

Global trajectories:

Power-geometries, cultural differences, and sociomateriality in school
practices in two nations

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Abstract

Globalisation is an all-encompassing and ubiquitous phenomenon—its consequential flows play an increasingly pervasive and profound role in most aspects of modern life in most societies across most of the world. Globalisation speeds up cultural transmission. Through vast and improved systems of transport and communication, an unprecedented migratory flow of people has increased the opportunities for different cultures to have more frequent interactions in local places like classrooms. Classrooms are now constituted by an ever-increasing array of cultural differences, as teachers and students move across once closed national boundaries to co-mingle with people unlike them. Teachers who stay in their home countries are no less affected as more and more of the world's people migrate in response to displacement, opportunity and global markets. Other global flows, like educational policies and curricula, learning materials and ideas, accompany this people mobility into many classrooms across the world. This research is timely as much of the world in general, and education in particular, is uneasy about current global people flows that bring differences to local places like schools and classrooms.

What goes on in classrooms, with respect to cultural differences, is the concern of this research. In the classrooms of the two geographically dispersed primary schools in Australia and United Arab Emirates, this research asks: How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two different nations in the context of globalisation? This is explored through the following sub-questions, which are matched to the data sets:

1. In what ways do global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom?

2. What do teachers and school leaders say about how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the schools and the classrooms?
3. How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in book reading and learning centres in each classroom?

Accordingly, this research studies teachers and students in two lower primary classrooms—one in Brisbane, Australia and the other in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. The research has been deliberately configured to study a world where cultural differences are increasingly growing, experienced and sometimes problematic.

The methodology for this work is based on critical ethnography, following Carspecken, applied to generate new understandings of how cultural differences influence the typical and routine actions of teachers and students as they interface with systems, with each other, as well as materials in their classrooms. Utilising a multidimensional approach to data analysis this study combines discourse and pragmatic horizon analysis to analyse an array of data representative of the everyday social actions of teachers and students in each school and classroom. The research framework is situated in Massey's theory of place, Giddens' structuration theory and Fenwick's theory of sociomateriality enables an examination of the linkages between schools and the broader sociocultural and material worlds in which each is contextualised, as well as the social interaction within. How these linkages, as global flows, work to structure the nature of social relations in each classroom is the essence of this inquiry.

The analysis generated four important findings about cultural differences in each classroom. The first illuminates that global flows, of people and curriculum, work as geometries of power to construct and contrive the social relationships in each school and classroom in ways that privilege some and marginalise others; the second, that the catering for and expression of cultural differences happens differently at each school—such differences manifest through powerful structuring dimensions of the social system to dominate, signify and legitimate some cultural practices over others. A third finding highlights that access, ease and familiarity with the

material worlds of lower primary classrooms, where there is a reliance on a sociomateriality for learning, appears to be influenced by cultural differences. The thesis overall, and fourth finding, is that in each school and classroom—contextualised in geographical and culturally distinct environs—white western educational ideologies dominate and position the cultural differences of class members.

The intended contribution of this research is to report on the ways that cultural differences—a consequence of global flows which bring an increasing cultural dynamism to the classrooms of this study—is positioned in the social action of teachers and students, as they go about their normal school day. A further contribution stems from the harnessing of seldom used, but in this case productive, social theories in educational research. There is limited application of the theories of place, following Massey, and Giddens’ structuration theory to investigate classroom social action with respect to globalisation. Its significance lies in the fact that there a paucity of research about cultural differences in primary classrooms, particularly with respect to its interplay with sociomateriality. Given the current world unrest that plagues our media and everyday lives with mixed messages about refugee boats, defensive and exclusionary walls, Islam, and white supremacy this research will have important stories to relate with respect to educating children for active, safe and informed participation in a future unsettled world.

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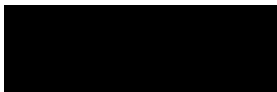
Statement of original authorship

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

Signed:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the author's signature.

