacity/No Expectation? Class Avoidance
---	--

The fifth theme to emerge was the notion of class, and this theme was linked to the stakeholder’s distrust and expectations of the Practitioner. There was a suspicion that the Practitioner had the potential to play a victim role to avoid the responsibilities (including leadership) associated with the recent reforms in the sector. Yet, there was a belief that the community practitioners were not capable of any responsibility. This dichotomy appears to have limited the expectation of leadership in the sector. Central to this conversation was the unwillingness of participants to discuss the notion of class.

8.2.1 The practitioner: Victim or villain

Throughout the interviews, there were competing and conflicting descriptions of the Practitioner. On the one hand, the Practitioner was painted as a dedicated, diligent, and caring person who supported children and parents, and had very little support with this role. On the other hand, the Prof Org representatives (C, C1, C4, C6 C7, and C8) suggested that beneath this façade, the Practitioner may be irresponsible and manipulative, a person who hides under victimhood and does not wish to be held accountable for the responsibilities of the recent reforms including leadership (Villain). This description appeared to have a classed context, as it was primarily directed at the community Practitioner and not the Practitioners in the private settings.

The community Practitioners themselves will have to become aware that leadership requires responsibility, professionalism, and that both, both of those do not hinge on victim identification or whingeing, whingeing to anyone who will listen to them and shouting and bashing anyone when they don’t agree with what they have to say. (Prof Org C1: 25350, 25658)

But we are constantly hearing that, ooh can you expect people on 10 euro an hour to understand Governance and leadership – then the other thing we hear is – we are the best qualified sector – these two do not marry, you can’t have it both ways. (Gov A4 19560, 20005)

Conversely, the Lecturers continued to discuss the Practitioners' demanding working conditions. Professional Org C2 described the situation in what appeared to be an objective manner:

You could say we play into this role and then we take on a victim role when it's not suiting us or maybe that's wrong maybe we take up, maybe, the victim role because of not being able to voice our opinion and maybe it's also a result of having no power and maybe the result of them not being allowed to say anything. So the nice woman who minds children has no other outlet but to moan and groan which we do a lot of because to do anything else otherwise would seem inappropriate for the job she's doing. (16975, 18180)

The discussion of the Practitioner as a victim/villain was mainly confined to the Professional Organisations. Conversely, the debate on the Practitioner's capacity for leadership involved all of participants, including the Practitioners themselves.

8.2.2 Leadership and voice: Capacity or no expectation

While the literature in the field suggests that advocacy is a role associated with leadership, as mentioned earlier, only two participants in the interviews initially accredited advocacy as a leadership. However, after further questioning, the majority of participants (n = 44) advised that "advocacy was a leadership role, but perhaps it is better left to the professional organisations who know how to do this well" (Prof Org C2: 4331, 4712) and/or "our advocates as well as our academics" (Gov A3. 8188,83 80). It would seem that "not only is Early Childhood Ireland [ECI] the voice of the sector, I believe the ECI is the voice of leadership in the sector" (Lecturer B4; 11681, 11901). Professional Org C agreed:

We are the dedicated policy, advocacy, and communications body and we have a dedicated team for this, and they strive to ensure that policy is moving towards better sustainability, quality, accessibility, and affordability in child care. (4267, 4617).

As such, advocacy, leadership, and communication were all considered to be the remit of the professional body. Prof Org C did not mention improving the working conditions of the Practitioner in her initial definition of advocacy. It is noteworthy that most of the participants agreed that advocacy was a role for the Professional Organisations, and Lecture B7 outlined the process of advocacy in the settings:

This is more so done by the Practitioner completing a survey or sending answers to the question posed by professional organisations like Early Childhood Ireland; the Practitioner gives their input; this is channelled up to the higher authorities ... this is the procedure for advocacy. (2072, 2506)

Participants appeared more interested in the neutrality of the professional organisation representing their needs than the repercussion of handing over their decision-making, communication, leadership, and advocacy to this professional organisation.

However, I think that the profession organisations, especially Early Childhood Ireland, need to go back to the ground, you know at times I think they have their own agenda and that people on the ground need to be listened to and have their opinions respected. They also need to stand back and look at where we are going and is this really where we want to go. (Prof Org C10: 8737,9082)

Nevertheless, Practitioner E4 explained:

We have been stripped of everything. When you strip away people's pride in what they do, you take away that sense of responsibility and then they hand it all over to others you are left with nothing. (Practitioner E4: 12584,12958)

The question of how Practitioners can engage with leadership, when their voice, decision-making, and advocacy roles have been outsourced to a professional organisation was never asked. Instead, a discussion ran subliminally throughout the data, questioning the Practitioner's capacity for leadership. Prof Org C10 encapsulated this pattern: "we must hold the belief that we are a more educated sector and that we maybe have the capacity to lead – so I don't want to think that it's not going to happen" (15827,16298). Lecturer B8 continued the discussion and affirmed that with leadership the Practitioner, more often the community practitioner neither had the confidence, knowledge, or ability to communicate what they needed: "then they can become more confrontational, and it all becomes a shouting match" (15704, 16332).

Throughout the data, the Practitioner's ability to lead was queried in general. However, specific reference was made to the Practitioners involved in community settings. Their academic ability, critical capacity and business acumen were questioned, and there was agreement amongst the Professional Organisations (Exemption C9, C10) that:

The full-day community service is struggling with leadership, and it's not what they're good at, it is probably asking a step too far as it seems to be enough to try and manage the settings as best, they can. (Prof Org C8 1315, 1577)

Participants appeared to have no expectation or conviction that the Practitioner was capable of leadership. This notion seems to have infiltrated the Practitioners' psyche: "Not much point in us saying anything, no one wants to hear — not much point in leading when no one thinks we can, and there's nowhere to go and no one coming with you" (Owner D: 2351, 2720). This sentiment appears to have also extended to how the Practitioners view their peer's capacity for leadership and the kudos associated with management, not leadership:

But if I was to talk about leadership, I would say that'll be very hard for a woman coming from the sector, you know the community sector, to take on the role of leader. My background is business, and this is a big advantage when trying to manage the centre as I come from a more objective standpoint, and it's not all tied up in emotion and how much I love working with children. (Manager E2: 10084, 10501)

Conversely, Prof Org B3 linked the absence of the Practitioners' leadership capacity to control: "We are continuously micromanaged, continuously told what to do, and I think that we've got into a mindset of just doing this and nothing about anything else ... [leadership]" (4051,4518). The expectation that leadership was not possible in ECEC seemed to overshadow the probability that leadership may be occurring in the settings and only Practitioner D5(a), Owner D4 and B3 acknowledged this hypothesis:

There are many who are practising leadership and don't even know it, making decisions and empowering the children, parents, or other staff members to think and look at their practice and how to improve it to benefit the children. (B3:1581,1928)

Conversely, it was suggested that it was not possible for the setting to build leadership as "I don't think the settings have the capacity to build leadership, the Early Years Practitioner doesn't have the tools or the ability" (Prof Org C1: 2800, 3304).

While participants were eager to discuss the Practitioner's inability to practise leadership, they were less inclined to discuss the impact that class might have on ECEC leadership.

8.2.3 Class evasion

“Class: I think that question will hurt a lot of people, and I am not sure it should be asked” (Gov A: 17621, 17714).

Conceivably the interview question that received the most heated reactions was the question on class and whether or not this had an influence on how leadership was understood in the sector and practised by the Practitioner. It was interesting to note that up until this question, there were numerous class innuendos concerning the community Practitioner. Still, when asked directly about class, a strong sub-theme developed – class evasion. There appeared to be four reactions to the question: rejection followed by admission, uncertainty about the topic, acceptance of class, and an impartial view. Most participants rejected and wished to avoid the subject, but eventually conceded it was an issue:

We don't look at this do we? And thinking about it, it is very significant. We have a history of people out of work being pushed into the ECEC, you know “hair or care”. You know, we also know people came to the sector because of low points and that all has a class base, now this has been extended to middle class people who couldn't get into primary teaching using ECEC as a steppingstone, none of these scenarios are good for leadership. (D3.5420, 5835)

The Practitioners, in general, were unsure of the construct:

I don't like that word; it puts people in categories and that is not good ... I am not really sure what it means, but I don't think anyone wants to be called working class, do they? (Practitioner D2 (a) 4928, 5159).

The smaller group, which included owner/managers, but mainly professional organisations, accepted that class influenced leadership. They advised that community ECEC services employ Practitioners of a similar socio-economic background. The expectation is that the Practitioner in these settings is not capable of leadership.

Class this is a big one, we don't like to talk about class in this country it's a taboo word, it's almost as if all we don't have class, we never think about class never talk about class, so there is no class, this is so far from the truth, it is here, there, everywhere. (Prof Org C1: 19910, 20233)

Private services are businesses and are of a certain class ... they identify themselves as the steak, not the burgers. They are business driven, capable and educated, especially the larger chains. (Prof Org C4: 15345, 15623)

Finally, the Lecturers were inclined to take a more objective and impartial view of the issue, describing how with support, Practitioners could “become capable leaders” (Lecturer B3.11011, 11236).

We are all products of our circumstances ... I do not hold a determinist view or an essentialist understanding of class. (Lecture B2: 19464, 19915)

I’m not sure we have reached this point; I know we have an issue with lower status ... but it has not even got as far as the class conversation yet. (Lecturer B6: 11276, 11808)

Gov A4 suggested there might be two models of ECEC leadership based on class:

What you have is two models, those who want to support the community and just need enough money to get going, may not hold leadership as a priority, and just want to manage settings and look after the families and children in the community. On the other hand, there is the business model, good vision, good education, and they have an understanding of leadership, and there is a class difference between the two models. (18603, 19522)

The notion of class was also broadened to include all Practitioners under one class (Third class) – “Women are 2nd class citizens, and we are third class – we are not valued. We may want to lead and improve but who will listen to us – we are bottom of the barrel” (D1 (a): 5709, 6018). Practitioner E8 unearthed an important connection between how Practitioners from different backgrounds may have different understandings and values concerning leadership. Lecturer B9 further developed this proposition:

In my opinion, class is huge; it can be reduced to the difference in the values and ideas which are class-based. And class values do influence how you think about and practise leadership. (13442, 13714)

Finally, participants discussed how to advance leadership or other strategies to develop the working conditions of ECEC Practitioners.

8.3 Theme 6

<p style="text-align: center;">Theme 6 Leadership “The only way forward?”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sub-theme Responsibility Critical consciousness Relationships Care</p>
---	---

8.3.1 Leadership: “The only way forward”

The outliers who queried whether leadership would ever be possible (B4) or was necessary (E2, E4), ultimately concurred with all of the other participants in the study that leadership “is central to the sector” (E1.8058, 8171) and “there is a need for leadership, there is no doubt about that. The development of the sector will depend to a great deal on leadership” (B: 15127, 15300). However, this finding raised the question “If you don’t know what ... it [leadership] means, then how can you do it, or how can we even be talking about developing leadership capacity in the area” (Prof Org C2; 1075, 1452). Nevertheless, Gov A3, B4 and E2 suggested leadership was adequate in the sector; that there was no need to change the status quo, and Gov A4 advised regulating leadership. Practitioner E4 suggested that maybe leadership was not the right word for the sector, as it was associated with inspections and regulations. Lecturer B7 agreed:

We need to be able to name it, develop, and support it. Above all, we need the training, knowledge, and confidence to do this. Maybe we could use another word. As I said before, leadership is often looked upon as ‘who do you think you are’ and management suggest ‘I am the boss’, maybe we need a new word more suitable to ECEC. (14459,14774)

Participants, in general, concurred that leadership was the only way forward for the sector. The emergent sub-themes outlined how the various participants described how this could be achieved, including critical consciousness, relationships, and care. While these suggestions were diverse, all the participants agreed that responsibility was a prerequisite and requisite for leadership. These sub-themes will be discussed in the following section. I

have borrowed the term “critical consciousness” from Freire because the Lecturers mentioned Freire on several occasions, and it seemed to encompass the Lecturers’ stratagems to develop leadership in the sector, including critical thinking/reflexivity, voice, research, and knowledge (Freire, 1970, p.17).

8.3.2 Responsibility

Leadership was described as a “responsibility for all early years Practitioners” (Lecturer 9: 17474, 17903) to “ensure children’s rights and adults rights... as in the people who work with the children, are upheld” (B8 27659, 27913). Leadership was also considered a responsibility for the “collective good of the school; it is about making sure that the wellbeing of the children, staff, and parents comes first” (D3: 560,846). C1 encapsulated the views of most of the participants:

You see, it could look like this, if you are to take responsibility for children’s learning – this can be called pedagogical leadership, if you are to take responsibility for the staff then this can be called mentoring, if you take responsibility for ensuring that everybody works together, then you can call this role collaboration. If you were to take the responsibility to develop the working conditions for the workforce, then you can call this role advocacy. So the roles are interwoven; this is what it’s all about; leadership is all about, responsibility. (2781, 3308)

Simultaneously, developing leadership was considered the remit of all participants in the sector:

I would like to see leadership that involves everybody that works with children taking the responsibility to work together for the benefit of the sector, and I mean everybody from the Government right down to the person who cleans the schools. (C2: 21987, 22419)

There is a responsibility on all of us to develop relationships within the sector and to develop leadership for the benefit of those who work in it and most importantly for the benefit of the children. (Gov A: 14781, 15168)

Parents have an obligation to show leadership too. You know, until parents begin to use their influence and voice their opinion and are willing to pay for the work done then it’ll be difficult to see leadership prosper in this environment. (C: 18069,18256)

Interestingly, while Gov A and A1 advised that they had a responsibility to develop leadership, Gov A3 announced the responsibility was with the Practitioners to find their own way to leadership, and Gov A4 proclaimed that the leader was responsible for Governance in the setting. Conversely, many participants expressed the opinion that the Government was never going to take responsibility for the welfare of the sector, as they were only concerned with economics. "The template for leadership and the Irish primary principals' networks are there since 1990; it was possible for them ...then it is possible for ECEC, but the Government is not interested in supporting us" (B3 6281,7109). However, while the owner/managers requested clarity on what the Government required from the inspection of leadership and management of learning they did not seem interested in acquiring support or resources from the Government for leadership. They were not interested in the top-down approach described by Gov A:

Leadership in the future needs to be top-down and bottom-up, there must be resources and training (top-down) and bottom-up Practitioners need to network, find common ground and vision, the political know-how to know what to ask for and how to ask for what they need. (Gov A 19833,20104)

There was an agreement amongst the professional organisations and Lecturers (exception Lecturer B4) that for leadership to develop in the sector supports in the form of training, and Professional Development (PD) resources, would be required. The Practitioners were less enthusiastic about mentoring and PD, they reiterated that often ECEC training was not fit for purpose. They considered the specialists approach already in place to mentor Practitioners was not suitable and as an alternative, this cohort requested new ways of training and support:

It's always better if this comes from us; we all know that training and CPD is hardly ever about what we want; we have to come together and decide what we want, not what everyone else wants. (D3(b): 470,705)

We need to rethink training; no one wants more modules that have little bearing on how to do it ... there have been huge changes in ECEC on how to look at health and safety, Governance... but we are very limited in the practice and understanding of leadership, the practical ways of coming together, and leading as a group. (16872,17516)

The importance of “experience” (Practitioner D3(a) 1600,1766) and experiential knowledge was endorsed by the Practitioners. They advised experience and the “knowing” that accompanies experience was very important, “when you have worked in the setting for a long time you know what works; many new girls coming out of college have no experience” (Practitioner 5(c): 989,1322). Conversely, many of the Lecturers and Practitioner E7 talked about the need for a body of knowledge based on theory, and relevant to the Irish sector, as a foundation for the sector and for leadership.

8.3.3 Critical consciousness

The Lecturers referred to the need for critical thinking/reflection to engage with leadership. The verb “thinking” ran throughout the interviews, the idea that the regulatory nature of the sector had prevented the Practitioner from thinking, and “there are more important things to be doing than thinking about leadership” (Prof Org C5 8562,8954). As Gov A1 explained earlier “thinking, leadership, vision, moving forward and critical thinking, these are not things that we are investing in at the moment” (Gov A1: 3999, 4110).

I suppose if you want to talk about leadership it will take more training; you will have to approach it in a different manner to business; there will be more critical thought and more independent thinking, independent thinking. (E2: 2261,2834)

It was considered “essential to think and question everything, move beyond homogenised ... group thinking” (Lecturer B6 3701, 4031). Government representatives A, A1, and A3 placed significant emphasis on reflective practice as a critical role in ECEC leadership and outlined the part it currently played in ECEC training and the sector frameworks. On the other hand, Lecturer B3 explained that reflection was not adequate for leadership; reflective practice and action research in the ECEC frameworks “is passive and involves looking at how you can improve practice; we need to look at a more critical active approach to leadership and move from the micro to the macro” (3079, 3492). Conversely, action research was described as a tool to develop the critical capacity of the Practitioner and enable leadership (B3, B9). Moreover, Gov A1 proposed that leadership was the means to develop critical thinking:

We need to be thinking forward, thinking critically, we need to know what we want to say and when you’re thinking of all these the first thing that comes to mind is leadership; it’s probably the only way to achieve this, and the only way we’re going to go forward. (Gov A1: 19833,20104)

The Lecturers B, B1, B3, B7, B5, and B9 were very vocal on the central place research had to play in the development of leadership. Research, they claimed, could develop a context-specific knowledge base for the sector, which in turn could improve the leadership research in Irish contexts could lead” to a more critical, reflective form of leadership” (B1 11804, 1191).

Tied into the idea of critical thinking, research and action research was the notion of voice and the number of voices in the sector, in particular, the number of Practitioner groups, was considered a hindrance to developing leadership and developing a united sector with a common purpose (D4(a), C6). Gov. A advised that there were “too many vocal people, all different groups, no connection to each other, no solidarity” (18330, 18716). However, she also noted that there was potential for solidarity, advocacy and one voice as most Practitioners were” trying to voice the same thing just coming from a different angle” (29019, 29201).

Ultimately, the link between critical reflection, research, voice and knowledge (Lectures, Gov A, A1) speaks to Freire’s notion of “conscientization”, the ability to understand and reflect on how the everyday reality is constructed, and therefore act and intervene, and ultimately transform the situation (Freire, 1970). The Lecturers cited the Practitioners’ lack of critical capacity as one of the main reasons for their lack of leadership and unwillingness to engage with leadership and address the needs of the sector. Interestingly, Prof Org C5 advised that while the Lecturers’ voice was” always present at forums and consultations, they are the least active in trying to improve the working conditions in the sector” (C5: 333, 3527). Government representative A3 and A4 did not mention critical thinking, and Gov A3 embodied the lack of critical thinking and unwillingness to deconstruct and reconstruct ideas, a willingness to accept the status quo, which appears to be endemic in the sector:

ECEC as a funded state system, I am not sure this is in the educational discourse at present or that it will ever become part of education... the way we look at it and our approach is that it is better to work with and invest in what we have rather than pull it apart. (Gov A3: 12401,13027)

The notion that the Practitioner was overregulated and may not have a voice to communicate their ideas and needs in the sector was articulated: “you cannot control people; if you want them to use their own initiative and enjoy their work, then you’ll have to allow them some freedom to have a voice” (D4(a): 3693,4094).

As women we have no voice, we do not even have a name. There is no mass in what we do — no value — we are looked down on, we are less than teachers — so it is difficult to talk about leadership when we don't even have a name — we are called everything — maybe we need leadership to change this (D4(a): 3693,4094).

8.3.4 Relationship and care

“Leadership, it needs to be all about relationships” (Lecturer B1: 4836, 15018).

Relationships were discussed at length by the Professional Organisation; they envisaged a relational leadership that had the potential to bring people together, imbuing a sense of solidarity and professional identity. Participants attested:

We need cohesion; there is little ... solidarity, no vision, no agreement at any level, no agreement on what we are doing, and what do we need to do and even what do we need. This is where leadership can play a role. (Gov A: 19581,19832)

Respect and develop strong relationships amongst providers — private and community, having a common language around leadership— can create some form of solidarity, and this may be the first stepping- stone to realising a form of leadership in early childhood education. (E5: 11460, 11697)

The blood had been sucked out of them, and there is a feeling like it is never going to change, we need to support each other and build a community together (Owner D1: 6020,6323).

A strong aspiration for unity “one voice ... a sense of purpose and a sense we are all in the same boat, this is a very disjointed sector” (Room Leader E1: 6568, 6757) was evident in the interviews. However, while most participants were in favour of forming a group with a shared purpose, there was also a realisation that—

Each setting has its own set of values; they have priorities, areas they place high value on, maybe there would be better relationship if there was room for difference and people were allowed to express this difference by setting out what their setting has to offer and how this will be implemented. Then maybe when people don't have to try and fit into one mould, there will be more room for relationships and discussion

of different ideas – but a lot of this depends on having similar language, where we are all talking about the same thing and this is not the governments language, it is our own. (D5(b):3282,3819)

The Owner/Managers acclaimed that leadership could identify what mattered in the setting, the values, the mission, and goals. Leadership could become the means to establish what needs to be done, and as such, it could become a means to address workforce development in the sector. The Practitioners were not averse to support and a coming together, but it had to be related to their values, experiences, and needs.

We need a united vision, I'm not saying that everybody can have the same opinion, but we do need to know what we want and who we are and then we can work together (Gov A1: 27740, 27874).

Solidarity both within and without the sector was highlighted, forging stronger relationships with other organisations:

I think we should be looking to share ideas and links with carers and nurses ...Cross fertilisation is a really good thing, look we have often looked and discussed our issues with engineers, with social workers, and I think that doesn't need to do more of this. We need to become more risk-takers. (C3.11764,12142)

There was a very strong discourse and continuous reference to the lack of care in the sector, and care was considered a central component to relationships and to developing leadership. "There is a nothing in ECEC, no value, no care, no care for anyone; it can't go on like this, something will have to give" (D2(a) 382,458). The Owner/Managers were vocal on the subject. Nonetheless, it was the Practitioners who were the most outspoken. "Well, we have forgotten about care and looking after the children, and all of us, the parents, the communities, we have to think about this". (D5(c) 224,280)

How to develop leadership, well we are going to have to look at it all differently, new ways of doing things— the old ones haven't worked— new ways of looking at leadership and new ways of looking at care, we spend all our time looking at education, and we have lost care. Reconsidering care is the way, the only way we are going to make sure that everybody is looked after, we feel good about our work and I think it is the way to getting better recognition and respect. (E1 2061,2213)

It was posited that what was needed was a “change in mind-sets, not only within this sector but within society ... towards the value of care and education in the early childhood years. It needs to be valued... leadership may well be the way to do it” (B9 17474, 17903).

8.4 Summary of themes

Leadership was considered a micro phenomenon involving a leader and a shared process that was tasked with building teams, creating a vision and was founded on trusting relationships. The Government Organisations viewed leadership for children’s learning, inclusion, and governance as central to the sector. However, the remaining participants considered these forms of leadership to be concerned with economic objectives. The absence of a conversation in the sector on the purpose of ECEC and leadership, and the tension between the government’s continually evolving financial goals for the sector and the other stakeholders’ education and care objectives created a challenge for participants to articulate the purpose of leadership.

Participants (exception Gov Representatives) conveyed that it was “all way better before” the ECCE scheme, the emphasis on affordable childcare for parents and the specialist support in the sector. All of these initiatives required Management not Leadership and had contributed to the unwillingness of Practitioners to work in the sector. Conversely, the Government representatives outlined that the ECCE scheme had empowered and saved the sector.

Gender and care emerged as a significant theme. The gendered notion of care as women’s work was considered responsible for the lack of status in the academy, the Professional Organisations’ demotion, and the Practitioners’ subjugation, where training and support were unnecessary for the role of women who care. The Government and society in general were considered to have limited regard for the care of the youngest children (0-3 years).

The Lectures and Prof Orgs wished to move beyond care, as a means to gain respect and recognition. Conversely, the Practitioners viewed care as essential for the child, and the lack of care was considered responsible for the fractured relationships in the sector. There was a suspicion, principally from the Professional Organisations that the Practitioner paradoxically was avoiding leadership responsibility (villain) and was simultaneously incapable of leadership (victim). The question of how the Practitioners could engage with leadership when there were no supports in place, and the communication and advocacy roles had been outsourced to a professional organisation, was never raised.

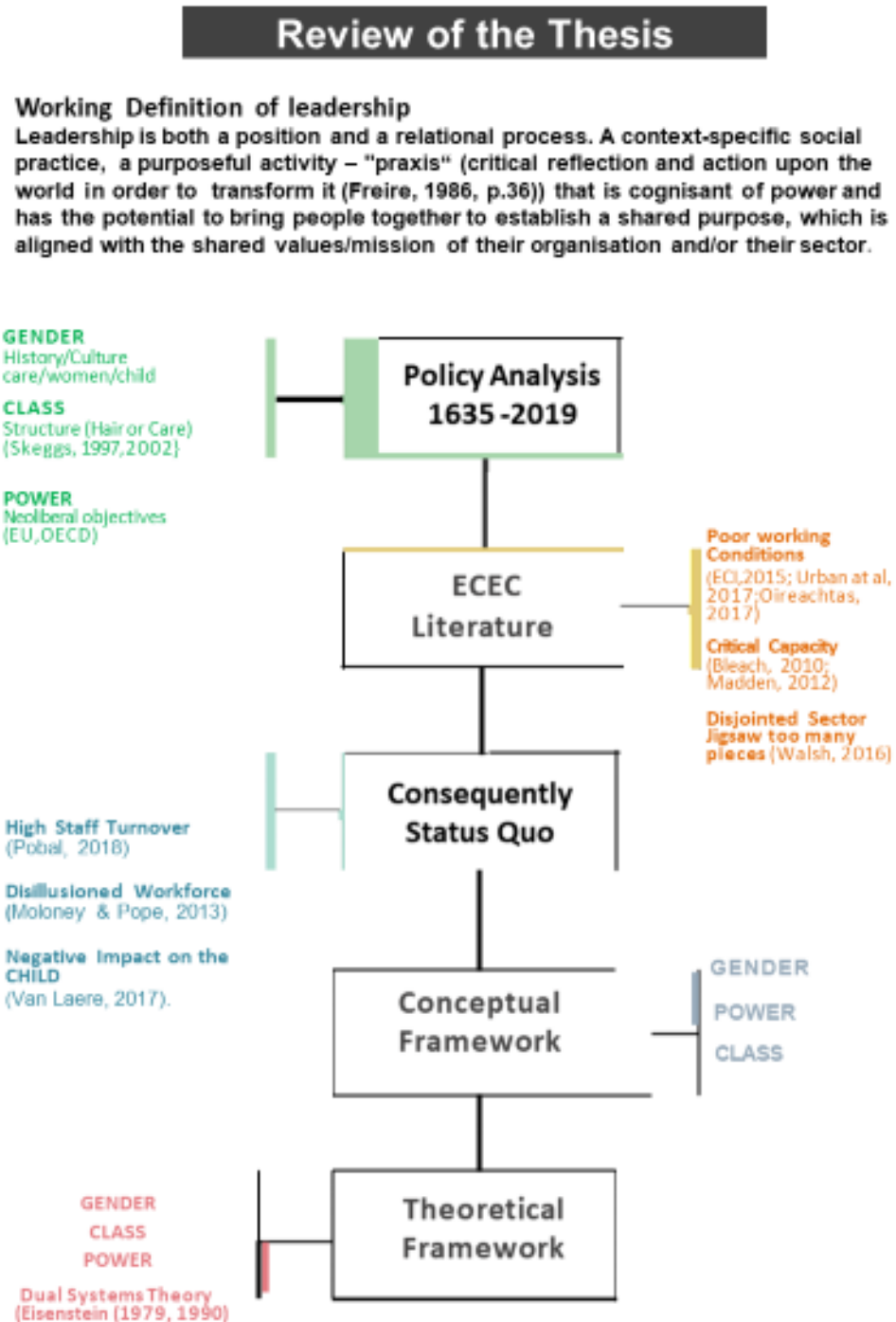
Central to this conversation was the reluctance of participants to discuss class. Participants' classed assumptions had positioned the community Practitioner as incapable of leadership. It would appear that this situation may have limited the expectation and practice of leadership in the sector.

Ultimately, participants concurred that leadership was necessary to develop the sector and simultaneously, it was essential to build leadership. The Practitioners proposed that care was central to the purpose of and to the development of leadership, and the Professional Organisations prioritised relationships at the macro and micro levels. The Lecturers described the need for critical thinking, research, and knowledge, to underpin and develop leadership in the setting. The Owner/Managers suggested that leadership offered the possibility of identifying the values, mission, and goals of the individual settings and identifying what needs to be done currently.

Figure 7 provides an overview and a recap of the study to this point. A definition of leadership and a synopsis of the policy chapters, the literature review, and the conceptual and theoretical frameworks are displayed.

Figure 19

Review of the Thesis



Chapter 9 Discussion

The analysis of the interviews revealed six emergent themes (Table 12), which are discussed in this chapter under the following four sections:

- the purpose and practice of leadership
- the power of gendered and classed assumptions
- the problem with care
- the possibility of leadership

The chapter commences with a discussion on the purpose and practice of ECEC leadership, which describes the participants' difficulty (excluding Government representatives) in articulating their understanding of leadership. The absence of a conversation on leadership and the emergence of several prescribed leadership roles and a network of government departments and organisations and their associated administrative and governance requirements (managerialism) has created confusion amongst the Lecturers and Professional Organisations and deprived the Practitioners of the confidence and opportunity to formulate the purpose of leadership and engage with the practice of leadership.

The discussion moves on to describe the participants' gendered and classed assumptions regarding the Practitioner. I will argue, based on my analysis of the data generated, that the power of these assumptions has created a complex web of hierarchical and fractious relationships and positioned the Practitioner as incapable of leadership and simultaneously capable of, but not interested in and avoiding, their responsibility for leadership (victim/villain).

The following section outlines how the synthesis of both the classed and gendered assumptions regarding the Practitioner and the patriarchal objectives and economic values relating to gender equality at the structural level (OECD) revealed the problem with care. The Practitioners' conceptualisation of care as central to working with children, relationships, and leadership in the sector were incompatible with the other participants' views and the structures overseeing and guiding the sector. Care became the primary constraint on the Practitioners' willingness to engage with leadership.

The discussion concludes by examining the participants' ideas for developing leadership and the possibility of aligning these stratagems with the Practitioners' vision for leadership.

The following were the initial set of research questions.

1. How is leadership understood in the sector, and how is it practised in ECEC settings?

2. What interventions currently exist to support leadership, including policies, literature, and training?
3. How do ECEC stakeholders relate to each other and the wider community?
4. How have/have not gender and class (other factors) influenced the ECEC stakeholders' understanding of leadership and leadership practice in the setting?
5. How do ECEC stakeholders conceptualise and articulate their ideas for developing leadership or alternative strategies to address Practitioners' working conditions?

To recap, Irish ECEC leadership research is lacking (Moloney & Petterson, 2017), and international research is considered sparse, inadequately theorised, and difficult to locate (Nicholson et al., 2018). The available research appears to be a repetitive exploration of distributed leadership, pedagogical leadership, and distributed pedagogical leadership (Heikka et al., 2013; Heikka et al., 2019). Waniganayke (2014) acknowledged that gender and culture (no mention of class) are absent in leadership research, and feminist research on ECEC leadership remains limited (Nicholson et al., 2018). Accordingly, this study became more about making sense of the participants' conceptualisations of leadership than situating their understandings within a body of ECEC literature.

The policies emanating from the national (CECDE, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; DCYA, 2010, 2013, 2014a, b, c, 2015, 2016a, b, c, d, 2019; DES, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2010; 2013, 2016a, b, c, d, 2018a, b; DJELR, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2006; NCCA, 2009, 2015) and international EU (2002, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2018, 2019) and OECD (2001, 2004, 2006, 2011, 2015, 2017, 2019) structures influencing ECEC policy and practice were drawn on in this endeavour. Along with the classed and gendered understandings of women and care in the broader literature (Braun et al., 2008; Colley, 2006; de la Bellacasa, 2012; Fraser, 2016; Lynch, 2009, 2010; Lynch et al., 2016; Mastracci, 2004; Reay, 1998, 2004; Raey & Ball, 2000; et al., 2010; Skeggs, 1997, 2002, 2011; Vincent & Ball, 2006; Vincent & Braun, 2011; Vincent et al., 2008; Walkerdine, 2011, 2015; Walkerdine & Lucy, 1989).

The theoretical perspective guiding this study — a social feminism framework — Dual System theory (capitalist patriarchy) (Eisenstein, 1979, 1990) became an invaluable framework for this research. Social feminism aims to find a means to improve the lives, working conditions, pay, and recognition of women. The argument that the current "brutal economic realities of globalization" make it impossible to ignore class and gender (Gordan, 2016, p. 234) and that the time is right for a favourable reconsideration of the socialist feminist perspective (Brenner, 2015; Lorber, 2012) sits firmly with this study. The reasons for omitting race in this study have been outlined (p.100). Similarly, confining research to

gender, class, and other forms of identity as separate paths that intersect may neglect what social feminism has for over two centuries described as a mutual dependency (Eisenstein, 1979) and fusion rather than intersection (Gordan, 2016).

The analysis of the interviews revealed six emergent themes (Table 12), and they will be discussed in this chapter under the following sections (see Table 15):

Table 15

Discussion Themes

Leadership			
The Purpose and practice of leadership	The Power of gendered and classed assumptions	The Problem with care	The Possibility of leadership

* The term Practitioner is used to cover the overall group of participants working in the ECEC settings/ The term Owner/Manager denotes when this group speak independently of the main group of Practitioners.

9.1 The purpose of leadership

The non-government participants described the challenge of defining leadership in a sector that had never discussed the purpose of ECEC. This situation may not be unique to Ireland or ECEC, as the purpose of leadership is rarely questioned in ECEC (Sims et al, 2015) and in the wider educational leadership field remains ambiguous and contested (Blackmore, 1999, 2013; Kempster et al., 2011; Sinclair, 2007). Similarly, there is no agreement on the content or foci of ECEC internationally (O' Sullivan & Ring, 2018), nor is there any agreement "on what is expected of ECEC graduates" (Waniganayake, 2014, p. 66). Thus, "the purposes of early childhood institutions are not self-evident" (Moss, 2007, p. 5). Without an understanding of the sector's function, it became difficult for participants to describe the purpose of ECEC leadership.

Furthermore, without a conversation on the purpose of ECEC/ECEC leadership in the sector, the government's conceptualisation of leadership had taken precedence and created leadership confusion amongst the non-government participants. It would be disingenuous to suggest that the various layers of ECEC participants (Practitioners, Lecturers, Government, and Professional Organisations) presuppose innate homogeneity

within each category. Nonetheless, there was, and this section outlines the majority conceptualisation of leadership within each group.

Leadership was understood as a relational and democratic process (Professional Organisations, Gov A1), a process embedded in a particular philosophy (Lecturers, Gov A3), an authoritative and regulated role (Practitioners, Gov A4), or a combination of all three (Gov A2 and many other nongovernment participants). This understanding aligns with the second wave of leadership research, where leadership is considered a socially constructed and context-specific phenomenon. In the literature, leadership as an authoritative role is viewed as a by-product of the male-orientated business model of leadership (Hard, 2006; Hallet, 2013) and the reason why ECEC Practitioners may not affiliate with leadership. However, the notion of a male model of leadership was not a strong theme in the interviews. Accordingly, the Practitioners' understanding of an authoritative leader was linked to their experience of the prescribed leadership roles, including room leader, and the inspection of leadership for quality learning experiences (Pedagogy) (DES, 2016a, 2016c).

Nevertheless, most participants alternated between understanding leadership as a relational process and leadership as a leader. By the end of the interviews, most Practitioners dismissed the modernist binary notion of a leader and a follower, aligning instead with a postmodernist perspective of leadership (Nicholson & Maniates, 2015). Conversely, the continuous calls internationally to delineate leadership roles would suggest that leadership is predominately situated in an individual with formal tasks (Aubrey, 2011; Ho, 2012; Rodd, 1997; Sims et al., 2018).

However, while I acknowledge what the theorists describe as the flexible and fluid nature of leadership, and the potential a postmodernist approach offers to develop a context-specific form of leadership (Cartmel et al., 2013; Nicholson et al., 2018); nevertheless, I consider the notion of a leader may be necessary for the sector. The rationale for this is that the question of who coordinates the diverse group of ECEC actors has not been resolved in the postmodern literature, nor has the difficulty of a sector embedded in a climate of regulations and inspections (Moloney & Pope, 2013) and without an articulated purpose (Moss, 2014; Urban et al., 2017) embracing a postmodernist perspective been acknowledged. Besides, if the postmodernist rejects the prospect of a coherent self (Gordan, 2016), leadership's emancipatory potential becomes impossible. As such, the notion of leadership as both a role and a relational process is included in the definition of leadership employed in this study (pp. 101-102).

The Government representatives concurred with Rodd's (2013) proposal that leadership is "everyone's business" and everyone can and should share the "leadership process every day" (p. 13). Most of the other participants, however, quantified the range of

prescribed leadership roles. These roles included room leader (Tusla), leadership for inclusion (DCYA), the inspection of leadership and management of quality learning (DES), and leader/manager to implement and administrate ECEC regulations and inspections (Governance)(Tusla) and to manage universal ECEC and government support for parents (affordable childcare) (Pobal). These leadership positions, they asserted, were associated with a leader and a specific role – a very different approach compared to the “leadership for everyone, and with everyone” mantra of the Government representatives.

The participants described the challenge of navigating the numerous leadership roles. This sense of leadership confusion (Nivala, 2002) correlates with the literature, where internationally ECEC leadership continues to be a confused and challenging activity (Ang, 2012; Inoue & Kawakita, 2019; Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011). However, the Government representatives had no difficulty describing leadership's purpose and prioritised leadership for inclusion, pedagogical leadership, and leadership for governance.

9.1.1 Leadership for inclusion, pedagogy, and governance

The Government representatives in line with the literature described the prescribed leadership roles in the sector as prestigious (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003) and essential to ensure quality learning, and affordable, accessible, and inclusive ECEC for parents and children. Conversely, the Practitioners described qualification Level 6 as inadequate training for Leadership for Inclusion (LINC), which left them ill-prepared for this role. Most of the Practitioners explained the “one size fits all” approach to inclusion neglects the child's individual needs (LINC Consortium, 2019; Oireachtas, 2017; 2018) and “equity” was limited to equal access for children, not full participation (Harris et al., 2003, p. 164). This cohort suggested that the inclusion model (AIM) was more concerned with alleviating the increasing public demand and specialist support cost (psychologists, speech therapists). This argument is sustained by the number of children requiring professional specialist support at the highest level of the AIM model (level 7), which has increased by 134% between 2016 – 2017 (Pobal, 2018). Support for children with SAEN they advised ought to occur at the “earliest possible opportunity, and not wait until the child is enrolled in the ECCE scheme” (LINC Consortium, 2019, p. 126).

The inclusion model is reminiscent of the cost-effective undertones of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). The Owner/Managers (D, D2, D4, and D5) questioned the rationale of imposing a leadership for inclusion role, albeit a coordinator role on a system that is already experiencing difficulties implementing the current sector frameworks. Too often, in the interest of efficiency and affordability, social actors (Practitioners) are assigned

responsibility for issues (cognitive development, disadvantaged children, the inclusion of children with SAEN) that are often outside their understanding and control (Ball, 2012).

Pedagogical leadership as a micro phenomenon, an approach to teaching and learning, was considered the primary function of leadership (Gov A and A1) and is reflected in the literature (Heikka, 2013; Fonsén & Ukkonen-Mikkola, 2019). This narrow understanding of leadership may explain the limited reference to leadership for advocacy within the interviews (only two participants made this link) and the scarcity of advocacy research in ECEC internationally (Boylan & Dalrymple, 2011; Nicholson et al., 2018). Gov A4's assertion that leadership could not be left to chance and had to be regulated corresponds to the nature of pedagogical leadership in the sector. The NCCA oversees the curriculum framework, and the Department of Education inspects leadership for learning described as pedagogical leadership (DES, 2016). The notion of inspecting leadership diverges from the literature, where ECEC leadership involves creating a vision and decision making, and is context specific (Nivala, 2002; Nicholson et al., 2018) and does not involve regulation.

The other participants did not use the term “pedagogy”. The absence of the term “pedagogical leadership” may be symptomatic of the confusion internationally, where countries with a robust pedagogical discourse (Finland and Australia) have limited explanations and implementation of pedagogical leadership (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011; Heikka, 2013) and the amalgamation of pedagogy and leadership is considered an ambiguous and unexamined concept (Male & Palaiologou, 2015). However, the alignment and interconnection of pedagogy, leadership, and inspection could be regarded as even more ambiguous.

In short, the Government representatives' regulated and narrow approach to pedagogy, and leadership, was at odds with the views of most other participants. In contrast, these other participants described the challenges of implementing the prescribed play-based curriculum and the inspection of this form of learning (Bubikova-Moan et al., 2019; Wood, 2014). With over 40% of ECEC settings following a Montessori ethos (ECI, 2018c) one could question the rationale of prioritising a play-based approach and this may partially explain the challenges of leadership for learning expressed by the Practitioners.

Conversely, there was an absence of any reference to play based learning in the Minister for Children's (DCYA, 2013) focus on children's learning and genomics, economics, and neuroscience. This dichotomy demonstrated the disconnection between the government departments overseeing the ECEC sector (European Commission, 2015) and confirms the participants' assertion that the government is primarily interested in the preschool child's (3–5 years) cognitive development to boost economic productivity and reduce future social

costs – human capital theory (Heckman, 1999, 2008, 2017). Hackman's theory and the benefits arising from the association of cognitive development and human capital have been questioned (Campbell-Barr & Nygård, 2014; Cannella, 1997). Others have asserted that the theory could be flawed (Burke and Sheffield, 2013; Hillman & Williams, 2015), and Heckman warned that his approach required further exploration (Heckman, 2011). Nevertheless, this association continues in ECEC policy documents (DCYA, 2016; Government of Ireland, 2018). While it was primarily the Lecturers who described human capital theory as the premise for the interest in leadership for learning, all participants acknowledged (exception Gov A3) that affordable and quality childcare for parents to facilitate gender equality and full employment had become the primary focus of the sector. This view aligns with the government's objective "Quality cannot and should not be divorced from the objective of affordability" (DCYA, 2016c p. 31).

Moreover, two of the four Government representatives expressed abiding confidence in leadership for governance, in which standardisation and accountability through the mechanisms of quality assurance measures and quality control, including curriculum frameworks, leadership, and quality inspection systems, would result in transparent governance and a rise in ECEC quality to facilitate full employment (OECD, 2015a). Conversely, the non-government participants agreed that some form of guidance and directive was necessary, and all participants (excluding Gov A3) considered the level of accountability to be excessive and more suitable for meeting minimum standards than quality environments for children (Fenech et al., 2008; O'Kane & Kernan, 2002). In short, the government representatives conceptualised leadership as a role with a specific purpose to oversee quality learning experiences (pedagogy), to coordinate quality inclusive environments (leadership for inclusion), and manage governance (regulations, inspections, audits). The other participants described the leadership roles as more concerned with managing and resourcing affordable, accessible, and quality childcare than with the welfare of child and the Practitioner.

9.1.2 Quality as the purpose of leadership

The Lecturers considered quality a socially constructed phenomenon with no universal definition (Elwick et al., 2018). Nevertheless, they advised the sector was "obsessed" with the quality discourse emanating from the OECD (2011, 2012, 2015a). The Irish ECEC policy appears to have followed a similar philosophy and trajectory (Table 1). The Lecturers advised quality had become the means to regulate and standardise the sector (Dahlberg & Moss, 2007; Moss, 2017) and promote economic growth based on the premise that this growth depends on cost-effective, "quality" childcare services that meet public

demand (Massey, 2013). The neoliberal story of the markets has, the Lecturers suggested, been "spread and normalised" through international organisations, including the EU, OECD, and individual governments (Moss, 2017, p.17). The OECD (2004, 2014, 2015b, 2018, 2019a) recommendations to change and redirect social and ECEC policy towards gender equality and full employment, where "change is the constant" (Blackmore, 2013, p. 139) rests on the neoliberal assumption that states should be reconstructed regularly through continuous reform and change (Rhodes, 2017). As such, the contention that education has become more reactive than proactive in the neoliberal climate (Starr, 2019) sits firmly with the participants' view of the free preschool year(s) (ECCE scheme) as a reactive policy (DCYA, 2010). So too does the notion that the ECEC sector may have been working well prior to introducing the ECCE scheme (Better Before). The participants claimed (excluding Gov A3) that the government had a propensity to introduce reactive reforms, including leadership reform, with little thought, collaboration, and evaluation of the [side] effects of the reforms (Oireachtas, 2017; Hayes, 2016; Pembroke, 2017).

The universal ECCE scheme was also regarded as one such reactive policy decision. While the benefits of universal ECEC for children and society were acknowledged by the participants (Hayes, 2016; Start Strong, Urban, et al., 2017), they further counselled that the benefits are dependent on high levels of state responsibility, governance, economic resourcing, and staff qualifications and remuneration (Yerkes & Javornik, 2019). The literature supports the participants' claim that there are tensions or [un]intended repercussions of prioritising and resourcing one aspect of ECEC (the ECCE scheme). The repercussions included: Negligible benefits to the 3–5-year-old child (McKeown et al., 2015). No support for the 0–3-year-old child (Hayes, 2016) and childcare that is expensive for parents. (Urban et al., 2017)

The government document (DCYA, 2015) also recognised the participants claim of an

inherent tension between the objectives relating solely to child development, as compared with those that relate solely to the issue of affordability and activation. Certainly, taken to their limits, both overarching objectives have the potential to have contra-indications for the other. (DCYA, 2015, p. 48)

This document (DCYA, 2015) confirms the nongovernment participants claim that ECEC had become primarily concerned with economics. Kempster et al. (2011) have

advised that without a discourse of 'leadership as purpose,' there is a general tendency for the purpose to become overly preoccupied with economics.

The practitioners pointed out the ECCE scheme had provided limited support for qualifications (level 5) as higher than this would "increase cost, heighten supply, and reduce accessibility and affordability for many parents" (Inter-Departmental Group Working Group, 2015, p. 48). Conversely, the lack of investment in the 0–3 years has occasioned ECEC settings to move towards an ECCE-only model reducing the number of all-day care facilities (ECI, 2018b). The scheme has been accredited with disregarding the economic position of those providing ECEC, driving ECEC working conditions down (Pembroke, 2017), and prioritising management over leadership (Tusla, NCCA). The Practitioners identified the scheme as the point of transition from leading a setting to managing a setting.

Similarly, the Lecturers mooted that management and increased administration had taken precedence over leadership to drive quality aligns with the literature (Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016; Osgood, 2012). However, the Owner/Managers argued that they were not engaged with management but were "just managing" the extensive administration from a network of overseeing organisations. This understanding may support the notion of network governance (Rhodes, 1997, 2017) and managerialism (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

9.1.3 Leadership in practice: Management, managing, or managerialism

The assortment of leadership roles was considered by many of the study participants to be symptomatic of a fragmented sector. They described a network of government departments and their subsidiary organisations, each with responsibility for some aspect of the childcare sector (Walsh, 2017), where all follow different and often-conflicting policy agendas (European Commission, 2015; Hayes, 2013; Urban et al., 2017) and leadership requirements. Yet, the common ground between these departments was the notion of quality (DES, Tusla, DCYA, Pobal). This understanding correlates with the neoliberal story of quality and high returns (Moss, 2017) and the infiltration of quality into the sector by shifting from government to governance within the growing hegemony of new managerialism (Moss & Dahlberg, 2008; Paananen et al., 2015). While "Governing without Government" (Rhodes, 2017, p. 1258) or network governance is associated with deregulation and privatisation, Skerritt & Salokangas (2020) suggest that the deprivatisation of the Irish ECEC sector is occurring.

Nevertheless, the conceptualisation of a mode of governance involving "multiple centres" (network) (Rhodes, 1997, p. 109) and dispersal of power across networks of actors

(Fairtlough, 2007) aligns with the participant's description of the distribution of power to a network of 10+ ECEC Government departments and their subsidiary support and inspection organisations (Walsh, 2017). Similarly, the Practitioners' claim that the introduction of the ECCE scheme (DES, 2010) was accompanied by the appropriation and restructuring of the sector, leaving ECEC service owners as subcontractors (Pobal, 2017), is considered a form of contracting out and managing public services through networks (Cohen & Eimicke, 2010).

The Practitioners' idea of "just managing" and the constant reference to quality, regulation, value for money, affordability, a more business-like approach, and the creation of management culture in the interviews may speak to the notion of managerialism (Ball, 2008; Blackmore, 2013; Lynch & Grummel, 2018; Pollitt, 1990; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011), where accountability and standards are considered structures of managerialism (Hammond et al., 2015).

According to the practitioners, these structures of managerialism have increased not only levels of responsibility and administration (Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016; Osgood, 2012) but also created a disciplinary culture, which has limited their decision-making and control (Fenech & Sumsion, 2007; Osgood, 2010). The assertion (Lecturer B8) that management is how leadership is now, correlates with Ozga's (2000) description of managerialism as the "official version of leadership" (p. 355). The managerialism ideology may also explain the participants' (Gov A3, A4) unyielding view that management and a disciplined workforce would raise ECEC quality and affordability. This belief exemplifies the hegemonic nature of the neoliberal/managerial discourse and how it has become incorporated into the "common-sense way" in which the participants interpret and understand ECEC (Harvey, 2005, p.2).

In short, while the Practitioners accredited the ECCE scheme with the transition from leadership to management and the Lecturers questioned the notion of quality in this transition, both may be symptomatic of a neoliberal turn in ECEC internationally (Børhaug, 2013; Kamali & Jönsson, 2019; Sims et al., 2018; Wasmuth & Nitecki, 2017) and nationally (Moloney et al., 2019; Nolan, 2020) and described as a "juggernaut" impacting ECEC (Moss, 2014, p. 6).

Can leadership in a neoliberal climate become the vehicle to support the Practitioners in developing their working conditions when the prescribed leadership roles may contribute to and continue poor working conditions in the sector (increased workload, regulation, and inspections)? In the broader field of educational leadership, the notion of leadership is enmeshed in neoliberal philosophy and objectives (Blackmore, 2013, 2019; Gunter, 2011; Lumby, 2013). Yet these and other academics align with the participants' view

that leadership is primarily a moral act built around the common good, involving the organisation's purpose, values, and beliefs (Palestini, 2012; Sergiovanni, 1996). However, the nongovernment participants' difficulty with the government's conceptualisation of leadership as a means to oversee cognitive development and governance in the interest of affordability and economic prosperity reflects Wrights (2001) assertion that attempting to marry the dual goals of human flourishing and a productive economy has culminated in a current form of leadership described as a "Bastard leadership", which has been described as a form of managerialism (Wright, 2001, p. 274).

Bustard leadership had played out in the tension between the (Gov A3, A4) belief that leadership was meeting the social and economic needs of the family and had elevated and empowered the Practitioner, and the Practitioners' claim that leadership was more concerned with "just managing" and had created friction (room leader) and confusion (pedagogy and inclusion) and over-regulation (governance). Without a conversation on ECEC/ECEC leadership, it would seem that the Government's conceptualisation of leadership as managing cost-effective and efficient services to facilitate full employment (managerialism) had taken precedence and created leadership confusion in the sector.

The Government representatives suggested that leadership and the ECCE scheme had empowered the sector; in contrast, the Owner/Managers described their powerlessness, the loss of power and control to make choices and decisions in their settings, and the loss of their identity as self-employed service owners. While acknowledging the Owner/Managers loss of agency (decision-making and control) under the ECCE scheme, they seemed to be unaware that neither people nor organisations can be entirely self-governing, especially if they receive public funds (Salokangas & Ainscow 2018; Ward et al., 2015). The Owner/Managers seemed to be uninformed of the consequences of their participating in the ECCE scheme: Lecture B4 advised, "yes, the funding model (ECCE scheme) may constrain leadership, but if you take the money, you must play the game." The game rules dictated that signing up for a free preschool year would involve losing a substantial control and power.

These differences in viewpoint about the ECEC scheme's implications for leadership in the sector may not be surprising, as the ECEC game has conflated leadership and management, child development, and affordable childcare policies (DCYA, 2015; Hayes, 2001). An [un]intended consequence of conflating ECEC policies is that services that offer the ECCE scheme and services which provide all-day care have been blurred into one entity – affordable childcare. The [un]intended repercussions of this conflation are that the Owner/Managers have become unsure of their status; they asked were they private owners, employers, providers of affordable childcare, employees, or subcontractors (p.149).

Moreover, this group is blamed for expensive all-day childcare and inadequate remuneration for ECEC workers. It could be argued that the conflation of policies has diverted the attention away from the government's responsibility for the sector and created what the participants described as fragmented and fractious relationships in the sector. ECEC settings, universities and colleges have become embroiled in competitive strategies regarding supply and demand. Competition between academic institutions was justified in the past as it could ensure improvements in course quality (DES, 1999). Similarly, creating competition between ECCE providers could lead to quality in childcare provision (NESF, 2006). However, the Owner/Managers (exception E2) and many Practitioners and Lecturers recognised that power did not only emanate from above (Lukes, 2005) but they were as much "participants as products in games of power where people can act on one another to gain an advantage (Foucault, 1997). I would argue from my analysis that the games of power were played out in the classed and gendered assumptions regarding the Practitioner and their engagement with leadership.

9.2 The power of gendered and classed assumptions

The participants considered the introduction of specialists in the sector a token to appease parents "specialist support will ... instil confidence in parents" (DCYA, 2018, p. 106) in the aftermath of the Prime Time Investigates programme. The programme exposed "grave concerns over the quality of childcare" in three Dublin crèches (Hillard, 2013). The owner/managers described how the difficulties at the management level and the lack of investment in the early years were side-lined in the government response to this situation (Hayes, 2013).

Blame was attributed to the ECEC settings, and the government assured the public that the level of inspection, noncompliance penalties, and childcare staff qualification standards would increase (DCYA, 2013). All of which is reminiscent of the Madonna House controversy (O'Sullivan, 2009) and suggest that the government is locked into reactive responses and cannot change direction due to the resources already invested in this course of action (Pierson, 2000; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004).

The Practitioners questioned the hierarchical implications of the title "specialists", (Hammond et al., 2015) who directed the knowledge and skills (Olin Wright, 2015) in the sector, with little recognition of Practitioner knowledge, values, experience, and context. This form of mentoring, they advised, did not suit many settings (Goodbody, 2012; Wong & Waniganayake, 2013).

Similarly, the practitioner's knowledge, values and skills were considered lacking, and a blame and mistrust culture permeated the interviews. The Professional Organisations

suggested the Practitioner did not have the critical capacity for leadership, and simultaneously they indicated that the Practitioner (in particular the community service practitioner) was capable of leadership but was avoiding it. The community Practitioner was accused of playing the victim role of the "nice woman" who loves children wronged by the system. Conversely, the analysis of the interviews suggested that the Practitioners were capable of critical reflection. They were the first to ask the critical questions regarding the one size fits all model of inclusion (D2(a), D4(a), D5(b) E6) and the motives of the professional body advocating on behalf of the sector. That leadership may not be an appropriate word for the sector (E5). The quandary of the victim/villain ran throughout the interview and could be attributed to the blame and mistrust culture emanating from the government. However, a closer examination of the classed and gendered articulations in the interview revealed the "dynamic power" relations governing the Practitioner and their relationship with leadership (Eisenstein, 1979, p.1).

The interviews included frequent references to the connection between leadership and gender. Participants Gov A4, B4, C8, and E2 were outliers, and in line with postfeminist theory, claimed that gender is "no longer an issue" (Osgood & Robinson, 2017, p. 35). Nevertheless, they made numerous gendered references to the all-female "bitchy" environment of the settings and discussed the difficulty women had with leadership in general. Similarly, this group and the remaining nonpractitioner participants held the belief that a confident, business-like, well-educated practitioner would instil confidence in parents and professionalise the sector, all of which speaks to the male model of leadership (Blackmore, 1989). These gendered assumptions may not only have reduced the potential for respect and solidarity but also lowered the expectation of leadership in the sector.

The practitioners did not concur with the literature's gendered claims, which suggest ECEC practitioners do not affiliate with the male model of leadership (Hard, 2004; 2011; Hard & Jónsdóttir, 2013). Moreover, the 'bitchy' working conditions, bickering and loud shouting were not considered gendered behaviour but an outlet to deal with the underlying problems of low status, pay and qualifications (Rodd, 2006). However, the non-practitioner participants, in general, did concur that the gender composition of ECEC and the image of the "nice girl" who loves children depicted ECEC women as unintelligent, incapable of leadership, speaking out, or asserting themselves (Stonehouse, 1989). This renders them an insignificant force, like how women are often viewed in the "highly gendered senior and policy echelons" (Sumsion, 2006, p. 2).

Moreover, the description of the community Practitioners tendency to engage in loud shouting matches (is often considered working-class behaviour) (Skeggs, 2002) in comparison to the desired classed image of capable, business-driven and assertive women

who work in private ECEC settings ran throughout the interviews (p.172). The interviews included many classed innuendos, though the word "class" was not used before the interview question on class. The Professional Organisations criticised the community Practitioner, and their way of life (*habitus*) and behaviour was devalued (p.174), their inability to engage with education (cultural capital) (Lecturers) (p.152) and the wider educational and political arena (social capital) (Professional Organisation) was scrutinised (pp.176 -177). These accusations delineated the community Practitioners' lack of resources or capital and determined their position in social space or class position (Bourdieu, 1986).

These classed assumptions also appear in Irish policy documents (DES, 2002, 2010, 2013; EOCP, 2004). In a similar manner to the working-class women, the community Practitioner enrolled in a care course (Skeggs, 2002) was considered challenged academically, administratively, and struggling with the sector's frameworks corresponds and referred to as useless subjects (Skeggs, 2002). Skeggs (2002, p. 173) argues that there is a denial of working-class experiences, ... People get cast in the underclass because they are seen as totally useless – (Bauman, 2005, p. 72). In contrast, there is no reference in the Irish policy documents that the frameworks in question have never been rolled out to all the Practitioners in the sector (Eurofound, 2014; Hayes, 2016). Nor is there any recognition of the difficulty the Practitioner may have with negotiating top-down policies in the context of neoliberal politics and economics (Roberts-Holmes, 2012).

Class aversion became a significant theme. It could be considered an Irish cultural response; however, a similar pattern emerges internationally (Osgood et al., 2017; Andrew, 2015; Whitebrook et al., 2018) where class can be invisible in policy and the sector's discourse. Yet, many Practitioners in these countries are working-class women. The Lecturers concurred with Roberts-Holmes (2012) and, in general, took an impartial view of class and were pragmatic in their analysis, agreeing with Frow (2005) that class may not be a given, but a process, where the individual is defined through the responses and power of others (1995, p. 384). Many Lecturers highlighted that the Practitioner could engage with leadership with support and training; conversely, others advised that "leadership was a step too far for the community Practitioner", reinforcing the notion that class is relational and structural (Eisenstein, 1979).

The Practitioners could be considered victims of these gendered and classed assumptions, culminating in low/no expectation for leadership in the sector. This understanding may further explain ECEC specialists' introduction to support the Practitioner's perceived gendered and classed inadequacies (low academic achievement, limited critical capacity, and not capable of implementing the frameworks). Nevertheless, the participants A, A1, and B9 exposed the harsh politics of class (hooks, 2000), referring to the

Community Employment (CE) scheme, where one in every five staff members in community settings is connected to the CE (Pobal, 2017).

The CE group has been accused of bringing expertise and wages down in the sector (Start Strong, 2012), and it would seem from the interviews that they have brought the expectation of leadership down also. Conversely, the villain claim could be more about the Professional Organisations struggling to reassert their status in the sector rather than the community Practitioner's incapacity to lead. Equally, the Practitioner may be the victim of a lack of knowledge concerning leadership, where they do not realise that the idea of power is crucial to leadership (Cheeseman, 2007) and have not as yet conceived that they have the power and potential for leadership (Hollingsworth et al., 2016) and improving their working conditions. These explanations go some way towards understanding why the Practitioner is perceived as the villain shirking leadership responsibilities, but do not explain why the Practitioner cannot or does not wish to articulate the purpose of leadership.

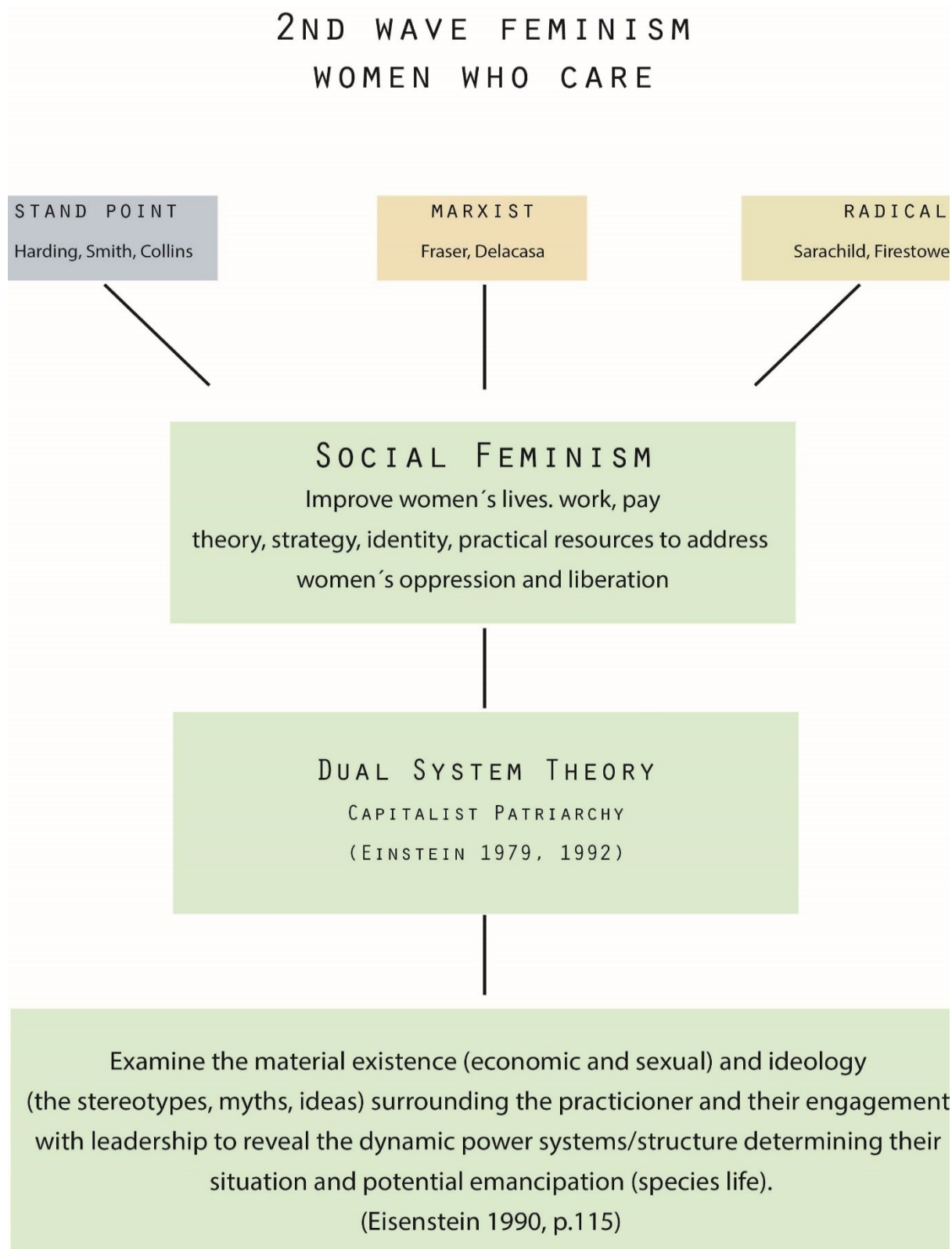
However, by analysing power in the data in terms of its class origins (Women as useless subjects) and its patriarchal roots (Women as an insignificant force) and how these forms of domination merge with the capitalist and patriarchal structures (International and international policy) steering these objectives (Eisenstein, 1979) revealed the source of the practitioner's subjugation and unwillingness to articulate their conceptualisations of leadership – the understanding of care. The lack of recognition and respect for women who care in society and "care" as an axiom and fundamental mode of praxis in ECEC had marginalised practitioner knowledge and weakened their confidence in articulating and positioning care as central to the purpose of ECEC and leadership. Figure 18 charts the data analysis process to reveal the problem with care.

9.3 The problem with care

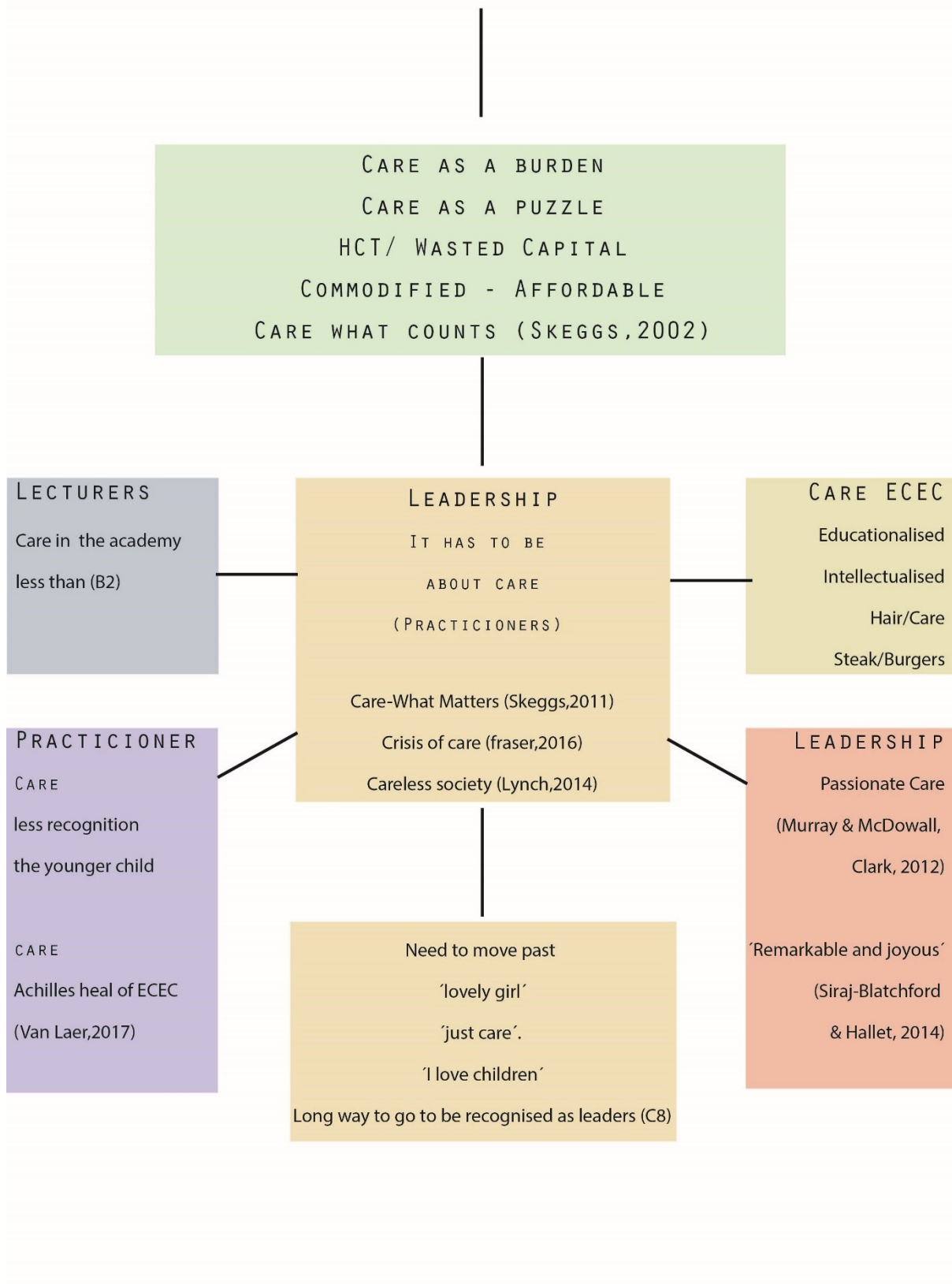
A synthesis of the gendered understanding of "nice women who care" as an insignificant force, and the classed understanding of women who care as useless subjects, coupled with the economic and patriarchal objectives (HCT, gender equality, full employment) emanating from the OECD and guiding Irish ECEC policy revealed the power over the Practitioner, and the principal issue constraining leadership in the sector was the notion of care. The tension and source of power between the non-Practitioner participants and the Practitioners was the understanding of care. This power dynamic was not only responsible for the repression of the Practitioner (villain); it had also disempowered and prohibited the Practitioner from articulating and positioning care as central to the purpose of ECEC and leadership. Figure 18 charts the data analysis.

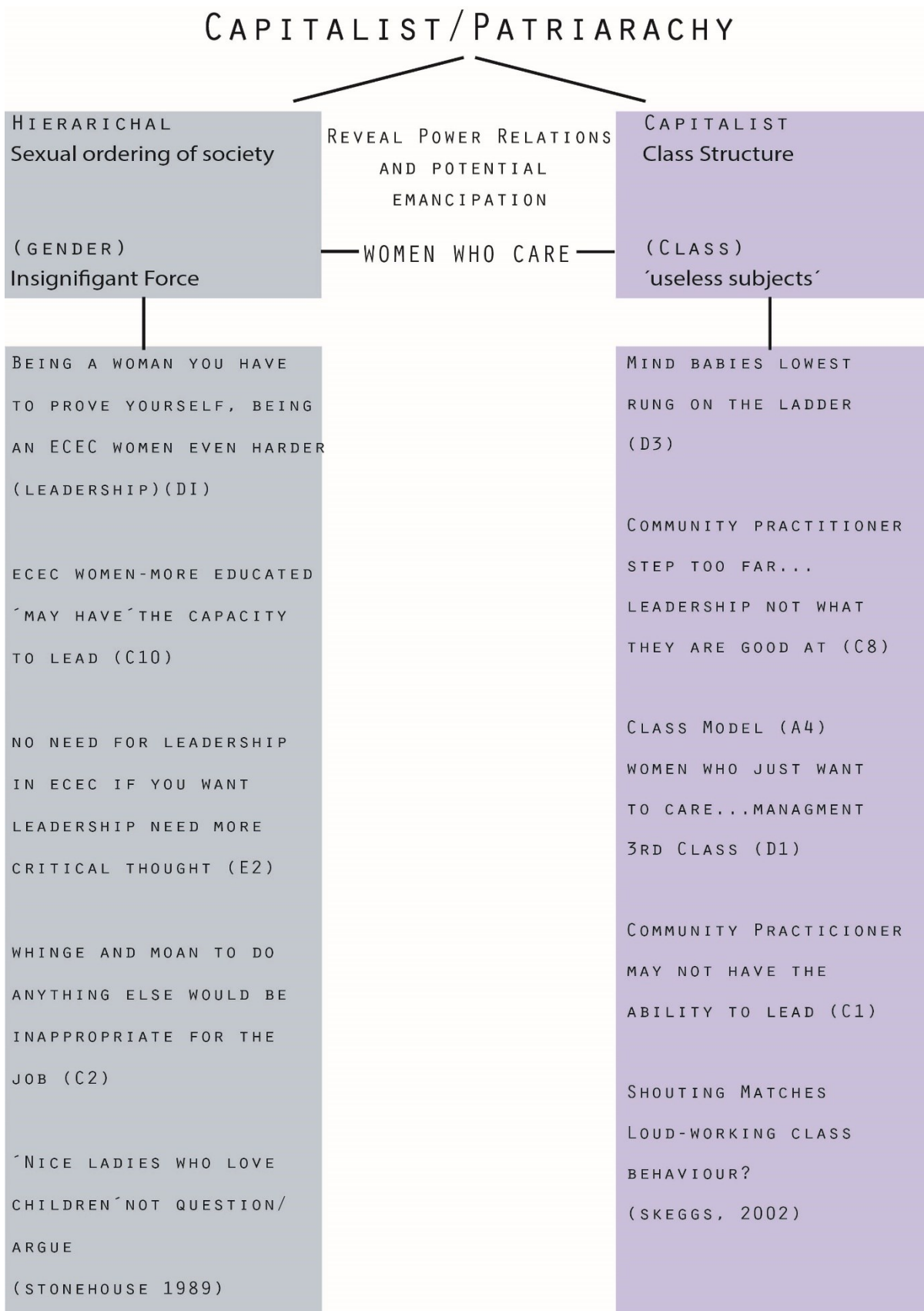
Figure 18

The problem with Care



OECD (STRUCTURES)





While many of the traditional duties of the family, including much of the child's care, has been transferred from the "private to Irish public social institutions", including crèches, nurseries, and preschools (McDonald, 2009, p. 89), it remains challenging to find a definition of care in ECEC research and policy. However, the OECD (2014) has described care as the "activity" that "provides what is necessary for the health, wellbeing, maintenance, and protection of someone or something". On the other hand, work is considered an activity that requires "mental or physical effort and is costly in terms of time resources" (p. 3). This feeds into the care and education divide in the sector and suggests that care requires no effort and is cost-free, which validates the participant's assertion that there is very little economic value placed on care. Equally, this definition is at odds with the Practitioner's understanding of care as nurturing, security, and bonding with the child, are vital for relationships in the sector.

However, the Practitioners, while wanting an idealised caring world described in the leadership literature as "remarkable and joyous" (Siraj-Blatchford & Hallet, 2014, p. x) and "passionate care" (McDowall Clark & Murray, 2012, p. 46), moved past these normative and nostalgic understandings of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012). The women in my study and others (Skeggs, 1997; Walkerdine & Lucy, 1989) were more at home with the practical aspect of care. They described the dilemma and silencing of who should support ECEC children in their physical and emotional needs, a dilemma described as the "Achilles' heel" of ECEC (Van Laere, 2017, p. 220). They aligned with Alderson's assertion that Childcare (in contrast to living alongside children) is positioned as labour, to be measured, priced, and delegated rather than valued and enjoyed" (Alderson, 2017, p. 309). The lack of interest and attention to care in the sector and society and the dilemma of who meets the care needs of ECEC children were of grave concern to the Practitioners. They questioned whether the government, the working mother, or society, in general, understood the value of care and the value of those entrusted with their children's care (Federici, 2012; Fraser, 2016). Academics have asked similar questions (Fraser, 2016; Lynch, 2009; Lynch, 2015; Moss, 2017) and recognised that the ethics of capitalism are deeply antithetical to the ethics of care (Fraser, 2016). They also advised that the OECD and EU may [un]intentionally have become public patriarchies, paternalist international organisations, whose directives seem to be less interested in care and more interested in using women "for reproduction, unpaid carers, and low-paid carers than achieving gender equality in the home and the workplace" (Lorber, 2012, p. 65). In the leadership literature, Blackmore (2013) has made a similar claim.

Understanding care as a burden, an obstacle to gender equality and the need for affordable childcare to alleviate this burden (DOJELR, 2017; OECD, 2014) aligns with the Government representatives (A3, A4) objective of affordable childcare — the commodification of ECEC. The Lecturers considered care to be the root of the sector's low

social, professional and economic status. Care was responsible for the subjugation of the Practitioner, the Lecturers' lower position in the academy, the Professional Organisations' loss of their role to the experts, and a deterrence to men working in the sector, as outlined in the literature (Sargent, 2001; Scurfield, 2017) and by participants (men should not be in the baby room (p. 165).

Furthermore, the image of the gendered and classed nice woman who "just cares" for the children and their community appeared to be the antithesis of the image the Lecturers and Professional Organisational representatives wished to portray in the interest of professionalising the sector. Vincent & Braun (2011) have recognised the importance of the right kind of physical appearance for working-class girls in care to "look the part" (p.780). I would argue from my analysis that the image of a young business-driven, well-qualified Practitioner (Gov A4) was considered the ideal Practitioner to instil confidence in parents and professionalise the sector.

It is noteworthy that while this study set out to look at the potential of leadership to develop the working conditions of the Practitioner, these issues were superseded by the Practitioners' request for respect and appreciation for the care (physical, social and emotional) of the child and caring relationships within the sector. Most of the other participants circumvented the word care when discussing leadership, training or the "way forward" in the sector. The Lecturers and Professional Organisations focused on qualifications, recognition, and status which may align with the robust discourse of professionalisation in the sector (ECI, 2014; Madden, 2012). Research into nursing highlights a comparable tension where care becomes "educated caring" in a bid for professional recognition (Apesora-Varano, 2007, p. 249).

In a similar manner care as a trait of professionalism for Swedish preschool teachers has been silenced (Lofgren, 2015) and the Professional Organisations focus on the child's wellbeing to exclude care, has been referred to as the "intellectualization of care" (Löfgren, 2015, p. 7). Conversely, the Practitioners focus on care may be understood in the context of how working-class women view care. Care is considered to be a moral value — "what matters" — in contrast to the care as affordable childcare, where care is valued as a commodity-based on ideas of exchange — "what counts" (Skeggs, 2011; Vincent & Braun, 2011).

It would be disingenuous to suggest that all the Practitioners in this study were or considered themselves working class. The women in Skeggs' study (1997) and this study asked, "Who would want to be seen as working-class?" (p. 95). Nevertheless, research has explained how lower-class individuals are less likely to seek top positions as they are generally more generous, trusting, and place more emphasis on relationships and concern

for others (Belmi & Laurin 2016; Piff et al., 2010). This could explain why the practitioners were opposed to the notion of leader but may affiliate with leadership as a relational process. Moreover, working-class women often use care as their kudos for recognition and respect (Skeggs, 1997, 2011; Vincent & Braun, 2011). Yet, the emphasis on care transcended class and included more than the community Practitioner. The recognition that there is a crisis of care across the world (Bateman, 2016; Bruneau, 2018; Fraser, 2016; Klein, 2017; Lynch et al., 2010) and we may occupy a careless society (Lynch, 2014) suggests the Practitioners may not be the villain complaining about care and caring but may have their finger on the zeitgeist. The practitioner has been left with the impossible task of making up the difference between capitalism's financialised agenda and what people need to live (care) (Fraser, 2016; Weinbaum & Bridges, 1976). The lack of recognition and a discussion on this development have created role confusion for the practitioner. The recent recognition that the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed how integral childcare provision is to essential workers and to a functioning economy" (Oireachtas, 2020, p. 1) and the limited reference to care in childcare policies and discourse also reaffirms their claim (Nolan, 2020).

The view that care is a problem and a hindrance to gender equality (OECD, 2014), coupled with the possibility of the participants' complicity in the relegation of care, appears to have marginalised care, pitted women against each other and neglected the needs of the child. The absence of guidance and respect for the child's care needs, respect for "care", has marginalised Practitioner knowledge and weakened their confidence in articulating and positioning care central to the purpose of ECEC and leadership.

The community Practitioners in this study seem to have chosen "resistance" or outright rejection of the sector's dominant economic discourse (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). They could be considered neither victims nor villains but the victors. They were the only group to describe the "craic" of working in the sector where their managers D1 and E2 (Business degree) took care of the administrative workload, and they did what they enjoyed most – care. It would seem the Practitioners were not so much irresponsible and unwilling to discuss or engage with leadership but often by acting "irresponsibly," we take "responsibility" for the care of ourselves and in doing this (Foucault) the Practitioners have pushed back the routine neoliberalisation of their working environments (Ball & Olmedo, 2013) and created the possibility of thinking about care and themselves differently.

9.4 The possibility of leadership

The participants' articulations on developing leadership informed the recommendations for future research, policy, and practice in the field and will be discussed in detail in the concluding chapter. This section gives a broad overview of the participants' discussion on the subject. There was a shift throughout the interviews (in particular the Practitioners) from viewing leadership as vested in an individual associated with specific roles and the highest level of authority (Aubrey, 2011; Ho, 2012) to a collaborative, interactive, and active process with a shared language and a shared purpose. The outliers who queried whether leadership would ever be possible (B4) or was necessary (E2, E4) ultimately concurred with all the other study participants that leadership was the only way the sector could move forward towards better working conditions. Nonetheless, while I take the participants' views seriously, there was a critical hesitance in accepting this consensus (Alvesson, 2003) primarily because it was not apparent at this point how the participants understood leadership and what leadership was for – leadership to what end? – for what purpose?

The final interview question proved a strong provocateur. It acted as a catalyst for the nongovernment participants to focus on how they would develop and envisage leadership, and served as a stimulant to establish how they understood leadership and what they considered to be the purpose of leadership. As such, the Professional Organisations focused on relationships and partnerships within and without the sector to develop leadership, and simultaneously, building trusting relationships was considered the purpose of leadership.

The Lecturers looked to critical consciousness or conscientisation (critical reflexivity, research, and knowledge) to develop leadership and as a requisite for leadership. The Practitioners placed a strong emphasis on care to build leadership and considered care of the child and other ECEC stakeholders as the purpose of ECEC leadership. While the possibility of aligning these divergent views on leadership will be discussed in the final chapter, all participants agreed that developing leadership was a “collective responsibility” (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, p. 14) and that leadership was itself a responsibility.

In line with the literature, the Lecturers acknowledged that the university had to take responsibility for developing the theoretical and practical dimensions of leadership (Campbell-Evans et al., 2014). Ironically, the Professional Organisations suggested that it was in their capacity to provide training for leadership in the sector. This offer could be interpreted as genuine, or as a tactic to reassert their status in the sector. Gov A3 and A4 remained detached from any responsibility, with Gov A3 announcing that the burden was with the Practitioners to find their way to leadership. This approach could be symptomatic of

politicians' tendency to avoid responsibility (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011) or, as discussed earlier, the tendency to position the responsibility across a network of organisations and actors (Rhodes, 2007). Minister Zappone outlined that ECEC “is not the responsibility of one Department or one Minister. It is the responsibility of the whole-of-Government and whole-of-society” (DCYA, 2018, p. 8). In short, it appears that everyone and no one is responsible for the ECEC children, parents, and women who care(s).

9.5 Summary

The Government representatives described leadership for pedagogy, inclusion, and governance as the purpose of ECCE leadership. These aspects were considered by other participants to be more concerned with management and economics than with the child and the sector. The introduction of the ECCE scheme and the accompanying quality discourse under the OECD's guidance was accredited with introducing a neoliberal turn and managerialism as a mode of governance into Irish ECEC policy and practice, to the detriment of relationships and leadership in the sector. However, the participants' classed and gendered assumptions of the Practitioner and the corresponding capitalist and patriarchal ideology concerning women and care emanating from the OECD had ultimately exposed care as the primary constraint on the Practitioners' willingness to engage with leadership. The Practitioners conceptualised care (physical, social, and emotional) as a value position and a necessity for the child, relationships, and leadership. This understanding of care was incompatible with the notion of care as a burden and a hindrance to gender equality (OECD) and incongruent with the commoditised educationalised and intellectualised opinion of care expressed by the remaining participants. This had prevented the Practitioner from articulating and positioning care as central to the purpose of ECEC and ECEC leadership.

Finally, most participants understood leadership as a position and a relational process, a context-specific, socially constructed phenomenon. The Lecturers and Professional Organisations proposed that critical consciousness (research, critical thinking, knowledge) partnerships and networking were prerequisites and requisites for leadership. In the following chapter, the research questions will be answered, and recommendations for research, policy, and practice will be discussed. The potential of aligning the participants' articulations of leadership to create a form of leadership to address the Practitioner working conditions is explored.

Chapter 10 Conclusions and Recommendations

In this chapter, the conclusions drawn from the participants' thematic conceptualisations of leadership in the previous chapter are utilised to answer the research questions.

The chapter commences with a reminder of the research questions.

The research questions were answered to varying degrees. As such, they are divided into the following sections:

1. Research questions that have been answered.
2. Questions which have been partially answered.
3. Those that require more research and explanation for the question to be answered.

Each of these sections will be followed by the participants' recommendations for developing ECE leadership.

The chapter culminates in a discussion on the study's limitations and strengths, and a personal reflective statement.

10.1 The research questions

1. How is leadership understood in the sector, and how is it practised in ECEC settings?
2. What interventions currently exist to support leadership, including policies, literature, and training?
3. How do ECEC stakeholders relate to each other and the wider community?
4. How have/have not gender and class (other factors) influenced the stakeholders' understanding of leadership and leadership practice in the setting?
5. How do ECEC stakeholders conceptualise and articulate their ideas for developing leadership or alternative strategies to address Practitioners' working conditions?

I have limited the recommendations in this section to the participants' articulations of developing leadership in the settings. My contribution to this discussion is to question and add to their suggestions. The recommendations are summarised in Table 11. The rationale

for focusing on the participants' recommendations is based on the premise that this study's primary objectives included exploring 1) a means (leadership or other strategies) for Practitioners to develop their working conditions and 2) to disseminate this knowledge to the Practitioners. The Practitioners could judge whether these insights and strategies might apply to or be worth trying in their context (Lennie, 2006). The objective did not include generalising the findings out to the universe, nor was it intended to provide a detailed prescription for policy advisors and government representatives. The recommendations reflect this objective and become not just a list of what to do, but “how to do”, how to support the Practitioner who may wish to put these recommendations into practice.