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1 Introduction to the study

The overarching backdrop of this research is the phenomenon of globalisation where flows of people, ideas and materials, as cultural convergence (Zajda, 2012), are transformative in reshaping once relatively homogenised people groups into those defined, instead, by heterogeneity (Appadurai, 1996). Globalisation is at the heart of social change where its processes generate “new kinds of identity, new forms of intercultural communication and new forms of community” in local places (Luke & Luke, 2013, p. 462). Local places, like schools and classrooms, are very much caught up in this globalising phenomenon—concentrated places of exchange, where the dominant discourses of culture meet (Adams & Kirova, 2013b). Not only characterised as culturally diverse, classrooms are sites where the import of foreign curriculum and teaching materials is often mismatched to the cultural knowledges and customs of many of its members.

1.1 Personal note

This research project is inspired from a time past when I lived and worked as a teacher in the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East. As a teacher in a foreign land, a heightened awareness of cultural diversity was raised, especially with respect to how cultural differences were constituted and played out in the classes I taught. In my kindergarten classroom, some 14 different nations were represented. Some were from near, like local Emiratis and other Arab nationals from countries like Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine, some who brought other ways of being from close non-Arab countries like Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, and some far removed from the Middle East in cultural, social and religious ways from countries like Germany, Australia and America. Still, there were others from the poorest nations on earth like the Philippines and Nepal.

1.2 Introduction

This research project grew out of the desire to understand how an amalgam of culture was positioned in the above classroom in the United Arab Emirates. In reflective stance, as teacher at that time, I realised that in some ways the classrooms I had left in Australia—before departing for an overseas teaching post and ones I would return to at the end of my teaching contract—were constituted similarly to the one in the Middle East. They too were a patchwork of cultural differences where there were students like me, but also a huge range of students not like me—refugees from Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan and Syria, Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander students, and first, second and third generation immigrants from a possible pool of 200 countries (Tsolidis, 2011).

The classrooms, described above, represent the realities of a modern world as it experiences an unprecedented and concentrated array of cultural differences brought on by the mass movement of people, a consequence of the phenomenon of globalisation. In all aspects of modern life, including social action in classrooms, globalisation plays an increasingly pervasive and profound role (Giddens, 2003; Held & McGrew, 1999; Luke & Luke, 2013) and changes the way that social actors experience the everyday (Giddens & Sutton, 2017; Massey & Jess, 1995). This research will interrogate these differences to understand how they are positioned, but also how they play out in the everyday life worlds of teachers and students as they go about their business of education. The classroom is a dynamic place where a multiplicity of entities like people, material objects, speech and action, ways of knowing and being, and dispositions interact and intermingle to convey messages and make meaningful communication. What is of interest in this research is how cultural differences are positioned in these disparate but connected worlds of two classrooms in two schools in two different countries.

1.3 Research problem and research aims

This study aims to investigate the social action around cultural differences in two classrooms—one in Brisbane, Australia and the other in Dubai, a city in the United Arab Emirates. Through globalising forces and flows (Appadurai, 1990; Waters, 2013), both countries are heavily populated with the cultures and materials of others. It is important to note that this study is not a comparative one, but rather an inquiry into how globalisation influences social action and the practices in schools.

While there is a plethora of literature on the impact of globalisation on education, this research overwhelmingly has focused across systems and is less aligned with the social action of education within classrooms—how teachers and students experience their school day through global forces. The literature includes important work in early childhood (Lall, 2011; Tobin, Hsueh, & Karasawa, 2009) and language curriculum (Zakharia, 2009), while other studies concentrate on secondary and higher education (Levinson, 2005; Tabulawa, 1997). There are many studies about education and cultural differences, (Sleeter, 2005; M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004; Tsolidis, 2011) which tend to paint increasing cultural diversity in deficit terms, caught up in the binaries of victimhood and domination (Luke & Luke, 2013). Although a growing body of literature is forthcoming, there is a paucity in research that looks comparatively across different world regions. Few of these studies explore connections between social action and cultural differences at the classroom level (Tobin et al., 2009). Further, this research attends to and fills the gap of a “general tendency to grossly under-estimate materials as mere instruments to advance educational performance” (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84) to explore how cultural differences interplay with the sociomaterial processes of each classroom, a relatively new area of social investigation in education.

As the world becomes further globalised and culturally mixed, as classrooms reflect this trend to be constituted by teachers and students culturally unlike each other and as global disharmony about cultural differences grows, investigating how cultural differences are

positioned in two classrooms is worthwhile. This study will investigate the positioning of cultural differences in the lower primary arena, as constituted in the school and the classroom by outside and inside forces. In so doing, it will provide important findings about the nature of classroom social action in two classrooms in an increasingly globalised and pluralised world.

1.4 Methodological and theoretical approach

The methodological and theoretical framework for this research was designed to illuminate different perspectives within each classroom. To relate stories about cultural differences, and particularly how they are positioned, it had to be capable of an examination across, as well as deep within, each school's contextualising social system. The chosen framework coupled critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996) with three social theories: i) Massey's (1991a) theory of place as globalised and socially dynamic; ii) Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, which acknowledges the powerful role structures play in influencing social relations; and iii) the theory of sociomateriality (Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuk, 2011), which binds humans and materials in a recursive entanglement of meaning making. Emancipatory in nature, a critical ethnographer sees the classrooms as "social sites, social processes and cultural commodities" enabling an uncovering of the "social antagonisms and inequalities" in classroom action (Apple as cited in Hardcastle, Usher, & Holmes, 2006, p. ix) as well as systemic inequalities and injustices "complexly maintained and reproduced by culture" (Carspecken, 2001, p. 4). Examining the dynamism and profound implications of the globalisation process in social action calls for a critical line of inquiry (Kincheloe & McClaren, 2000) that looks across—place and systems theories (Giddens, 1984; Massey, 1991a)—as well as social action deep within (Carspecken, 1996; Fenwick et al., 2011). These ideas will be discussed further in Chapter Three and Four.

Several qualitative and thick data sets were collected—field notes of classroom social and material action, including reflective journal notes, semi-structured interview audio files, photographs of classroom action, and official transcripts like curriculum and other school

documents. Three methods were used to analyse the data: coding the data according to *a priori* as well as *in vivo* themes (Saldana, 2013); discourse analysis to study the language in use and therefore preoccupied with the contextualised linguistic aspects of the classroom—what people say (Gee, 2011); and a pragmatic horizon analysis, to generate a range of possible meanings attributed to speech—analysis of selected verbatim data for claims that are subjective, objective and normative (horizontal) or vertical in nature, as foregrounded, backgrounded and intermediate (Carspecken, 1996, 2001).

1.5 Context of this research—two countries, two classrooms

This research sits within an assemblage of geographical, social, cultural and sociomaterial constructs—schools and classrooms isolated by geography, classroom social relations disrupted by global influences, an increasing propensity towards cultural diversity and the understanding that classrooms are places where human and materials intertwine in meaning making. These contexts are briefly discussed below and are further explored in the forthcoming chapters of this research.

1.5.1 Two classrooms, two countries: Isolated, similar and different

Dubai and Brisbane, the two cities in which each school is located, contrast in multifarious ways—separated across space by 11,973 kilometres, they are socially, culturally, politically, economically and religiously different. Local politics in each city are predicated on different ideologies—Dubai is an Islamic, federal, presidential elected monarchy ruled by powerful sheiks, whereas Brisbane, as a city of the Commonwealth of Australia, has a representative democracy where freedom of religion is constitutionally reinforced.

1.5.2 The United Arab Emirates: Religious, social and political histories

The United Arab Emirates was founded in December 1971 as a federation uniting six (and now seven) Trucial States that were established in the 19th Century with the British to mine gas and

oil (Saudelli, 2012). Today, the United Arab Emirates is a modern oil producing country with a diversified economy that boasts material spectaculars like the world's tallest building, the aspiring Burj Khalifa. Life, for the Emiratis, has been transformed with the discovery of one of the world's largest supplies of gas and oil.