10.2 The questions answered

Questions 2 and 3 explored the supports in place for leadership and the relationships within the sector and the wider public field. The premise of these questions was the growing body of literature which advised that relationships and support are central to developing educational leadership (Burns, 1978; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Gardner et al., 2010; Greenleaf, 1977).

10.2.1 Research question 2

What interventions currently exist to support leadership, including policies, literature, and training?

This question was not difficult to answer; while the essential role of leadership supports has been documented in the ECE literature (Douglas, 2017, 2019; Bloom et al., 2013), only two participants in the study mentioned an ECE leadership theorist, and no participant could draw on ECE leadership policy or literature nationally or internationally. The participants' assertion that ECE leadership was not supported, and that the theoretical foundations underpinning leadership training and the prescribed leadership roles were limited, is endorsed in DCYA (2016a). In this document, leadership is simultaneously described as one process, a leader, and two different functions; leaders are everywhere, and ultimately, “the role of management is to provide leadership” (pp. 68-69).

Similarly, the participants' claim that there is little training, and that the training that exists is not fit for purpose, correlates with the international literature where there have been calls to provide leadership training (Fenech, 2013; Campbell-Evans et al., 2014) and to evaluate the content and effectiveness of training already in place (Teri et al., 2014; Macfarlane & Cartmel, 2012).

In short, Gov A3 and A4 claimed there were numerous supports in place for ECE leadership, but other participants disagreed. The publication from the Irish academics Moloney & Pettersen (2016) confirms the remaining participants' assertion that there was little leadership training, policy, or research available to support the Irish Practitioner.

10.2.2 Recommendation: To move from reflective practice to critical participation

The Lecturers advised the focus on reflective practice and action research within the mentorship model and Aistear (NCCA, 2009) was passive and had limited the Practitioners' vision and approach to the setting and the sector (Aubrey, 2011; Nicholson & Kroll, 2015). They recommended critical reflexivity, underpinned by research (Dewey, 1987), which would enable the Practitioner to create a relevant knowledge-base for the sector, and act to support and develop leadership. The Lecturers asserted that within this culture of critical reflexivity, the sector could speak from one voice and become what Urban & Dalli (2012) describe as "a Profession Speaking – and Thinking – for Itself" (p. 157). Urban (2008) suggested that individualising the responsibility for developing critically reflective practice could exert enormous pressure on the individual Practitioner. However, it could be argued that the Practitioners in this study had the critical capacity to understand their everyday reality, and they did not wish to have more of the training (done to them). However, what they make be lacking is the means to come together and engage in continual dialogue (Freire, 1997).

Campbell-Evans et al. (2014) advised that educational institutions can prepare ECE graduates for leadership, and the benefits of training and professional development (PD) have been outlined in the literature (Hallet, 2013; Bloom et al., 2013). Conversely, when the interviews were weighted (Appendix U) on the question of training, the Lecturers were the least interested in discussing training and PD. They were more interested in the theoretical than the practical side of critical consciousness (the practical logistics of bring people together, continual dialogue, and action). This is not unusual; PD programmes often fail to address critical reflexivity or mention how this can be achieved (Ahuna et al., 2014; Uksw, 2014). While Kuhn (1999) pointed out over 20 years ago "that education is failing in its most central mission—to teach students to think" (p.16), the question "Can you teach people to think?" could be asked. This question echoes the Lecturers' concern that they were "doing training to them" (students). It may explain the absence of training in their conversations, and why the Practitioners had no appetite for more uniform and context-free PD. This form of PD is considered a product of the broader neoliberal and managerial conditions in education (Hardy & Ronnerman, 2011). The Practitioners also concurred with Mockler & Groundwater-

Smith (2009) that PD often frames teachers as being in deficit, encourages dependency upon external agents, and may not be useful for ECE leadership development (Wong & Waniganayake, 2013).

The Practitioners requested a means, a set of tools, to develop a shared process, with a shared language, underpinned by their agenda, values, and experiential learning to build their working conditions. I concur with the Practitioners that people's voice and ideas (Blaschke, 2012; Knowles, 1970) need to be part of any training, and people, given the necessary tools, are not only capable of understanding their situation, but are also best equipped to address their difficulties (Freire, 1970; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991). Similarly, I agree with the Lecturers that there is a need to move from reflection and action research to a critical but also a more active and dialogical approach such as participatory action research (PAR) (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). PAR has a strong commitment to participation and research and can provide a framework for the Practitioners to work towards a shared language collaboratively. This group has the potential through continual dialogue and debate, to speak from one voice and engage with leadership (Urban, 2008).

10.2.3 Research question 3

How do ECEC participants relate to each other and the wider educational and political arena?

Relationships are considered central to collaborative and congenial ECE workplaces, and central to individual groups who wish to merge into more extensive networks to work together (Hodgins & Kummen, 2019; Urban et al., 2012). However, the analysis revealed a matrix of horizontal and vertical power relations, which Walsh (2017) has described as a jigsaw with too many pieces, too many broken pieces (Gov A). The relationships between the Practitioner and 10+ government departments and their subsidiary organisations and specialists emerged as hierarchical contractor and subcontractor relationships, which had subjugated the Professional Organisations and Practitioners to expert knowledge (Olin Wright, 2015).

The workforce's classed, gendered identities, and the understanding of care also exposed the complicated power relationships over and within the sector (Lukes, 1974). It would seem that the relationships were Better Before the neoliberal and managerial turn in the sector, where the goals of efficiency and economic productivity in the guise of quality (and leadership) have left little room for relationships, collaboration, and solidarity in the sector (Hammond et al., 2015).

Nevertheless, the nonpractitioner participants may [un]intentionally have limited the potential for relationships and solidarity by perpetuating the gendered stereotypes of women

(Practitioner) being bitchy and demanding (MacNaughton, 2005). However, Practitioners are considered a diverse and fragmented group underpinned by different qualifications, ethos, sessional/all-day crèche, geographical location, and private or community, which has both engendered exclusive groups, and excluded dialogue, solidarity and a common ground (Urban et al., 2017). Similarly, a blame culture that positions the Practitioner as the problem and the source of expensive childcare and the low remuneration of ECE staff have created complicated relationships between parents and the Practitioner, and between service providers and their staff.

The Professional Organisations advised trusting relationships and partnerships within the sector, and cross-fertilisation with larger groups was a prerequisite and requisite for building solidarity and leadership. Their notion of cross-fertilisation appeared to include new alliances. It could encompass other “disciplines and professional bodies, social care, unions, feminist movements, human rights organisations” (Giroux, 2000, p. 141) and provide the opportunity to engage with shared leadership experiences, knowledge, and practices (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003). However, the Professional Organisations did not suggest how to build relationships.

10.2.4 Recommendation: To move from individual to integrated systems

The notion of feminist consciousness-raising (Sarachild, 1973; Friedman, 2014) and the idea that participation in a small conscious-raising group has the potential to facilitate a group to move forward and make changes in their working conditions may be worth exploring. Feminists concur that there are real differences in women's lives; nevertheless, points of contact can become the basis for solidarity and action (Kennedy & Lapidus, 1980). From my analysis, I would argue the point of contact in ECEC relationships is the child and care, which may be the place to start. This may also address the absence of continual dialogue and action in the Lecturers' understanding of conscientisation. Interestingly, the Portuguese word *conscientização* refers to both “consciousness-raising” and “critical consciousness”.

In a similar manner to ECE researchers (Hayes, 2016; Urban et al., 2017; Walsh, 2017), I propose reducing the number of government bodies governing the sector and address the split system of education and care. The split system's negative aspects include higher levels of investment and qualifications for education, and the neglect of care and the under-threes (Bennett, 2003; Hayes, 2008; Van Laere et al., 2012). The dual role of childcare as the care (physical) of children to facilitate working parents (gender equality) and the role of ECEC have become merged in policy and discourse. Yet these are separate issues (DCYA, 2015;

Hayes, 2001, p. 79). Without consideration, the tension between these dual purposes will continue to divert attention from the government's responsibility to adequately fund the sector and continue to impact the working conditions in the sector negatively.

10.3 The question partially answered

Question 4: How have/have not gender and class (other factors) influenced the stakeholders' understanding of leadership and leadership practice in the setting?

The answer to question four was yes; gender, class, and (other factors) influence the conceptualisation and practice of ECEC leadership. However, the notion of class received such a heated and protracted response that the question on the other factors impacting on leadership was limited to references to the sectors' frameworks (Professional Organisation), brain development (E4), and the low level of professional identity (B5, B8). The decision to exclude ethnicity/race and the many references to age in the study (young women and business model of leadership; women 50+) suggest how these broader demographics are/are not influencing ECE leadership requires further exploration.

10.3.1 Research question 4

In general, the participants recognised that gendered (nice women who care as an insignificant force) and classed (women as "useless" subjects) attitudes had reduced leadership expectations in the sector. The Practitioners' classed and gendered conceptualisation of care (physical, social, and emotional) as a value position which was considered necessary for the child, relationships, and leadership was in tension with the views of the remainder of the participants. This tension had weakened their confidence in articulating and positioning care as central to the purpose of ECEC and leadership.

It could also be argued that the remainder of the participants had a gendered view of leadership. They held the belief that a confident, business-like, well-educated leader would instil confidence in parents and professionalise the sector, all of which speaks not only to the male model of leadership (Blackmore, 1989) but also to the neoliberal citizen unencumbered by care commitments (Lynch, 2014).

The Practitioners proposed that care was the missing link in prioritising the child over affordable childcare and highlighting the importance of their work and working conditions. Their proposition that care was the antidote to the neoliberal care[less] sector, and their recommendation to reconceptualise care, may provide the means not only to address their working conditions but may also go some way towards addressing the challenge all workers, but especially working mothers, have in balancing care commitments in a careless society.

The Practitioners advised the manner to begin the process of reconceptualising care involved a collaborative process, with a shared language, underpinned by their values and experiential knowledge. The question of whether or not this was leadership arose and required further analysis.

10.3.2 Recommendation: "Change in mind-sets towards... care"

It is no small irony that the theoretical framework guiding this study emanated from the second wave of feminism and the concern for gender equality. Conversely, this study has brought to light the repercussions of the second wave endeavour, the unresolved issue of childcare. The question of whether/not feminists, seeking equality rather than liberation, led women out of the frying pan into the fire, with adverse repercussions for themselves, their families, and social well-being has been asked. In hindsight, Germaine Greer (second-wave feminist) stated: "Even if it had been real, equality would have been a poor substitute for liberation." (1999, p. 5). Equally, a report from the State of the World's Fathers: Unlocking the Power of Men's Care (Van der Gaag et al., 2019), a feminist analysis of care, advised that it would take 202 years to close the economic gender gap between men and women (World Economic Forum, 2019). The report suggests that traditional ideas that women are the default caregivers persist. For this to change, governments must provide training to change the attitudes of service providers such as teachers, childcare workers, and health care providers. Educational programmes should teach children to value care from an early age (Van der Gaag et al., 2019, p.10).

Second-wave feminist Hochschild (1989) described the second shift and the difficulties of combining care at home with paid work in the formal sector. Hochschild (2002) went on to study what she called the care deficit and how women from third world countries were involved in a heart transplant by working in care work in wealthier countries. They were transplanting their love for the young, old, and sick in their own countries to meet the first world's care deficit.

Brenner (2017), a social feminist, in an edition of Real Utopias Project overseen by Erik Olin Wright, has described care's democratisation as a realistic alternative to the family household and democratising the organisation of public care. Similar conversations have occurred concerning the "emotional labour required to work with young children and the role of class and gender in this process" (Skeggs, 1997; Vincent & Ball, 2006; Vincent et al., 2008). Likewise, with the steady increase in children attending all-day care (OECD, 2019b, 2019c), there have been numerous debates as to the extent ECEC should represent a home-like environment and the "nursery nurse play a quasi-maternal role" (Colley, 2006, p.

15). Alternatively, this may be considered overstepping the boundary between public and private (Dahlberg & Moss, 2008). While the relationship may come to love, this is not the primary purpose (Cantillon & Lynch, 2016).

During these relevant discussions on care, it would seem the Practitioners must change their attitude to care; emotional involvement with the child may not be considered professional practice, and the democratising of the organisation of public care has little to say about the care needs of the young child or the Practitioner entrusted with their care. Conversely, migrant care workers are described in terms of love and care, while the emotional labour in childcare is limited to stress and burnout (Hard, 2004; Oke, et al., 2019). During the second wave of feminism, Friedman (1963) referred to white middle-class women who wished to work outside the home as the problem with no name. I would suggest that the child's care has become the problem with no name, or the problem seldom voiced.

Nevertheless, there have been several calls to recognise ECEC, like education, as a public good (Hayes, 2007; Fine-Davis, 2007; Moss, 2016; Urban et al., 2017). However, few have articulated the Practitioners' call for care to be recognised as a public good, to stand alone, not entangled in or as an adjunct to education, but care as essential for the development of the child and in shaping the future adult, not a lesser version of women's work. However, the Practitioners not only engaged with the normative, moralistic, nostalgic understanding of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012) but highlighted the absence of a conversation or reference to the practical aspect of care, the "Achilles heel" of ECE, where a dilemma exists as to who should support children in their physical and emotional needs; often this role is "not considered to be part of the professional repertoire of teachers" (Van Laere, 2017, p. 220). The reason for the silencing of this issue may be related to the gendered and patriarchal notion that care resides in the home, and the most embittered feminist conversations relate to childcare (Fraser, 2016).

Besides, it may also be a class issue, where working-class women value care as a means to be respected and berate middle-class women for leaving their children in all-day care (Skeggs, 2002). A more in-depth analysis of a tetrad of care, class, gender, and race may be a prerequisite to reconceptualising care. Similarly, a more in-depth analysis of care and Mothering as a powerful position associated with knowledge, wisdom, and guidance (Reay & Ball, 2000) and care as a means for all women "to be recognized" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 56) may be a starting point for the discussion.

10.3.3 Recommendation: A gender/class detoxification

The first steps towards a shared understanding of care could involve accepting and moving past the classed and gendered assumption that care is of little economic value,

something women do naturally and often associated with working-class women. This ideological detoxification (Brookfield, 2016) has to start with ourselves (ECE stakeholders) to create a counter-discourse. A discourse of care in the broadest sense, essential for not only the child but for all relationships, is recommended. This recommendation would involve moving away from the gendered and classed assumptions and the commodification, educationalisation, and intellectualisation of care, and endorsing care as an end in itself and not a means to receive professional recognition or support full employment.

This proposal does not suggest that class values are unimportant; on the contrary, there is a recognition that for any political or educational intervention to be successful, the worldview of the people involved must be acknowledged (Freire, 1972, p. 93). This approach recognises that class values are a significant factor in approaching and enacting leadership (Andre, 2015; Martin et al., 2017). Hooks (2000) recognised that conversations about class involve courage, and the willingness to speak about class may be considered the “first act of resistance” (p. 155). I would suggest that conversations on care also involve courage. Speaking about care may be the “first act of resistance” towards the gendered and classed assumptions surrounding the care, and the capitalist and patriarchal structures perpetuating this understanding of care.

10.3.4 Recommendation: A political detoxification

For decades, social feminism has proposed that the capitalist class structure and the hierarchical sexual structuring of society were responsible for women's problems (Eisenstein, 1990, p.115) and were built into national/international social structures and so have to be addressed structurally (Lorber, 2012). Bruneau (2018) has advised that capitalism has penetrated and reinforces patriarchal norms since industrialisation. The OECD and EU may [un]intentionally have become agents of public patriarchy, more interested in using women's labour (reproduction and production) than achieving gender equality in the home and the workplace (Fraser, 2016; Lorber, 2012). However, scant attention has been given to how these capitalist and patriarchal structures and their understanding of care have impinged on ECE policy, discourse, and practice. The EU has described “the puzzle of care in the private life of working women and men” and how it “must be resolved” (EU, 2019, p. 1), with no mention of the child. It is here that our attention needs to be focused, not just in the interest of ECE leadership, but also in the interests of the child and of ourselves. The drive to find an answer to the puzzle of care may provide the opportunity for our sector to stand up as the experienced and professional voice regarding the child and care.

10.4 Research question that requires further research

The first research question asked how ECEC stakeholders conceptualised leadership. This proved to be a very challenging question for the participants to answer, and in the analysis, it was challenging to interpret their ideas. I am not sure that either of our answers (participants' and mine) are comprehensive and straightforward. It would seem that the participants had not discussed or thought about the purpose of ECEC or of ECEC leadership, and so they did not appear to have sufficient time in an interview to reflect on and consider their answer. It could be argued that the default response from the Lecturers was when in doubt invoke theory, and with only two participants having any knowledge of leadership theorists, their choice of theorist was Freire. However, they omitted any reference to practice, action, or, to use Freire's term, "praxis".

Similarly, from my analysis, I would argue that the Professional Organisations, sandwiched between government officials and the Practitioner, reverted to blame for their lack of knowledge and action concerning leadership in the sector. They asserted the government had taken their role as facilitators in the setting and had wasted an opportunity to develop leadership. Simultaneously, they accused the Practitioner of avoiding leadership and suggested the Practitioner was not capable of engaging with leadership. I would also argue that the Practitioners in the study threw caution to the wind in the final question, decided they had nothing to lose and, as participant D4 suggested, decided to "call it as it is" (p.148). Besides, the study revealed numerous variables that needed to be explored to answer the question. The role of agency, culture, ethnicity, age, and professional identity all required further research, as did gender, class and race.

Conversely, it could be asked "Can this leadership question be answered?" (Fink, 2005).

10.4.1 Research question 1

How do ECEC stakeholders understand leadership, and how is leadership practised in ECE settings? My initial analysis of this question suggested that the participants did not understand leadership, and there was leadership confusion in the sector. However, I had to reflect on the criteria I was employing to make this judgment. In all of the ECE leadership literature I have read, to date, Rodd (everyone is a leader) (2006, 2013) is the only theorist who has delineated what she understands as leadership. Equally, while the second wave of leadership (Nivala, 2002; Hijala, 2004) went a long way towards theorising leadership, it has been acknowledged that leadership remains under-theorised. In other words, no one seems

to understand this phenomenon. As such, this question required a more in-depth analysis and I commenced with examining what was apparent in the interviews.

The Government representatives understood leadership as a specific role, responsible for pedagogy, inclusion, and governance. These representatives seemed to have no knowledge of any research on ECEC leadership and may reflect the wider governments understanding that leadership involves a role. This may not be surprising as most studies in the wider educational field have looked at the leader (as a position of authority) and have neglected the “leadership process”, distinct from occupying a leader role (Martin et al., 2017, p.49) or have promoted Distributed leadership (OECD, 2008) which may be just another term a leader delegating the workload (Lumby, 2019). The other participants asserted the prescribed leadership roles were more concerned with quality assurance and value for money than leadership. Management or just managing (managerialism) as the official version of leadership (Ozga, 2000, p. 355) was how leadership was practised in the setting. The Practitioner understood leadership as a relational process, and the remainder of the participants (exception B3) conceptualised leadership as both a role (leader) and a shared process. All of which suggested that leadership was a socially constructed and context-specific phenomenon (Nivala, 2002; Hujala, 2004; 2013).

At this point in the analysis, I noticed that the participants described leadership in terms of roles and responsibilities; their descriptions were devoid of action, devoid of any reference to practice. Conversely, the Practitioners described a shared and active process. However, whether or not this was leadership was difficult to determine. In the broader educational literature, Spillane (2006) has noticed a similar pattern where accounts of leadership pay scant attention to the practice of leadership; more attention is paid to the *what* of leadership —the people, structure, and roles — rather than the *how* (practice) of leadership (p. 5).

After much deliberation, the participants agreed that leadership was first and foremost a responsibility, a moral act built around the common good, involving purpose, values, and beliefs of the organisation and central to the welfare of the next generation (Palestini, 2012; Sergiovanni, 1996; Wright, 2001). Their claim that this perspective could act as an antidote to the economic focus of ECEC leadership echoes Sergiovanni's (1996) call to conceptualise leadership as a moral act, which he advised was “strong medicine” but was necessary to overcome the current toxic leadership (p. xvi).

Ultimately, the tension in the interviews between the economic and the democratic functions of leadership; and the conflict between the given purpose (prescribed leadership) and the participants' pursuit of a personal purpose (Dewey, 1916, p. 114) [un]intentionally

opened up their questioning and rethinking of what they understood by the very notion of leadership itself (MacBeth, 2010, p. 41).

The participants' rethinking moved past the prescribed leadership roles and explored several leadership positions, including leadership as a temporal phenomenon, leadership as a relational and collaborative process of meaning making, a "praxis", and the possibility that leadership was not a distinct phenomenon; the research concluded with more questions than answers.

The participants, in general, extended beyond the notion that leadership involves an individual or a process of influence over another (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004; Yukl, 1981) past a task-oriented leadership (pedagogy, inclusion, and governance) towards a relationship-oriented leadership (professional organisations). Relational leadership has been found to create greater cohesion among group members (Rüzgar, 2018). However, the participants considered a commitment to relationships and critical reflexivity, responsibility, networking, and new ways of looking at care as a prerequisite and a leadership requirement. These aspirations align with Moss & Urban's (2010) notion of experimental and democratic education, which promotes critical and creative thinking, responsibility and care, solidarity and social justice, and a willingness to [re]imagine practice differently and try out new ways of doing things (p. 16). This causes us to ask whether the participants' ideas are generic, theoretical, and applicable to education, advocacy, human flourishing, and social justice. If so, perhaps leadership may not be a distinct phenomenon?

The Lecturers' delineation of leadership as critical reflexivity could stand alone, as could the notion of networking (Professional Organisations). The Government representatives' understanding of leadership emerges as coordination (Leadership for inclusion) and "room leader" appears to be middle management (liaising between the manager and the staff). Thus, leadership may not be a distinct phenomenon, and the participants have interpreted other factors as leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003).

Similarly, the Practitioners' lack of respect for the prescribed leadership roles as an axiom and fundamental mode of praxis in ECEC created an unwillingness to affiliate with leadership. They requested an interactive, democratic and active process to unite people together with a common interest (Jarvilehto, 1996, as cited in Nivala, 1998, p. 53), to develop a shared language and identify what needs to be done currently – a purpose. All of which are congruent with the notion of collaborative communities (Adler & Heckscher, 2017), communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), caring learning communities (Larrivee, 2000), and Participatory Communication (Freire, 1997; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991). These approaches to learning could facilitate the participants' vision of an interactive and active

process focusing on care, they may limit their call for critical reflexivity and networking with other institutions and organisations, which are also considered components of leadership (Sergiovanni, 1996). Furthermore, it may also be possible that the participants understand leadership as a tool to promote thinking, a mechanism which involves people coming together to identify the strategic direction they hope to work towards, “a common interest and a shared language” (Jarvilehto 1996, as cited in Nivala, 1998, p. 53), a shared purpose (Blackmore, 2011).

Does it follow that leadership, understood as a thinking and sense-making tool, could be an occasional, context/situation-specific dynamic rather than a perpetual state in the relationship? Such a perspective might pose questions about when leadership is needed or helpful, and not (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, p. 15). Is there a possibility that the participants' ideas could align to shape a form of leadership underpinned by critical reflexivity and regard for the macro and the micro, an interactive process (Burns, 1978; Freire, 1970)? However, the practitioners' idea of an interactive and active process of questioning and analysing leadership within the ECCE sector advances critical reflection into action and may align with leadership as a purposeful activity (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008) but appears to be more congruent with “conscientization ... reflection and action upon the world to transform it” (Freire, 1970). Could this meet the participants' request for an interactive and active process to bring people together to identify and act on a shared purpose?

Kempster et al. (2011) have argued that purpose is central to leadership, and they align with Vaill's (1982) understanding of “purposing as a continual flow of actions that generate the effect of inducing clarity, consensus and commitment” (p. 29). Does it follow that the practitioners' understanding of identifying and acting on a shared purpose is ultimately a collaborative sense-making activity? Or could this be by any other name, leadership? This understanding could move leadership past a prescribed role to oversee pedagogy, coordinate inclusion, and manage governance to a process that brings people together to collaborate, identify and make sense of their situation, a process of critical “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1986, p. 36). Taking into consideration that the Practitioners were not averse to accepting support to develop an interactive and active process that was cognisant of their agenda, their experiences and knowledge (Knowles' theory of andragogy, 1980), the option of working with the Professional Organisations could be explored. The interviews suggested that there was a good working relationship between them in the past. As such, there were more questions than answers at the end of the analysis, and the following recommendations for ECEC may begin the process of answering these questions.

10.4.2 The possibility of leadership: Critical participatory action research

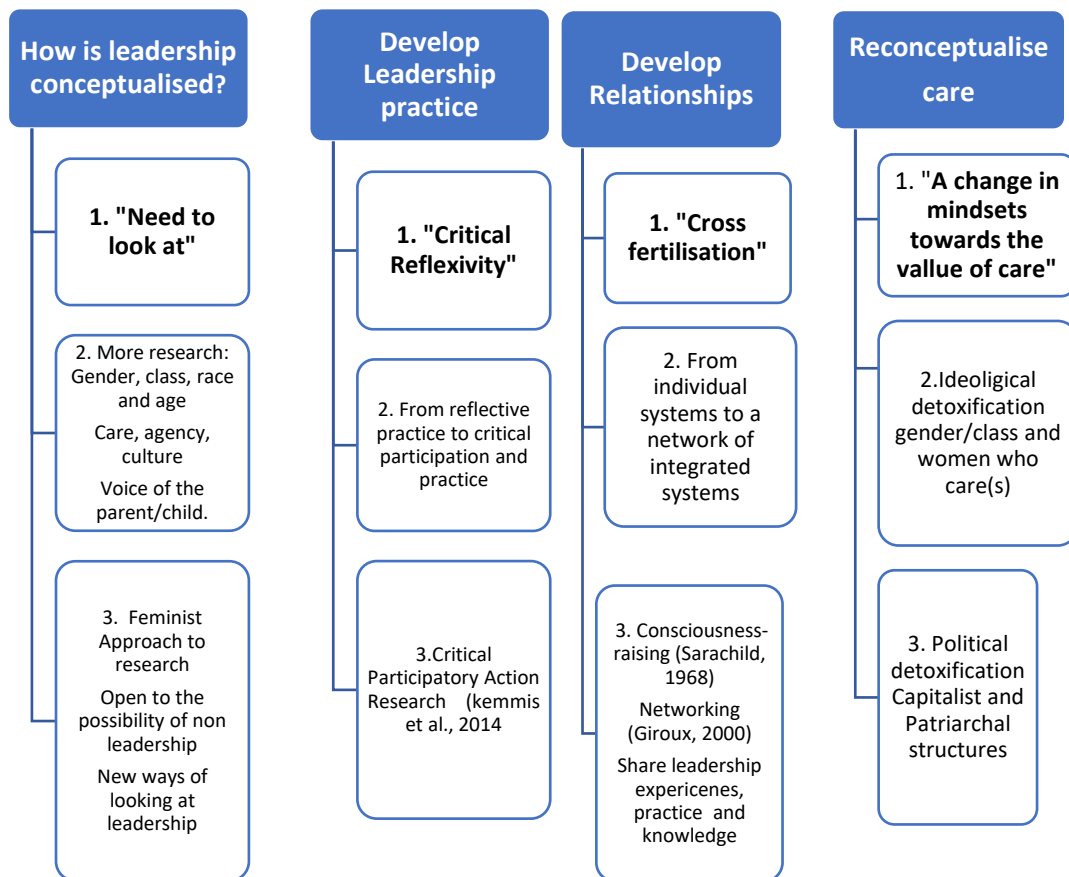
This recommendation sits very comfortable with my Montessori philosophy (maybe too comfortably – bias?) where the directress' (teacher's) role is to facilitate the children. The notion of a facilitator, critical reflexivity, and relationships speaks to critical participatory action research. I am aware that this is my interpretation. However, the day I discovered I had come full circle with this study, back to CPAR, I wrote in my journal "I honestly did not see this coming" (July/15/2019). Two further points are worth noting; in hindsight, the interviews should have included the question — what does your understanding of leadership look like in practice? Perhaps another question for another study. Secondly, the Practitioner's unwillingness to accept the status quo, could this be leadership? (Goffin, 2015). At this point, I hope I have "told my story well", and I leave it to you, the reader, to decide how leadership is understood and practised in ECE (Lennie, 2006).

Nevertheless, I recommend exploring CPAR as a collaborative, interactive process that underpins leadership, or as part of a set of critical tools to work towards developing the sector's working conditions. CPAR has a strong commitment to participation and social analysis to reveal disempowerment and injustices in society. CPAR also takes account of disadvantages attributed to gender and ethnicity as well as to social class. The extension of action research collectives to include "critical friends" to build alliances with broader social movements and to encompass membership across institutional hierarchies provides a way of enhancing the understanding, and political efficacy [agency], of individuals and groups and a means to build solidarity (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 12).

Table 11 summarises the participants' articulations (quotes) (1) and recommendations (2) to include critical reflexivity, cross-fertilisation, and the reconceptualisation of care to develop an interactive and active process with the shared purpose of addressing the Practitioners' working conditions – whether this is leadership requires further research. My contribution to these recommendations is included in the last sections (3).

Table 16

Summary of Recommendations



10.5 Final recommendations

In conclusion, three critical areas merit inclusion in the recommendations: The Purpose of ECEC/ECEC leadership, Speaking from one voice, and Feminist research.

10.5.1 The purpose of ECEC/ECEC leadership

I join with other ECE researchers both nationally (Urban et al., 2017) and internationally (Moss, 2014; Moss et al., 2016; Urban & Swadener, 2016; Wasmuth & Nitecki, 2017) to appeal to the sector and the government to engage in a discussion/debate and establish what we mean by and what we want for childhood, education, and care. This discussion needs to establish what defines and bounds ECE as a field of practice (Goffin & Washington, 2019). In short, what is the purpose of ECE? Similarly the question what is the purpose of ECEC requires attention as Kempster et al. (2011) have advised that without a

discourse of leadership as purpose, there is a general tendency for the purpose to become overly preoccupied with economics.

ECE researchers (Hayes, 2016; Urban et al., 2017; Walsh, 2017) have drawn attention to the confusing range of government departments and subsidiary bodies governing the sector. There is a pressing need to examine recent policy initiatives, including the prescribed leadership roles, the Better Start mentorship, Siolta/Aistear, the ECCE scheme, and the affordable childcare scheme to see if they are fit for purpose. The recent news that Minister O Gorman (DCYA, 2020) is going to review all of the above is a welcome one. However, the rhetoric is all too familiar, and “the review will result in a model that is efficient and effective ... affordable, accessible, and high-quality childcare”. However, there is the opportunity to “speak with one voice” and challenge this view.

10.5.2 One voice

There were several indications in the interviews that Gov A was correct, and it would not “take much for the sector to speak from one voice”. The Practitioners' focus on care in this study transcended class, and this may in part be a reaction to what has been described as the “careless society” we inhabit (Lynch et al., 2012, p.83). Suppose this reaction is a reflection of the sentiment in the sector. In that case, this bodes well for relationships, as social feminism acknowledges that there are real differences in women's lives, yet, there are also points of contact that can become the basis for cross-class organising (Kennedy & Lapidus, 1980). As mentioned earlier Arndt et al. (2018) suggested it is possible to meet these challenges and “build individual and collective professional identities that are grounded in diverse local contexts and a broader transnational professional (political) consciousness and collective voice” (p.97). As such, there appears to be the potential for congenial relationships and individual groups merging into a larger collective to develop ECEC environments for the benefit of the child and the working conditions of those working in the sector ECEC (Bown & Sumsion; 2016; Taylor et al., 1997; Urban et al., 2012).

A commitment to responsibility, critical consciousness, relationships, and new ways of looking at care were considered a prerequisite and a requirement for leadership, the means to develop leadership, and the purpose of leadership. As such, have the participants a shared language and a shared purpose? And is there the potential for the stakeholders to “unite in a mutual purpose” which may be described as “leadership” (Grarock & Morrissey, 2013, p.6).

10.5.3 Feminist research: Gender, class, and race

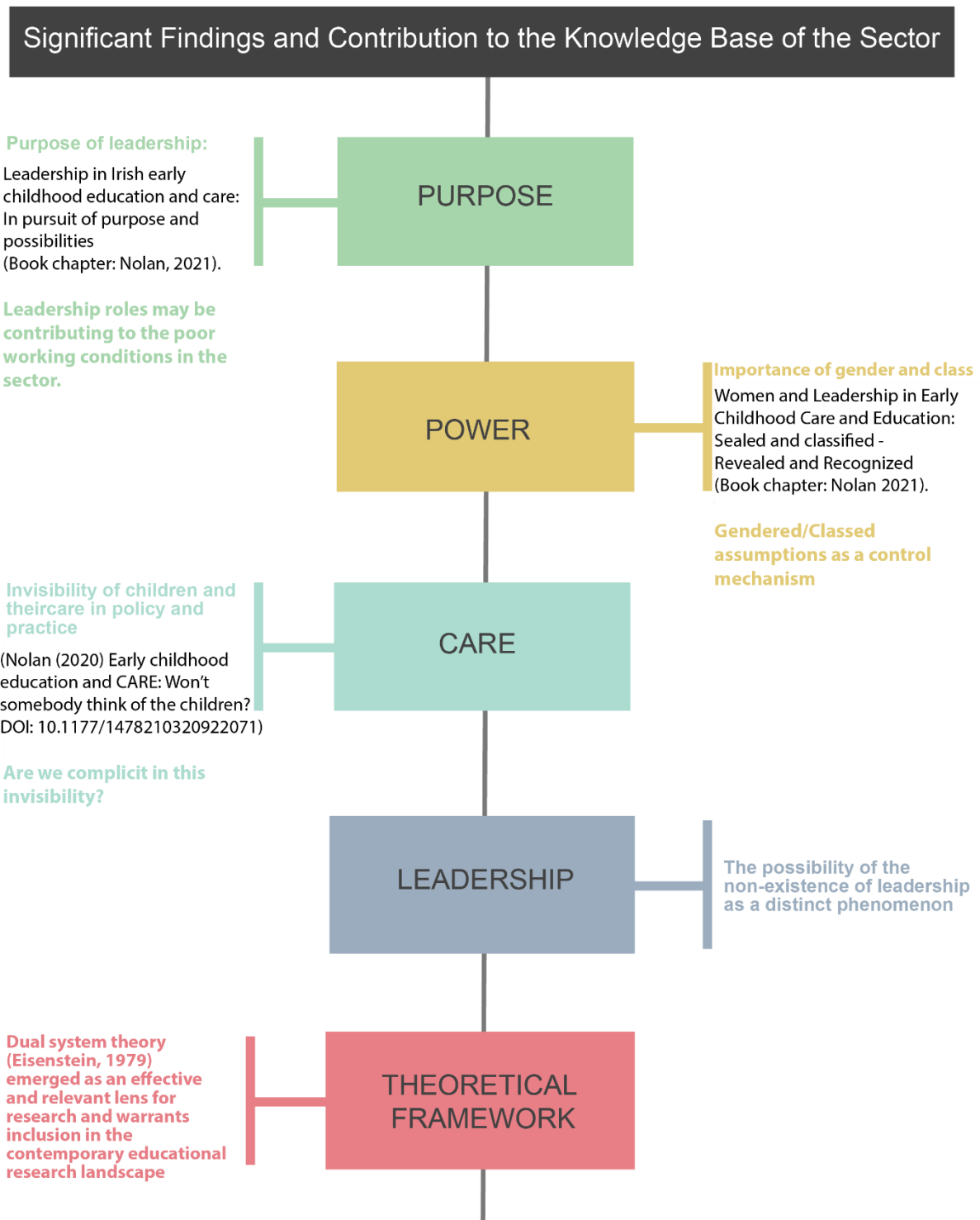
Feminist researchers have had a key influence on leadership in higher education, secondary, and primary school institutions (Blackmore, 2010a; 2010b). Yet, feminist research and perspectives appear limited in ECEC literature (Davis et al., 2015). In a feminised and marginalised sector (Fenech et al., 2009; Mastracci, 2004), it seems appropriate to engage with feminist proposals including Dual Systems theory (Eisenstein, 1970) for researching those from the margins, unearthing subjugated knowledge (Harding, 1987; hooks, 2000; Hesse-Biber, 2012). This study was open to the notion of non-leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012) not as an act of rebellion, nor as a signal to end leadership, but as a means to challenge and broaden the analysis and interpretation of the interviews. More recently, Endes & Weibler (2020) have described the relevance of non-leadership phenomena for understanding leadership in contemporary organisations more comprehensively.

Class was a significant issue in my study. It was not possible, given the limitations of this thesis, to adequately explore and analyse the Practitioner and their “working class” experiences, and the complexity of the fusion with gender and race. While Beck (1992) has described the end of class, others (Skeggs, 2011; Reay et al., 2010) verify it is still very much alive and relevant in “shaping life chances, life experiences” (Vincent et al., 2008). There is little in the ECEC literature (Osgood, 2005) and The ECEC leadership literature (Andrew, 2015) on the topic, and this area requires further research.

In sum, taking all of these recommendations into consideration, I suggest the time is right for all ECEC stakeholders to reimagine ECEC and ECEC leadership possibilities; new ways of looking at the sector, care and [non]leadership. Figure 9 outlines the significant findings in this study and the contributions to the sector's knowledge base.

Figure 20

Significant findings and contributions to the knowledge base of the sector



10.6 Reflective statement to include the strengths and weakness of this study

Nearly 20 years ago, Southworth (2002) proposed that if knowledge and understanding of leadership are required, the leadership thinking of the ECEC members must be considered. To date, this goal appears to have remained elusive, and scholarship continues unabated to theorise leadership practice in the context of distributed leadership (Heikka & Hujala, 2013; Heikka et al., 2019). As such, I would argue the strength of this study lies in the inclusion of a range of ECEC stakeholders as participants. Conversely, the exclusion of the parents' and children's voices in the study may be considered a weakness. The children were included in my M.Ed. study on leadership, and their insights exposed the power relationships in the settings.

The choice of theoretical framework could also be considered a strength. The strong association of women, care, gender, and class in the policy analysis, the absence of these factors in the leadership literature, coupled with the close alignment of the aim of this study and the objective of social feminism, and my affiliation with feminist research, justified the choice of Dual Systems Theory as a theoretical framework. The framework was invaluable in finding meaning in a complicated sector which appears to have no meaning or purpose and working with such an ambiguous and elusive concept as leadership, which may not be a phenomenon. The Dual Systems approach was instrumental in revealing the power dynamics in the sector and bringing the Practitioners' ideas, concerns, and vision to the fore, which was always the objective of this study. However, Eisenstein (1979) advised that Dual Systems theory could reveal the root of women's oppression and their emancipation. Only then, when oppression is understood in its entirety, in this case the positioning of women and care, will species life be available to women, "species life being what Marx referred to as creative work, community, and critical consciousness for women" (Eisenstein, 1979, p.11).

Interestingly, when I choose this framework (2015 - 2016), there was little contemporary writing on social feminism. Recent literature has gone some way to address this gap (Brenner, 2017; Bruneau, 2018, Bridges & Messerschmidt, 2017; Fraser, 2016). Bruneau (2018) has described capitalism and patriarchy as one struggle, and Fraser (2016) asks might a new form of socialist feminism succeed in breaking up the mainstream movement's love affair with marketisation? Democratising care has been considered a fruitful avenue for developing socialist-feminist politics ... and the fight against austerity in the 21st century (Brenner, 2014). These feminists acknowledge what Joan Acker (1989) described over 30 years ago as the danger in abandoning the project of patriarchy. Gender lacks patriarchy's critical-political sharpness and may be more easily assimilated and co-opted than patriarchy (Acker, 1989, pp. 239-240).

All of these insights speak to this study, and the potential for social feminism to underpin ECEC research and fill the void in leadership research, where there is little reference to feminist theory (Nicholson, et al., 2018). On the broader leadership field, Blackmore (2013) has acknowledged the “dulling of, and dumbing down, of any political imperative” in leadership and educational research (p. 146) and advises focusing the feminist gaze away from the numerical representation of women in leadership to the social relations of gender and power locally, nationally and internationally. Similarly, Urban (2016) has advised that ECEC researchers need “to (re-)claim the political in our research” (p. 107). I would suggest that this study’s strength is the attempt to reclaim the political and to be relevant to the Practitioner: it was about, and for, the Practitioner.

Please take the opportunity to assess the state of education research... to explore how our work can help overcome the challenges of our time by becoming more relevant to communities, Practitioners, and policymakers who believe in democratic principles and the public schools that should sustain those principles. Spoken in a clear, compelling, and multilingual manner, our evidence-based narratives can empower a populist movement of a new kind—one that demands a caring, supportive, and challenging education from early childhood through adulthood as a basic human right. (AERA, 2019)

This study has influenced me as a researcher, a Practitioner, and a person. The last five years have challenged, inspired, and developed all of these roles. It is true to say that I end this process as a better version of myself (I know people usually say that at weddings or receiving an award). However, I have found resilience and determination, where I never thought possible. I have developed a respect for research and researchers and become so immersed in this study my family has asked me to stop coding their articulations and emotions. As a semi-retired Practitioner and a part-time Lecturer, I have reignited my respect for and connection with the child and the people who support children — the practitioners. I am very proud of the participants in this study and their courage in discussing the sector’s issues, especially care, as the most embittered feminist battle is concerned with care (Fraser, 2016). I am proud that I dared to write about their findings (Nolan, 2020; Nolan, 2021a, 2021b forthcoming) and hope that many more papers will follow, and I will achieve what I set out to do, “to explore, document and disseminate potential strategies to address the working conditions in the sector”. I would add care and the child to this wish list. This study has also forced me to rethink how I work with ECEC students. The need to collaborate with the students on what and how they wish to navigate their learning, (“learn from them”)

taking into account their values, needs and the experience they bring to the table (“build with what they know”).

Finally, I accredit the participants in this study with mirroring back many of my misconceptions. My attempt to advocate for the Practitioner involved the “educationalisation of care” (Appendix A); it may have been more appropriate to campaign for care. This study's focus was the Practitioner, yet the Practitioners forced me to question the positioning of the child in policy and society. Equally, the idea of a facilitator may be more appropriate to the Practitioners’ needs than retaining the notion of a leader (my view) (p.191) to facilitate their interactive and active process as the “way forward”, or was that always the point?

Go to the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them.