Transformed as well, is the population of this once quiet and tribal country where endless sand dunes devoid of water and trees echo of past simple and nomadic lives. To fuel the economic future of the country some eight million people representing over 90 countries now join the 1.4 million Emiratis (Snoj, 2015). More than 50 per cent of expatriates who come from poor east Asians countries furnish the labour force while western nations, like Australia, America, Britain and European nations, as well as others like India and South Korea, boost the intellectual workforce of education, finance, engineering, medicine and law (Jamal, 2015; Morgan, 2018).

As an Islamic country, religion plays a major role in daily life in all sectors. The judicial system is derived from a civil law system as well as Sharia Law. For example, Sharia courts have the ability to penalise domestic workers with physical punishment like floggings, amputation and crucifixion, less common today, are acceptable legal punishments (Amnesty, 1999). School curriculum, mostly western and imported, is supplemented by the study of Islam and Muslim students participate in Islamic Studies up to four times a week. The Mosque-dotted landscape provides places of worship, with few exceptions, for mostly men, the dominance of a patriarchal society limits opportunities for its female citizens (Brooks, 1995). Loudspeakers override the constant repetitious hammering of city construction sites as well as the quietness of small villages, bound by the constancy of sand, with calls to prayer, five times daily. Although there is evidence of occupation some 2000 years before, the modern nation of the United Arab Emirates is founded on a rich material inheritance of oil and gas. Modern Australia, on the other hand, is founded on invasion and colonial occupation.

1.5.3 Australia: religious, social and political histories

Historically invented by England, in 1788, “as a white diaspora at the edges of the empire”, Australia, as a British penal colony, “forcibly superimposed [Western ideologies] on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands and cultures, and [was] often treated by the empire in little more benign terms than our Asian counterparts” (Luke & Luke, 2013, p. 454). One of the most ethnically diverse nations of the world, modern Australia is populated by some 200 nations with 45 per cent of the population either born overseas or having at least one parent born outside Australia (Tsolidis, 2011). Australia’s prosperity, unlike that of the United Arab Emirates, grew on the back of wheat, wool and meat, coupled with successful ventures into manufacturing and mining (Connell, 2007). Lately, tourism, viticulture and international education are major contributors to GNP. In similarity to the United Arab Emirates, but for very different reasons, Australia is a country with a large percentage of educated migrants who participate as skilled workforce (Adams & Kirova, 2013b).

Culturally, Australia is beleaguered by a troubled past of invasion and racial discrimination deeply embedded in the relationship between European settlers and Indigenous people—an historical and current, inflamed and unresolved issue—and the White Australia Policy which forbade Asian immigration to discriminate against non-white and non-Christian groups (Connell, 2007; Tsolidis, 2011). An equally troubled future of increased complexity is more than likely; one racked with guilt and indifferences towards an ever-disadvantaged Indigenous people and a growing phobia of racial and religious intolerance fuelled by recent trends and events surrounding immigration (Markus, 2001; Marr, 2017). The recent rise of Islamophobia is one example, with visible markers under attack, like the hijab, mosques and halal food, thus challenging the accepted beliefs about what makes a suitable immigrant (Tsolidis, 2011).

Australia has a complex multicultural past. It always been a multicultural continent: at least 450 nations of Indigenous Australians have lived here for tens of thousands of years

(Townsend-Cross, 2004, p. 2), where they have suffered from extreme racism and continuing disadvantage (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2014). After World War II a massive influx of immigrants from southern Europe “challenged the conception of Australia as a British outpost in an Asian-Pacific region” (Tsolidis, 2011, p. 19). These much needed migratory flows, to bolster labour shortfalls, have been met with both welcome and derision—for example, the early years of this migration wave saw that Australian people were largely xenophobic and were fearful of cultural invasion (Rizvi, 1985, p. 6)—and reactionary national immigration policies like assimilation and The White Australia Policy, which meant that only immigrants from Northern Europe and Britain could come to Australia given their obvious ability to integrate into a homogeneous culture and “strictly applied to keep the supposedly ‘unassimilable’ non-Caucasians out” (Rizvi, 1985, p. 9).