Start with what they know. Build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say ‘We have done this ourselves’. (Lao Tzu, 604 BC)

References

- Abel, M. B., Talan, T., & Masterson, M. (2017). *Whole leadership: A framework for early childhood programs*. <https://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/library/whole-leadership-a-framework-for-early-childhood-programs/>
- Acker, J. (1989). The problem with patriarchy. *Sociology*, 23(2), 235-240.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038589023002005>
- Action Learning, Action Research Association (ALARA). (2016). *Action learning action research association*. <https://www.alarassociation.org/>
- Adair, V. C. (2005). US working-class/poverty-class divides. *Sociology*, 39(5), 817-834. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038505058367>
- Adler, P. & Adler, P. (2012). Expert voices. In S.E. Baker & R. Edwards (Eds.), *How many qualitative interviews is enough?* National Centre for Research Methods Review Discussion Paper (pp. 8-11). <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/>
- Adler, P. S., & Heckscher, C. (2018). Collaboration as an organization design for shared purpose. In P. Hiller, L. Ringel & C. Zietsma (Eds.), *Toward permeable boundaries of organizations?* (pp. 81-111). Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Ahuna, K. H., Tinnesz, C. G., & Kiener, M. S. (2014). A new era of critical thinking in professional programs. *Transformative Dialogues Teaching and Learning Journal*, 7(3), 1-9.
http://www.kpu.ca/sites/default/files/Transformative%20Dialogues/TD.7.3.7_Ahuna_et_al_New_Era_of_Critical_Thinking%20.pdf
- Alexander-Floyd, N. (2012). Disappearing acts: Reclaiming intersectionality in the social sciences in a post-black feminist era. *Feminist Formations*, 24(1), 1-25.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23275087>
- Allen, A. (1999). *The power of feminist theory: Domination, resistance, solidarity*. Westview Press.
- Allen, A. (2016). Feminist perspectives on power. *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2016/entries/feminist-power/>
- Alvesson, M. (2003). Critical organization studies. *The sage handbook of organizational discourse*. (pp. 317-337). Sage.
- Alvesson, M., & Spicer, A. (2012). Critical leadership studies: The case for critical performativity. *Human Relations*, 65(3), 367-390.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726711430555>

- Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2003). The great disappearing act: Difficulties in doing 'leadership'. *Leadership Quarterly*, 14(1), 359-381.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/026809392011.598240>
- Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2012). *Making sense of management: A critical introduction*. Sage. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446251782>
- American Educational Research Association. (AERA). (2019). *Leveraging education research in a "post-truth" era: Multimodal narratives to democratize evidence*.
<https://www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/Annual-Meeting/2019-Annual-Meeting-Theme>
- American Psychological Association. (APA). (2019). Publication manual of the American psychological association: The official guide to APA style (7th Edition).
https://bibliu.com/app/#/view/books/9781433832185/epub/OEBPS/html/9781433832185-002.html#page_82
- Alderson, P. (2017). Common criticisms of children's rights and 25 years of the IJCR. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 25(2), 307-319.
<https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02502001>
- Andrew, Y. (2015). Beyond professionalism: Classed and gendered capital in childcare work. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 16(4), 305-321.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/146394911561632>
- Andrews, B. (2008, October,7). *Educational disadvantage: Dáil Éireann debate*.
<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2008-10-07/336/>
- Ang, L. (2012). Leading and managing in the early years: A study of the impact of a NCSL programme on children's centre leaders: Perceptions of leadership and practice. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 1(40), 289-305.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143212336960>
- Apple, M. W. (2018). The critical divide: Knowledge about the curriculum and the concrete problems of curriculum policy and practice. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 4(2), 63-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2018.1492692>
- Arndt, S., Urban, M., Murray, C., Smith, K., Swadener, B., & Ellegaard, T. (2018). Contesting early childhood professional identities: A cross-national discussion. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 19(2), 97–116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949118768356>
- Aspfors, J., & Fransson, G. (2015). Research on mentor education for mentors of newly qualified teachers: A qualitative meta-synthesis. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 48(1), 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.02.004>
- Association of Childcare Professionals (ACP). (2015). *Comments on early childhood 19th January 2015*. <http://www.acpireland.com/national-rally.html>

- Atkinson, W. (2007a). Beck, individualization and the death of class: A critique. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 58(3), 349-366. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00155.x>
- Atkinson, W. (2007b). Beyond false oppositions: A reply to Beck. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 58(4), 707-715. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00172.x>
- Atkinson, P. (2015). *For ethnography*. Sage.
- Atkinson, P., & Mackenzie, R. (2015). Without leadership there is no change. *Management Services*, 59(2), 42-47. http://www.philipatkinson.com/uploads/7/1/5/0/7150143/without_leadership_there_is_no_change_article.pdf
- Atkinson, P., & Silverman, D. (1997). Kundera's immortality: The interview society and the invention of the self. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), 304-325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049700300304>
- Atlantic Philanthropies. (2013). *Prevention and early intervention programme in Ireland and Northern Ireland*. <http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/evaluations/evaluation-prevention-and...>
- Aubrey, C. (2011). *Leading and managing in the early years*. Sage Publications.
- Aubrey, C., Godfrey, R., & Harris, A. (2013). How do they manage? An investigation of early childhood leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(1), 5-29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143212462702>.
- Austin, L. J. E., Whitebook, M., Connors, M., & Darrah, R. (2011). *Staff preparation, reward, and support: Are quality rating and improvement systems addressing all of the key ingredients necessary for change*. University of California, Berkeley. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED543253.pdf>
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). (2011). *Guide to the education and care services national law and the education and care services national regulations*. ACECQA. <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/pdf/asmade/sl-2011-653>
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). (2018). *Guide to the regulations*. ACECQA. <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-01/NQF-Resource-02-Guide-to-ECS-Law-Regs.pdf>
- Australian Productivity Commission. (2011). *Early childhood development workforce, research report*. <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/education-workforce-early-childhood/report/early-childhood-report.pdf>

- Avolio, B.J., Sosik, J.J., Jung, D.I., & Berson, Y. (2003). Leadership models, methods, and applications. In I. B. Weiner (Ed.), *Handbook of psychology: Industrial and organizational psychology* (pp.277-307). Wiley.
- Avolio, B. J., Zhu, W., Koh, W., & Bhatia, P. (2004). Transformational leadership and organizational commitment: Mediating role of psychological empowerment and moderating role of structural distance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(8), 951-968. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.283>
- Bailey, D., Duncan, G.J., Candice, L., Odgers, B., & Yuc, W. (2014). Persistence and fadeout in the impacts of child and adolescent intervention. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 10(1), 7-39. <http://doi.org/10.1080/19345747.2016.1232459>
- Baker, S. E., & Edwards, R. (2012). *How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research*. National Centre for Research Methods. http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf
- Balfour, B. J. (2016). Feminist tales of teaching and resistance: Reimagining gender in early childhood education (Reggio Emilia, Italy). *Gender and Education*, 28(3), 445-457. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2016.1167176>
- Ball, S. J. (2008). *The education debate*. Policy Press.
- Ball, S. J. (2009). Privatizing education, privatizing education policy, privatizing educational research: Network governance and the “competition state”. *Journal of Education Policy*, 24(1), 83-100. <http://doi.org/1080/02680930802419474>
- Ball, S. J. (2012). Performativity, commodification and commitment: An i-spy guide to the neoliberal university. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60(1), 17-28. <http://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2011.650940>
- Ball, S. J., & Olmedo, A. (2013). Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neoliberal governmentalities. *Critical Studies in Education*. 54(1), 85-96. <http://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2013.740678>
- Ball, S., & Youdell, D. (2007). *Hidden privatisation in public education: Preliminary report*. https://pages.ei-ie.org/quadrennialreport/2007/upload/content_trsl_images/630/Hidden_privatisati on-EN.pdf
- Barling, J., & Weatherhead, J. G. (2016). Persistent exposure to poverty during childhood limits later leader emergence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101, 1305-1318. <https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000129>

- Barker, S. F. (1992). What is a profession? *Professional Ethics, A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 1(1), 73-99. <https://doi.org/10.5840/profethics199211/22>
- Barrett, M. (1980). *Women's oppression today: The marxist/feminist encounter*. Verso.
- Barry, U. (2008). *Changing economic and social worlds of Irish women*. New Island Books.
- Bartik, T. (2011). *Investing in kids: Early childhood programs and local economic development*. W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. <https://doi.org/10.17848/9780880994002>
- Bartky, S. (1990). *Femininity and domination: Studies in the phenomenology of oppression*. Routledge.
- Bass, M. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*. Free Press.
- Bateman, V. (2016). *Capitalism is suffering a crisis of care*. <https://unherd.com/2017/11/capitalism-suffering-crisis-care/>
- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Work, consumerism and the new poor*. Open University Press.
- Beane, L. (2016). *Advocacy leadership in early childhood: Educators' perspectives*. [Master of Education (Research), Australian Catholic University]. <https://doi.org/10.4226/66/5a9dbbe733626>
- Beaudin, H. L. (2017). Navigating the changing landscape of early education within a preschool setting. *The organizational improvement plan at Western University*. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1019&context=oip>
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. Sage.
- Beck, U. (1999). *World risk society*. Polity.
- Beckman, L. J. (2014). Training in feminist research methodology: Doing research on the margins. *Women & Therapy*, 37(1-2), 164-177. <http://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2014.850347>
- Belmi, P., & Laurin, K. (2016). Who wants to get to the top? Class and lay theories about power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 111(4), 505-529. <http://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000060>
- Bennett, J. (2003). Starting strong: The persistent division between care and education. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 1(1), 21-48. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X030011006>
- Bennett, J. (2006). *History matters: Patriarchy and the challenge of feminism*. University of Pennsylvania Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fhtgm>
- Berg, A. J., & Lie, M. (1995). Feminism and constructivism: Do artifacts have gender? *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 20(3), 332-351.

- <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.856.5210&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Bernstein, L. (1989). *Quote*. <https://citaty.net/citaty/1385248-leonard-bernstein-to-achieve-great-things-two-things-are-needed-a/?page=3>
- Better Start. (2016). *Better start national early years quality development*. <https://aim.gov.ie/better-start-2/>
- Better Start. (2018). *Access and inclusion model (AIM)*. <https://aim.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/AIM-Level-4-Access-and-Inclusion-Profile-Rationale.pdf>
- Bilge, S. (2013). Intersectionality undone: Saving intersectionality from feminist intersectionality studies. *Du Bois Review*, 10(2),405-424. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/SirmaBilge/publication/272010842iINTERSECTIONALITY_UNDONE/links/56b2df3508ae56d7b06cda93/INTERSECTIONALITY_UNDONE.pdf
- Blackmore, J. (1989). Educational leadership: A feminist critique and reconstruction. In J. Smyth (Ed.), *Critical perspectives on educational leadership*. Falmer Press.
- Blackmore, J. (1999). *Troubling women: Feminism, leadership, and educational change*. Open University Press.
- Blackmore, J. (2010a). "The other within": Race/gender disruptions to the professional learning of white educational leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 13, 45-61. <https://doi.org/10.1167/189760980310362435>
- Blackmore, J. (2010b). Disrupting notions of leadership from feminist post-colonial positions. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 13(1), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2014.850347>
- Blackmore, J. (2011). Leadership in pursuit of purpose: Social, economic and political transformation. *Counterpoints*, 409, 21-36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42981293>
- Blackmore, J. (2013). A feminist critical perspective on educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 16(2),139-154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2012.754057>.
- Blackmore, J. (2019). Feminism and neo/liberalism: Contesting education's possibilities, *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*,40(2),176-190, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2019.1569877>.
- Blackmore, J., & Sachs, J. (2007). *Performing and reforming leaders: Gender, educational restructuring, and organizational change*. State University of New York Press.
- Blakemore, K., & Griggs, E. (2007). *Social policy: An introduction*. Open University Press.

- Blaikie, W. (2005). *Designing social research*. Polity Press.
- Blank, H., & Schulman, K. (2014). *Spreading the word on early education: Principals influence on teaching and advocacy can help children in poverty overcome the learning gap*. <http://www.naesp.org/principal-marchapril-2014-poverty/spreading-word-early...>
- Blaschke, L. M. (2012). Heutagogy and lifelong learning: A review of heutagogical practice and self-determined learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 13(1), 56–71. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v13i1.1076>
- Bleach, J. (2011). *Developing ECCE practitioners' sense of professionalism through reflective practice and on-going professional development*. [Paper presentation]. European Early Childhood Education Research Association (EECERA) 21st Annual Conference, (September, 14-17), Geneva-Lausanne. <http://trap.ncirl.ie/1136/>
- Bleach, J. (2014). Developing professionalism through reflective practice and ongoing professional development. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 22(2), 185-197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2014.883719>
- Bloch, M.N., Swadener, B. B., & Cannella, G.S. (2014). *Reconceptualizing early childhood education and care — A reader*. Peter Lang.
- Bloom, P. J. (1996). *Improving the quality of work life in the early childhood setting: Resource guide and technical manual for the early childhood work environment survey*. Early childhood development project. National Louis University.
- Bloom, P. J. (1997). Navigating the rapids: Directors reflect on their careers and professional development. *Young Children*, 52(7), 32-38. <http://www.google.ie/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=4&ved=0CDUQFjAD&url=http%3A%2F%2Ffiles.eric.ed.gov%2Ffulltext%2FED420426.pdf&ei=Vev9U->
- Bloom, P. J., Jackson, S., Teri, N., & Kelton, R. (2013). *Taking charge of change: A twenty-year review of empowering early childhood administration through leadership training*. <http://www.google.ie/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=13&ved=0CF0QFjAM&url=http%3A%2F%2Folms1.cte.j>
- Bodwitch, H. G. (2014). Why feminism? How feminist methodologies can aid our efforts to “give back” through research. *Journal of Research Practice*, 10(2), 1-9. <http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/428/397>
- Bøe, M., & Hognestad, K. (2015). Directing and facilitating distributed pedagogical leadership: Best practices in early childhood education. *International Journal of*

- Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, 20(2), 133-148.
<https://doi.org/1080/13603124.2015.1059488>
- Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*. Sage.
- Bordo, S. (1993). *Unbearable weight: Feminism, western culture, and the body*. University of California Press.
- Børhaug, K. (2013). Democratic early childhood education and care management? The Norwegian case. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake, & J. Rodd (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education* (pp. 145-162). Tampere University Press.
- Boulett, V. (2015). The Irish economic crisis: The expiry of a development model? *Etudes Irlandaises*, 40(2), 17-30. <https://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/4730>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu P. (1996). Understanding. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 13(2), 17-37.:
<https://doi.org/10.1177/026327696013002002>
- Bown, K., & Sumsion, J. (2016). Generating visionary policy for early childhood education and care: Politicians' and early childhood sector advocate/activists' perspectives. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 17(2), 192-209.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949116641511>
- Boylan, J., & Dalrymple, J. (2011). Advocacy, social justice and children's rights practice. *Social Work in Action*, 23(1), 19-30.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09503153.2010.536212>
- Bradbury, H., & Reason, P. (2008). Concluding reflections: Whither action research. In H. Bradbury & P. Reason (Eds.), *Sage handbook of action research* (pp.695-707). Sage.
- Bradbury-Huang, H. (2010). What is good action research? Why the resurgent interest? *Action Research*, 8(1), 93-109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750310362435>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2),77-101. https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/preview/1043068/thematic_analysis_revised_-_final.pdf
- Braun, A., Vincent, C., & Ball, S. J. (2008). I'm so much more myself now, coming back to work: Working class mothers, paid work and childcare. *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(5), 533-548. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02680930802054370>
- Bree, R.T., & Gallagher, G. (2016). Using microsoft excel to code and thematically analyse qualitative data: A simple, cost-effective approach. *AISHE-J: The All-Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 8(2), 2811- 28114.
<http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/281/467>

- Brenner, J. (2014). 21st century socialist feminism. *The Journal for the Society of Socialist Studies/Revue de la Société d'Études Socialistes*, 10(1), 31-49.
<http://www.socialiststudies.com/index.php/sss/article/viewFile/23486/17371>
- Brenner, J. (2015). Democracy, community, and care. *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política*, 18, 301-316. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-335220151811>.
- Brenner, J. (2017). *Democratizing care*. <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3538-democratizing-care>
- Bridges, T., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2017). Joan Acker and the shift from patriarchy to gender. *Gender Work and Organization*, 26(12), 1773-1775.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12226>
- Brookfield, S. (2016). So exactly what is critical about critical reflection? In J. Fook, V. Collington, F. Ross, G. Ruch & L. West (Eds.), *Researching critical reflection and research: Multidisciplinary perspectives*. Routledge.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments in nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- Brundett, M., & Rhodes, C. (2014). *Researching educational leadership and management*. Sage.
- Bruneau, C. (2018). *How do patriarchy and capitalism jointly reinforce the oppression of women?* <https://www.cadtm.org/How-do-patriarchy-and-capitalism-jointly-reinforce-the-oppression-of-women>
- Brydon-Miller, M., Kral, M., Maguire, P., Noffke, S., & Sabhlok, A. (2011). Jazz and the banyan tree. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp.387- 400). Sage Publications Inc.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. Oxford.
- Bubikova-Moan, J., Naess Hjetland, H., & Wollscheid, S. (2019). ECE teachers' views on play-based learning: A systematic review. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 27(6),776-800. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2019.1678717>
- Burke, P. J. (2004). Identities and social structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award Address. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 67(1), 5–15.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/019027250406700103>
- Burke, L., & Sheffield, M. (2013). Universal preschool's empty promises. *Backgrounder* (2773), 1-8. http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2013/pdf/bg2773.pdf
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
- Burman, E. (2018). Towards a posthuman developmental psychology of child, families and communities n. In M. Fler, B. van Oers (Eds.), *International handbook of early childhood education* (pp. 1599-1619). Springer.

- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1992). Contingent foundations: Feminism and the question of "postmodernism."
In J. Butler & J. W. Scott (Eds.), *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 3-21). Routledge.
- Buysse, V., Wesley, P. W., Snyder, P., & Winton, P. J. (2006). Evidence-based practice: What does it really mean for the early childhood field? *Young Exceptional Children* 9(4), 21.
<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/ceed/events/summerinstitute/2008institute/openingse...>
- Cafferky, I. (2013). *Leadership in a community based early childhood care and education service: Governance and practice*. [Masters Dissertation. Queens University, Belfast]. <https://www.roscommonchildcare.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Leadership-in-a-community-based-ECCE-Service..pdf>
- Calvino, I. (1986). *Mr. Palomar*. Mariner.
- Cameron, C. (2004). Social pedagogy and care: Danish and German practice in young people's residential care. *Journal of Social Work*, 4(2), 133-151.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468017304044858>
- Campbell, T., Gambaro, L., & Stewart, K. (2018). Universal early education: Who benefits? Patterns in take-up of the entitlement to free early education among three-year-olds in England. *British Educational Research Journal*, 44(3), 515-538.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3445>
- Campbell-Barr, V., & Garnham, A. (2010). What parents want—parents and childcare: A literature review. *Commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission*.
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-66-childcare-review-of-whatparents-want.pdf>
- Campbell-Barr, V., & Leeson, C. (2016). *Quality and leadership in the early years: Research, theory and practice*. Sage.
- Campbell-Barr, V., & Nygård, M. (2014). Losing sight of the child? Human capital theory and its role for early childhood education and care policies in Finland and England since the mid-1990s. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 15(4), 346-359. <https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2014.15.4.346>
- Campbell- Evans, G., Stamopoulos, E., & Maloney, C. (2014). Building leadership capacity in early childhood pre-service teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(5), 42-49. <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol39/iss5/3>
- Cannella, G. S. (1997). *Deconstructing early childhood education: Social justice and revolution*. Peter Lang.

- Cannella, G. S. (2000). Critical and feminist reconstructions of early childhood education: Continuing the conversations. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 1(2), 215-221. <https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2000.1.2.9>
- Cantillon, S., & Lynch, K. (2016). Affective equality: Love matters. *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 32(1), 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12305>
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming critical: Education knowledge and action research*. Falmer.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (2005). Staying critical: *Educational action research*, 21(3), 347-357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650790500200296>
- Carroll, S. (2013, May 29). RTE crèche documentary exposes “emotional abuse”. Revelations of rte prime time investigation deeply distressing, says Fitzgerald. *The Irish Times*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/rte-cr%C3%A8che-documentary-exposes-emotional-abuse-1.1409758>
- Carroll, B., Levy, L., & Richmond, D. (2008). Leadership as practice: Challenging the competency paradigm. *Leadership*, 4(4), 363-379. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715008095186>
- Cartmel, J., Macfarlane, K., & Nolan, A. (2013). Looking to the future: Producing transdisciplinary professionals for leadership in early childhood settings. *Early Years: Journal of International Research & Development*, 33(4), 398-412. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2013.852522>
- Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education (CECDE). (2006). *Síolta the national quality framework for early education*. Centre for Early Childhood Development & Education.
- Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education. (2007a). *Síolta research digest: Standard 8 planning and evaluation*. <https://siolta.ie/media/pdfs/Research%20Digest%20-%20Planning%20and%20Evaluation.pdf>
- Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education. (2007b). *Síolta research digest: Standard 10 organisation*. <https://siolta.ie/media/pdfs/Research%20Digest%20-%20Organisation.pdf>
- Chandler, D., & Torbert, B. (2003). Transforming inquiry and action: Interweaving 27 flavors of action research. *Action Research*, 1(2), 133-152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14767503030012002>
- Cheeseman, S. (2007). Pedagogical silences in Australian early childhood social policy. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 8(31), 244-254. <http://search.proquest.com/professional>

/australianeducationindexdocview/764321462/1483B88ED4F10F2C609/1? ac
countid=14404

- Child Abuse Commission. (2009a). *The report of the commission to inquire into child abuse (The Ryan report)*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/3c76d0-the-report-of-the-commission-to-inquire-into-child-abuse-the-ryan-re/>
- Child Abuse Commission. (2009b). Residential child welfare in Ireland 1965-2008. *In child abuse commission: The report of the commission to inquire into child abuse (The Ryan report)* (Vol 4, Chapter 4).
<https://www.industrialmemories.ucd.ie/ryan-report/report/4-4>
- Children's Rights Alliance. (2011). *Ten years on: Did the national children's strategy deliver on its promises?*
<https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/15464/1/ReviewNCS2000to2010-0211%5B1%5D.pdf>
- Children's Rights Alliance. (2020). *Budget 2021: What does it mean for children and young people?* <https://socialcareireland.ie/budget-2021-what-does-it-mean-for-children-and-young-people/>
- Child Trends. (2011). *Coaching in early care and education programs and quality rating and improvement systems (QRIS): Identifying promising features*.
<https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2011-35CoachingQuali...>
- Chodorow, N.J. (1978). *The reproduction of mothering*. University of California Press.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013a). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. Sage.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013b). *Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming challenges and developing strategies for effective learning*. <https://uwe-repository.worktribe.com/preview/937606/Teaching%20thematic%20analysis%20Research%20Repository%20version.pdf>
- Cohen, S., & Eimicke, W. (2010). Contracting out, and why is it growing? Contracting defined. In M. Bevir (Ed.), *Sage handbook of governance* (pp.231-252). Sage.
<https://doi:10.1080/13603124.2012.754057>.
- Colley, H. (2006). Learning to labour with feeling: Class, gender and emotion in childcare education and training. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 7(1), 15-29.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2006.7.1.15>
- Colmer, K., Waniganayake, M., & Field, L. (2014). Leading professional learning in early childhood centres: Who are the educational leaders? *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(4), 103-113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911403900414>

- Coolahan, J. (1981). *Irish education/history and structure*. Institute of Public Administration.
- Coombes, M., & Russell, J. (2014). *Work practice & experience in childcare*. Gill Education.
- Conger, J. (1990). The dark side of leadership. *Organizational Dynamics*, 19, 44-55.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(90\)90070-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(90)90070-6)
- Considine, F., & Dukelow, M. (2009). *Irish social policy: A critical introduction*. Gill and Macmillan.
- Considine, F., & Dukelow, M. (2017). *Irish social policy: A critical introduction*. Policy Press.
- Corcoran, D. (2013). *Freedom to achieve freedom, the Irish free state 1922-1932*. Gill Books.
- Cornwall, A., & Jewkes, R. (1995). What is participatory research? *Social Science & Medicine*, 41(12), 166-176.
http://www.civitas.edu.pl/pub/nasza_uczelnia/projekty_badawcze/Taylor/what_is_participatory_research.pdf=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CCIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.civitas.edu
- Courtney, S. J., McGinity, R., & Gunter, H. (2017). *Educational leadership: Theorising professional practice in neoliberal times*. Taylor & Francis.
- Cresswell, T. (2004). *Place: A short introduction*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approach*. Sage.
- Creswell, J., & Plano Clark, V. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage.
- Creswell, J., & Plano Clark, V. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Zhang, W. (2009). The application of mixed methods designs to trauma research. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 22(6), 612-621.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20479>
- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, E., Plano Clark, V., & Alejandro, M. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 236-264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006287390>
- Crevani, L. (2018). Is there leadership in a fluid world? Exploring the ongoing production of direction in organizing. *Leadership*, 14(1), 83-109.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715015616667>

- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage.
- Curran, D. (2018). Beck's creative challenge to class analysis: From the rejection of class to the discovery of risk-class. *Journal of Risk Research*, 21(1), 29-40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2017.1351464>
- Cuthbert, R., Møller, J., & Ozga, J. (2013). Leadership and the reform of education. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 34 (2), 281-294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2012.761385>
- Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, R. (1999). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Postmodern perspectives*. Falmer press.
- Dahlberg, G., & Moss, P. (2005). *Ethics and politics in early childhood education*. RoutledgeFalmer.
- Dahlberg, G., & Moss, P. (2008). *Beyond quality in early childhood education and care – languages of evaluation*. <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/166935/1/ifo-dice-report-v06-y2008-i2-p21-26.pdf>
- Davis, J. M., Bell, A., & Pearce, M. (2014). *Taking the first steps – is childhood practice working? An investigation by the University of Edinburgh for the SSSC*. Scottish Social Services Council. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295545969_Taking_the_first_steps_-_is_Childhood_Practice_working
- Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist Theory*, 9(1), 67-85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700108086364>
- Davis, K., Krieg, S., & Smith, K. (2015). Leading otherwise: Using a feminist-poststructuralist and postcolonial lens to create alternative spaces for early childhood educational leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, 18(2), 131-148. <https://doi:10.1080/13603124.2014.943296>
- Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(2), 221-258. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X15616863>
- Day, D. V., & Antonakis, J. (2012). Leadership: Past, present, and future. In D. V. Day & J. Antonakis (Eds.), *The nature of leadership* (2nd ed., pp. 3-25). Sage.
- Daycare Trust. (2010). *Keeping mum: Childcare as a vote winning issue*. Daycare Trust/Bounty.

- Dean, M. (2012). Free economy, strong state. In D. Cahill, I. Edwards & F. Stilwell, (Eds.), *Neoliberalism: Beyond the free market* (pp. 69-89). Cheltenham.
- de la Bellacasa, M. P. (2012). Nothing comes without its world: Thinking with care. *The Sociological Review*, 60(2), 197-216.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02070.x>
- Denzin, N.K. (2001). The reflexive interview and a performative social science. *Qualitative Research*, 1, 23-46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879410100100102>
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, S. (2011). *The sage handbook of research*. Sage.
- Denzin, N., & Lincoln, S. (Eds.), (2017). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2008). *Forum on prevention and early intervention for children and youth*.
https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/Forum_report_p04.pdf
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2010). *The free pre-school year in early childhood care and education (ECCE) scheme*. Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Stationery Office.
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2013). *Right from the start: Report of the expert advisory group on the early years strategy*.
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ba2572-right-from-the-start-report-of-the-expert-advisory-group-on-the-earl/>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (DCYA). (2014a). *Ryan report implementation plan fourth progress report December 2014*. https://ptfs-oireachtas.s3.amazonaws.com/DriveH/AWDData/Library3/CYAdocId130315_112516.pdf
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2014b). *Better outcomes – Brighter futures. National policy framework for children and young people 2014–2020*. Government Stationery Office.
<https://assets.gov.ie/23796/961bbf5d975f4c88adc01a6fc5b4a7c4.pdf>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2014c). *Better start: National early years quality development service*. <https://www.pobal.ie/programmes/better-start/>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2016a). *Diversity, equality and inclusion charter and guidelines for early childhood care and education*.
<https://aim.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-Equality-and-Inclusion-Charter-and-Guidelines-for-Early-Childhood-Care-Education.pdf>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2016b). *Access and inclusion model (AIM)*. <https://aim.gov.ie/>

- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2016c). *Policy paper on the development of a new single affordable childcare scheme*.
www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/earlyyears/20161028PolicyPaper.pdf
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2016d). *Early childhood care and education (ECCE) or free preschool*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d7a5e6-early-childhood-care-and-education-ecce-or-free-preschool/>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2019a). *Workforce development plan for the early learning and care (ELC), school-age childcare (SAC) and childminding sector* [Press release]. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/26122f-workforce-development-plan-for-the-elcsac-sector/>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA). (2019b). *Workforce development plan for the early learning and care (ELC), school-age childcare (SAC) and childminding sector*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/26122f-workforce-development-plan-for-the-elcsac-sector/>
- Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (DCYA). (2020, June 03). *Minister Zappone this week chaired the fifth meeting of the expert advisory group on the planned reopening of Childcare services* [Press release]. <http://www.wccc.ie/press-release-minister-zappone-chairs-fifth-meeting-of-advisory-group-on-planned-reopening-of-childcare-services/>
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (Formerly DCYA). (2015). *Report of inter-departmental working group: future investment in childcare in Ireland*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d16af6-report-of-inter-departmental-working-group-future-investment-in-chil/>
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. (2020, June 10). *Minister Zappone announces funding package of €75 million for reopening Early Learning and Childcare Services* [Press release]. www.gov.ie/en/press-release/cd1cf-government-announces-substantial-supports-for-the-re-opening-of-childcare-minister-zappone-announces-funding-package-
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. (2020, June 12). *Reopening funding package for childcare services*.
<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/76437/160e1b25-17d5-4687-be0a-3359c8125d1e.pdf#page=null>
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. (2020 June 15). *Minister Zappone and Minister McHugh announce information and resources for children preparing for pre-school and junior infants* [Press release].
<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/64182-minister-zappone-and-minister-mchugh->

announce-information-and-resources-for-children-preparing-for-pre-school-and-junior-infants/

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. (2020, July 15).

Minister O’Gorman announces the publication of a “focused policy assessment” of the ECCE higher capitation payment [Press release].

<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/90960-wednesday/>

Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. (2020, July 27).

Minister O’Gorman initiates review of childcare operating model. [Press release].

<https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/163fc-minister-ogorman-initiates-review-of-childcare-operating-model/>

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (1999). *Ready to learn: White paper on early childhood education.* <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Ready-to-Learn-White-Paper-on-Early-Childhood-Education.pdf>

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2004). *OECD thematic review of early childhood education and care background report Ireland.*

<https://www.oecd.org/ireland/34431749.pdf>

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2009). *Developing the workforce in the early childhood care and education sector: Background discussion paper.* The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2010). *A workforce development plan for the early childhood care and education sector in Ireland.* The Stationery Office.

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2013). *Final report on the development and implementation of the síolta quality assurance programme.*

<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/S%C3%ADolta-Final-Report.pdf>

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2016a). *A guide to early-years education-focused inspection (EYEI) in early-years settings participating in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) programme.* <http://wexfordchildcare.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/DES-Inspection-Guide.pdf>

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2016b). *Survey of early years practitioners consultation for the review of education and training programmes in early years.*

<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Early-Years-Practitioner-Survey-Findings-2016.pdf>

Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2016c). *Early years-focused inspections.*

<https://www.education.ie/en/publications/inspection-reports-publications/Early-Years-Education-Reports/>

- Department of Education and Skills (DES). (2016d). *National síolta aistear initiative*.
<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Early-Childhood/national-siolta-aistear-initiative/>
- Department of Education and Skills. (2018a). *National síolta aistear initiative: Review of the current nsai mentoring model*. <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/Early-Childhood/national-siolta-aistear-initiative-review-of-the-current-nsai-mentoring-model.pdf>
- Department of Education and Skills. (2018b). *Leadership and management in post-primary schools*. https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0003_2018.pdf
- Department of Education and Skills. (2019). *Professional award criteria and guidelines for initial professional education (level 7 and level 8) degree programmes for the early learning and care (ELC) sector in Ireland*.
<https://assets.gov.ie/30316/784a2158d8094bb7bab40f2064358221.pdf>
- Department of Education and Skills. (2020). *Early start programme*.
<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Grants-and-Additional-Support/Early-Start-Programme/>
- Department of Health and Children (DOHC). (1996). *Report on the inquiry into the operation of Madonna House*.
<https://www.lenus.ie/bitstream/handle/10147/46317/MadonnaHouse.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>
- Department of Health and Children (DOHC). (2000). *The national children's strategy: Our children: Their lives: Executive summary*. The Stationery Office.
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. (1999). *National childcare strategy report of the partnership 2000 expert working group on childcare*. The Stationery Office. <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Childcare1.pdf/Files/Childcare1.pdf>
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR). (2000). *Equal opportunities childcare programme 2000-2006*. The Stationery Office.
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR). (2002). *Model framework for education, training and professional development in the early childhood care and education*. The Stationery Office.
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. (2003). *Developing childcare in Ireland: A review of progress to end 2003 on the implementation of the equal opportunities childcare programme 2000 – 2006*.
<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Childcare.pdf/Files/Childcare.pdf>

- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. (2006). *Childcare programme 2006 – 2010*. <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/ChildcareNote.pdf/Files/ChildcareNote.pdf>
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. (2014). *Focused policy assessment of early childhood education and the ecce scheme*.
<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Value-For-Money-Reviews/Focused-Policy-Assessment-of-Early-Childhood-Education-and-the-ECCE-Scheme.pdf>
- Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (DJELR). (2017). *National strategy for women and girls 2017–2020: Creating a better society for all*.
http://policereform.ie/en/JELR/National_Strategy_for_Women_and_Girls_2017_-_2020.pdf/Files/National_Strategy_for_Women_and_Girls_2017_-_2020.pdf
- DeVault, M. L., & Gross, G. (2012). Feminist qualitative interviewing: Experience, talk, and knowledge. In S.N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed., pp. 173-97). Sage.
- Devers, K. J., & Frankel, R. M. (2000). Study design in qualitative research--2: Sampling and data collection strategies. *Education for Health, 13*(2), 263-271.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13576280050074543>.
- Dewey, J. (1923). Culture and professionalism in education Author(s). *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors (1915-1955)*, 9(8), 51-53.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40217281.pdf>
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Macmillan.
- Dewey, J. (1987). Art as experience. In J. Boydston (Ed.), *The later works of John Dewey, 1925-1953* (Vol. 10). Southern Illinois University Press.
[https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/uv/uv/UV9406/dewey-john-\(1987\).-art-as-experience.pdf](https://www.uio.no/studier/emner/uv/uv/UV9406/dewey-john-(1987).-art-as-experience.pdf)
- Dick, B. (1990). *Convergent interviewing*. <http://www.aral.com.au/areol/areol-session08.html>
- Dick, B. (2000). *A beginner's guide to action research*. <http://www.aral.com.au/areol/>
- Dick, B. (2002). *Applications. Session 1 of areol - action research and evaluation online*.
<http://www.aral.com.au/areol/areolind.html>
- Dick, B. (2015). Reflections on the sage encyclopedia of action research and what it says about action research and its methodologies. *Action Research, 13*(4), 431-444. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750315573593>
- Dick, B. (2016). *Action research and evaluation online: Session 8: Convergent interviewing*. <http://www.aral.com.au/areol/areol-session08.html>

- Dill, B. T., & Kohlman, M. H. (2012). Intersectionality: A transformative paradigm in feminist theory and social justice. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed., pp. 154-174). Sage Publications.
- Dobrowolsky, A., & Saint-Martin, D. (2005). Agency, actors and change in a child-focused future: "Path dependency" problematized. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 43(1), 1-33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14662040500054198>
- Dodson, L., Schmalzbauer, L., & Piatelli, D. (2006). Behind the scenes: A conversation about interpretative focus groups. In S. N. Hesse-Biber, & S. D. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist research practice: A primer* (pp.174-182). Sage Publications.
- Douglass, A. (2017). *Leading for change in early care and education: Cultivating leadership from within*. Teachers College Press.
- Douglass, A. (2019). Leadership for quality early childhood education and care. *OECD Education Working Papers, No. 211*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/6e563bae-en>.
- Dowling, P. J. (1971). *A history of Irish education: A study in conflicting loyalties*. Mercier Press.
- Duignan, M. (2012). *The journey towards professionalism in early childhood education and care in Ireland*.
http://www.acpireland.com/uploads/1/5/3/7/15370432/the_journey_towards_professionalism_in_waterford_presentation.pdf
- Duignan, M. (2016). Establishing an inspectorate for the ECCE programme. In B. Mooney (Ed.), *Education matters yearbook 2016-2017: Shaping Ireland's education landscape* (pp.113-118).
<https://irelandsyearbookofeducation.ie/downloads/YB20162017.pdf>
- Duignan, M. (2019). Update from early years inspection. In B. Mooney (Ed), *Education matters 2016-2017: Shaping Ireland's education landscape* (pp.28-31).
https://issuu.com/educationmattersie/docs/irelands_yearbook_of_education_2018_434d03_170f7321/28
- Dunlop, A.W. (2008). *A literature review on leadership in the early years*.
https://www.academia.edu/30192102/A_Literature_Review_on_Leadership_in_the_EarlyYears?auto=download
- Dunlop, W. (2012). Preface in McDowall Clark, R., & Murray, J. (2012). *Reconceptualising leadership in the early years* (p. xi). Open University.
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). (2012). *Leadership*. www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/

- Early Childhood Ireland. (2014). *€3m childcare fund will leave 70% of providers "out in the cold"*. <https://www.thejournal.ie/childcare-funding-2-1399745-Apr2014/>
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). (2015). *Theresa Harney comments on Tulsa report*. <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/comment-on-tusla-inspection-report/> www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). (2016). *Doing the sums: the real cost of providing childcare*. <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ECI-Doing-The-Sums-Report-Sept-2016.pdf>
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). (2018a). *Invest for the best: Building a world-class early childhood care and education system for Ireland, budget 2018 submission*. <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ECI-Budget2018-Invest-for-the-best.pdf>
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). (2018b). *Minister announces CPD infrastructure: April 17, 2018*. <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/minister-announces-cpd-infrastructure/>
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). (2018c). *Summing It up: The ECI stats series*. <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/work/advocacy/summing-eci-stats-series>
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). (2019). *Budget 2020: Lacking ambition, lacking direction*. <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/blog/budget-2020-lacking-ambition-lacking->
- Early Childhood Ireland (ECI). (2020a). *About us*. <https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/about/>
- Early Childhood Ireland. (2020b). *Pathways to better prospects: delivering proper terms and conditions for the early years workforce in Ireland a literature review*. <https://www.ncn.ie/images/PDFs/Pathways-To-Better-Prospects-2020.pdf>
- Economic and Social Research Institute ESRI. (2018). *Maternal employment and the cost of childcare in Ireland*. www.esri.ie/system/files?file=media/file-uploads/2018-11/RS73.pdf
- Eisenhardt, D., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1), 25-32. <https://doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2007.24160888>
- Eisenstein, Z. (1979). *Capitalist patriarchy and the case for social feminism*. Monthly Review Press.
- Eisenstein, Z. (1999). Constructing a theory of capitalist patriarchy and the socialist feminism. *Critical Sociology*, 29(5), 212-221. <http://doi:10.1177/08969205990250020901>
- Ehrenreich, B. (1990). *Fear of falling: The inner life of the middle class*. Harper Perennial.

- Elwick, A., Osgood, J., Robertson, L.H., Sakr, M., & Wilson, D. (2018). In pursuit of quality: Early childhood qualifications and training policy. *Journal of Education Policy*, 33(4),510-525. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2017.1416426>
- Endres, S., Weibler, J. (2020). Understanding (non)leadership phenomena in collaborative interorganizational networks and advancing shared leadership theory: An interpretive grounded theory study. *Bus Res*, 13, 275-309. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40685-019-0086-6>
- Eurofound. (2014). *Early childhood education and care: Working conditions and training opportunities – Working paper*. Dublin. http://www.acpireland.com/uploads/1/5/3/7/15370432/early_childhood_education_and_care_-_working.pdf
- European Commission. (2002). *European Council Barcelona*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/DOC_02_7
- European Commission. (2019). *Key data on early childhood education and care in Europe*. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/default/files/ec0319375enn_0.pdf
- European Commission. (2011). *Early childhood education and care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow*. European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0066:FIN:EN:PDF>
- European Commission. (2013). *Barcelona objectives: The development of childcare facilities for young children in Europe with a view to sustainable and inclusive growth*. www.ec.europa.eu/justice/genderequality/files/documents/130531_barcelona_en.pdf
- European Commission. (2014). *Proposal for key principles of a quality framework for early childhood education and care report of the working group on early childhood education and care under the auspices of the European commission*. https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/policy/strategic-framework/archive/documents/ecec-quality-framework_en.pdf
- European Commission. (2015). *Commission staff working document. Country report Ireland 2015 including an in-depth review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances*. European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_ireland_en.pdf.
- European Commission. (2016). *European semester: Country specific recommendation/council recommendation – Ireland*. <https://eur->

- lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.C_.2016.299.01.0065.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AC%3A2016%3A299%3ATOCr
- European Commission. (2018). *Towards a European education area by 2025*. European Commission. <https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-areaen>
- European Commission. (2019). *Key data on early childhood education and care in Europe – 2019 edition*. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5816a817-b72a-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-102611557>
- European Parliament. (2017). *A new directive on worklife balance*. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/614708/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)614708_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/614708/EPRS_BRI(2018)614708_EN.pdf)
- European Policy Network on School Leadership (EPNoSL). (2016). *European policy network of school leadership*. <https://www.fpce.up.pt/ciie/?q=en/content/epnosl-%E2%80%93-european-policy-network-school-leadership>
- European Union. (2017). *Gender equality index 2017 measuring gender equality in the European Union 2005-2015*. <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2017-measuring-gender-equality-european-union-2005-2015-report>
- Fairtlough, G. (2007). *The three ways of getting things done: Hierarchy, heterarchy and responsible autonomy in organisations*. Triarchy Press.
- Fallon, J. (2007). *Early childhood in Ireland: Evidence and perspectives*. https://siolta.ie/media/pdfs/03_early_childhood_in_ireland.pdf
- Fals-Borda, O., & Rahman, M. (1991). *Action and knowledge-breaking the monopoly with participatory action-research*. Apex Press.
- Farrell, P., & Ainscow, M. (2002). *Making special education inclusive: From research to practice*. David Fulton Publishers.
- Federici, S. (2012). *Revolution at point zero: Housework, reproduction and feminist struggle*. Common Notions/PM Press.
- Fenech, M. (2013). Leadership development during times of reform. *American Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(1), 89-94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911303800114>
- Fenech, M., & Sumsion, J. (2007). Early childhood teachers and regulation: complicating power relations using a Foucauldian lens. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 8(2), 109-122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569900110306>

- Fenech, M., Sumsion, J., & Goodfellow, J. (2008). Regulation and risk: Early childhood education and care services as sites where the “laugh of Foucault” resounds. *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(1), 35-48.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930701754039>
- Fenech, M., Waniganayake, M., & Fleet, A. (2009). More than a shortage of early childhood teachers: Looking beyond the recruitment of university qualified teachers to promote quality early childhood education and care. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(2), 199-213.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569900110306>
- Fenech, M., Sumsion, J., & Shepherd, W. (2010). Promoting early childhood teacher professionalism in the Australian context: The place of resistance. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 11(1), 85-105. <https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2010.11.1.89>
- Ferguson, H. (1996). Protecting Irish children in time: Child abuse as a social problem and the development of the child protection system in the Republic of Ireland. *Administration*, 44(2), 5-36. <https://elib.tcd.ie/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.elib.tcd.ie/scholarly-journals/protecting-irish-children-time-child-abuse-as/docview/57486445/se-2?accountid=14404>
- Fiedler, F.E. (1967). *A theory of leadership electiveness*. McGraw-Hill.
- Fiedler, F. E. (1971). Validation and extension of the contingency model of leadership effectiveness: A review of empirical findings. *Psychological Bulletin*, 76(2), 128-148. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0031454>
- Fine-Davis, M. (1983). Mothers' attitudes towards childcare and employment: A nationwide survey. In *Working party on childcare facilities for working parents, report to the minister for labour*. The Stationery Office.
- Fine-Davis, M. (1988). *Changing gender role attitudes in Ireland: 1975-1986*, (Report No. 2) *Issues related to equal employment opportunity. The second report of the second joint committee on women's rights*. The Stationery Office.
- Fine-Davis, M. (2007). *Childcare in Ireland today. Briefing paper to the Irish congress of trade unions*. <https://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/briefingpaper-on-childcare-final-draft-4-june-2007-mfd.pdf>
- Fink, D. (2005). *Leadership for mortals*. Sage Publications.
- Fitzgerald, T., & Gunter, H. (2008). Contesting the orthodoxy of teacher leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 11(4), 331-340.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13603120802317883>
- Flood, E., & Hardy, C. (2012). *Early care & education practice*. Gill Education.