As illustrated above, Australia and the United Arab Emirates operate in and out of the complexity of cultural mixity in many aspects of everyday life (Bhabha, 1994; Massey, 1999), home grown in each case by their situated histories, economies and geographical locations in the world, but also increasingly influenced by globalisation and global flows. The United Arab Emirates operates as a bureaucracy where a royal family preside over state matters, whereas democratic Australia relies on a system of elected representatives to deliver the will of the people. A “democracy seeks to replace the arbitrary disposition of the hierarchical superordinate ‘master’ by the equally arbitrary disposition of the governed and the party chiefs dominating them”, whereas “bureaucracy has a ‘rational’ character; rules, means, ends and matter-of-factness dominate its bearing” (Weber, 2006, pp. 89, 90).

These complex social relations form the backdrop of this research and are explored later throughout the analysis and findings. What binds these relations is the overarching phenomenon of globalisation, marked by people flows that render each classroom as a multicultural malaise of humans and materials, a mixing, and a heterogeneous representation of cultural differences (Bhabha, 1994; Massey, 1991a). What is interesting, as part of the discussion in Chapter Six, is a

tendency towards white western educational practices in each place despite their different cultural constitutions. How these cultural differences are positioned is the focus of this study.

1.6 Education—the intersection of globalisation, cultural differences and social action

As discussed earlier, one of the consequences of globalisation is the mass movement of people—many places, including the classrooms in this study, are characterised by a cultural heterogeneity where people from different lands come together in local places to act and interact through local social realities. These people movements have changed the notion of culture. Culture is no longer fixed to time and place (Tomlinson, 2007), but rather has been “dirempted” from place—place and culture are split into two and no longer connected (McCarthy, Crichlow, Dimitriadis, & Dolby, 2005, p. xv). The nation-state and its communities are no longer culturally contained or containable, but instead are highly transnationally dynamic in people and material goods (Casinader, 2014).

1.6.1 Global-cultural connections

Globalisation is a phenomenon that is “deeply implicated in nearly all of the major issues in the new millennium”, but in particular, is implicated in social and cultural contexts, where life trajectory vectors are no longer confined to local geography, worldviews and religion (M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 1). In the modern world larger displaced global networks challenge the local realities of human occupation where a constant cultural rubbing up against each other brings inputs and exchanges to alter the essence of cultural realities (Casinader, 2014). These inputs and exchanges permeate many established frontiers including those of family and education, creating challenges that carry risks and have wide implications (M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). For example, manufactured risks like environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, as well as global poverty, increased vulnerability due to wars and the spread of infectious diseases bring change to our world (Giddens, 2003).

1.6.2 Education-cultural connections

Education is similarly disaffected by this globalising phenomenon where many classrooms across the world struggle with “immigration and population movement; unruly forms of identity; (and) youth with cultural knowledge and technological multiliteracies that exceed those of their teachers” (Luke & Luke, 2013, p. 462). Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco et al. (2010), point out that “(i)migrant origin youth are the fastest growing student population in a growing number of countries” (p. 548). What was apparent, as the previous anecdote as teacher in the Middle East suggests, was that this cultural diversity appeared to be ignored—not catered for and not expressed as part of regular classroom social action and learning.

This ignorance is visible in Australia as well as the United Arab Emirates. For example, the colonising and more recent post-colonial federal and state education policies in Australia impose a western orientation to knowledge, language and culture that marginalises those of Indigenous people as well as newcomers to this land. An example is how different cultural groups view the concept of time. In the past, traditional Indigenous Australians ordered their daily lives with respect to the natural elements of sun, weather and seasons, whereas the newcomers to a colonised Australia ordered their daily activities via the clock, a 17th Century European invention (Smith, 2012).

The United Arab Emirates is currently populated by foreign and external educational institutions where teachers impart a mostly western perspective of history, geography and literature, often in direct opposition to and ignorance of the local knowledges of history and literature. Classrooms constituted by a plethora of cultural identities are taught American history and geography, learning about Yankee Doodle and naming the rivers and states of the USA on photocopied outlines of the country (personal reflection). Such activities are oblivious to the cultural needs of students and are dissonant towards the celebration of their own rich histories and geographies. Cultural dissonance abounds in many other countries and does little to work towards inclusion and building respect and tolerance across cultures (Smith, 2012). Such

dissonance is productive of a cultural contestation, by-products of constant transitions of who we are in response to “location, positionality and enunciation” of global displacements (Rizvi in Casinader, 2014, p. xv) and where cultural knowledge and experiences, language and stories tend to be cast aside and rendered invisible (Giroux, 1992).

The makeup of students that comprise the studied classrooms in each country is similar in that it is heterogeneous in nature, but dissimilar in terms of the nature of that heterogeneity. For example Australian students include students from “Anglo-Celtic, Italian, Greek, Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, African and other cultural backgrounds, as well as an important cultural collective that is constantly absent from the public debates on diversity within education, Indigenous Australians” (Joseph, 2008, p. 29). Class members in the United Arab Emirates, as discussed earlier, are constituted by an array of cultures that mimic those in Australia but are constituted by far more students that come from closer Arab lands like Jordan, Syria and Palestine. Primary teachers are similarly female, white and with few exceptions, western.

Although flagged more than ten years ago, it is the current case in many schools of globalised countries that what is taught and how it is taught is attended to by a business-as-usual attitude (McCarthy, Giardina, Harewood, & Park, 2005). Such ignorance plays out where too many students “leave schools without developing and mastering the kinds of higher order skills, communication skills, and cultural sensibilities needed in today’s global economy and society” (Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010, p. 548). If the social function of education is a “methodical socialization of the young generation” (Durkeim, 2006, p. 80), then, in a globalised world, where classrooms are constituted as culturally diverse, how does the “educative process not be restricted, constrained and corrupted” (Dewey, 2006, p. 99) so that education is not narrowed through one cultural perspective? To promote and “authentic intercultural interaction[s]” non-western perspectives must be foregrounded (Dreamson, 2018, p. 75).

“Immigration is never solely about workers—it is about human beings” (Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010, p. 535). An education committed to diversity and justice needs to

incorporate opportunities for students to “approach diverse beliefs and practices with an open mind and respect for others without falling into the spectre of relativism” (Rizvi, 2005, p. 168).

In Australia and the United Arab Emirates, as a consequence of global flows of people, classrooms are now very different places. In these classrooms, if the reality is western white women (Sleeter, 2005) teaching students unlike them (Allard & Santoro, 2004) then how does this cultural mixing interplay with the social and material actions in the classroom?

1.6.3 Classrooms—sociomaterial places

Sociomaterial studies are interested in the patterns of human and non-human energies evident in the “minute dynamics and connections that are continuously enacting the taken-for-granted” everyday events in educational contexts (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. vii). Sociomateriality posits a dynamic relationship between the social—interactions, bodily arrangements and spoken language—and the material—classroom texts, wall displays, food, adornments and clothing (Mills & Exley, 2014). Studying such patterns reveals the dynamics which encompass powerful entities and linkages that interact to change the nature of action. Classrooms, like the ones in this study, are constituted with a variety of materials like curriculum documents, student work, maths manipulatives, art tools, paint and wall displays that form enmeshments with the social actions of teachers and students; the material setting is not natural but contrived (Sheehy & Leander, 2011). In each classroom, materials and their use were influenced by a western understanding of play as a pedagogical ideal.