- Fonsén, E., & Ukkonen-Mikkola, T. (2019). Early childhood education teachers' professional development towards pedagogical leadership. *Educational Research*, 61(2), 181-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2019.1600377>
- Fortidas, B. (2019). Does leadership exist in early childhood education in Tanzania? In P. Strehmel J. Heikka E. Hujala J. Rodd & M. Waniganayake (Eds.), *Leadership in early education in times of change: Research from five continents*. (pp.115-122). Verlag Barbara Budrich. https://ecommons.aku.edu/eastafrica_ied/102
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977*. Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1997). *The ethics of the concern for self as a practice of freedom*. In P. D. Rabinow (Ed.), *Essential works of Foucault 1954–1984 (Vol. 1), Ethics: subjectivity and truth* (pp. 281-302). Penguin Books.
- Fraser, N. (2016). Capitalism's crisis of care. *Dissent*, 63(4), 30-37. <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/nancy-fraser-interview-capitalism-crisis-of-care>
- Freire, P. (1970, 1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin.
- Freire, P. (1986). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1994). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Freire, P. (1997). *Pedagogy of the heart*. Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Freire, P. (1999). *Pedagogy of freedom: Ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Freire, P. (2004). *A pedagogy of indignation*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Freire, P. (2014). *Pedagogy of commitment*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Freire, P. (2016a). *Pedagogy of process*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Freire, P. (2016b). *Daring to dream: Toward a pedagogy of the unfinished*. Routledge.
- Friedman, B. (1963). *The feminine mystique*. Norton & Co
- Friedman, B. (2014). *Reclaiming the feminist vision: Consciousness-raising and small group practice*. McFarland & Company Inc.
- French, G. (2007). *Children's early learning and development: A research paper executive summary*. <https://ncca.ie/media/1112/how-aistear-was-developed-research-papers.pdf>
- French, G. (2019). *Key elements of good practice to support the learning and development of children from birth to three*. <https://ncca.ie/media/4123/key-elements-of-good-practice-to-support-the-learning-and-development-of-children-birth-three-drgfrench.pdf>

- Froebel, F. (2001). Friedrich Froebel's education by development (J. Jarvis, Trans.). In K. J. Brehony (Ed.), *The origins of nursery education: Friedrich Froebel and the English system* (Vol. 4). Routledge:
- Gallagher, C. (2019, July 24). Creche practices 'a recipe for disaster', says childcare expert: Dr Mary Moloney "shocked" at poor safety procedures highlighted by RTÉ documentary. *The Irish Times*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/creche-practices-a-recipe-for-disaster-says-childcare-expert-1.3966506>
- Gardner, W. L., Lowe, K. B., Coglisier, C., Moss, T., & Mahoney, K. (2010). Scholarly leadership of the study of leadership: A review of the leadership quarterly's second decade, 2000-2009. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21(6), 922-958. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984310001402>
- Gatenby, B., & Humphries, M. (2000). The more things change, the more they stay the same: Reconstructing gender through women's careers. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 9(1), 45-52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/103841620000900110>
- Gaeloideachas, (2020). *Statistics*. <https://gaeloideachas.ie/i-am-a-researcher/statistics/>
- Gentles, S. J., Charles, C., Ploeg, J., & McKibbin, K. (2015). Sampling in qualitative research: Insights from an overview of the methods literature. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(11), 1772-1789. <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss11/5>
- Gibbs, L., Press, F., & Wong, S. (2019). Complexity leadership theory: A framework for leading in Australian early childhood education settings. In P. Strehmel, J. Heikka, E. Hujala, J. Rodd & M. Waniganayake (Eds.), *Early education in times of change: Book research from five continents* (pp. 163-187). Verlag Barbara Budrich.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In A different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, R. (2014). The "public child" and the reluctant state? In M. Luddy & J. M. Smyth (Eds.), *Children, childhood, and Irish society 1500 to the present* (pp.145-163). Four Courts Press.
- Glass, C., & Cook, A. (2016). Leading at the top: Understanding women's challenges above the glass ceiling. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(1), 51-63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.09.003>
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Sociology Press.
- Global Childhood International. (2017). OECD's "Baby Pisa" early learning assessment. <https://www.acei.org/article/oecd-baby-pisa-early-learning-assessment/>

- Gobo, G. (2004). Sampling, representativeness and generalizability. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice* (pp. 405-426). Sage.
- Goffin, S. (2013). *Early childhood education for a new era: Leading for our profession*. Teachers College Press.
- Goffin, S. (2015). *It's time to make ECE'S promise a reality*.
<https://nieer.org/2015/08/12/its-time-to-make-eces-promise-a-reality>
- Goffin, S., & Washington, V. (2019). *Ready or not: Early care and education's leadership choices – 12 years later*. Teachers College Press.
- Gomm, R., Hammersley, M., & Foster, P. (2000). Case study and generalization. In R. Gomm, M. Hammersley, & P. Foster (Eds.), *Case study method* (pp. 98-115). Sage.
- Goodbody Economic Consultants. (2011). *Evaluation of initial implementation of síolta final report December 2011*. <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Early-Years/Siolta-Evaluation-Final-Report.pdf>
- Gordan, L. (2016). "Intersectionality", socialist feminism and contemporary activism: Musings by a second-wave socialist feminist. *Gender & History*, 28(2), 340-357. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0424.12211>
- Government of Ireland. (2015). *Children First Act 2015*.
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/36/enacted/en/pdf>
- Government of Ireland. (1996). *Partnership 2000: For inclusion, employment and competitiveness*. Stationery Office
- Government of Ireland. (2018). *First 5: A whole-of-government strategy for babies, young children, and their families 2019–2028*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/f7ca04-first-5-a-whole-of-government-strategy-for-babies-young-children-and/>
- Government of Ireland (2020). *First 5: Working together for early learning and care*.
<https://first5.gov.ie/supportorganisations>
- Graham, G. (1996, May 10). The Madonna house report. *The Irish Times*.
<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/letters/madonna-house-report-1.50034>
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 6(2), 219-247. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843\(95\)90036-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5)
- Grarock, M., & Morrissey, A.M. (2013). Teachers' perceptions of their abilities to be educational leaders in Victorian childcare settings. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 38, 4-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911303800202>

- Green, B. N., Johnson, C. D., & Adams, A. (2001). Writing narrative literature reviews for peer-reviewed journals: secrets of the trade. *Journal of Sports Chiropractic & Rehabilitation* 15(1), 5–19. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0899-3467\(07\)60142-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0899-3467(07)60142-6)
- Greenleaf, R.K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.
- Greer, G. (1999). *The whole woman*. Doubleday.
- Grieshaber, S., & McArdle, F. (2010). *The trouble with play*. McGraw-Hill Education
- Gronn, P. (2000). Distributed properties: A new architecture for leadership education. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 28(3), 317-338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X000283006>
- Gronn, P. (2000). Distributed properties: A new architecture for leadership education. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 28(3), 317-338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X000283006>
- Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *Leadership Quarterly*, 13, pp. 423-451. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(02\)00120-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00120-0)
- Gronn, P. (2008). Hybrid leadership. In Leithwood, K., Mascall, B. and Strauss, T. (Eds.), *Distributed leadership according to the evidence* (pp.17-40). Routledge.
- Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (2001). From the Individual Interview to the Interview Society. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 2-32). Sage. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412973588.n3>
- Guerin, S., Hayes, N., & McNally, S. (2018). *Research and evaluation in community, health, and social care settings: Experiences in practice*. Routledge.
- Gunter, H. (2001). *Leaders and leadership in education*. Paul Chapman.
- Gunter, H. (2011). *Leadership and the reform of education*. Policy Press.
- Gunter, H. (2016). *An intellectual history of school leadership practice and research*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Gunter, H., Courtney, S., Hall, D., & McGinity, R. (2018). School principals in neoliberal times: A case of luxury leadership? In K. Saltman & A. Means, (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of global educational reform* (pp. 113-130). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Gunter, H., & Ribbins, P. (2002). Leadership studies in education: Towards a map of the field. *Educational Management & Administration*, 30(4), 387-416. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X020304003>
- Haberman, M. (1991). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 73(4), 290-294. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171009200223>
- Hadley, F., Waniganayake, M., & Shepherd, W. (2015). Contemporary practice in professional learning and development of early childhood educators in Australia:

- Reflections on what works and why. *Professional Development in Education*, 41(2), 87-202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2014.986818>
- Hagemann, K., Jarausch, K., & Allemann-Ghionda, C. (2014). *Time policies of childcare, preschool, and primary education in Europe*. Berghahn Books.
- Hailey, J. (2001). Beyond the formulaic: Process and practice in South Asian NGOs. In B. Cooke & U. Kothari (Eds.), *Participation: The new tyranny* (pp. 88-101). Zed.
- Hallet, E. (2013). We all share a common vision and passion: Early years professionals reflect upon their leadership of practice role. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 11(3), 312-325. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X13490889>
- Halpin, H. (2020, June 20). Ombudsman expresses “grave concern” over potential abolition of Department of Children decision. *The Journal*. <https://thejournal.ie/department-of-children-scrapping-ombudsman-5121161-Jun2020/>
- Halttunen, L. (2013). *Determination of leadership in a day care organisation*. http://ilrfec.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/art_05Halttunen.pdf
- Halttunen, L. (2016). Distributing leadership in a day care setting. *Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*, 5(1), 2-18. <https://jecer.org/fi/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Halttunen-issue5-1.pdf>
- Hammersley, M. (1998). Partisanship and credibility: The case of anti-racist educational research. In P. Connolly & B. Troyna (Eds.), *Researching “race” in educational settings*. Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Hammersley, M. (2009). Against the ethicists: On the evils of ethical regulation. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(3), 211-225. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570802170288>
- Hammersley, M. (2010). Can we re-use qualitative data via secondary analysis? Notes on some terminological and substantive issues. *Sociological Research Online*, 15(1), 47-53. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.2076>
- Hammersley, M. (2017). Interview data: A qualified defence against the radical critique. *Qualitative Research*, 17(2), 173-186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794116671988>
- Hammond, S., Powell, S., & Smith, K. (2015). Towards mentoring as feminist praxis in early childhood education and care in England: Early years. *An International Research Journal*, 35 (2), 139-153. <https://doi.org/1080/09575146.2015.1025370>
- Hansen, H., Ropo, A., & Sauer, E. (2007). Aesthetic leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(6), 544-560. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.09.003>

- Hanson, C. (2009). *Toward transformative learning and a transnational feminist pedagogy: Experiences of activist-facilitators working in development* [Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia]. <https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/7103>
- Hard, L. (2004). How is leadership understood in early childhood education and care? *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education*, 11(1), 123-131. https://www.google.ie/?gws_rd=cr&ei=ZB23U_ilEIHn7AaZ2YGwDg
- Hard, L. (2006). Horizontal violence in early childhood education and care: implications for leadership enactment. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(1), 40-47. <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/australasian-journal-early-childhood/ajec-archive/2006-issues/ajec-vol-31-3-september-2006/>
- Hard, L. (2011). *Leadership in early childhood education and care: Facing the challenges and embracing new possibilities*. <https://louisehard.files.wordpress.com/2012/12/leadership-in-ecec.pdf>
- Hard, L., & Jónsdóttir, A. H. (2013). Leadership is not a dirty word: Exploring and embracing leadership in ECEC. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 21(3), 311-325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2013.814355>
- Hard, L., & O’Gorman, L. (2007). “Push-me” or “pull-you”? An opportunity for early childhood leadership in the implementation of Queensland’s early years curriculum. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 8(1), 50-60. <https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2007.8.1.50>
- Hard, L., Press, F., & Gibson, M. (2013). Doing social justice in early childhood: The potential of leadership. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 14(4), pp. 324-334. <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/70536/>
- Harding, S. (1987). *Feminism and methodology*. University Press.
- Harding, S. (1993). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity"? In L. Alcoff & E. Potter, (Eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp. 49-82). Routledge.
- Hardy, I., & Rönnerman, K. (2011). The value and valuing of continuing professional development: Current dilemmas, future directions and the case for action research. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 41(4), 461- 472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2011.625004>
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2003). *The seven principles of sustainable leadership*. https://jotamac.typepad.com/jotamacs_weblog/files/seven_principles.pdf
- Harraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599. <https://philpapers.org/archive/harskt.pdf>

- Harris, A. (2013). Distributed leadership: Friend or foe? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(5), 545-554. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213497635>
- Harris, A., Day, C., Hopkins, D., Hadfield, M., Hargreaves, A., & Chapman, C. (2003). *Effective leadership for school improvement*. Routledge Falmer.
- Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J. (2017). *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 18, (1) Art. 19, 34 paras. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Case-Study-Research%3A-Foundations-and-Methodological-Harrison-Birks/24784882aac9a156baae725382702f5e6e05a4ba>
- Hartsock, N. C. M. (1983). *Money, sex and power: Toward a feminist historical materialism*. Longman.
- Hartmann H. (1979). The unhappy marriage of marxism and feminism: Towards a more progressive union. *Capital & Class*, 3(2), 1-33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030981687900800102>
- Harvey, G. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press
- Harvey, B. (2014). *PEIN network. the case for prevention and early Intervention. promoting positive outcomes for children, families and communities*. <https://www.tcd.ie/Education/assets/documents/PEIN%20A4%20Report-April%2020...>
- Hayden, J. (1998). Directors of early childhood services: Experience, preparedness and selection. *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education*, 1, 49-61. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED408062.pdf>
- Hayes, N. (2001). Early childhood education in Ireland: Policy, provision and practice. *Administration*, 49(3), 43-67. <https://doi.org/10.21427/D7RG98>
- Hayes, N. (2007). Perspectives on the relationship between education and care in early childhood, *Research paper*. NCCA. <https://www.ncca.ie/media/1112/how-aistear-was-developed-research-papers.pdf>
- Hayes, N. (2008). The role of early childhood care and education – an anti-poverty perspective: *Paper commissioned by Combat Poverty Agency*. https://www.acpireland.com/uploads/1/5/3/7/15370432/therole-ofearlychildhoodcareandeducation_2008.pdf
- Hayes, N. (2010). Childcare? Early childhood education and care? Towards an integrated early years policy for young children in Ireland. *Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development*, 30(1), 67-78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575140903503068>

- Hayes, N. (2012). An introduction: Children at the center of practice. In M. Mhic Mhathuna & M. Taylor (Eds.), *Early childhood education & care: An introduction for students in Ireland* (xi-xviii). Gill and Macmillan.
- Hayes, N. (2013). *Early years practice: Getting it right from the start*. Gill Education.
- Hayes, N. (2016). Early childhood education and care: A neglected policy arena? In M. Murphy & F. Dukelow (Eds.), *Irish welfare in the twenty-first century* (pp.193-214). Palgrave.
- Hayes, N., & Bradley, S. (2008). Early childhood education and care in Ireland: Getting it right for children. In *CSER early childhood care and education policy seminar series*, [Seminar 2], Dublin, Ireland (24 January 2008, pp.1-32). Technological University Dublin ARROW@TU Dublin.
- Hayes, N., O'Toole, L. & Halpenny, AM. (2017) *Introducing Bronfenbrenner: A guide for practitioners and students in early years education*. Routledge
- Heck, R. H., & Hallinger, P. (2014). Modelling the longitudinal effects of school leadership on teaching and learning. *Journal of Education Administration*, 52, 653-681.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-08-2013-009>
- Heckman, J. J. (1999). Policies to foster human capital. *Research in Economics*, 54, 3-56. <https://doi.org/10.1006/reec.1999.0225>
- Heckman, J. J. (2008). Schools, skills, and synapses. *Economic Inquiry*, 46(3), 289-324.
<https://doi:10.1111/j.1465-7295.2008.00163.x>
- Heckman, J. J. (2011). *Research agenda for understanding the dynamics of skill formation in American Society*. <https://www.aeaweb.org/content/file?id=370>
- Heckman, J. J. (2015). *The economics of human potential*.
<http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/4-big-benefits-investing-earlychildhood-development>.
- Heckman, J. J. (2017). *Early education packs a high return on investment*.
<https://www.ced.org/blog/entry/comprehensive-birth-to-age-five-early-childhood-education-has-the-highest-r>
- Heikka, J. (2013). Enacting distributed pedagogical leadership in Finland: Perceptions of early childhood education stakeholders. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake & J. Rodd (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education*. Tampere University Press.
- Heikka, J. (2015). Shifting the responsibility for leadership from a positional to a distributed endeavour. In M. Waniganayake, J. Rodd & L. Gibbs (Eds.), *Thinking and learning about leadership: Early childhood research from Australia, Finland and Norway*. Community Child Care Cooperative.

- Heikka, J., & Hujala, E. (2013). Early childhood leadership through the lens of distributed leadership. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 21(4), 568-580. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1350293x.2013.845444>.
- Heikka, J., & Waniganayake, M. (2011). Pedagogical leadership from a distributed perspective within the context of early childhood education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 14(4), 499-512. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2011.577909>
- Heikka, J., Waniganayake, M., & Hujala, E. (2013). *Contextualizing distributed leadership within early childhood education: Current understandings, research evidence and future challenges*. <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi:uta-201406061624>.
- Heikka, J., Pitkäniemi, H., Kettukangas, T., & Hyttinen, T. (2019). Distributed pedagogical leadership and teacher leadership in early childhood education contexts. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1623923>
- Held, V. (1993). *Feminist morality: Transforming culture, society, and politics*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Held, V. (2006). *The ethics of care: Personal, political and global*. Oxford University Press.
- Hiebert, J., Gallimore, R., & Stigler, J. W. (2002). A knowledge base for the teaching profession: What would it look like and how can we get one? *Educational researcher*, 31(5), 3-15. <http://journals.sagepub.com.elib.tcd.ie/doi/pdf/10.3102/0013189X031005003>
- Hillard, M. (2013, May 13). RTÉ investigation uncovers mistreatment in creches. Widespread breach of regulations found in prime-time undercover investigation. *The Irish Times*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/rt%C3%A9-investigation-uncovers-mistreatment-in-creches-1.1409277>
- Hillard, M. (2015, October 15). Plan for second free preschool year “ill-thought through”. Trinity academic warns budget measure misses real investment needs of sector. *The Irish Times*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/plan-for-second-free-preschool-year-ill-thought-through-1.2393382>
- Hillman, J., & Williams, T. (2015). *Early years education and childcare Lessons from evidence and future priorities*. http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/Early_years_education_and_childcare_Nuffield_FINAL.pdf
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2010). Qualitative approaches to mixed methods practice. *Qualitative inquiry*, 16(6), 455-468. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410364611>

- Hesse-Biber, S.N. (2011). *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Piatelli, D. (2012). The feminist practice of holistic reflexivity. In S.N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed., pp. 312-326). Sage.
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (2012). Feminist research: Exploring, interrogating and transforming the Interconnections of epistemology, methodology, and method. In S.N. Hesse Biber (Ed.), *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed., pp. 2-26). Sage.
- Ho, D. (2012). The paradox of power in leadership in early childhood education. *Peabody Journal of Education: Issues of Leadership, Policy, and Organizations*, 87(2), 253-266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0161956X.2012.664479>
- Hobbs, M.K. & Stovall, R. (2015). The future of early childhood teacher education in a time of changing policy, standards and programming. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 36(2), 90-99. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2014.943617>
- Hochschild, A. & Machung, A. (1989). *The second shift: Working parents and the revolution at home*. Viking Penguin.
- Hochschild, A. (2002). Love and gold. In B. Ehrenreich & A. Hochschild (Eds.), *Global woman* (pp. 15-31). Owl,
- Hodgins, B. D., & Kummen, K. (2018). Transformative pedagogical encounters: Leading and learning in/as a collective movement. In S. Cheeseman & R. Walker (Eds.), *Pedagogies for leading practice* (Chapter 8). Routledge.
- Hogan, J., Dolan, P., & Donnelly, P. (2009). Introduction, in J. Hogan, P. Dolan & P. Donnelly (Eds), *Approaches to qualitative research: Theory and its practical application* (pp. 1-18). Oak Tree Press.
- Holohan, P. (2009). What went wrong in Ireland? *Trinity College Dublin*, 1-12. <https://www.tcd.ie/Economics/staff/phonohan/What%20went%20wrong.pdf>
- Hollingsworth, H. L., Knight-McKenna, M., & Bryan, R. (2016). Policy and advocacy concepts and processes: Innovative content in early childhood teacher education. *Early Child Development and Care*, 186(10), 1664-1674. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2015.1121252>
- Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: Flexibility, consistency, and coherence. *Qualitative Research*, 3, 345–357. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1468794103033004>

- Holstrom, N. (2002). *The socialist feminist project: A contemporary reader in theory and politics*. Monthly Review Press.
- Holmstrom, N. (2003). The socialist feminist projects. *Monthly Review*, 54(10), 235-243.
<http://monthlyreview.org/2003/01/the-socialist-feminist-project/>
- hooks, B. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black, volume 10*. South End Press.
- hooks, B. (2000). *Feminist theory: From the margin to the centre*. Pluto Press.
- Horgan, D., Martin, S., Cunneen, M., & Towler, M. (2014). early childhood care and education policy: Ireland country note'. *New Zealand Research In Early Childhood Education*, 17, 21-34.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282150699_Early_Childhood_Care_and_EducationPolicyIrelandCountryNote
- Houses of the Oireachtas. (2013). *Seanad Éireann debate – Wednesday, 6 Mar 2013*. <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/seanad/2013-03-06/13/>
- Houses of the Oireachtas. (2017). *Joint committee on children and youth affairs July 2017 report on the working conditions of the early years education and care sector 2017*.
https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_children_and_youth_affairs/reports/2017/2017-07-26_report-on-the-working-conditions-of-the-early-years-education-and-care-sector-2017_en.pdf
- Houses of the Oireachtas. (2018). *Childcare Support Act (2018)*.
www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/2017/153/ N
- Houses of the Oireachtas. (2020). *Special committee on covid-19 response debate - Tuesday, 23 Jun 2020*.
https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/special_committee_on_covid-19_response/2020-06-23/4/
- Hujala, J. (2002). Leadership in a childcare context in Finland. In V. Nivala & E. Hujala (Eds.), *Leadership in early childhood education: Cross cultural perspectives* (pp.77-136). Oulu University Press.
- Hujala, E. (2004). Dimensions of leadership in the childcare context. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 48(1), 37-40.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0031383032000149841>
- Hujala, E. (2013). Contextually defined Leadership. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake, & J. Rodd (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education* (pp. 47-60). Tampere University Press. https://ilrfec.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2014/01/art_02Hujala.pdf

- Hujala, E. & Eskelinen, M. (2013). Leadership tasks in early childhood education. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake & J. Rodd (2013) (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education* (pp.213-233). Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Hujala, E., Waniganayake, M., & Rodd, J. (2013). (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education*. Tampere University Press.
https://trepo.tuni.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/94572/leadership_tasks_in_early_childhood_education_2013.pdf?sequence=1
- Hunt, J., & Dodge, G. (2000). Leadership deja vu all over again. *Leadership Quarterly*, 11(4), 435-458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601102250803>
- Huppatz, K. (2009). Reworking Bourdieu's "capital": Feminine and female capitals in the field of paid caring work. *Sociology*, 43(1), 45-66.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038508099097>
- Inoue, C. & Kawakita, M. (2019). Japanese leadership roles in meeting social changes in early childhood education. In P. Strehmel, J. Heikka, E. Hujala, J. Rodd & M. Waniganayake (Eds.), *Early education in times of change: Book research from five continents* (pp.201-215). Verlag Barbara Budrich.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/j.ctvmd84fc.18.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A231a67c270a9689df1de74e73f3c901>
- International Labour Organization. (2014). *ILO policy guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood education personnel*. International Labour Office. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_236528.pdf.
- Inter-Departmental Group Working Group. (2015). *Future investment in childcare in Ireland*.
<https://assets.gov.ie/36162/37cc5033f3124062912a416088a48827.pdf>
- Irish Examiner. (2009, April 09). €1,000 childcare supplement scrapped. *The Irish Examiner* <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-20088795.html>
- Irish Forest Schools Association. (2020). *Irish forest schools*.
<https://irishforestschoollassociation.ie/>
- Irish Statute Books (1937). *Constitution of Ireland*.
[https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1939/ca/1/enacted/en/htmlBunrecht Na HEireann](https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1939/ca/1/enacted/en/htmlBunrecht%20Na%20HEireann).
- Irvine, A., Drew, P., & Sainsbury, R. (2013). 'Am I not answering your questions properly?' Clarification, adequacy and responsiveness in semi-structured telephone and face-to-face interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 13(1), 87-106.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112439086>

- Jacobson, L. (2019). Pre-to-3: New 'baby PISA' study to include US 5-year-olds. <https://www.k12dive.com/news/pre-to-3-new-baby-pisa-study-to-include-us-5-year-olds/549810/>
- Javornik, J., & Ingold, J. (2015). A childcare system fit for the future? In L. Foster, A. Brunton, C. Deeming & T. Haux (Eds.), *In defence of welfare 2* (pp. 75-8). Policy Press. http://www.social-policy.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/21_javornik-ingold.pdf
- Kagan, S., & Hallmark, S. (2001). Cultivating leadership in early care and education. *Child Care Information Exchange*, 7(1), pp. 7-11. <http://www.waynecc.edu/sherryg/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/Cultivating>
- Kalami, M., & Jönsson, J. (2019). *Neoliberalism, Nordic welfare states and social work: Current and future challenges*. Routledge.
- Karila, K. (2002). Contextual and situational perspectives on leadership in early education centres. In V. Nivala & E. Hujala. (Eds.), *Leadership in early childhood education: Cross cultural perspectives* (pp.59-67). University Press.
- Kastner, M., Tricco, C., Soobiah, E., Lillie, L., Perrier, T., Horsley, V., Welch, E., Cogo, J. Antony, S. & Straus, E. (2012). What is the most appropriate knowledge synthesis method to conduct a review? protocol for a scoping review. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 12(114), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-12-114>
- Katz, R. L. (1955). Skills of an effective administrator. *Harvard Business Review*, 33(1), 33–42. <https://hbr.org/1974/09/skills-of-an-effective-administrator>
- Keenan, O. (1996, May 10). The Madonna House report. *Irish Times*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/the-madonna-house-report-1.47778>
- Kemmis, S. (1989). Improving schools and teaching through educational action research. *Singapore Journal of Education* (Special Issue), 6–30. <https://repository.nie.edu.sg/bitstream/10497/4105/1/1989SpecialIssue.pdf#page=9>
- Kemmis, S. (2009). Action research as a practice-based practice. *Educational Action Research*, 17(3), 463-474. https://www.infor.uva.es/~amartine/MASUP/Kemmis_2007.pdf
- Kemmis, S. (2010). What is to be done? The place of action research. *Educational Action Research*, 18(4), 417-427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2010.524745>
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Deakin University Press.

- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory action research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 567-605). Sage.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2005). Participatory action research: Communicative action and the public sphere. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 559-604). Sage.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014). *The action research planner: Doing critical participatory action research*. Springer.
- Kempster, S., Jackson, B., & Conroy, M. (2011). Leadership as purpose: Exploring the role of purpose in leadership practice. *Leadership*, 7(3), 317-334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715011407384>
- Kennedy, E. (1970). *Reformatory and industrial schools system report 1970*.
<https://www.lenus.ie/bitstream/handle/10147/77793/Reformatory&IndusSchoolSys.pdf;jsessionid=A16D75478621E3B5D6CC84EF5B00E664?sequence=5>
- Kennedy, L., & Lapidus, J. (1980). Review of Capitalist *patriarchy and the case for socialist feminism*, by Z. Eisenstein. *Feminist Studies*, 6, 571.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3177483A>
- Kiernan, G., & Walsh, T. (2004). The changing nature of early childhood care and education in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies*, 23(2), 1-18.
<https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/5517/1/TW-Childhood-Ireland.pdf>
- Kiersey, R., & Hayes, N. (2010). The discursive construction of “children” and “rights” In Irish early childhood policy. Paper presented at the 20th EECERA Conference, *Knowledge and voice in early childhood*, Birmingham, UK, September 6th, 2010.
<https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=csercon>
- Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2000). Rethinking critical theory and qualitative research. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 279-314). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Klevering, N., & McNae, R. (2018). *Making sense of leadership in early childhood education: Tensions and complexities between concepts and practices*.
https://www.exeley.com/exeley/journals/journal_of_educational_leadership_Policy_andpract/33/1/pdf/10.21307_jelpp-2018-002.pdf
- Klein, J. (2017). Steps to promote open and authentic dialogue between teachers and school management. *School Leadership & Management*, 37(4), 391-412.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2017.1325353>
- Knowles, M.S. (1970). *Modern practice of adult education*. The Association Press.
- Knowles, M. S. (1984). *Andragogy in action*. Josey-Bass Publishers.

- Kram, K.E. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal*, 26 (4), 608-25. www.zdruzenje-manager.si/si/file/download/.../phases_of_the_mentor%20KRAM.P...
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kathy_Kram/publication/277548649_Phase...
- Kram, K. E. (1985). *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life*. Scott Foresman
- Kuhn, D. A. (1999). Developmental model of critical thinking. *Educational Researcher*, 28(2),16-46. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X028002016>
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews*. SAGE Publications.
- Langdon, F. J., Alexander, P.A., Farquhar, S., Tesar, M., Courtney, M. R., & Palmer, M. (2016). Induction and mentoring in early childhood educational organizations: Embracing the complexity of teacher learning in contexts. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 57,150-160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.03.016>.
- Larrivee, B. (2000). Transforming teacher practice: Becoming the critically reflective teacher. *Reflective Practice*, 1, 293-307.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14623940020025561>
- Lauckner, H., Paterson, M., & Krupa, T. (2012). Using constructivist case study methodology to understand community development processes: Proposed methodological questions to guide the research process. *The Qualitative Report*, 17(13), 1-22. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol17/iss13/1>
- Langdon, F. J., Alexander, P.A., Farquhar, S., Tesar, M., Courtney, M. R., & Palmer, M. (2016). Induction and mentoring in early childhood educational organizations: Embracing the complexity of teacher learning in contexts. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 57,150-160. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.03.016>.
- Lee, C., & Zemke, R. (1993). The search for spirit in the workplace. *Training*, 30, 21-28.
<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/52071078/the-search-for-spirit-in-the-workplace-strandtheoryorg>
- Lee, R. (2008). David Riesman and the sociology of the interview. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 49(2), 285-307. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40220069>
- Leithwood, K., & Mascall, B. (2008). Collective leadership effects on student achievement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(4), 529-561. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08321221>
- Leithwood, K., Maschall, B., & Strauss, T. (2010). *Distributed leadership according to the evidence*. Routledge.

- Lennie, J. (2006). Increasing the rigour and trustworthiness of participatory evaluations: Learnings from the field. *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 6(1), 27-35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1035719X0600600105>
- Lenz Taguchi, K. (2009). *Going beyond the theory/practice divide in early childhood education: Introducing an intra-active pedagogy*. Routledge.
- Lenz Taguchi, H. (2011). Investigating learning, participation and becoming in early childhood practices with a relational materialist approach. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 1(1), 36- 50. <https://doi.org/10.2304/gsch.2011.1.1.36>
- Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues*, 2, 34-46. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1946.tb02295.x>
- Liebovich, B., & Matoba Adler, S. (2009). Teaching advocacy in early years initial teacher education programmes. *Forum*, 51(1), 25-34. https://research.gold.ac.uk/3897/1/EDU_Liebovich_2009a.pdf
- Lillis, D., & Morgan, J. (2012). Irish education financial crisis. *Weiterbildung*, 4, 1-8. <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=scschcomart>
- Leadership for Inclusion (LINC). (2016). *The linc programme*. <https://lincprogramme.ie/>
- Lillis, D., & Morgan, J. (2012). Irish education financial crisis. *Weiterbildung*, 4, 1-8. <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=scschcomart>
- LINC Consortium. (2019). *Interim evaluation of the leadership for inclusion in the early years (linc) programme*. <https://lincprogramme.ie/research>
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, EG. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
- Lindon, J., & Lindon, L. (2012). *Leadership and early years professionalism: Linking theory and practice*. McGraw Hill.
- Locher, B., & Prugl, E. (2001). Feminism and constructivism: Worlds apart or sharing the middle ground? *International Studies Quarterly*, 45(1), 111-129. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00184>
- Löfgren, H. (2015). A noisy silence about care: Swedish preschool teachers' talk about documentation. *Early Years*, 36(1), 4-16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2015.1062744>
- Lorber, J. (2012). *Gender inequality: Feminist theories and politics*. (5th edn.) Oxford University Press.
- Lovell, T. (2000). Thinking feminism with and against Bourdieu. *Feminist Theory*, 1(1), 11-32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14647000022229047>

- Loxley, A. (2010). Lecture 4: *Introduction to educational research methods*. Trinity College Dublin.
- Luft, R. E., & Ward, J. (2009). Toward an intersectionality just out of reach: Confronting challenges to intersectional practice. In V. P. Demos & M. T. Segal (Eds.), *Perceiving gender locally, globally and intersectionally* (pp. 9-37). Emerald Group Publishing.
- Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. Macmillan Press.
- Lukes, S. (2005). *Power: A radical view*. (2nd ed.). Red Globe Press.
- Lumby, J. (2013). Distributed leadership: the uses and abuses of power. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(5), 581-597. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213489288>
- Lumby, J. (2019). Distributed leadership and bureaucracy. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 47(1), 5-19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143217711190>
- Lynch, K. (2009). Affective equality: Who cares? <https://www.theopencollege.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Lynch-2010-Affective-Equality.pdf>
- Lynch, K. (2010). Carelessness: A hidden doxa of higher education. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, 9(1), 54-67. <https://doi.org/1177/1474022209350104>
- Lynch, K. (2014). New managerialism: The impact on education. *Concept*, 5(3), 1-11. <http://concept.lib.ed.ac.uk/article/view/2421/3544>
- Lynch, K. (2015, February 13th). *Care, gender and justice: Affective inequality and contributive justice*. [Keynote address]. Social Care and Social Policy Conference: Seeking Social Justice in an Era of Austerity and Beyond. Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). <https://www.dit.ie/newsandevents/news/archive2015/news/title107603en.html>
- Lynch, K., Baker, J., & Lyons, M. (2009). *Affective equality: Love, care and injustice*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lynch, K., Baker, J., Lyons, M., Cantillon, S., & Walsh, J. (2016). *Affective equality: Love, care and injustice*. Palgrave McMillian.
- Lynch, K., Grummell, B., & Devine, D. (2012). *New managerialism in education: commercialization, carelessness, and gender*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lynch, K., & Grummell, B. (2018). *New managerialism as an organisational form of neoliberalism*. <http://doi.10.4324/9781315111742-12>

- Lynch, K., Ivancheva, M., O'Flynn, M., Keating, K., & O'Connor, M. (2020). The care ceiling in higher education. *Irish Educational Studies*, 39(2), 157-174.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2020.1734044>
- MacBeath, J. (2010). Distributed leadership: Paradigms, policy and paradox. In K. Leithwood, B. Mascall, & T. Strauss (Eds.), *Distributed leadership according to the evidence* (pp. 41-57). Routledge.
- Macfarlane, K., & Cartmel, J. (2012). Circles of change revisited: Building leadership, scholarship and professional identity in the children's services sector. *Professional Development in Education*, 38(5), 845-861. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2012.680603>
- MacNaughton, G. (2005). *Doing Foucault in early childhood studies: Applying post-structural ideas (contesting early childhood)*. Routledge.
- McCord, R. (2013). *The mother and child scheme: The role of Church and State*. <https://www.theirishstory.com/2013/06/19/the-controversy-of-womens-health-the-mother-and-child-scheme…>
- Madden, R. (2012). *For love or money: Exploring the professional identity of the early childhood care and education sector in Ireland today*. [Master's in research Marymmaculate College].
[http://dspace.mic.ul.ie/bitstream/10395/1532/2/Madden,%20R.\(2012\)For%20Love%20or%20Money%3A%20Exploring%20the%20professional%20identity](http://dspace.mic.ul.ie/bitstream/10395/1532/2/Madden,%20R.(2012)For%20Love%20or%20Money%3A%20Exploring%20the%20professional%20identity)
- Mahon, E., & Bailey, J. (2015). The incomplete revolution: Development of childcare policies in Ireland. In D. Kutsar and M. Kuronen (Eds.), *Local welfare policy making in European cities* (pp.149-160). Springer International.
- Male, T., & Palaiologou, I. (2015). Pedagogical leadership in the 21st century: Evidence from the field. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(2), 214-231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213494889>
- Male, T. & Palaiologou, I. (2016). Pedagogical leadership in action: Two case studies in English schools. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 19(2), 1-16.
<https://doi.org/1080/13603124.2016.117431>
- Marjanen, P., Spolander, G., & Aulanko, T. (2018). Neoliberalism, welfare state and social work practice in Finland. In M. Kamali & J.H H. Jönsson (Eds.), *Neoliberalism, nordic welfare states and social work: Current and future challenges* (pp.79-91). Routledge.
https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/143704/Marjanen_Spolander_Aulanko.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

- Marshall, M. N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice*, 13(6), 522-526.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/13.6.522>
- Marshall, J. (2001). Self-reflective inquiry practice. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *Handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice* (pp.433-439). London: Sage.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, B. R. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage.
- Martin, J., Nuttall, J., Henderson, L., & Wood, E. (2020). Educational Leaders and the project of professionalisation in early childhood education. *Australia, International Journal of Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101559>.
- Martin, S. R., Innis, B. D., & Ward, R. (2017). Social class, leaders and leadership: A critical review and suggestions for development. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 18(1), 49-4.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.08.001>. Epub
- Massey, D. (2013). Vocabularies of the economy. *Soundings*, 54, 9-22.
https://www.newformations.co.uk/sites/default/files/s54_02massey.pdf
- Mastracci, S. (2004). *Breaking out of the pink-collar ghetto: Policy solutions for non-college women*. Routledge.
- McArdle, A. (2017). Towards the affordable childcare scheme an opportunity to improve quality of provision for our youngest children. In B. Mooney (Ed), *Ireland's yearbook of education 2017-2018* (pp.89-94). Education Matters.
<https://educationmatters.ie/downloads/YB20172018-Early%20Childhood.pdf>
- McCall, L. (1992). Does gender fit? Bourdieu, feminism and conceptions of social order. *Theory and Society*, 21, 837-867.
<https://stonecenter.gc.cuny.edu/files/1992/12/mccall-does-gender-fit-feminism-bourdieu-and-conceptions-of-social-order-1992.pdf>
- McCleskey, J. A. (2014). Situational, transformational, and transactional leadership and leadership development. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly*, 5(4), 117-130.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272353199_Situational_transformational_and_transactional_leadership_and_leadership_development
- McCurry, C. (2019, July 25). Minister 'disgusted' at treatment of children in creches: An undercover investigation into the standard of care at Dublin's Hyde & Seek childcare chain revealed how children were roughly handled. *The Irish Independent*.
<https://www.independent.ie/breaking-news/irish-news/minister-disgusted-at-treatment-of-children-in-creches-38345827.html>
- McDonald, B. (2009). *An introduction to sociology in Ireland*. Gill and Macmillan.

- McDowall Clark, R., & Murray, J. (2012). *Reconceptualizing leadership in the early years*. Open University Press.
- McGinnity, F., Russell, H., & Murray, A. (2015). *Growing up in Ireland: Non-parental childcare and child cognitive outcomes at age 5*. The Stationery Office.
- McKeown, K., Haase, T., & Pratschke, J. (2015). Determinants of child outcomes in a cohort of children in the free pre-school year in Ireland, 2012/2013. *Irish Educational Studies*, 34(3), 245-263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2015.1065430>
- McLachlan, C., Flerer, M., & Edwards, S. (2013b). *Early childhood curriculum: Planning, assessment and implementation*. Cambridge University Press.
- MacNaughton, G. (2005). *Doing Foucault in early childhood studies: Applying post-structural ideas*. Routledge.
- McRobbie, A. (1982). The politics of feminist research: Between talk, text and action. *Feminist Review*, 12(1), 46-57. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.1982.29>
- Meindl, J., Ehrlich, S., & Dukerich, J. (1985). The romance of leadership. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 30(1), 78-102. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392813>
- Menter, I., Elliott D., Hulme, M., Lowden, K. (2011). *A guide to practitioner research in education*. Sage.
- Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study application in education*. (2nd ed.) Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S.B. (2001). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Mevawalla, Z., & Hadley, F. (2012). The advocacy of educators: Perspectives from early childhood. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 37(1), 74-80. <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.elib.tcd.ie/ehost/detail/detail?vid=4&sid=911fb5e4-8c3d-4aa9-83cb->
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Miles, M., Huberman, M., & Salanda, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods source book*. Sage.
- Miller, L., & Hevey, D. (Eds.). (2012). *Policy issues in the early years*. Sage Publications.
- Mitchell, T. R., Biglan, A., Oncken, G. R., & Fiedler, F. E. (1970). The contingency model: criticism and suggestions. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 13(3), 253-267. <https://doi.org/10.5465/254963>

- Mockler, N. & Groundwater-Smith, S. (2009) *Teacher professional learning in an age of compliance: Mind the gap*. Springer.
- Modise, M. R. (2019). Pedagogical leadership in early childhood development: A means for quality practices through professional training. In *Glocal Education in Practice: Teaching, Researching, and Citizenship: BCES Conference Books*, 17(3), 117-123. The Bulgarian Comparative Education Society.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED596943.pdf>
- Moen, K. M., & Granrusten, P.T. (2013). Distribution of leadership functions in early childhood centers in Norway following organisational changes. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake & J. Rodd (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education* (pp.79-96). Tampere University Press.
- Moloney, M. (2010). Professional identity in early childhood care and education: Perspectives of pre-school and infant Teachers. *Irish Education Studies*, 29, 167–187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323311003779068>
- Moloney, M. (2015). A vocation or a career: The perspectives of BA. ECEC graduates about accessing employment and working in the early years sector in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies*, 34(4), 325-339.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2015.1119705>
- Moloney, M., & Pope, J. (2013). Where to now for early childhood care and education (ECCE) graduates? A study of the experiences of Irish BA ECCE degree graduates. *International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 3(13), 1-11.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2013.782327>
- Moloney, M. (2016). *The affordable childcare scheme: Parental panacea, or pedagogical paradox*. ResearchGate, (1-13).
www.researchgate.net/publication/309864391
- Moloney, M. (2017). Towards the affordable childcare scheme: An opportunity to improve quality of provision for our youngest children. In *Education Matters Yearbook 2017-2018* (pp.89-94).
- Moloney, M., & Pettersen, J. (2017). *Early childhood education management: Insights into business practice and leadership*. Routledge.
- Moloney, M., & McCarthy, E. (2018). *Intentional leadership for effective inclusion in early childhood education and care: Exploring core themes and strategies*. Routledge.
- Moloney, M., Sims, M., Rothe, A., Buettner, C., Sonter, L., Waniganayake, M., Opazo, M.J., Calder, P., & Girlich, S. (2019). Resisting neoliberalism: professionalisation of

- early childhood education and care. *International Journal of Elementary Education*, 8(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijeedu.20190801.11>
- Montessori, M. (1949). *The absorbent mind*. The Theosophical Publishing House.
- Montessori, M. (1992). *The secret of childhood*. Random House Inc.
- Morel, N., Palier, B., & Palme, J. (2012). *Towards a social investment state? Ideas, policies and challenge*. Policy Press.
- Morgan, M. & Rochford, S. (2017). *Coaching and mentoring for frontline practitioners*. Centre for Effective Services. http://wwwMolonet.aleffectiveservices.org/downloads/CoachMentorLitReview_Final_14.0...
- Mosca, I., & Wright, R. E. (2019). The long-term consequences of the Irish marriage bar, *IZA Discussion Papers, No. 12301, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)*. <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/196799/1/dp12301.pdf>
- Moss, P. (2007). Bringing politics into the nursery: Early childhood education as a democratic practice. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 15(1), 5-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13502930601046620>
- Moss, P. (2013). Colloquium beyond the investment narrative. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 14(4), 370-372. www.wwwords.co.uk/CIEC 37. <http://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2013.14.4.370>
- Moss, P. (2014). *Transformative change and real utopias in early childhood education*. Routledge.
- Moss, P. (2015a). *From "beyond quality" to "ethics and politics in early childhood education"*. (Slide set). https://www.bag-bek.de/fileadmin/user_upload/BAG-BEK_Herbst_2015_Peter_Moss.pdf
- Moss, P. (2015b). Time for more storytelling. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 23(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2014.991092>
- Moss, P. (2016). Foreword, in W. Parnell, W., & JM. Iorio (Eds.), *Disrupting early childhood education research: Imagining new possibilities*, (pp. viii-xvi). Routledge.
- Moss, P. (2017). *Power and resistance in early childhood education: From dominant discourse to democratic experimentalism*. *Sciendo*, 8(3), 11-32. <https://content.sciendo.com/view/journals/jped/8/1/article-p11.xml?language=en>
[https://content.sciendo.com/configurable/contentpage/journals/\\$002fjped\\$002f8\\$002f1\\$002farticle-p11.xml](https://content.sciendo.com/configurable/contentpage/journals/$002fjped$002f8$002f1$002farticle-p11.xml)
- Moss, P., & Dahlberg, G. (2008). Beyond quality in early childhood education and care – languages of evaluation. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers' Work*, 5(1), 03-12. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.551.1316&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

- Moss, P. & Urban, M. (2010). *Democracy and experimentation: Two fundamental values for education*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED534650.pdf>
- Muijs, D., Aubrey, C., Harris, A., & Briggs, M. (2004). How do they manage? A review of leadership in early childhood. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 2(2), 157-169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X04042974>
- Murray, J., & McDowall Clark, R. (2013). Reframing leadership as a participative pedagogy: The working theories of early years professionals, *Early Years*, 33(3), 289-301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2013.781135>
- Mudge, S. (2014). Critiquing a shadow. In B. Jessop & W. Davies, *Roundtable: The limits of neoliberalism* (pp. 86-90). <https://www.academia.edu/8670938>
- Murphy, R. (2015). Early childhood education in Ireland: Change and challenge. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 8(2), 287-300. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1085883.pdf>
- Murray, J., & Palaiologou, I. (2018). Young children's emotional experiences. *Early Child Development and Care*, 188(7), 875-878. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2018.1449839>
- Morris, K. (2016). *The posthuman child. Educational transformation through philosophy with picturebooks*. Routledge.
- Nash, J.C. (2008). Re-Thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, 89(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2008.4>
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (NCCA). (2007). *Early childhood: How aistear was developed: [Research papers]*. <https://ncca.ie/media/1112/how-aistear-was-developed-research-papers.pdf>
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (2009). *Aistear the early childhood curriculum framework*. <https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/introduction/full-print-version-aistear/https://ncca.ie/media/1112/how-aistear-was-developed-research-papers.pdf>
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. (2015). Aistear siolta practice guide. <https://www.aistearsiolta.ie/en/>
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE). (2014). Delivery for students with special educational needs a better and more equitable way. https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Allocating_resources_1_5_14_Web_accessible_version_FINAL.pdf
- Network for Educational Action Research in Ireland (NEARI). (2016). *Network for educational action research in Ireland*. <https://www.alarassociation.org/>

- Neylon, G. (2014). An analysis of Irish pre-school practice and pedagogy using early childhood environmental four curricular subscales. *Irish Educational Studies*, 33(1), 99-116. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03323315>
- Neylon, G. (2012). An analysis of the free pre-school year in early childhood care and education (ECCE) scheme – from a practitioner’s perspective. *Department of Politics and Public Administration University of Limerick*. http://icep.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/icep12_submission_19.pdf
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2011). *Te Whariki: The early years framework*. <http://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/ece-curriculum/te-whariki/>
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2017). Te Whāriki He whāriki mātauranga mōngā mokopuna o Aotearoa early childhood curriculum. <https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Early-Childhood/ELS-Te-Whariki-Early-Childhood-Curriculum-ENG-Web.pdf>
- Nicholson, J.M., & Kroll, L. (2015). Developing leadership for early childhood professionals through oral inquiry: Strengthening equity through making particulars visible in dilemmas of practice. *Early Child Development and Care*, 185(1), 17-43. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2014.903939>
- Nicholson, J., & Maniates, H. (2016). Recognizing postmodern intersectional identities in leadership for early childhood. *Early Years*, 36(1), 66-80. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2015.1080667>
- Nicholson, J., Kuhl, K., Maniates, H., Lin. B., & Bonetti, S. (2018). A review of the literature on leadership in early childhood: Examining epistemological foundations and considerations of social justice. *Early Child Development and Care*, 190(2), 91-122. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2018.1455036>
- Nitecki, E., & Warmouth, H. (2017). Global trends in early childhood practice: Working within the limitations of the global education reform movement. *Global Education Review*, 4(3), 1-13. <https://pd5e3bdfs.semanticscholar.org/ea35/08c50ec72712637949d87f0d4b537bd.pdf>
- Nitecki, E., & Warmouth, H. (2019). Policy futures in education. Call for proposals. (Un)intended consequences in current ECEC policies: Revealing and examining hidden agendas. <https://journals.sagepub.com/pb-assets/cmscontent/PFE/PFE%20CfP%20-%20Current%20ECEC%20Policies-1551784374597.pdf>

- Nivala, V. (1998). Theoretical perspectives on educational leadership. In E. Hujala & A. Puroila, (Eds.). (1998). *Towards understanding leadership in early childhood context: Cross-cultural perspectives*. Oulu University Press.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED438065.pdf>
- Nivala, V. (2002). Leadership in general: Leadership in theory. In V. Nivala & E. Hujala (Eds.), *Leadership in early childhood education: Cross cultural perspectives* (pp.13-23). Oulu University Press
- Nivala, V., & Hujala, E. (2002). *Leadership in early childhood education: Cross cultural perspectives*. Oulu University Press.
- Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing, 18*, 34-35. <http://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2015-102054>
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools*. Teachers College Press.
- Noddings, N. (2003). *Happiness and education*. Cambridge University Press
- Nolan, A., & Raban, B. (2015). *Theories into practice understanding and rethinking our work with young children*. https://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/shop/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/SUND606_sample.pdf
- Nolan, A., Cartmel, J., & Macfarlane, K. (2012). Thinking about practice in integrated children's services: Considering transdisciplinary. *Children Australia, 37*(3), 94-99. <http://doi.org/10.1017/cha.2012.27>
- Nolan, G. K. (2015). *Leadership in early childhood education and care: Perceptions, practises, and possibilities*. [Master's thesis. Trinity College Dublin].
- Nolan, G.K. (2020). Early childhood education and CARE: Won't somebody think of the children? *Policy Futures in Education, 18*(6), 772-786.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210320922071>
- Nolan, G.K. (Forthcoming). Women and leadership in early childhood care and education: Sealed and classified - revealed and recognized. In D. Donsky & N. Aoudeh (Eds.), *Women in educational leadership: Critical perspectives*.
- Nolan, G.K. (Peer review). Leadership in Irish early childhood education and care: In pursuit of purpose and possibilities. In D. R. Modise, N.C. Phatudi, T. Phala, J. Heikka, E. Fonsén & M. Boe, (Eds.), *Global perspectives of leadership in early childhood education and care*. Helsinki University Press.

- Nowell, S. J., Norris., J.M. White, D. E., & Moules, J.N. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16, 1-13.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/>
- Noyes, J., & Lewin, S. (2011). Extracting qualitative evidence. In J. Noyes, A. Booth, K. Hannes, A. Harden, J. Harris, S. Lewin & C. Lockwood (Eds.), *Supplementary guidance for inclusion of qualitative research in cochrane systematic reviews of interventions. version 1*. Cochrane Collaboration Qualitative Methods Group.
<http://cqrmg.cochrane.org/supplemental-handbook-guidance>
- Nivala, V. (2002). Leadership in general: Leadership in theory. In V. Nivala & E. Hujala (Eds.), *Leadership in early childhood education: Cross cultural perspectives* (pp.13-23). Oulu University Press
- O'Brien, Z., & Prangnell, M. (2015). *Childhood social, legal & health studies*. Gill & MacMillan.
- O'Connor, M. (2012). The development of early childhood education in Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in N. Hayes (Ed), *Early childhood education: An introductory text* (pp.1-12). Gill & Macmillan
- O'Donoghue Hynes, B. (2012). *Designed to benefit whom? An evaluation of Irish early childhood education and care policy using policy design theory*. [Doctoral Thesis, Dublin Institute of Technology]. <https://doi:10.21427/D78K5F>
- Oireachtas. (2009). Dáil Éireann debate – Tuesday, 26 May 2009.
<https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2009-05-26/31/>
- Oireachtas Library & Research Service. (2020). *L&RS Note: Public provision of early childhood education: an overview of the international evidence*.
https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/libraryResearch/2020/2020-06-16_l-rs-note-public-
- Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA). (2007). *Value for money review of the equal opportunities childcare programme*.
<https://assets.gov.ie/34532/bd9329546c8f49aba2ed7e810cec1c75.pdf>
- Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA). (2012). *Funding childcare in Ireland*. <https://studylib.net/doc/17843937/funding-childcare-in-ireland-darragh-doherty-office-of-th...>
- Office of the Minister for Children (OMC). (2013). *Better outcomes brighter future*. The national policy framework for children & young people 2014 – 2020. Stationery Office. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/775847-better-outcomes-brighter-futures/>

- Oke, M., Hayes, N., Lambert, J., & Filipovic, K. (2019). Burnout and work-life experience of Irish early childhood educators - Implications for policy and practice. In: 29th Annual Conference of the *European Early Childhood Education Research Association*, 20-23 August 2019, Thessaloniki, Greece.
- Olsen, D., & Snell, L. (2006). *Assessing proposals for preschool and kindergarten: Essential information for parents, taxpayers and policymakers*. Reason Foundation. <https://reason.org/wp-content/uploads/files/b7abd1fc30bdf33cd824db3b102c4db0.pdf>
- O'Reilly, D., & Reed, M. (2010). Leaderism: An evolution of managerialism in UK public service reform. *Public Administration*, 88(4), 960-78. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.2010.01864.x>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2001). *Starting strong: Early childhood education and care*. OECD. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/starting-strong_9789264192829-en#page1
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2003). *Babies and bosses – reconciling work and family life (Volume 2): Austria, Ireland and Japan*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264104204-en>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2004). *Financial management and governance in HEIs: Ireland*. <https://www.oecd.org/ireland/33643745.PDF>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2006). *Starting strong II: Early childhood education and care*. OECD. <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/37417240.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2008). Distribution of school leadership pointers for policy development. <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/45137513.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2009). *Improving school leadership, the toolkit*. <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/44339174.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2010). *Enhancing quality in early childhood education and care*. <https://www.oecd.org/education/school/49322232.pdf>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2011). *How can we do better for our families? Issues, outcomes, policy objectives and recommendations.*: <https://www.oecd.org/els/family/47701128.pdf>

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2012). *Starting strong III - A quality toolbox for early childhood education and care*.
<http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/startingstrongiiiqualitytoolboxforearlychildhoodeducationandcare.htm>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2014). *Unpaid care work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes*.
https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2015a). *Starting strong IV: Monitoring quality in early childhood education*.
<https://www.oecd.org/publications/starting-strong-iv-9789264233515-en.htm>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2015b). *OECD economic surveys Ireland*. https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-surveys-ireland-2015_eco_surveys-irl-2015-en#page1
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2015c). *Schools for 21st-century learners: strong leaders, confident teachers, innovative approaches*.
<https://www.oecd.org/.../schools-for-21st-century-learners-9789264231191-en.htm>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2016). *OECD Reviews of School Resources: Uruguay 2016*.
<https://www.oecdilibrary.org/docserver/9789264265530en.pdf?expires=1594211459&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=556FBD2AF929D353527B00A0EB6C124A>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2017). *Starting Strong V: Transitions from early childhood education and care to primary education*.
 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2018). *Family-friendly policies a key driver of economic growth*. <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/family-friendly-policies-a-key-driver-of-economic-growth.htm>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2019a). *Good practice for good jobs in early childhood education and care: Eight policy measures from OECD countries*. <https://oe.cd/pub/ecec2019>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2019b). *Family data base SF2.1: fertility rates*.
https://www.oecd.org/els/family/SF_2_1_Fertility_rates.pdf
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2019c). *Leadership for quality early childhood education and care*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/6e563bae-en>

- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2020a). *International early learning and child well-being study*. <http://www.oecd.org/education/school/early-learning-and-child-well-being-study/>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2020b). *TALIS 2018 results (volume ii): Teachers and school leaders as valued professionals*.
<https://www.oecd.org/.../talis-2018-results-volume-ii-19cf08df-en.htm>
- Osgood, J. (2005). Who cares? The classed nature of childcare. *Gender and Education*, 17(3), 289-303. <https://doi.10.1080/09540250500145098>
- Osgood, J. (2006). Deconstructing professionalism in early childhood education: Resisting the regulatory gaze. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 7(1), 5-14. <https://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2006.7.1.5>
- Osgood, J. (2010). Critically reflective emotional professional. *Early Years*, 30(2), 119-133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2010.490905>
- Osgood, J. (2012). Time to get down to business? the responses of early years practitioners to entrepreneurial approaches to professionalism. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 2(1) 5-24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1476718X0421001>
- Osgood, J., & Robinson, K. H. (2017). Celebrating pioneering and contemporary feminist approaches to studying gender in early childhood. In K. Smith, K. Alexander, & S. Campbell (Eds.), *Feminism(s) in early childhood: Using feminist theories in research and practice* (pp. 35-47). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3057-4_4
- Ó Buachalla, S. (1985). Church and state in Irish education in this Century. *European Journal of Education*, 20(4), 351-359. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1503339>
- O'Sullivan, E. (2009). Residential child welfare in Ireland, 1965-2008: An outline of policy, legislation and practice: A paper prepared for the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse. (*The Ryan Report*) (Vol 4, Chapter 4).
<http://www.childabusecommission.ie/rpt/pdfs/CICA-VOL4-10.pdf>
- O'Sullivan, L., & Ring, E. (2016). The importance of including the child's voice in the transition process: Signposts from a national evaluation of concepts of school readiness in Ireland. *Children's Research Digest*, 3(2), 37-44.
<https://dspace.mic.ul.ie/handle/10395/2386>
- O'Sullivan, L. & Ring, E. (2018). Play as learning: Implications for educators and parents from findings of a national evaluation of school readiness in Ireland. *International Journal of Play*, 7(3), 266-289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21594937.2018.1532720>
- Ozcan, P., Han, S., & Graebner, M. (2017). Single cases: The what, why and how.

- In R. A. Mir, & S. Jain, (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to qualitative research in organization studies*. Routledge, (pp. 92-112).
- Ozga, J. (2000). Leadership in education: The problem, not the solution. *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education*, 21(3), 355-61. <https://doi.10.1080/713661163>
- Paananen, M., Kumpulainen, K., & L. Lipponen. (2015). Quality drift within a narrative of investment in early childhood education. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 23(5), 690-705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2015.1104043>
- Pakulski, J., & Waters, M. (1996). The reshaping and dissolution of social class in advanced society. *Theory and Society*, 25(5), 667-691. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/658079>
- Palestini, R. (2012). *Educational leadership as a moral science*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Park, JJ., O'Brien, L., Roe, J., Ward Thompson, C, & Mitchell R. (2011). The natural outdoors and health: assessing the value and potential contribution of secondary public data sets in the UK to current and future knowledge. *Health Place*, 17(1), 269-79. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2010.11.005>.
- Parliament, UK. (2015). *Select committee on affordable childcare report*. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldselect/ldaffchild/117/11703.htm>
- Paschal, C., & Bertram, T. (2020). *Early years workforce review: A joint statement by Prof. Chris Pascal and Prof. Tony Bertram*. <http://www.crec.co.uk/announcements/EY-workforce-review-2020-statement>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*: Sage.
- Pavia, L., Nissen, H., Hawkins, C., Monroe, M. E., & Filimon-Demyen, D.(2003). Mentoring early childhood professionals. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 17(2), 250-260. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568540309595014>
- Peck, J. (2013). Explaining (with) neoliberalism. *Territory, politics, governance*, 1(2), 132-157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2013.785365>
- Pembroke, S. (2017, January 17). *How policy is driving precarious work for professionals in childcare and higher education*. <https://www.tasc.ie/blog/2017/01/17/how-policy-is-driving-precarious-work-for-professi/>
- Penn, H. (2011). *Quality In early childhood services - An international perspective*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Pence, A. (2017). Baby PISA: Dangers that can arise when foundations shift. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, 41(3), 54-58. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319298454_Baby_PISA_Dangers_that_can_Arise_when_Foundations_Shift
- Petticrew, M., & Roberts, H. (2006). *Systematic reviews in the social sciences: A practical guide*. Blackwell Publishing.

- Pierson, P. (1993). When effects become cause. Policy feedback and political change. *World Politics*, 45(4), 595-628.
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2b31/91b6ecbfdbec512e504d506eb3015570c633.pdf>
- Pierson, P. (2000). Increasing returns, path dependence, and the study of political science. *American Political Science Review*, 94, 251-257.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2586011>
- Pierson, P. (2004). Increasing returns, path dependence, and the study of politics. *The American Political Science Review*, 49(2), 251-267. http://www.criticaljuncture.net/uploads/2/1/9/9/21997192/pierson_increasing_returns.pdf
- Piff, P. K., Kraus, M.W., Côté, S., Cheng, B.H., & Keltner, D. (2010) Having less, giving more: The influence of social class on prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99(5), 771-84. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020092>
- Pillow, W. S. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure: Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16, 175-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000060635>
- Philipson, I. J., & Hansen, K.V. (1989). *Women, class, and the feminist imagination: A socialist-feminist reader (Women in the political economy)*. Temple University press.
- Pobal. (2017). *Early years sectors profile 2016/2017*.
<https://www.pobal.ie/app/uploads/2018/06/Early-Years-Sector-Profile-Report-2016-2017.pdf>
- Pobal. (2018). *Early years sectors profile 2017/2018*.
<https://www.pobal.ie/app/uploads/2018/11/Early-Years-Sector-Profile-Report-2017-2018.pdf>
- Pobal. (2020). *Pobal annual survey of the early years sector 2018-2019*.
<https://www.pobal.ie/app/uploads/2019/12/Annual-Early-Years-Sector-Profile-Report-AEYSPR-2018-19.pdf>
- Pobal. (2021). *Pobal annual survey of the early years sector 2019-2020*.
<https://www.earlychildhoodireland.ie/annual-early-years-sector-profile-report-2019-2020/>
- Pollitt, C. (1990). *Managerialism and the public services: The Anglo-American experience*. Basil Blackwell
- Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2004). *Public management reform: A comparative analysis*. Oxford University Press.

- Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public management reform: A comparative analysis – new public management, governance, and the neo-weberian state*. Oxford University Press.
- Poppe, L. M., W, LaDonna., A, Guzman., M, Brand, G. L., Fox, M. S., Crandall, L., Durden, T. R., & Pitt, RaSheem. (2011). Ages and stages: 3- 4- and 5-year-olds. G2106. *Faculty Publications from CYFS*. 76.
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cyfsfacpub/76>
- Portobello Institute. (2020). *Primary school teaching is the career goal of many of our early childhood graduates*.
<https://www.facebook.com/portobellearlyyears/photos/a.114387985288832/3604812172913045>
- Pound. (2014). *Influencing early childhood education: key figures, philosophies and ideas*. Open University Press.
- Powney, J. & Watts, M. (1987). *Interviewing in educational research*. Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Prins, B. (1995). The ethics of hybrid subjects: Feminist constructivism according to Donna Haraway. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 20(3), 352-367.
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.887.3149&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Provenzo, E. F. (2009). Friedrich Froebel's gifts connecting the spiritual and aesthetic to the real world of play and learning. *American Journal of Play*, 2(1), 85-99.
<https://www.journalofplay.org/sites/www.journalofplay.org/files/pdf-articles/2-1-article-friedrich-froebels-gifts.pdf>
- Quality & Qualifications Ireland. (2020). *National framework of qualifications (NFQ)*
[https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)
- Quinn, S., Kennedy, P., Matthews, A., & Kiely, G. (2005). *Contemporary Irish social policy*. UCD Press.
- Raelin, J. (2011). From leadership-as-practice to leaderful practice. *Leadership*, 7(2), 195–211. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715010394808>
- Ramgopal, P. S., Dieterle, K. P., Aviles, J., McCreedy, B., & Davis, C. F. (2009). Leadership Development in the South: Where do we go from here? *Dimensions of early childhood*, 37(1), 33-38. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ883579>
- Rathcliffe, S. (2016). *Oxford essential quotations* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2014). *The sage handbook of action research*. Sage.
- Reay, D. (1998). Rethinking social class: Qualitative perspectives on class and gender. *Sociology*, 32(2), 259-275. <https://doi.org/10.1177/003803859803200200>

- Reay, D. (2004). Mostly roughs and toughs: Social class, race and representation in inner city schooling. *Sociology*, 38(5), 1005-1023.
<http://doi.org/10.1177/0038038504047183>
- Reay, D., & Ball, S. J. (2000). Essentials of female management: Women's ways of working in the education marketplace? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 28(2), 145-159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X000282004>
- Reay, D., Crozier, G., & Clayton, J. (2010). Fitting in or standing out: Working-class students in UK higher education. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(1), 107-124.
<https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01411920902878925>
- Redmond, J., & Harford, J. (2010) "One man one job": the marriage ban and the employment of women teachers in Irish primary schools. *Paedagogica Historica*, 46(5), 639-654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00309231003594271>
- Rhodes, R.A.W. (1997). *Understanding governance: Policy networks, governance, reflexivity and accountability (Public policy & management)*. US. Open University.
- Rhodes, R.A.W. (2007). Understanding governance: 10 years on. *Organization Studies*, 28(8), 1243-1264. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607076586>
- Rhodes, R.A.W. (2017). *Understanding governance: 20 years on*. <http://www.raw-rhodes.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/National-Governance-Review.pdf>
- Roberts, A. (2000). Mentoring revisited: A phenomenological reading of the literature. *Mentoring and Tutoring*, 8(2), 145-170. <http://doi.org/10.1080/713685524>
- Roberts-Holmes, G. (2012). "It's the bread and butter of our practice": Experiencing the early years foundation stage. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 20(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2012.664473>
- Roberts-Holmes, G., & Bradbury, A. (2016). *Governance, accountability and the datafication of early years education in England*.
<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1475127/8/+GRH%202016%20pre-publication%20.pdf>
- Robinson, C. (2011). *Real world research*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 11(1), 25-41.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.801543>
- Robinson, K. H., & Jones-Diaz, C. (2006). *Diversity and difference in early childhood education*. Open University Press.

- Rodd, J. (1996). Towards a typology of leadership for the early childhood professional of the 21st century. *Early Childhood Development and Care*, 120, 119-126.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0300443961200109>
- Rodd, J. (1997). Learning to be leaders: Perceptions of early childhood professionals about leadership roles and responsibilities. *Early years; An International Research Journal*, 18(1), 40-44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575149701800108>
- Rodd, J. (2006). *Leadership in early childhood education* (3rd ed.). Open University.
- Rodd, J. (2013). Reflecting on the pressures, pitfalls and possibilities for examining leadership in early childhood within a cross-national research collaboration. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake & J. Rodd (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education* (pp.31-47). Tempere University Press.
- Rodd, J. (2015). *Leading change in the early years*. Open University Press.
- Rogers, M. (2014). *Better start: Working together for children*.
http://www.acpireland.com/uploads/1/5/3/7/15370432/better_start_-_working_together_for_children.pdf Accessed: 02 December 2017
- Rogers, M. (2014a). *Better start: Working together for children*.
http://www.acpireland.com/uploads/1/5/3/7/15370432/better_start_-_working_together_for_children.pdf
- Rogers, M. (2014b). *Better start: Working together for children*.
<https://docplayer.net/60649368-Working-together-for-children-dr-margaret-rogers-better-start-nov.html>
- Rogers, M. (2019). ECEC in Ireland 2018: Where to from here? In B. Mooney (Ed.), *Ireland's yearbook of education, 2018-2019* (pp.7-14). Education Matters.
https://issuu.com/educationmattersie/docs/irelands_yearbook_of_education_2018_434d03_170f7321/7
- Rosemary, C., Roskos, K., Owendoff, C., & Olson, C. (1998). Surveying leadership in United States early care and education: A knowledge base and typology of activity. In E Hujala & A-M Puroila (Eds.), *Towards understanding leadership in early childhood context*. (pp.185-205). Acta Universitatis Ouluensis.
- Ross, P.T., Hart-Johnson, T., & Santen, S.A. (2020). Considerations for using race and ethnicity as quantitative variables in medical education research. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 9, 318-323. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-020-00602-3>
- Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed.) Sage Publications.

- Ruttten, W. A. (2006). Politics in time. *The Independent Review*, 11(2), 299-305.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/24562231.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Aa6a837fd481b607bc8a25d20e49960e4>
- Ryan, F., Coughlan, M., & Cronin, P. (2009). Interviewing in qualitative research. *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 16(6), 309-31. <https://doi.org/10.12968/ijtr.2009.16.6.42433>
- Salokangas, M., & Ainscow, M. (2018). *Inside the autonomous school: Making sense of a global educational trend*. Routledge
- Sarachild, K. (1973, March 12). *Consciousness-raising: A radical weapon*. Paper presented at First National Conference of Stewardesses for Women's Rights, New York City.
<https://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/Feminist-Revolution-Consciousness-Raising--A-Radical-Weapon-Kathie-Sarachild.pdf>
- Sargent, L. (1981). *Women and revolution*. South End Press.
- Scrivens, C. (2000). *Professional leadership in early childhood: The New Zealand Kindergarten experience*.
<https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/1999/scr99178.pdf>
- Scurfield, I. (2017). Walking gendered Lines: The contradictory expectations of men who work in early childhood education. *Inquiries Journal*, 9 (11). <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1708/walking-gendered-lines-the-contradictory-expectations-of-men-who-work-in-early-childhood-education>
- Sergiovanni, T. (1996). *Leadership for the schoolhouse*. Jossey-Bass.
- Sheehan, M. (2019, February 26). We are actually paying more than before subsidy was introduced' - creche crisis as fees rise by €600. *The Irish Independent*.
<https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/we-are-actually-paying-more-than-before-subsidy-was-introduced-creche-crisis-as-fees-rise-by-600-36640400.html>
- Shepherd, S. (2018). Managerialism: an ideal type. *Studies in Higher Education*, 43(9), 1668-1678. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1281239>
- Shor, I. & Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for liberation: Dialogues on transforming education*. Bergin & Garvey Publishers.
- Silver, C. & Lewins, A. (2014). *Using Software in qualitative research: A step-by-step guide* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2003). Analyzing talk and text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln. (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 340-362). Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2013). *A very short, fairly interesting, reasonably cheap book about qualitative research*. Sage.

- Sims, M., Forrest, R., Semann, A., & Slattery, C. (2015). Conceptions of early childhood leadership: Driving new professionalism? *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 18(2), 149-166. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2014.962101>
- Sims, M., Waniganayake, M., & Hadley, D. F. (2018). Educational leadership: An evolving role in Australian early childhood settings. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(6), 960-979. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143217714254>
- Sinclair, A. (2007). *Leadership for the disillusioned: Moving beyond myths and heroes to leading that liberates*. Allen & Unwin.
- Sinek, S. (2014). *Leaders eat last: Why some teams pull together and others don't*. Penguin Group.
- SIPTU. (2019a). *Registration crisis update*. <https://bigstartireland.medium.com/tusla-and-the-dcya-must-fix-the-re-registration-crisis-7a00297ceb56>
- SIPTU. (2019b). *The early years professionals' survey 2019*. <https://cdn.thejournal.ie/media/2019/09/bigstartsurvey2019.pdf>
- SIPTU. (2020). *Rewards and recognition: An international comparative analysis of pre-primary wages*. <https://bigstartireland.medium.com/1-the-oecd-has-only-recently-begun-publishing-teacher-salaries-at-pre-primary-level-f7266edae518>
- Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Hallet, E. (2014). *Effective and caring leadership in the early years*. Sage.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class and gender: Becoming respectable*. Sage.
- Skeggs, B. (2002). *Formations of class and gender: Becoming respectable*. Sage.
- Skeggs, B. (2011). *Imagining personhood differently: Person value and autonomist working class value practices*. https://values.doc.gold.ac.uk/media/publications/SR_person_value_2011.pdf
- Skerritt, C., & Salokangas, M. (2020). Patterns and paths towards privatisation in Ireland. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 52(1), 84-99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2019.1689104>
- Smith, D. E. (1974). Women's perspective as a radical critique of sociology. *Sociological Inquiry*, 44(1), 7-13. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1974.tb00718.x>
- Somerville, M., & Green, M. (2015). *Children, place and sustainability*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Southworth, G. (2002). Instructional leadership in schools: Reflections and empirical evidence. *School Leadership & Management: Formerly School Organisation*, 22(1), 73-91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430220143042>
- Spillane, J. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. Jossey-Bass.

- Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Educational Researcher*, 30, 23-28. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X030003023>
- Spolander, G. (2019). The impact of neoliberalism on management and supervision. In L.K. Engelbrecht, (Ed.), *Management and supervision of social workers: Issues and challenges within a social development paradigm*. Cengage Learning EMEA Limited.
- Stamopoulos, E. (2012). Reframing early childhood leadership. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 37(2), 42-48. <http://rptcd.catalogue.tcd.ie/ebsco-w-b/ehost/detail?sid=38011bb0-c112-49d3-be34a741d3a728f0%40sessionmgr114&vid=1&hid>
- Stacki, L. S., & Monkman, K. (2003). Change through empowerment processes: Women's stories from South Asia and Latin America. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 33, 173-189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305792032000070057>
- St Pierre, E.A. (2002). Science rejects postmodernism. *Educational Researcher*, 31(8), 25-27. <https://doi.org/10.1038/embor.2012.130>
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage
- Stake, R. E. (2005). *Multiple case study analysis*. Guilford.
- Stake, R. E. (2010). *Qualitative research: Studying how things work*. Guilford Press
- Stamopoulos, E. (2012). Reframing early childhood leadership. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 37(2), 42-48. <http://rptcd.catalogue.tcd.ie/ebsco-w-b/ehost/detail?sid=38011bb0-c112-49d3-be34a741d3a728f0%40sessionmgr114&vid=1&hid>
- Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking out again feminist ontology and epistemology*. Routledge.
- Starr, K. (2019). *Education policy, neoliberalism, and leadership practice: A critical analysis*. Routledge.
- Start Strong. (2010). *Children 2020: Children's early care and education in Ireland*. Start Strong.
- Start Strong. (2012). *Submission on a workforce development plan for the early childhood education and care sector*. https://www.childrensrights.ie/sites/default/files/submissions_reports/files/StartStrong%20submissionon%20Workforce%20Development%20Plan.pdf
- Steiner, R. (2007). *What Is a Waldorf kindergarten?* SteinerBooks, Incorporated

- Stonehouse, A. (1989). Nice ladies who love children: The status of the early childhood professional in society. *Early Child Development and Care*, 52(1), 61-79.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/0300443890520105>
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*: Sage Publications
- Strehmel, P., Heikka, J., Hujala, E., Rodd, J., & Waniganayake, M. (2019). *Leadership in early education in times of change research from five continents*.
<https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/23736/1006408.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Stuart, M. (2011). *Cradle and all: Rocking the cradle of wealth. Human capital theory and early childhood education in New Zealand, 1999-2008*. [Unpublished PhD thesis. Auckland AUT University].
- Stuart, M. (2013). A trinity of saviours—parent, teacher and child: Human capital theory and early childhood education in New Zealand. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(4), 51-57. <http://doi.org/10.1177/183693911303800407>
- Studdert, D., & Walkerdine, V. (2016). Being in community: Re-visioning sociology. *The Sociological Review*, 64(4), 613-621. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12429>
- Sumsion, J. (2006). From Whitlam to economic rationalism and beyond: A conceptual framework for activism in children's services. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(1), 1-9. <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=182259c5-1274-44e6-a42e2a7cf6a0501%40sessionmgr111&hid=128>
- Sveningsson, S., & Alvesson, M. (2003). Managing managerial identities: Organizational fragmentation, discourse and identity struggle. *Human Relations*, 56(10), 1163-1193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00187267035610001>
- Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., & Sammons, P. (2015). *Effective pre-school, primary and secondary education project (EPPSE 3–16+)*. Department for Education.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/455670/RB455_Effective_pre_school_primary_and_secondary_education_project.pdf.pdf
- Taggart, G. (2011). Don't we care? The ethics and emotional labour of early years professionalism. *Early Years* 31(1), 85-95.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2010.536948>

- Taggart, G. (2014). Compassionate pedagogy: The ethics of care in early childhood professionalism. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 24(2), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2014.970847>
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). Putting the human back in “human research methodology”: The researcher in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4(4), 271-277. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689810382532>
- Taylor, D., Coughlin, D., & Marasco, J. (1997). *Teaching and advocacy*. Stenhouse Publishers.
- Taylor, M. (2012). Social policy and early childhood education and care. In M. Mhic Mhathuna & M. Taylor (Eds.), *Early childhood education & care: An introduction for students in Ireland* (pp. 63-82). Gill and Macmillan.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2010) “Overview of contemporary issues in mixed methods research”. In A. Tashakkori, & C. Teddlie, (Eds.), *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (pp. 1-41). Sage Publications.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2012). Common “core” characteristics of mixed methods research: A review of critical issues and call for greater convergence. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 56(6), 774-788. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764211433795>
- Titley, B. (1983). *Church, state and the control of schooling in Ireland 1900/1944*. Gill and Macmillan.
- Tovey, H. (2016). Bringing the Froebel approach to your early years practice. David Fulton.
- The Social Research Centre. (2014). *2013 national early childhood education and care workforce census*. Department of Education
http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/nwc_national_report_final.pdf.
- Thornton, K., & S. Cherrington. (2014). Leadership in professional learning communities. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 39(3), 94-102.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/183693911403900312>.
- Tight, M. (2010). The curious case of the case study: A viewpoint. *International Journal of Methodology*, 13(4), 329-339
<http://web.a.ebscohost.com.elib.tcd.ie/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=62ac8ac5-7259-414e-bd79-11ab434e0ad1%40sessionmgr4010&vid=3&hid=4204>
- Tomlinson, P. (1989). Having it both ways: Hierarchical focusing as a research interview method. *British Educational Research Journal*, 15(2), 155 -176.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192890150205>

- Tomlinson, B. (2013). Colonizing intersectionality: Replicating racial hierarchy in feminist academic arguments. *Social Identities*, 19(2), 254-272.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2013.789613>
- Tong, A., Sainsbury, P., & Craig, P. (2007). Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups, *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 19(6), 349–357. <https://doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/mzm042>
- Torrance, D. (2013). Distributed leadership: Challenging five generally held assumptions. *School Leadership & Management*, 33(4), 354-372.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2013.813463>
- Trinity College Dublin (TCD). (2009). *Policy on good research practice*.
<https://www.tcd.ie/dental/research/research-ethics/TCDGoodResearchPractice.pdf>
- Trinity College Dublin (TCD). (2016). *Research ethics in the school of education*.
<https://www.tcd.ie/Education/research/ethics/>
- Tröhler, D., Meyer, H., Labaree, D., & Hutt, L. (2014). Accountability: Antecedents, power, and processes. *Teachers College Record*, 116(9), 1-12.
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317041627_Accountability_Antecedents_o
power_and_Processes](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317041627_Accountability_Antecedents_power_and_Processes)
- Tronto, J. (1993). *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care*. Routledge.
- Tronto, J. (2013). *Caring democracy: Markets, equality, and justice*. NYU Press.
- Troy, R. (2018). *Joint Oireachtas committee on health and children: Affordable high-quality child care*: Thursday 18 June, 2015.
[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/debateRecord/joint_committee_on_health_and
children/2015-06-18/debate/mul@/main.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/debateRecord/joint_committee_on_health_and_children/2015-06-18/debate/mul@/main.pdf)
- Tseng, V., Easton, JQ., & Supplee, L.H. (2018). Research-practice partnerships: Building two-way streets of engagement. *Social Policy Report*, 30(4), 2-17.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2379-3988.2017.tb00089.x>
- Turner, W. D. (2010). Qualitative Interview Design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754-760. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2010.1178>
- Tusla, (2013). *Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Section 56*.
[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_Section_56_Service_Arrangement_\(Final\)
\)PART_A.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_Section_56_Service_Arrangement_(Final)_PART_A.pdf)
- Tusla. (2014). *Tulsa child and family agency*. <https://www.tusla.ie/about/>

- Tusla. (2018). *Quality and regulatory framework: Full day care service and part-time day care service*. Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla.
https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/4566-TUSLA_QRF_DAY_CARE_LR.pdf
- Undurraga, R. (2010). How quantitative are feminist research methods textbooks? *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 13(3), 277 - 281. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2010.482265>
- Uksw, S. (2014). Developing critical thinking skills through schoolteacher training “training and development personnel” model and their determinants of success. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 4(2), 161-166.
<http://www.ijiet.org/papers/390-N10010.pdf>
- United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the rights of the child*.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- United Nations. (2013). *Unpaid care work and women’s human rights*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2437791>
- United Nations Education and Science Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (1994). Salamanca Spain, June 10. *World conference on special needs education: Access and quality: Final report*. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED384189>
- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2008). *The child care transition, innocenti report card 8, 2008*. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/rc8_eng.pdf
- Urban, M. (2008). Dealing with uncertainty: Challenges and possibilities for the early childhood profession. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 16(2), 135-152. <http://doi.org/doi.org/10.1080/13502930802141584>
- Urban, M. (2010). Rethinking professionalism in early childhood: Untested feasibilities and critical ecologies. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 11(1), 1-7.
<http://doi.org/10.2304/ciec.2010.11.1.1>
- Urban, M. (2014). Starting wrong? In: M. Matthes, L. Pulkkinen, L. Pinto & C. Clouder (Eds.), *Improving the quality of childhood in Europe* (pp.82-97). Alliance for Childhood European Network Foundation.
- Urban, M. (2018). Editorial. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 26(3), 311-315. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2018.1469857>
- Urban, M. (2019). Reimagining early childhood education and care in Ireland: A competent system and a public good. In B. Mooney (Ed), *Ireland's yearbook of education, 2018-2019*. Education Matters (pp.35-42).
- Urban, M. (2020). Winds of change. In B. Mooney (Ed), *Ireland's yearbook of education, 2019-2020*. Education Matters (pp.93-99).