The point is that different cultures attribute different meanings to different material entities as part of their historical development (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1991), formed and transformed through engagement in sociocultural circumstances (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Factors like beliefs and practices, established elsewhere in the wider community, like homes, influence a social actor’s choice and use of materials (Mills, 2010). How cultural differences interplays with the sociomateriality in each classroom is a focus of this research.

This section has considered the overarching contexts of this research—schools and classrooms as globalised, culturally diverse and sociomaterial places. The next section presents a brief overview of the chapters that form this body of this research.

1.7 Overview of research

Chapter One provides a rationale for this research with respect to examining how cultural differences is positioned in two distinct lower primary classrooms in two different countries. It outlines the theoretical as well as methodological framework for this research—a framework that draws upon the macro-sociological theories of Massey (1991a) and Giddens (1984), the social interactional theories of Fenwick et al. (2011) within a critical ethnography, following Carspecken (1996). Further, it situates the research in important contexts of globalisation and cultural diversity, as well as interactional contexts within the classroom, as sociomaterial. It provides initial links between these contexts within the educational landscape of teaching and learning.

Chapter Two reviews the literature, relevant to this research, in three pivotal and intersecting concepts—globalisation, cultural differences and sociomateriality. The focus for this research lies in the overlap and interrelations of these three categories. The phenomenon of globalisation frames this research—one of its consequences the flow of people and materials across the world that manifest in places like classrooms. These concepts are brought together in the examination of the two lower primary classrooms to investigate the influence of the global, and in particular, global flows of people and curriculum, on the sociomaterial practice of teachers and students in each culturally diverse classroom. The literature concerning globalisation, and the intersection of globalisation and education, as an overarching concept, will be considered first. This consideration will be followed by the literature concerning cultural differences and sociomateriality in the classroom.

Chapter Three provides a detailed overview and elaboration of the three theoretical frames for this research—the notion of place as globalised, socially dynamic and power-filled (Massey, 1991a), the theory of structuration, including the structuring dimensions of domination, signification and legitimation (Giddens, 1984) and the concept of sociomateriality (Fenwick et al., 2011). It considers each theory as it relates to this research and provides examples of how each theory might be operationalised within this research.

Chapter Four describes the methodology, which is guided by critical ethnography following Carspecken (1996). It provides details regarding the explicit use of critical ethnography for this research, outlines research design, and includes a description of the sites and participants, as well as details of a pilot study. It documents data collection methods, including data sets, data analysis and interpretation. The chapter concludes to discuss some general problems of validity, limitations of the research design and ethical requirements.

Chapter Five presents the research analysis and findings in two parts that relate to the first two research sub-questions: i) In what ways do global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom? and ii) What do teachers and school leaders say about how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the schools and the classrooms? The first part develops the notion of each research site as a thrown together (Massey, 2005) place where, in the context of cultural globalisation (Appadurai, 1996; Waters, 2013), global flows and power-geometries (Massey, 1999) operate to position social actors in powerful and less powerful ways.

The second part reports an analysis of the talk of teachers and school leaders at each school with respect to how cultural differences is catered for and expressed. Structuration theory is used to examine how the talk of teachers and school leaders, through signification, domination and legitimation structural dimensions (Giddens, 1984), position teachers and students in the school and the classroom. These positionings reveal the time-space patterns of social relations that contribute to system reproduction (Giddens, 1984).

Chapter Six is presented in two parts. The first part answers the third research sub-question—How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in book reading and learning centres in each classroom? It utilises the concept of sociomateriality, which binds humans and materials together in meaning making (Fenwick et al., 2011), to analyse the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality through a number of selected analyses of classroom social action. The second part of this chapter provides a theoretical discussion with respect to the findings for the overarching research question—How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two different nations in the context of globalisation?

Chapter Seven summarises the results outlined in chapters Five and Six and reviews the overall aims of the research. Further, it contextualises the study in the literature, presents limitations of this research, implications for practice and recommendations, and last, arguments of significance.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has sought to introduce the reader to the social contexts of this research. It has outlined the methodological approach and the theoretical framework that was used to study the research questions and argued for the significance of the research. Preliminary concepts and understandings have been discussed with respect to globalisation, cultural differences and sociomateriality. The next chapter will critically explore the literature that occupies the field of globalisation, culture and sociomateriality, in education.