- Urban, M., & Dalli, C. (2012). A profession speaking – and thinking – for itself. In L. Miller C. Dalli & M. Urban (Eds.). *Early childhood grows up: Towards a critical ecology of the profession*. Springer.
- Urban, M., & Swadener, B. B. (2016). Democratic accountability and contextualised systemic evaluation. A comment on the OECD initiative to launch an international early learning study (IELS). *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies*, 5(1), 6-18.
<https://journals.sfu.ca/iccps/index.php/childhoods/article/view/71/pdf>
- Urban, M., Vandenbroeck, M., Van Laere, K., Lazzari, A., & Peeters, J. (2012). *Competence requirements in early childhood education and care. Final report*. European Commission. Directorate General for Education and Culture.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED534599.pdf>
- Urban, M., Robson, S., & Scacchi, V. (2017). *Review of occupational role profiles in Ireland in early childhood education and care*.
<https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Final-Review-of-Occupational-Role-Profiles-in-Early-Childhood-Education-and-Care.pdf> Mathias Urban Sue Robson Valeria Scacchi
- Urban, M. (2020). Winds of change: A tale on intended and unintended consequences. In B. Mooney (Ed.), *Education matters yearbook 2016-2017: Shaping Ireland's education landscape* (pp.113-118).
- Vaill, P. B. (1982). The purposing of high-performance systems. *Organizational Dynamics*, 11(2), 23-39. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(82\)90003-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(82)90003-1)
- Vandenbroeck, M. (2020). *Revisiting Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed: issues and challenges in early childhood education (Contesting early childhood)*. Routledge.
- Van der Gaag, N., Heilman, B., Gupta, T., Nembhard, C., & Barker, G. (2019). State of the world's fathers: Unlocking the power of men's care. *Promundo-US*.
https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/BLS19063_PRO_SOWF_REPORT_015.pdf
- Van Laere, K. (2017). *Conceptualisations of care and education in early childhood education and care*. [PhD Thesis. University of Ghent, Belgium].
<https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/8540806/file/8540810>
- Van Laere, K., Peeters, J., & Vandenbroeck, M. (2012). The education and care divide: The role of the early childhood workforce in 15 European countries. *European Journal of Education*, 47(4), 527-541. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12006>
- Van Laere, K., Vandenbroeck, M., Roets, G., & Peeters, J. (2014) Challenging the feminisation of the workforce: Rethinking the mind–body dualism in early childhood

- education and care. *Gender and Education*, 26(3), 32-245.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.901721>
- Van Vugt, M., & Ahuja, A. (2011). *Toward an integrated theory of leadership: The evolutionary science of leadership*. HarperCollins.
- Veazey, V. (2020). Te Whāriki: What is New Zealand's early years curriculum?
<https://www.family.co/blog/te-whariki-new-zealand-early-years-curriculum>
- Vecchio, R. (2007). *Leadership: Understanding the dynamics of power and influence in organizations*. Notre Dame Université Press.
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/247f/d0f29ca1a0b23a4bd909a12e7fe7e7559ca9.pdf?ga=2.43553197.929218439.1607620117-126406527.1602013397>
- Verschuren, P. (2003). Case study as a research strategy: Some ambiguities and opportunities, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6(2), 121-139.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570110106154>
- Vincent, C., & Ball, S. J. (2006). *Childcare, choice, and class practices*. Routledge.
- Vincent, C., Braun, A., & Ball, S. (2008). Childcare and social class: Caring for young children in the UK. *Critical Social Policy*, 28(1), 5-26.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249628443_Childcare_choice_and_social_class_Caring_for_young_children_in_the_UK
- Vincent, C., & Braun, A. (2011). "I think a lot of it is common sense. ..." Early years students, professionalism and the development of a "vocational habitus". *Journal of Education Policy*, 26(1), 771-785.
https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10011836/1/Common_sense.pdf
- Vogt, P. W., Gardner, C.D., & Haefel, L. M., (2012). *When to use what research design*. Guildford Press.
- Vuorisalo M., Alanen L. (2015). Early childhood education as a social field: everyday struggles and practices of dominance. In: L. Alanen, E. Brooker & B. Mayall, (Eds.), *Childhood with Bourdieu. Studies in childhood and youth*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137384744_5
- Walkerdine, V., & Lucey, H. (1989). *Democracy in the kitchen*. Virago.
- Walkerdine. (2011). Neoliberalism, working-class subjects, and higher education. *Contemporary Social Science*, 6(2), 255-271. [https://doi:10.1080/21582041.2011.580621](https://doi.org/10.1080/21582041.2011.580621)
- Walkerdine V. (2015). Transmitting class across generations. *Theory & Psychology*, 25(2), 167-183. [https://doi:10.1177/0959354315577856](https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354315577856)
[/index.php/ger/article/view/383/263+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ie](https://index.php/ger/article/view/383/263+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=ie)
- Walsh, B. (2016). *Essays in the history of Irish education*. Palgrave Macmillan

- Walsh, G.M., McGuinness, C., Sproule, L., & Trew, K. (2010). Implementing a play-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum in Northern Ireland primary schools: What lessons have we learned? *Early Years*, 30(1), 53-66.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09575140903442994>
- Walsh, T. (2005). Constructions of childhood in Ireland in the twentieth century: A view from the primary school curriculum 1900/ 1999. *Child Care in Practice*, 11(2), 253-269.
<https://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/5519/1/TW-Constructions-Childhood.pdf>
- Walsh, T. (2016). Recent policy developments in early childhood education (ECE): A jigsaw with too many pieces? *An Leabhbh Óg*, 10, 69-94.
http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/12836/1/TW_recent.pdf
- Walsh, T. (2017). A year of progress and promise. In B. Mooney (Ed.), *Ireland's yearbook of education 2017-2018* (pp. 83-89). Education Matters.
<https://educationmatters.ie/downloads/YB20172018-Early%20Childhood.pdf>
- Waniganayake, M. (2014). Being and becoming early childhood leaders: Reflections on leadership studies in early childhood education and the future leadership research agenda. *Journal of Early Childhood Education Research*, 3(1), 66-81.
<https://jecer.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Waniganayake-issue3-1.pdf>
- Waniganayake, M., Cheeseman, S., Fenech, M., Hadley, F., & Shepherd, W. (2012). *Leadership: contexts and complexities in early childhood education*. Melbourne: Open University Press.
- Waniganayake, M., Morda, R., & Kapsalakis, A. (2000). Leadership in child care centres: Is it just another job? *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 25(1), 45-52.
<https://www.questia.com/library/p3903/australian-journal-of-early-childhood/i2894762/vol-25-no-1-march>
- Waniganayake, M., & Semann, A. (2011). Being and becoming leaders. *Rattler*, 100, 22-26.
<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.931.8718&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Ward, S. C., Bagley, C., Lumby, J., Woods, P., Hamilton, T., & Roberts, A. (2015). School leadership for equity: Lessons from the literature. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19(4), 333-346. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2014.930520>
- Wasmuth, H., & Nitecki, E. (2017). Global early childhood policies: The impact of the global movement and possibilities for reconceptualization. *Global Education Review*, 4, 1-17. https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:G_Zw8WTXweUJ:http://ger.mercy.edu

- Watts, M. & Ebbutt, D. (1987). More than the sum of the parts: Research methods in group interviewing. *British Educational Research Journal*, 13(1), 25-34. https://www-jstor-org.elib.tcd.ie/stable/1501227?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Wayman, S. (2018, October 6). Childcare costs a fortune, staff earn little. How can it be fixed? How can we sort out Ireland's "glorified babysitter" industry? *The Irish Times*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/health-family/parenting/childcare-costs-a-fortune-staff-earn-little-how-can-it-be-fixed-1.3650353>
- Webb, J., Schirato, T., & Danaher, G. (2002). *Understanding Bourdieu*. Sage.
- Weber, M. (1905). *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*. <https://web.stanford.edu/class/sts175/NewFiles/Weber's%20Protestant%20Ethic.pdf>
- Weible, C.M., Heikkila, T., deLeon, P., & Sabatier, P. A. (2012). Understanding and influencing the policy process. *Policy Sciences*, 45(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-011-9143-5>
- Weinbaum, B., & Bridges, A. (1976). The other side of the paycheck: Monopoly capital and the structure of consumption. *Monthly Review*, 28(3), 88-103. https://doi.org/10.14452/MR-028-03-1976-07_7
- Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511803932>
- Wermke, W., Rick, S.O., & Salokangas, M. (2019). Decision-making and control: Perceived autonomy of teachers in Germany and Sweden. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 51(3), 306-325. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2018.1482960>
- Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018). *Early childhood workforce index – 2018*. Berkeley, ca: Center for the study of child care employment, University of California, Berkeley. <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/topic/early-childhood-workforce-index/2018/>
- Wood, E. (2014). The play-pedagogy interface in contemporary debates. In L. Brooker, M. Blaise, & S. Edwards (Eds.), *The sage handbook of play and learning in early childhood* (pp.145-156). Sage.
- Wood, E., & Hedges, H. (2016). Curriculum in early childhood education: Critical questions about content, coherence, and control. *The Curriculum Journal*, 27(3), 387-405. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2015.1129981>
- Woodrow, C., & Busch, G. (2008). Repositioning early childhood leadership as action and activism. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 76(1), 83-93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13502930801897053>

- Woods, P. A., & Gronn, P. (2009). Nurturing democracy: The contribution of distributed leadership to a democratic organizational landscape. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37(4), 430-451. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143209334597>
- Wong, D. & Waniganayake, M. (2013). Mentoring as a leadership development strategy in early childhood. In E. Hujala, M. Waniganayake & J. Rodd (Eds.), *Researching leadership in early childhood education*. Tampere University Press (pp.163-180). http://ilrfec.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/art_09Wong-Waniganayake.pdf
- Worell, J. (1996). Opening doors to feminist research. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 20, 469-485. <https://doi.org/110.1111/j.1471-6402.1996.tb00317.x>
- Wright, E. O. (1997). *Class counts: Comparative studies in class analysis*. Cambridge.
- Wright, E. O. (2015). *Understanding class*. Verso.
- Wright, N. (2001). Leadership, “bastard leadership” and managerialism: Confronting twin paradoxes in the Blair education project. *Educational Management & Administration*, 29(3), 275-290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X010293003>
- Wright, N. (2003). Principled “bastard leadership”: A rejoinder to Gold, Evans, Earley, Halpin and Collarbone. *Educational Management and Administration*, 31(2), 137-141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263211X030312003>
- Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(2), 134-152. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss2/12>
- Yerkes, M. A., & Javornik, J. (2019). Creating capabilities: Childcare policies in comparative perspective. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 29(4), 529-544. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928718808421>
- Yin, R. K. (1994). Discovering the future of the case study method in evaluation research. *Evaluation Practice*, 15(3), 283-290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/109821409401500309>
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed). Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed). Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. The Guilford Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2012a). *Applications of case study research* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2012b). *Case study research: Design and methods*. <http://faculty.washington.edu/swhiting/pols502/Yin>
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research design and methods* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton University Press.

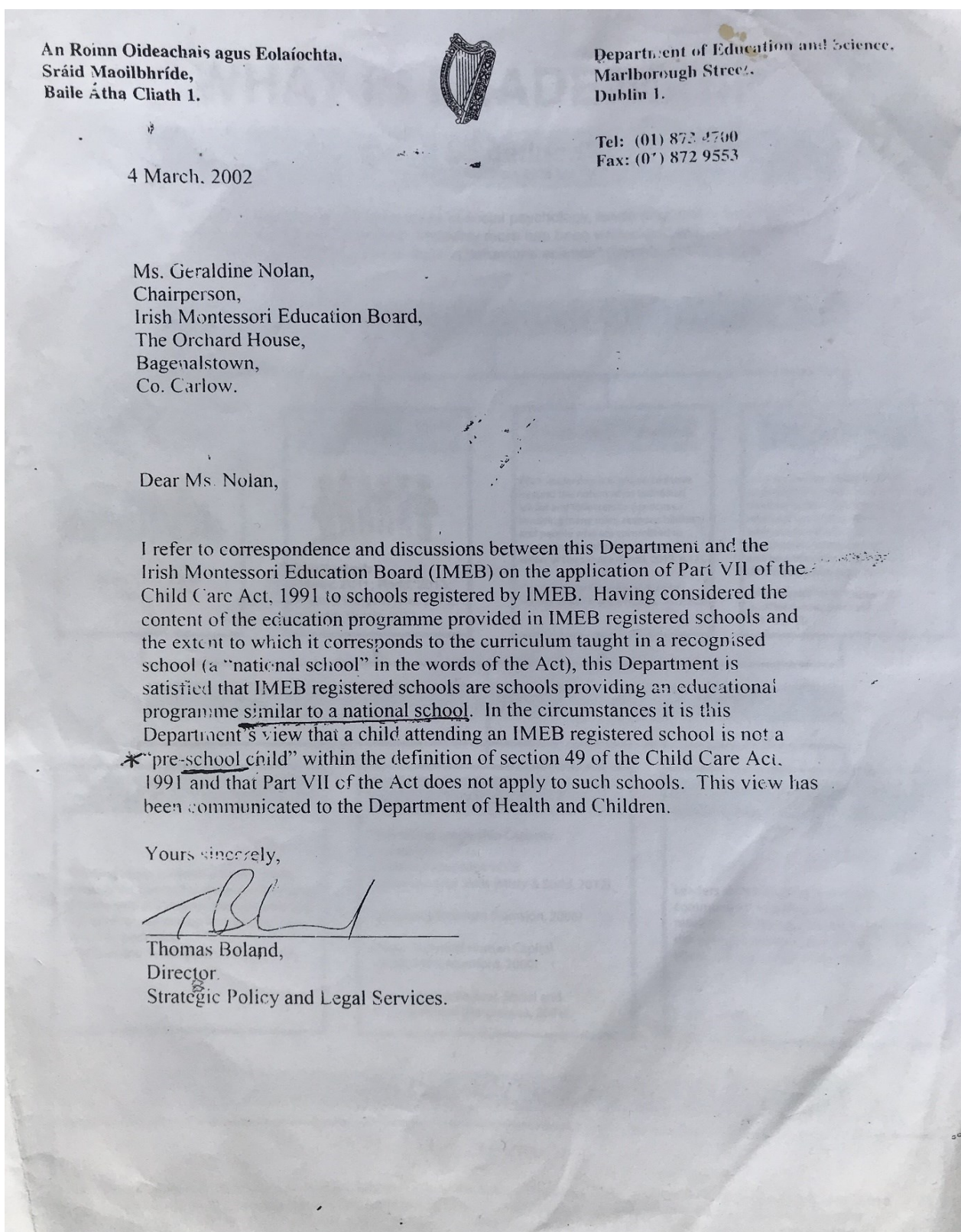
Yukl, G. A. (1981). *Leadership in organisations*. London: Prentice-Hall International.

Zenger, J. & Folkman, J. (2012). Are women better leaders than men? *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2012/03/a-study-in-leadership-women-do>

Zhao, Y. (2018). *What works may hurt—side effects in education*. Teachers College Press.

Appendices

Appendix A: Letter from the Department of Education and Science (2002)



Appendix B: Balancing the books

Profit & Loss Account	
	€
Food & Provisions	4,660
Insurance	655
Bank charges	26
Light & Heat - Gas	857
Light & Heat - ESB	642
Waste collection charges	439
Telephone-Eircom	671
Telephone - Vodaphone	967
E Mobile	50
Rent	19,200
Rates	2035
Kitchen equipment	112
Wages	52,422
PRSI	4486
Books/DVD	22
Games, Toys, Videos & Art mats	181
Transport - Use of a car	103
Fixtures & Fittings	64
Repairs & Maintenance	548
Book-keeping & Accountancy	-697
Photos	16
Cleaning & Hygiene	753
Medical	29
Postage & Stationery	87
Subs & Membership	168
HSE	80
	<hr/>
	88,556
Depreciation - Motor	200
	<hr/>
Total expenses	88,756
Sales	86,305
Net Profit	-2451
	<hr/>
	<u>-2451</u>

Wayman, S. (2018, October 6). Childcare costs a fortune, staff earn little. How can it be fixed? How can we sort out Ireland's 'glorified babysitter' industry? *The Irish Times*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/health-family/parenting/childcare-costs-a-fortune-staff-earn-little-how-can-it-be-fixed-1.3650353>

Appendix C: Conceptual framework mind map



Gap in literature:

Class, gender, power, feminist research

Women as carers

Gender

Class

Power

Appendix D: Towards a theoretical framework

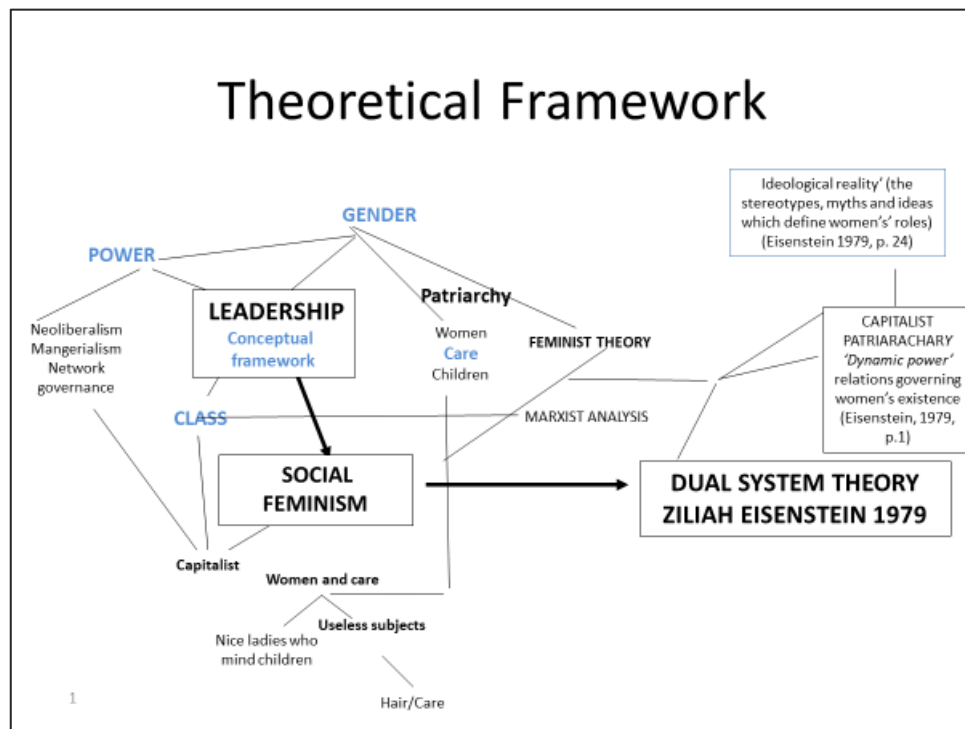
The purpose of ECE within the ECE quality, quantity, and equality policy and the [un]intentional outcomes of this policy (linked to the policy chapter 2).

Purpose	Quantity	Quality	Equality	Intentional Outcome	[Un]intentional Outcomes - Policy
The ECE: Quandary: Quantity quality equality	Affordable childcare	Childrens learning Governance	Access: Universal Free preschool	Affordable childcare to support: Women in workforce Disadvantaged children Lift families out of poverty, National social and economic success Competitive in the global market	<p>QUANTITY: 2,4,1 [Un]intentional Children [no]rights 2,4,2 [Un]intentional: Community and private childcare providers class divide*</p> <p>QUALITY: 2.5.1 [Un]intentional Children learn and develop divide 2.5.2 ECE policy: Quality and high returns – child in the future –under class* 2.5.3 Quality: Workforce Development* 2.5.4 Quality control: Government to governance/control/ Specialists*</p> <p>EQUALITY 2.6.3 [Unintentional] ECE Inequalities/Tokenism*</p> <p>CULTURE 2.3.3 [Un]intentional: Care and education divide – Gendered understanding of care*</p>
2.7 The child an endangered species 2.8 Women who care(s) 2.9: The lost local context					
*Intersecting forms of oppression and subordination - gender and class					

The purpose of ECE leadership within the ECE quality, quantity, and equality policy and the [un]intentional outcomes of this policy (linked to the policy chapter 2)

Purpose	Quantity	Quality	Equality	Intentional Outcome	[Un]intentional Outcomes - Policy
<p>Leadership What is it?</p> <p>micro phenomenon, concerned with leadership roles</p>	Leadership to ensure quality and affordable childcare for parents is paramount (Gov A4)	1)Leadership as an imposing and regulatory process (practitioners Gov A4)	2) Leadership managers/leader philosophy (UNCRC, Montessori/ Individual setting ethos, etc.) 3)Democratic relational process (Majority of stakeholder)	Understand and practice leadership	<p>Literature confusing- modernist/post-modernist</p> <p>Stakeholders could describe leadership, problem with articulating the purpose of leadership (excluding the Government Representatives) *</p> <p>Quantity Absence: practitioner /workforce development*-</p> <p>Pedagogical leadership – questioned in the literature (Heikka & Waniganayake, 2011, Male & Palaiologou, 2015).</p> <p>Quality 2.6.4 [Unintentional] ECE Children becoming</p> <p>2.5.4 [Unintentional] Absence advocacy/voice*-</p> <p>Equality 2.6.3 [Unintentional] ECE Inequalities/Tokenism –specialist*</p> <p>Quantity Focus on Affordable exclusion child and workforce (Moloney, 2017; Urban et al., 2017) *</p> <p>Quality 2.5.4 Quality control: Overregulation /Standard 2.5.2 ECE policy: Quality/ high returns – under class 2.6.4 [Unintentional] ECE Children becoming 2.10.1 [Unintentional] Absence leadership at macro level *Equality</p>
For whom?	Leadership for governance	Pedagogical leadership	Leadership for Inclusion (LINC)	Leadership for quantity, quality and equality	
<p>Leadership For what and to what end?</p>	Accountability Quantity (Affordable) Quality childcare	Quality learning environment : future workforce citizens	Coordinate the inclusion of children with special and additional needs	Leadership for quantity, quality, and equality	
Interlocking forms of oppression and subordination - gender and class					

Appendix E: Theoretical framework mind map



Appendix F: Towards a definition of leadership

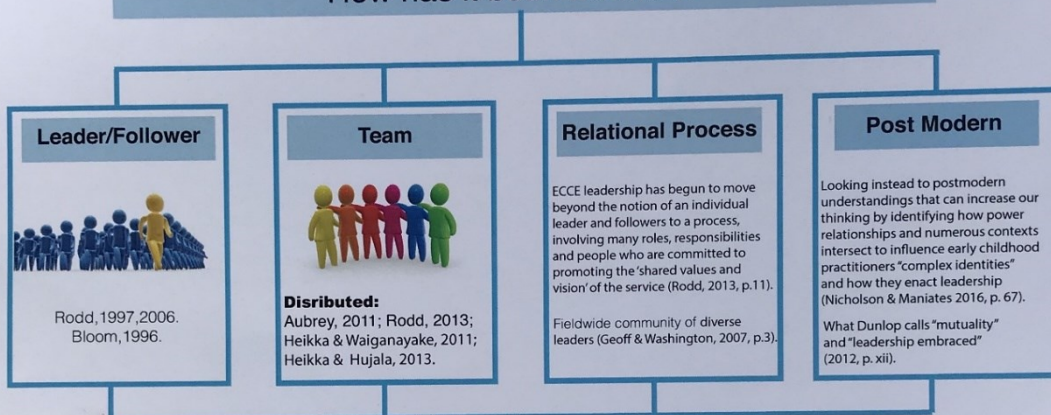
WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

Can it be defined?

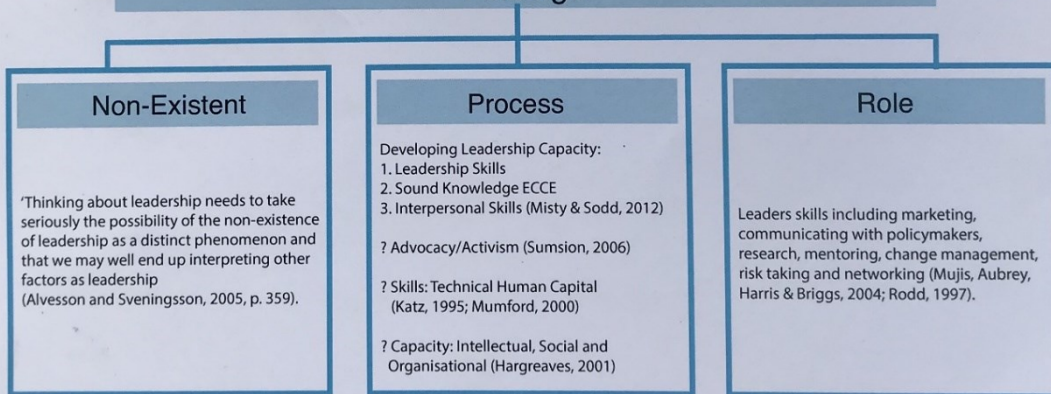
(Fink,2005, Bass,2008.)

"of all the hazy and confounding ideas in social psychology, leadership theory undoubtedly contends for the top nomination. Probably more has been written and less known about leadership than any other topic in behavioral science" (Bennis, 1993, p 259).

How has it been Defined?



Findings



Re-Defining Leadership

Activity Praxis

Leadership is a "situational socially constructed and interpretative phenomenon" (Hujala & Puroila, 1998, p. 8). Leadership becomes more than a function or an activity but in "essence it is praxis" (Male & Palaiologou, 2013, p.18). Praxis may be defined as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (Freire, 1986, p. 36). As Carr and Kemmis (1998) suggest, praxis embodies certain qualities that require a person to "make a wise and prudent practical judgment about how to act in this ... situation" (p.190). Tools and skills to solve own problems, praxis opens doors for oppressed people to criticise, problematize and claim their condition and overcome it (Feire, 1979).

Appendix G: Ethical approval**Approval:** Geraldine Nolan**1 November 2016**

Dear Geraldine,

The School of Education's Ethics Committee has received and considered your application for approval of your PhD research project.

It is the decision of the Committee that no additional information is needed regarding your application. Therefore, approval is granted for your research, on the condition that it is carried out as indicated on your application. Should there be a change in the design of your research project, you will need to re-apply again for approval from the School of Education's Ethics Committee.

You are required to include a copy of this letter as an appendix to your thesis.

If you have any queries regarding this decision, please contact the Chair of the School of Education's Ethics Committee and Director of Research, Dr Stephen James Minton (mintonst@tcd.ie).

We wish you all the very best with your research project.

Kind regards,

Fiona McKibben

Research Officer at the School of Education

On behalf of Professor Stephen James Minton

Director of Research

3088 School of Education Arts Building

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin

Dublin 2, Ireland.

Tel | +353 1 8963583

Appendix H: Pilot study

Summary Form 1

Interview: Early Year's Practitioner

Visit Date: 7/10/2016

Today's Date: 7/10/2016

Written by: G. Nolan

ECCE "for all children to grow and develop" **Leadership** "not sure what it means"

- **Policy/structures:** *"we are the bottom of the barrel—no policies, no help, no one wants to know"*.
- *"Leadership not a word we use, more about managing a service"*. Leaders are people who lead and have a vision, roles = mentoring, support staff, work with parents and children.
- **Skills:** getting on with people and asking the tough questions of staff and families (**MICRO LEVEL**).
- When probed, leaders need to ask tough questions at government level **"Hopeless/ no point, no value on ECCE"**.
- **It is all about money...to improve we need training**, ridiculous support up to level 5, expected to do 4 jobs, teacher, carer, administrator, team worker, all for minimum wage, need training to lead, no training. **No emphasis on leadership, no support/training**.
- All emphasis - planning, assessment, documentation, and inspections *"three of them now, what other sector has 3 inspections and on minimum wage?"* CPD for primary teachers and we work with the same age group...indicator of how we are valued.
- *"The main deterrent is no self worth, no status, lead when profession isn't valued"*. **Relationships, side-lined** *"no real connections to anyone"*. CCC all too busy paper work for DYCA, ECI concerned with private providers and inspectors just inspect, even the AIM not very supportive. A lot of in-house fighting, poor pay/qualifications.
- *"Of course it is about gender, women and mothers, carers all have no value in society, men on the other hand would not put up with this..."it's a mans world"*
- **Class**, no pensions, no value...how all minimum wage and have very little opportunities to train as CPD and courses expensive, **we the new poor... no contract "how and who could you lead in this situation?"** **Siolta no help, not about leadership**.
- **Leadership** *"where all come together to discuss and find ways to solve problems would be helpful, yet no time, no noncontact time and no one wants to stay behind on their own time"*. **Not sure** what will help get us out of this situation, join together, strength and have a voice in policy and pay..until paid properly can see no improvements.
- **Could leadership help?** *"well we need to come together and have a voice and know how to lobby and ask the right questions, what we want...yeah we need to be able to ask for what we want and not be so agreeable with everything ...some policies make no sense, we should question what they are about?"* Leadership does not happen in my ECCE setting, all about

following regulations and paper work, **no time to lead. In the future:** leadership, “*where everyone has the time to come together and work towards what we need to do*” to get better working conditions, more sensible regulations and less about spending money on mentors and specialists, pay the childcare workers instead. “*Nothing is working at the moment*” maybe leadership is the way to do this, but requires training.

- **Suggestion: Ask, who do they see as a leader in ECCE?**

INSIGHTS:

- Time: 55 minutes
- Opening question – relax/conversation flow
- Probe leadership at macro level
- Clarify: understand leadership (many/leader?)
- Added question at the end to draw conclusions: In three or four sentences, describe how leadership is and how you would like it to be?

Summary Form 2

Interview: Stakeholder, Childcare Committee Representative

Visit Date: 7/10/2016

Today's Date: 7/10/2016

Written by: G. Nolan

- **ECCE ALL ABOUT Relationships. Leadership** is all about relationships mentoring, having a vision and support children, families, and staff, being leaders: ensuring children's environment and curriculum suit the child's needs. Need a good business head and need to advocate for the rights of children, business-like, be responsible, trustworthy.
- **Role confusion: ARE THEY LEADERS OR MANAGERS, MORE LIKE MANAGERS.** Not sure if I understand the difference, **nor do I know what leadership** is. Is it about the leader or what else it is? very confused area. We are hearing more and more about leadership lately, but what it is, I am not too sure.
- **Constraints: no support, we are so busy now with the administration side of the free preschool year, we do not have time to support the settings. Not sure if leadership being practised,** the settings are inundated with new regulations and policies; they haven't time to lift their heads, more like secretaries than leaders, all about administration and regulations.
- **Enables leadership**, well I suppose **Siolta, but not sure if it covers leadership- does it?**
 Improve practice/understanding: training, training, training, but even when it is available CPD, the practitioner has no time or money to pay for it, they are on minimum wage. We have tried to run classes, but who can take a Monday afternoon off to pay and attend classes (they are subsidised). Gender, well it is female for a start, ITS WHAT WE ARE GOOD AT, ISN'T THAT HOW IT'S SEEN. Class – ha! – Well, I suppose there is a difference in community and private – you know!
Question the training, what is in the training, and who is giving it? and the time has arrived to question the entry level to ECCE, **points** to get into BA courses often way too low, need to make it more difficult and will attract people who are willing to work and have the ability, not just for a piece of paper to get higher capitation.

- **Qualifications have their difficulties: practitioners resentful of younger women arriving in with a level 8** and managing the setting and they are there for 20 years...a lot of **fighting, passive/aggressive** bitterness in the sector.
- **Relationships: Probably the most important, no relationships outside the sector - Very vulnerable workforce, have very poor self-image** - have they the confidence to lead, to deal with other organisations, **I am not sure they have. Sometimes you'd think they don't want to lead or make it right – I don't know.**
- **Improve: need space** to come together and tease out what they want, **a vision** for their services and the sector. Yes leadership is probably the way forward, **what else is there**, there are no supports, no practical training, no role models, no CPD , nothing on how to move your setting and the sector forward. Problem: **how to do it?** It's the chicken and egg syndrome, if we had leadership we wouldn't be in the **mess** we are in, and **yes it is a crisis**, all our graduates are going into primary teaching and ironically the **government is giving them better jobs with a ECEC salary to be mentors**, specialists and inspectors. Who will care for and educate the children?
- The future: **support and a pay scale for ECCE**, we will attract people with the characteristics and the knowledge and skills to lead the sector forward.

INSIGHTS:

- Time: 1 hour.
- Might be too many sections in question 5 (overlap).
- Leadership and management - need to probe more.

PARTICIPANT SUGGESTIONS: Going forward, leadership or leader, seems to BE A LOT OF CONFUSION, maybe ask again at the end what is leadership, not just how you would see leadership, as they will have had time to think about it during the conversation.

Appendix I: Interview Information Sheet

Organisation: Trinity College Dublin

Title of study: Leadership in Early Childhood Care and Education: How it is and how it could be?

Dear, (participant).

I am undertaking a Ph.D. through Trinity College Dublin and I am researching leadership in early childhood education. The purpose of this study is to gain an increased understanding of how leadership is understood and enacted in the sector and how it could be in the future. In order to do this, I am undertaking interviews to garner data from all the various Participants in the sector

If you choose to participate in this project, you will be involved in:

- **A semi-structured interview** of approximately one hour conducted in a location of your choice. This discussion will be audio-recorded. Please see possible questions at the end of this letter.

If participating, you can be assured that your contributions shall remain anonymous in the study and any publication resulting from the research. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the process at any time without comment.

Feedback will be provided, and the completed thesis will be made available to you for a period of three months after the completion date (December 2019). The audio recording of the interview will be stored for the period specified by the School of Education guidelines and destroyed according to these guidelines (TCD, 2016).

My supervisors for the project are Professor Andrew Loxley and Dr Maija Salokangas; who can be contacted at: Phone: 01 8961737 or email: salokam@tcd.ie or loxleya@tcd.ie If you have any queries relating to the research project, please feel free to contact me at: Phone: 087 790 7828 or genolan@tcd.ie. I have enclosed a consent form for you to sign.

If I receive a consent form from you, I will be in touch by phone to arrange a time for the interview and focus group.

I look forward to receiving your response in the near future.

Appendix J: Consent Form

Organisation: Trinity College Dublin

Title of study: Leadership in Early Childhood Care and Education: How it is and how it could be?

This research project is being conducted by Geraldine Nolan as part of a Ph.D. being undertaken through Trinity College Dublin.

Contact Details:

Phone: 087 7907828

Email: genolan@tcd.ie

Description:

This research will explore how the ECEC participants understand and enact leadership and the possibilities in the future.

By signing below, you are indicating that you

- Have read and understood the Information Sheet and have had time to think about the information.
- Understand that it is OK to stop taking part at any time and that you do not have to say why.
- Understand that the researcher will be audio recording your voice during the discussion.
- Understand that the researcher might include quotes from you in reports, when they are talking at conferences or in research papers. You give permission for her to do so. The researcher will not use your name and any quotes presented will be anonymous.
- Have had any concerns answered to your satisfaction.
- Understood that if you have any additional questions you can contact the researcher.
- Understood that if you have any additional questions you can contact the researcher's supervisor.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Appendix K: Interview Schedule

**The main question is in bold print and the bullet points underneath are possible topics for discussion.*

1. How do you/your organisation understand leadership and how is it practised in early childhood care and education settings?

- How do you think leadership is practised in ECCE settings? Leadership/management?
- What can we do to build a better understanding of leadership (knowledge) and leadership practice (skills)?

2. How do international organisations or government departments and their policies inform and support ECCE leadership?

- Are there policies at international/national level to inform leadership training?
- Is there a requirement or guidelines for developing/implementing a leadership module? How does your organisation address leadership?
- Are there support structures or Irish literature available on leadership in early childhood education?
- Why is there leadership support for primary and secondary teachers and not for ECEC? Could this area be improved, how?

3. How do you /your organisation relate to ECCE settings and the wider educational and political arena?

- How much contact has your organisation with ECCE settings?
- Do you have any connection to national government/international organisations and do you have any input into the development of ECCE policies?
- Does your organisation have any connection/collaboration with other organisations?
- How can we improve relationships within/without the ECCE community?

4. How do the following influences impact on the understanding, relationships, and practice of leadership?

- Gender,class?
- Are there other influences that could be assisting the practice of leadership?
- Are there other influences that may be preventing leadership practice?

5. How would you/your organisation envisage and develop leadership?

- What form should ECCE leadership take?
- How can we develop this form of leadership?
- If not leadership, what are the alternative interventions to address the difficulties being experienced by the ECCE practitioners?
- In three or four sentences, describe how leadership is and how it could be?

Appendix L: Interview Log

Interviews 2016/2017 50 Participants

Government Representatives	Higher Educational Institutions	Professional Bodies	Practitioners Within the school settings	Practitioners Individual
A 26/1/2017 DES	B 11/11/2016	C 19/1/2017	D (2) 12/12/2016 Rural privately owned sessional service	E1 25/5/2017
A2 28/6/2017 DCYA	B1 11/11/2016	C1 3/2/2017	D1 (3) 11/1/2017 Rural Community Crèche	E2 30/5/2017
A3 29/9/2017 DCYA	B2 24/11/2016	C2 10/3/2017	D2 (4) 10/2/2017 11/2/2017 Urban, All day, school privately owned	E3 2/6/2017 Withdrew
A4 6/12/2017 Tulsa	B3 19/1/2017	C3 11/4/2017	D3 (3) 22/2/2017 Montessori privately owned	E4 23/6/2017
	B4 3/4/2017	C4 19/4/2017	D4 (2) 11/4/2017 Privately owned sessional and after school	E5 27/6/2017
	B5 5/5/2017	C5 24/4/2017	D5 (4) 2/5/2017 Urban Community Crèche	E6 28/8/2017

	B6 17/5/2017	C6 18/5/2017		Level 5
	B7 23/6/2017	C7 27/5/2017 (No show) (Replaced 13/12/2017)		F1 Level 5 – 7/11/2017 F2 Level 5 – 7/11/2017
	B8 25/6/2017	C8 14/7/2017		
	B9 15/7/2017	C9 14/7/2017		
		C10 25/10/2017		

Appendix M: Transcribed Interview: Question 1

SCHOOL D

Demographic Details

Pseudo Name: D

Date: 12/12/2016

Background/ Qualification: 46 years; Level 8- went back completed degree- to 'secure decent capitation- level 6, level 7 not sufficient anymore'

Location: Rural all day service

x2 Practitioners

x1 Manager/owner

x32 children

Stakeholder Level: ECEC Owner/Manager

Purpose: It should be all about the care and education of young people that is what it should be concerned with, yet, you know that most, many parents and people in general only see it as a babysitting service-we are there to mind their children while they go out to work. They don't seem to realise it is much more than this and this is a very important time for the child's development in all areas.

(1) How does your setting understand leadership and how is it practiced in your setting?

D: Sigh-when I did my degree 5 years ago it was all about management-how to manage a centre, how to look at budgeting, staff organisation, meeting legal/policy requirements- now it is all about leadership, everywhere you look there is leadership AIM, inspections focused- but I have no idea what it is- does it mean a leader, does it mean everyone is a leader-I really don't know. Without doubt, it is all now to do with management, its management- yet we are trying to lead. Funnily enough, there was I think more leadership before the ECCE scheme. We were business owners having to make daily decisions, project forward, we had the leadership skills to keep our settings viable, welcoming and professional, now we are reduced to "free pre-school"- there isn't much professional about that- nor is there much need to look for our way forward- we are no longer independent, we must tick the same boxes and do the same thing as everyone else- it's a joke.

I Roles, Responsibilities, and Skills?

D Roles: I suppose you are talking about things like team building, working together and collaborating on ideas, a vision for the setting, supporting your staff, working with parents all towards the best interest of the child. Maybe looking at how the setting can move forward- the long-term goals/plans and don't talk to me about the government leadership, well that's another story, they are definitely not leading as I do – leading as I say is more like what is going on. Look we have no

say, no right to run our schools as we wish and now we have a list of rules and regulations that no other sector would put up with.

I 1a Roles - You talk about government responsibility and leadership - do you think there is a responsibility on the practitioner/owner/manager to advocate for the sector and would this be considered a leadership role?

Yes, we do have to advocate for the child and their needs, AIM is there to make sure the child gets all its entitled to, but here it's all about saving money, free inclusion, well at 2 euro per child it is definitely cost cutting. We are now doing the work of psychologists, speech and language therapists and identifying difficulties, but that's all we are doing, we are just passing the book on to the next person, that is not inclusion and yes it's the child in the middle of it all and no one seems to ask questions or care about this, these are young children with very special needs- it's very difficult at the moment.

1a1 Does leadership involve advocating for ourselves.

Not much point in us saying anything no one wants to hear- not much point in leading when nowhere to go and no one coming with you. I think it should come from government, they need to pay workers, provide supports for them, all talk about leadership and quality- it takes money and resources to achieve this and the government are very resistant to doing this. You know as well as I do, it is all about affordability, the parent and working there is nothing else. Look parents have to work, they have huge mortgages, it's not easy and we have to take care of the children, but does it all have to be about saving money. I know you are thinking than why not do something about it? Well I tried in the past and I joined groups and talked about it , but I got fed up as we could never agree what we could do and it all became a big moaning session, I am not like this normally, but I feel so frustrated and angry with what is happening to us. Look we need to get better at asking for what we want, we need to be able to think on the spot and also to be able to stand back and reflect- what is the best for us and the children, this could be called leadership, if it is than it is not happening in the sector.

I 1c Leadership/management? Is there a difference?

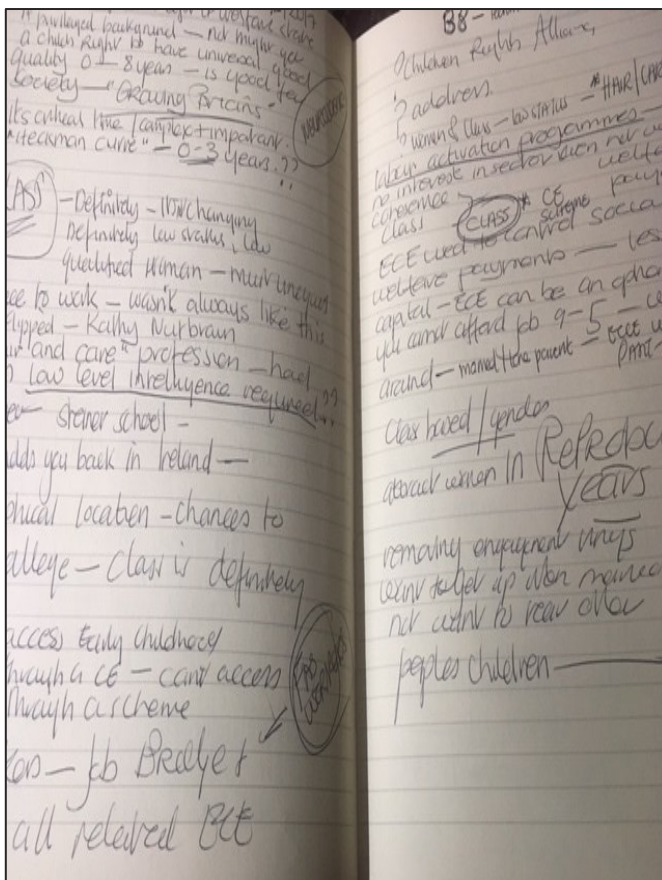
D: Yes, definitively- management just day to day stuff, it's the admin and organisation to make sure the setting runs smoothly- leadership all about vision, the future, planning, reflecting, collaboration as a team, a group to bring this to fruition. You need both for a setting to run well, but that is not happening, there is way too much administration work, regulations, inspections, new policies, new protocols, new modules, new add on inclusion, education inspections, proof of documentation, its like the busy office in an organisation overseeing the running of a firm - it no more resembles the old ECCE centre where the manager had time to ramble out and say hello to parents and the children and chat to the staff.

It takes too long to do what is required to get the school to run smoothly day-to-day to even think about the future.

I 1d What can we do to build a better understanding of leadership (knowledge) and leadership practice (skills)?

D: I don't know what is the best way to prepare and support staff in this policy madness? There is so much red tape, so many forms to be filled, regulations, visits, audits, inspections, it's a very difficult job. Ooh, well improve, training as I said what I did in college was all about managing ,the CCC after support but it is also about management, how to manage PIP etc. We could do with CPD- not directed CPD but groups of managers coming together to share ideas and ways of leading- CPD seems to be always around one idea and you sign up- I'd much prefer meet others similar to me- yet in the past there have been attempts at this, but it has never worked to groups of different interest and opinions, way too many voices in our sector. It is all crazy, isn't it?

Appendix N: Interview memos



Appendix O: Deductive and inductive coding

Exported Code Book List 5

REFINING THE CODES IN TO PATTERNS/THEMES

OCTOBER 2017 - DEC 2017

DEDUCTIVE CODES

1) LEADERSHIP
LAYER(S)
CONSTRAINT(S)
PERCEPTION(S)

2) GENDER

3) CLASS

page 1 *downloaded hyperresearch 875

Exported Code Book List 5A

INITIAL CODES October 2017
INDUCTIVE
WHAT IS EMERGING?

OCTOBER 2017

4:1 (D)
LIST OF INITIAL CODES
(97)

Page 1

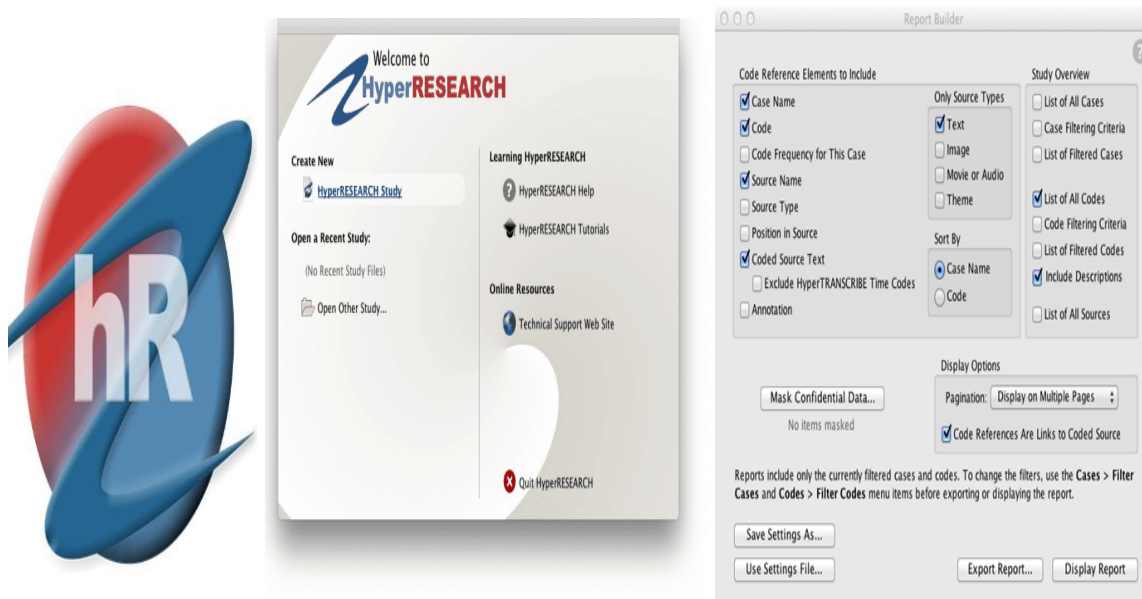
Exported Code Book List 5

- DEVELOP LEADERSHIP
- CROSS FERTILISATION
- DELINEATE ROLES
- EDUCATE PARENTS/ADVOCATE
- ROLE DELINEATION
- UNIONS
- WAY FORWARD
- YOUNG SECTOR/EVOLVING
- CLASS MATTERS
 - CLASS/SUPPORT
 - CLASS
 - CLASS AVOIDANCE
 - CLASS REPRODUCTION/REGENERATION
 - CLASS/EDUCATION
- COMMUNICATION
 - RELATIONSHIPS
 - ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT
 - STRUGGLE
 - SUPPORTS
 - SUPPORT PRIMARY
 - TOKENISM
- CONTRADICTION
 - INCONSISTENCY
 - REACTIVE/PROACTIVE
 - POWER/EMPOWER
 - PROGRESS/REGRESS
 - PURPOSE
- GENDER
 - GENDER-SPECIFIC
 - GENDER/LEADERSHIP
 - PATRIARCHY
 - CULTURE OF NICENESS
 - VICTIM/VILLIAN
 - WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN
- LAYERS
 - OWN AGENDA 1
 - ABDICATING RESPONSIBILITY
 - CONNECTED
 - DISCONNECT
 - FRACTURED/FRAGMENTED
 - OWN AGENDA
- LEADERSHIP
 - INVISIBLE LEADERSHIP
 - PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP
 - AUTONOMY
 - CRITICAL CAPACITY
 - LEADERSHIP DEFICIT
 - LEADERSHIP ESSENTIAL
 - REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
- LEADERSHIP CONSTRAINTS
 - COMPETITION
 - CONSTANTLY CHANGING
 - DISILLUSIONMENT/RESIGNATION
 - EXODUS/EXTINCTION
 - HOPE
 - ISOLATED/INVISIBLE
 - LANGUAGE
 - LEADERSHIP BY DEFAULT
 - PRIVATE V COMMUNITY
 - TIME DEFICIT
- LEADERSHIP PERCEPTION
 - LEADERSHIP DEFINITION
 - RESEARCH/KNOWLEDGE/THEORY
 - CONFUSION
 - EVERYONE A LEADER
 - PROCESS
 - RESPONSIBILITY

Exported Code Book List 5A

- CLASS/SUPPORT
- GENDER-SPECIFIC
- GENDER/LEADERSHIP
- INCONSISTENCY
- INVISIBLE LEADERSHIP
- LEADERSHIP DEFINITION
- NO KNOWLEDGE OF POLICY/ LITERATURE
- OWN AGENDA 1
- PATRIARCHY
- PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP
- REACTIVE/PROACTIVE
- RESEARCH/KNOWLEDGE/THEORY
- VALUED/PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY
- ABDICATING RESPONSIBILITY
- ADMINISTRATIVE OVERLOAD
- AUTONOMY
- BUSINESS
- CLASS
- CLASS AVOIDANCE
- CLASS REPRODUCTION/REGENERATION
- CLASS/EDUCATION
- COMPETITION
- CONFUSION
- CONNECTED
- CONSTANTLY CHANGING
- CRITICAL CAPACITY
- CROSS FERTILISATION
- CULTURE OF NICENESS
- DELINEATE ROLES
- DISCONNECT
- DISILLUSIONMENT/RESIGNATION
- EDUCATE PARENTS/ADVOCATE
- EVERYONE A LEADER
- EXODUS/EXTINCTION
- FRACTURED/FRAGMENTED
- HOPE
- INADEQUATE TRAINING
- ISOLATED/INVISIBLE
- LANGUAGE
- LEADERSHIP BY DEFAULT
- LEADERSHIP DEFICIT
- LEADERSHIP ESSENTIAL
- LEADERSHIP MACRO
- LEADERSHIP V MANAGEMENT
- LIMITATIONS
- MANAGEMENT/MANAGING
- NEOLIBERALISM/SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS
- NO SUPPORT STRUCTURES
- OUTLIER
- OVERREGULATED
- OWN AGENDA
- POLICY/LITERATURE
- POWER/EMPOWER
- PRIVATE V COMMUNITY
- PROCESS
- PROGRESS/REGRESS
- PURPOSE
- QUALIFICATIONS
- REFLECTIVE PRACTICE
- RELATIONSHIPS
- RESEARCH/BODY OF KNOWLEDGE
- RESPONSIBILITY
- ROLE
- ROLE DELINEATION
- ROLE/MENTORING/TEAM
- ROLE/STAKEHOLDERS
- ROLES
- ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Appendix P: HypeRESEARCH



LEADERSHIP RECORDED 3.hs4

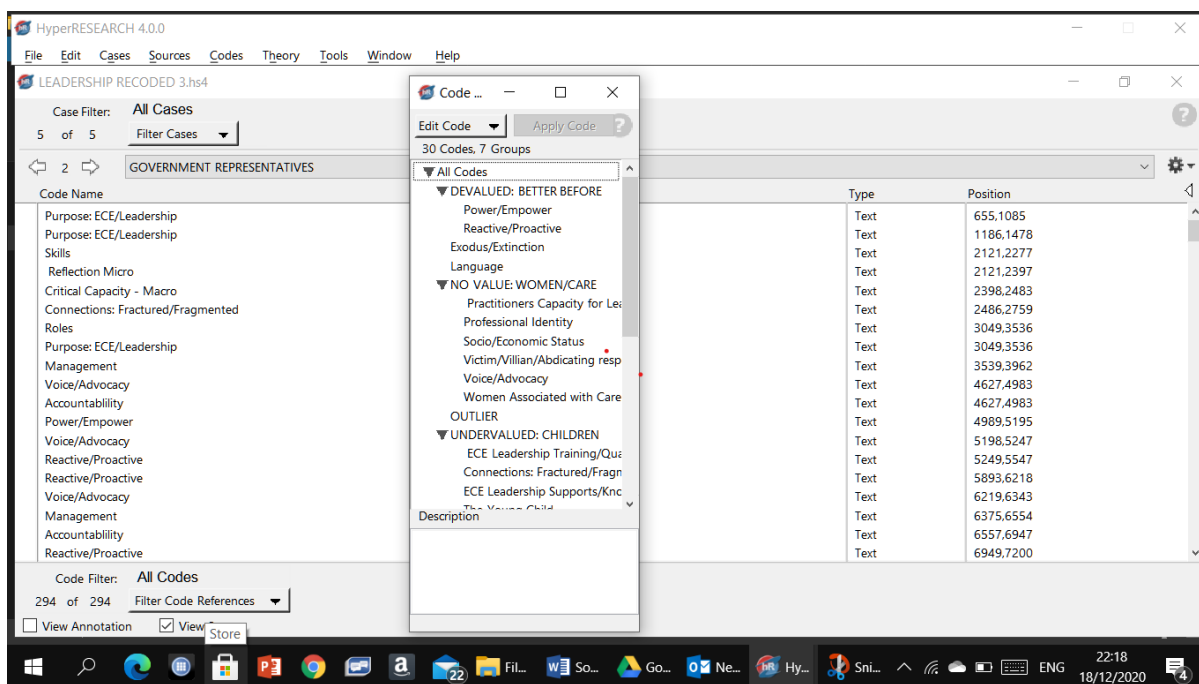
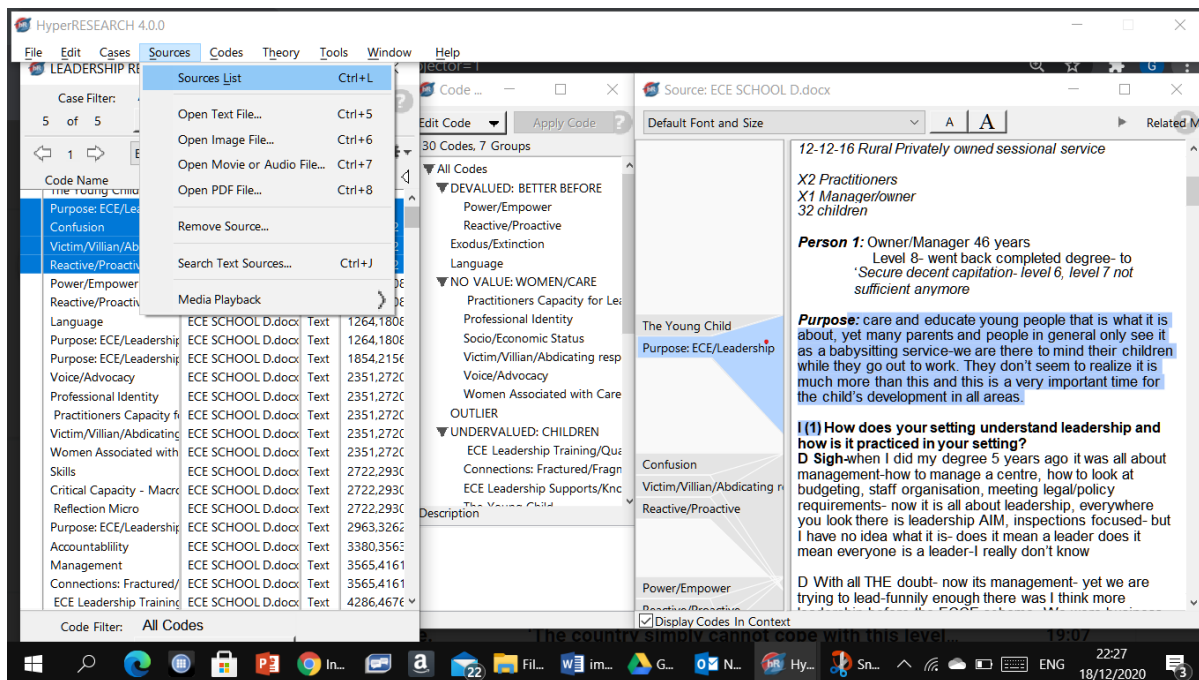
Case Filter: All Cases
5 of 5 Filter Cases

ECE SCHOOLS D

Code Name	Source	Type	Position
The Young Child	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	459,791
Purpose: ECE/Leadership	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	459,791
Confusion	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	885,1262
Victim/Villain/Abdicating responsibility	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	885,1262
Reactive/Proactive	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	885,1262
Power/Empower	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	1264,1808
Reactive/Proactive	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	1264,1808
Language	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	1264,1808
Purpose: ECE/Leadership	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	1264,1808
Purpose: ECE/Leadership	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	1854,2156
Voice/Advocacy	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2351,2720
Professional Identity	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2351,2720
Practitioners Capacity for Leadership Autonomy	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2351,2720
Victim/Villain/Abdicating responsibility	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2351,2720
Women Associated with Care	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2351,2720
Skills	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2722,2930
Critical Capacity - Macro	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2722,2930
Reflection Micro	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2722,2930
Purpose: ECE/Leadership	ECE SCHOOL D.docx	Text	2963,3262

Code Filter: All Codes
411 of 411 Filter Code References

View Annotation View Source



Appendix Q: Frequency of initial codes

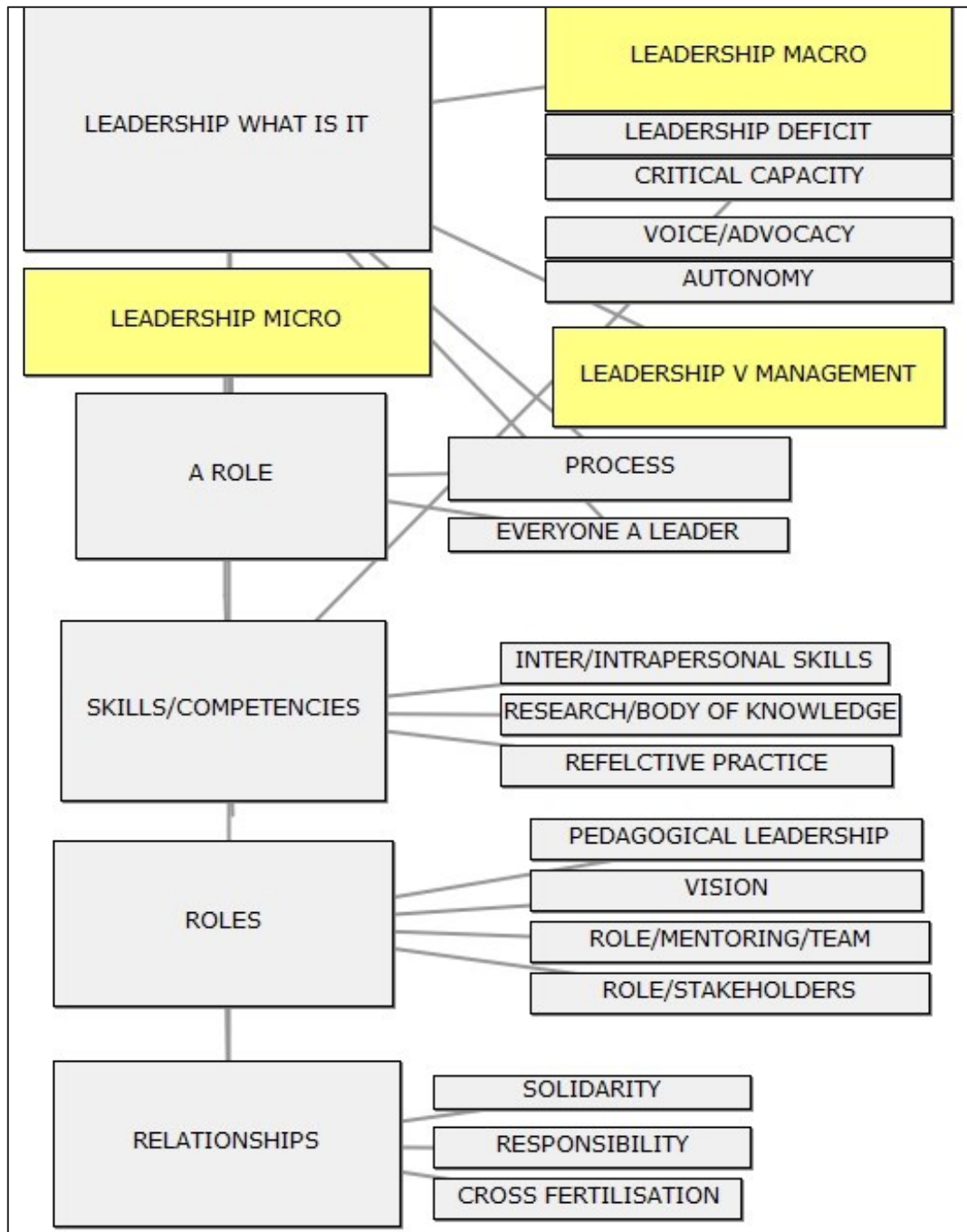
Code	Total	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev	Bar Graph
CLASS/SUPPORT	15	0	6	3	2.449	
CLASS/LEADERS...	52	3	18	10.4	6.025	
INVISIBLE LEADERS...	12	0	5	2.4	2.074	
LEADERSHIP DEFIN...	66	7	20	13.2	5.805	
NO KNOWLEDGE ...	40	0	19	8	6.964	
OWN AGENDA 1	21	0	20	4.2	8.843	
PATRIARCHY	52	0	21	10.4	9.343	
PEDAGOGICAL LEA...	24	0	10	4.8	4.438	
REACTIVE/PROACT...	49	0	19	9.8	7.95	
RESEARCH/KNOWL...	18	0	10	3.6	3.782	
VALUED/PROFESSI...	95	9	34	19	10.075	
ABDICATING RESPO...	78	4	25	15.6	8.264	
ADMINISTRATIVE...	34	2	15	6.8	5.07	
AUTONOMY	13	0	6	2.6	2.302	
BUSINESS	18	3	5	3.6	0.894	
CLASS	54	5	21	10.8	6.099	
CLASS AVOIDANCE	26	2	10	5.2	2.95	
CLASS REPRODUCTI...	30	2	13	6	4.848	
CLASS/EDUCATION	35	3	13	7	3.937	
COMPETITION	9	0	4	1.8	2.049	
CONFUSION	38	1	10	7.6	3.715	
CONNECTED	32	0	11	6.4	5.128	
CONSTANTLY CHA...	5	0	3	1	1.225	
CONTRADICTION	18	0	8	3.6	4.099	
CRITICAL CAPACITY	103	6	41	20.6	16.652	
CROSS FERTILISATI...	19	2	7	3.8	2.168	
CULTURE OF NICEN...	25	0	10	5	4.301	
DELINEATE ROLES	5	0	2	1	1	
DISCONNECT	30	0	10	6	3.674	
DISILLUSIONMENT/...	33	3	14	6.6	4.393	
EDUCATE PARENTS...	18	3	5	3.6	0.894	
EVERYONE A LEADER	9	0	5	1.8	1.924	
EXODUS/EXTINCTI...	30	0	11	6	4.528	
FACTURED/FRAG...	77	7	33	15.4	10.334	
FINDER	12	1	6	2.4	2.191	
PIPE	5	0	2	1	1	
INADEQUATE TRAI...	67	3	19	13.4	6.542	
RELATED/INVISIBLE	39	1	25	7.8	9.834	
LANGUAGE	48	4	15	9.6	4.722	
LEADERSHIP BY DEF...	6	0	3	1.2	1.095	
LEADERSHIP CONS...	15	1	4	3	1.414	
LEADERSHIP DEFICIT	49	1	21	9.8	8.075	
LEADERSHIP ESSEN...	69	8	24	13.8	6.648	

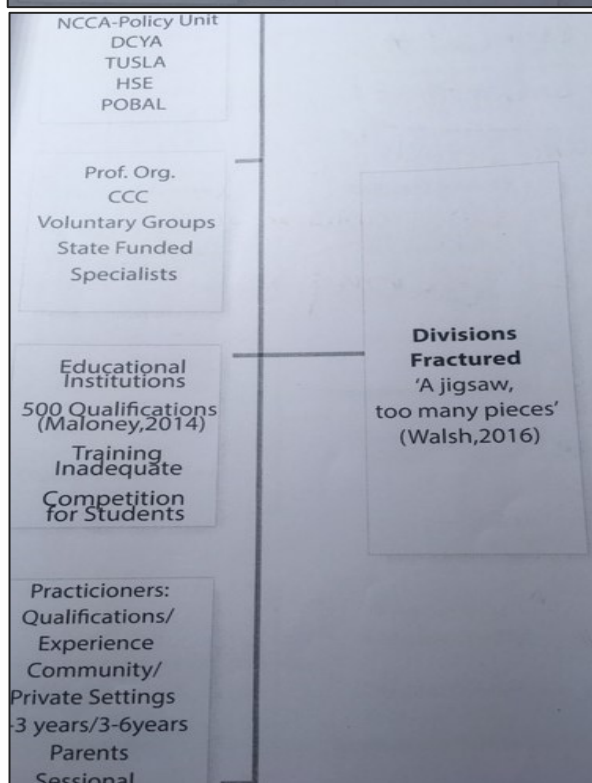
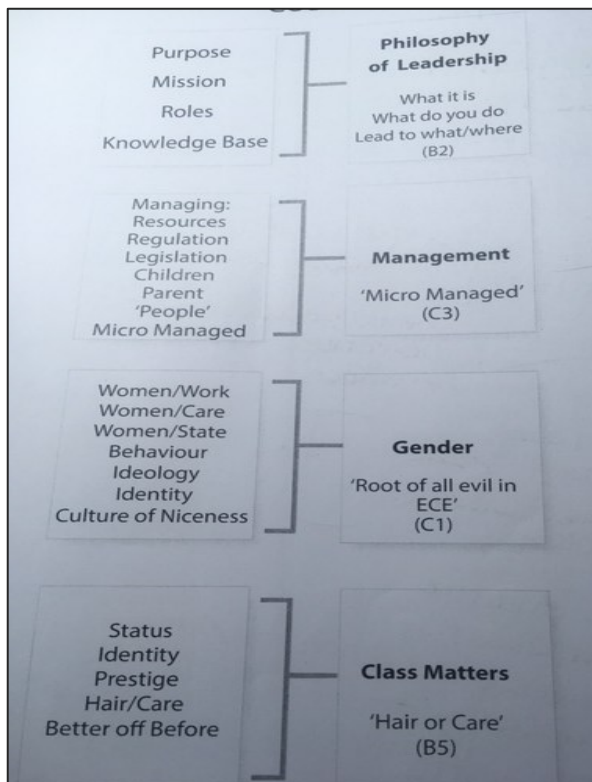
LIST I
FREQUENCY

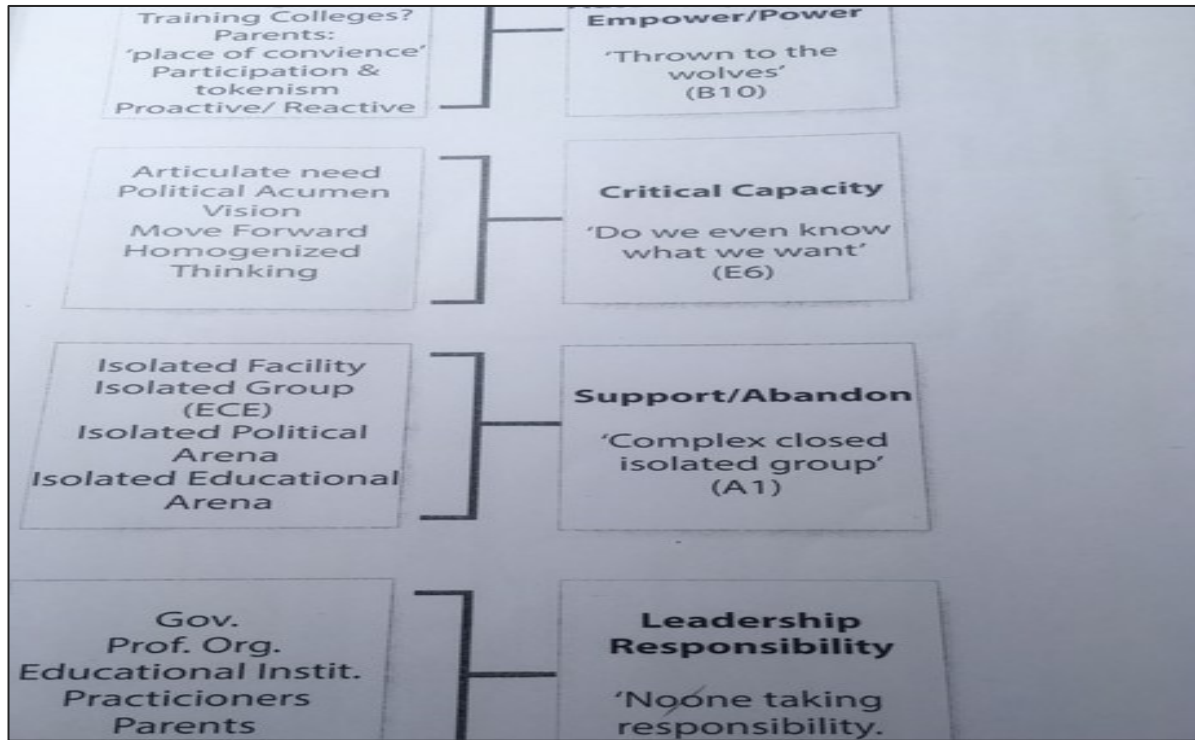
LIST I
FREQUENCY

LIST I

Appendix R: Refining and recoding codes







Appendix S: Cuts across the data

THEME	GOV REP	HIGHER ED	PROF ORG	SCHOOLS	PRACTITIONERS
<p>Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role/process ▪ Skills/competencies ▪ Pedagogical/ AIM ▪ Vision ▪ Confusion ▪ Relationships/ solidarity 	<p>Pedagogical leadership, to us this is crucial.</p> <p>We feel that leadership involves everyone in a service, from the person who serves the food to the cleaner to those who are involved in the curriculum, there is leadership at all levels (GOV A: 1231,1684).</p>	<p>I would consider leadership to be associated with support, the leader is someone who inspires and supports people in their work and brings them along in such a way they follow them (H.Ed B7:465,688).</p>	<p>A process where communication, policy, and quality for children is paramount (Prof Org C: 1781, 1995).</p>	<p>I laughed when I saw your topic as my masters is about this topic and after a year I am none the wiser about what it is- as far as I know- no one knows what it's all about. I use to think it was all about a leader now I think it involves everyone-trying to do this in practice is hard - impossible. (School D2: 1017, 1524).</p>	<p>E2 We don't use the word leader, some settings have room leaders but we don't as it only causes hassle with the girls, they feel left out and hurt if they are not the room leader and there is a bad atmosphere (Practitioner E2 437,645).</p>
<p>Better Before:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Progression/ regression ▪ Reactive/proactive ▪ Voice/advocacy ▪ Power/Empower ▪ Support ▪ Autonomy 	<p>We're just moving people out of sector; we are training them into specialist jobs...a brain drain-who will be left to lead? (5893, 6217)</p> <p>Unfortunately start strong was only beginning to get established and they didn't get to make the impact they would</p>	<p>Management is how leadership is now (H.Ed B8:26317, 26440).</p>	<p>Our own role has become very management orientated. We spent the early years working in partnership with the settings ...if we had continued in this manner then we would have the beginning if not the realisation of a very good understanding and practice of leadership in the sector (Prof Org C8:8557.9183).</p>	<p>Now its management ... we had the leadership skills to keep our settings viable, and professional - now we are reduced to 'free pre-school'- there isn't much professional about that- nor is there much need to look for our way</p>	<p>CCC...You think they're working for you rather than with you, with a lot of paperwork with the new schemes ... but if you're talking about a close reciprocal relationship... somebody helping you with documentation doesn't make for deep and meaningful relationships (Practitioner E5: 9438,9474).</p>

	have liked (GOV A: 5014,5226).			forward. We are no longer independent; we must tick the same boxes and do the same thing as everyone else- it's a joke (School D 1343,1865)	
<p>In Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management ▪ Business ▪ Pedagogy/Inclusion ▪ Affordable ▪ Reflective practice 	I believe in the reflective practitioner , (Gov A3: 5440, 5826). Governance and accountability , essential elements of leadership (Gov A4: 14008, 14357).	Sometimes it's all about money (H.Ed B1:14223, 14225).	C3 We have a discourse now of affordable childcare and this is where all the resources are going to make the service more affordable to parents (Prof Org C3:9149, 9290).	This may sound bad but you can talk all day about team work and joint decision making but now it is all about business and making ends meet in our case (School D5:6978,7273)	Affordable childcare this is the language that we are listening to - how would you even begin to know who to lead, how to lead, what to lead or where to lead in the midst of all of this language (Practitioner E6:18248, 18618).
<p>Absent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child/Care ▪ Gender ▪ Voice/Advocacy ▪ Professional identity ▪ Social/economic status ▪ Support(structures/literature/policy) ▪ Critical capacity 	The language around leadership, vision moving forward, critical thinking these are not things that we are investing in the sector at the moment (Gov A1: 3993, 4135).	There seems to be no more motivation, no momentum, people view themselves as glorified babysitters, they feel undervalued, there's no power (Higher. Ed B6: 12831, 13111).	We lost such an opportunity here, free is never valued ... now we have 2 free years, the whole value diminished to a free 3 hours for children and 3 hours for parents who need to do something else or wish to go to work (Prof Org C4: 13933,14668)	We are not relevant in the scheme of things, we just do childcare (School D4(a): 6802, 6837). Why can't we ask practitioners and see what they need and put in the supports necessary to ensure strong leadership (School D5:10957, 11506).	We have been stripped of everything. When you strip away people's pride in what they do, you take away that sense of responsibility and then they hand it all over to others you are left with nothing (Practitioner E4: 12584,12958).

<p>Responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Critical capacity ▪ Cross fertilisation ▪ Leadership macro ▪ Understanding leadership/practice 	<p>There is a need to change the whole attitude around early childhood education it's not a babysitting service it's not about mothering a child it's a professional job (Gov A1: 19781, 20031).</p>	<p>I'm thinking you know about Freire, empowering students, are we taking this away from them, is there within the university a place for developing critical skills around politics, advocacy within leadership and are we living up to this responsibility, you're leaving me with more questions than answers (H.Ed B2: 27709,28012).</p>	<p>I see leadership as a way to change things, we have to take on this role and become more responsible you know, we need to start small and we need to gather, gather people together (Prof Org C10: 1406,14234)</p>	<p>Improve relationships top down-bottom up-both- the government could lead, one body, one department to oversee us, we could develop a working relationship with one-bottom-up start in settings-qualifications need to be aligned. We have way too many different standards of training. If this happened, community and private would speak the same language (School D2, 6507, 6875).</p>	<p>I think we are capable of developing a form of leadership; we need an Irish solution to an Irish problem. We always think how we can do something who could help us, we need to focus on the present we need to tackle the issue [leadership] ourselves (Practitioner E6: 16356, 17127).</p>
<p>Developing Leadership</p>	<p>The area that interests us is [leadership for] inclusion and the Learner fund and Link to support this. (Gov A3:11835, 12382).</p>	<p>I think ECEC could be called affordable convenience, places for people to leave their children to go to work and I think parents just can't think about us, they just can't go there, they're so busy that there's no headspace, there needs to be a conversation</p>	<p>You could say that it is our job to support leadership and develop in the sector coming from a child CCC ...we would love to address leadership, we think it is probably more important than management, at the moment schools are finding it hard to fill in forms (Prof Org C9: 5490/6044)</p>	<p>How staff can get relevant training to support leadership even management, this is the question, are they doing a good job, many organisations are good they get a lot of attention in the media but whether they are</p>	<p>E4 Develop Leadership: difficult, too many groups, too many agendas, too many qualifications- not sure how (Practitioner E4: 7534, 7694).</p>

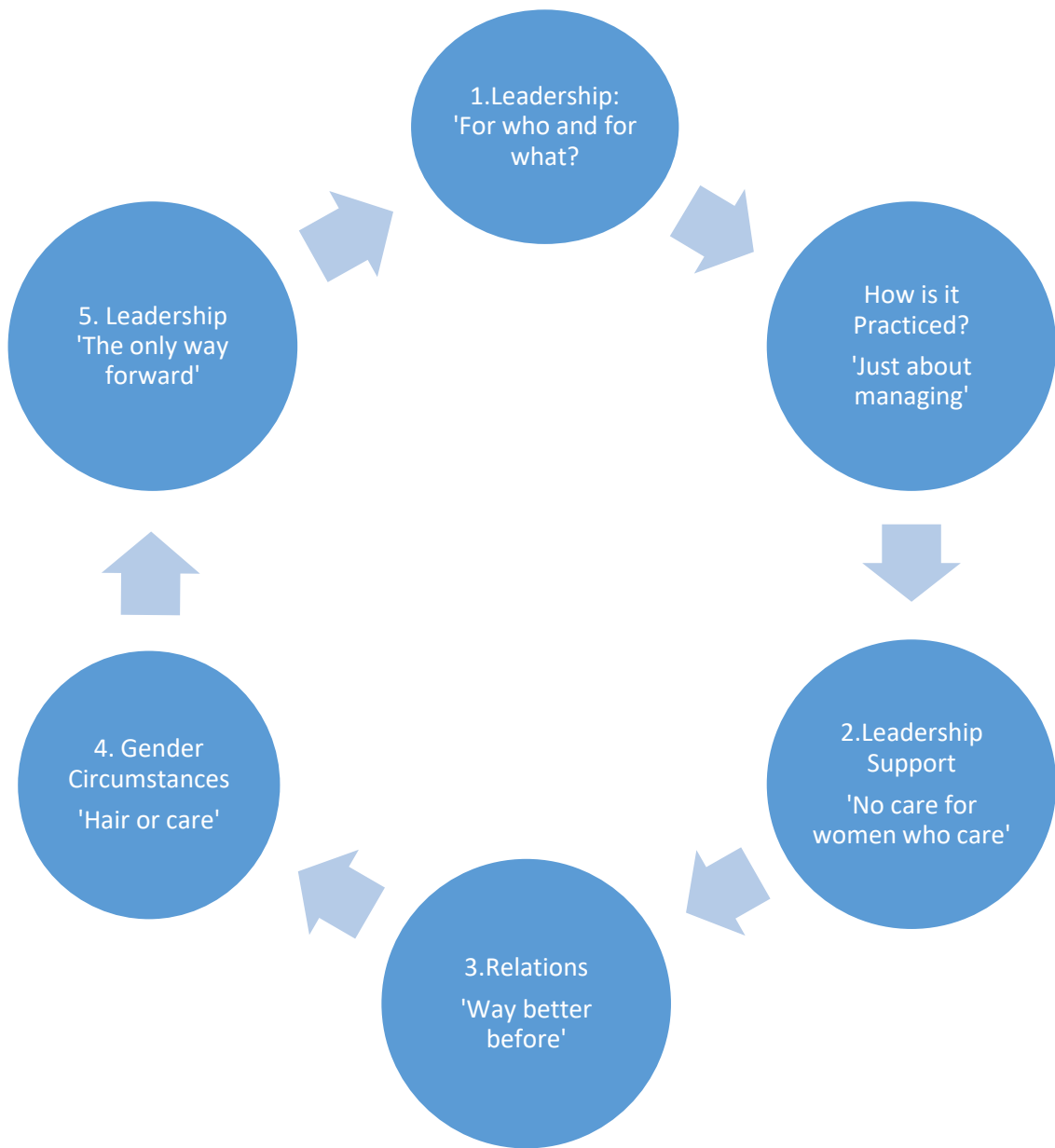
		about what we're doing and a vision and purpose for early childhood education (H.ED B9: 987,1328) .		helping the manager/leader is another question (School D4(a):10957, 11506).	
--	--	---	--	--	--

Appendix T: You know what you display

Possible themes and sub-themes

<p>Leadership for what ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion as to the purpose of ECE and leadership. • Practitioners must confused, Government Representatives clear purpose - PURPOSE
<p>Better Before</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement that recent ECE policy, regulations, and inspections could be considered reactive rather than proactive. • The stakeholders (exception Gov Rep) suggested that supports, relationships expectations, and morale were 'better before'. Practitioners considered to be disempowered and are exiting the sector.
<p>Manage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stakeholders advised that leadership was unlikely to be practiced in the settings as the priority in the sector was management to facilitate accountable and affordable childcare. • Question - is it more /less than mangement?
<p>Value</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children were described as the least valuable member of society and by association the gendered ideology of women and care devalued the role of the practitioner and leadership • Training and supports for leadership of no value. • Relationships in the sector fractured and fragmented - 'No care for women who care • Is value the right title?
<p>The Class Seal[ing}</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a suspicion that the practitioner may be a villain not a victim • Stakeholders had no expectation, questioned practitioners capacity for leadership .Stakeholders unwilling to discuss the impact of socio/ecomich status and associated values on leadership. • Class a no go area
<p>Leadership Way forword</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for advancing leadership • Communication (Voice) • Identity and Belonging (relationships) • Exploring (Research) and Thinking (Critical) • Well-Being (leadership the responsibility for the welfare of all stakeholders) • Question: Am I just forcing these categories (Aistear THemes)

Leadership	Theme	Sub-theme	Research Question
What is it?	Leadership 'For whom for what and to what end'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership: What is it? • Leadership: For Whom? • Leadership: To what end? 	(1) How is ECE Leadership understood?
How it was?	Better Before 'All way better before'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reactive Policy • Practitioner: Empowered/Powerless • Practitioner: Participation/Exodus 	<p>(1) How is leadership understood</p> <p>(3) How do ECE stakeholders relate to each other</p>
How it is	Management 'Just about managing now'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Childcare • Accountable Childcare 	(1) How is leadership practiced?
Why it is	Value The value of women and Child/Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Children are of little value' • 'Training and Supports of no Value' • Relationship: 'Who is There to Talk to' • 'No Care for Women who Care' 	<p>(2) What are the structures/policies in place to support leadership</p> <p>(4) What are the influences impacting on leadership</p>
Why it is?	The Class Seal[ing] 'The great unmentionable, the elephant in the room'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Practitioner: Victim or Villain – Trust/Mistrust • Leadership: Capacity or Expectation • Class Evasion 	4)What are the influences impacting on leadership
How it could be	Leadership 'The only way forward'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication (Voice) • Identity and Belonging (relationships) • Exploring (Research) and Thinking (Critical) • Well-Being: leadership responsibility for the welfare of all stakeholders 	(5) Strategies to develop leadership or other interventions to advance the workforce.



Appendix U: Weighted codes

Doing qualitative research with the intermittent support of numbers may be considered a productive way of keeping 'analytically honest, guarding against bias and examining how solid the insights are' - (Miles et al., 2014, p. 286).

Theme 2 Better Before: <i>'All way better before the free year'</i>				
Theme 2	Gov. Rep (n= 4)	Higher Educ (n= 10)	Prof Org (n= 11)	Practitioners (n= 25)
Reactive Policy	13	25	44	51
Practitioner Empowered/Powerless	20	69	89	74
Practitioner Participation/Exodus	6	13	10	28
Area of most interest	A3/A4 empowered the sector. A/A1 disempowered	Practitioner disempowered – recent reforms	Their own sense of disempowerment and practitioner	Very vocal – loss of power to make decisions
Area of least Interest	Practitioners exiting the sector	Practitioners exiting the sector	Practitioners exiting the sector	Practitioners exiting the sector

Theme 3 Management <i>'Management is how leadership is now'</i>				
Theme 3	Gov Rep (n= 4)	Higher Educ (n= 10)	Prof Org (n= 11)	Practitioners (n= 25)
Management	17	32	43	49
Affordable Childcare	6	26	28	66
Accountable Childcare	4	9	18	52
Area of most interest	Management	Management	Management	Affordable Childcare

Theme 4	Gov Rep (n= 4)	Higher Educ (n= 10)	Prof Org (n= 11)	Practitioners (n= 25)
Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Structures 	12	25	44	33
	10	30	35	11
Careless Relationships	20	32	67	34
The Child	4	29	32	68
Women/Care	8	42	55	42
Area of most interest	Relationships mainly Gov A and A1	Relationships	Relationships	Relationships
Area of leas interest	Women and children	Training	The child	Support strictures –literature, policy

Theme 5 Class <i>'Class is there, it is everywhere'</i>				
Theme 5	Gov Rep (n= 4)	Higher Educ (n= 10)	Prof Org (n= 11)	Practitioners (n= 25)
Victim/Villain	15	23	82	9
No Capacity/Expectation	11	12	42	16
Class avoidance	7	8	14	19
Area of most interest	Emphasis on villain	Victim	Emphasis on Villain	No expectation for leadership
Area of least interest	Class	Class	Class	Victim/villain

Theme 6 Leadership <i>'The only way forward'</i>				
Theme 6	Gov Rep (n= 4)	Higher Educ (n= 10)	Prof Org (n= 11)	Practitioners (n= 25)
Regulate leadership (Gov 4)	1	0	0	0
Status Quo (Gov A3)	1	1	1	2
Relationships	6	20	47	12
Conscientization	4	56	29	8
Children and care	3	28	22	61
Area of most interest	Relationships	Critical capacity	Relationships	Children and care
Area of least interest	Children and care	Regulate	Regulate	Regulate

Appendix V: HyperRESEARCH Theory builder

The software package provided the opportunity to test out the theory.