2 Review of the literature

Chapter One introduced the overarching background of this research to place it in the context of key features of contemporary society: i) globalisation, ii) cultural differences and iii) sociomateriality. The purpose of Chapter Two is to review the literature concerning the above three phenomena, contextualise prior scholarship and illustrate the worthwhile and unique nature of this study. As further discussed below, there is a paucity of research that links globalisation, cultural differences and sociomateriality in classroom social action. Given that our worlds and classrooms are constituted by increasing global flows it is important to study how these flows influence what goes on in the classroom. This current study fills that literature gap by addressing current world contexts of culturally diverse classrooms through their social action.

Chapter Two will review the literature as dictated by the overarching research question: How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two different nations in the context of globalisation? As indicated by this question, as well as the three research sub-questions, this study stretches across three pivotal and intersecting themes—globalisation, cultural differences and sociomateriality—as indicated in Figure 2.1 below.

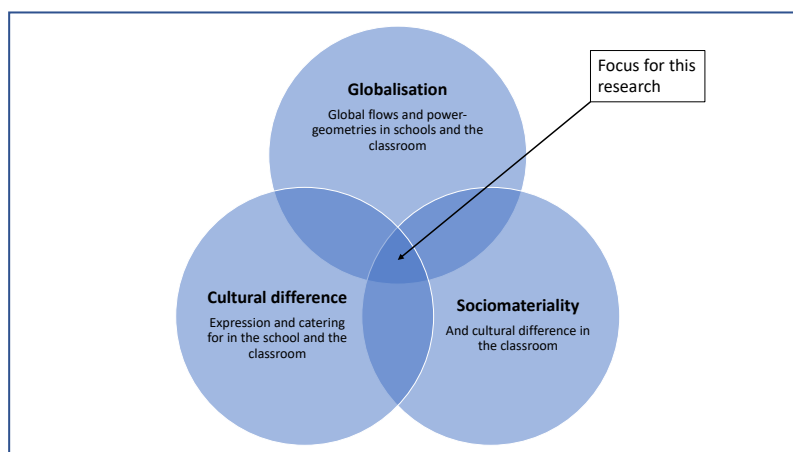


Figure 2.1 Key literature theme and focus for this research

The literature concerning globalisation, and the intersection of globalisation and education, is considered first. This review is followed by the literature about cultural differences in the classroom and, last the sociomateriality literature is reviewed. As indicated in Figure 2.1 the focus for this thesis lies in the overlap and interrelations of these three themes.

2.1 Globalisation

Globalisation, a pervasive phenomenon of the twenty-first century, frames this study—its consequential flows permeate all aspects of modern life in most societies across most of the world. This section will review the literature under two main headings: the background literature that describes globalisation processes and the literature that documents its manifestation in schools, with respect to global flows, the key globalising concept attended to in this research. Throughout this review my research is referred to as the global trajectories study. This part of the literature review is concluded with a summary of the key points with respect to the literature and this study.

2.1.1 Background literature on globalisation

It is important to illuminate the globalisation background to understand the way it is experienced in places like classrooms, as is the focus of the global trajectories study. This section looks at the existing literature through the competing definitions, its origins, the discourses and debates surrounding globalisation, and the ways that globalisation is accounted for in the educational research literature. The literature defines globalisation as an imprecise phenomenon (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b); its nature highly contested (Bulut et al., 2010; Eckersley, 2007; Rizvi, 2007). It is viewed as a process rather than a condition (Harvey, 1989; Waters, 2013), a phenomenon under dispute (Massey, 2005), and predominately a people exercise (Gupta, 2003). Certainly ubiquitous (Giddens, 2003) and no longer constrained by geographical boundaries (Tomlinson, 2007; Waters, 2013), it plays an increasingly pervasive and profound role in all

aspects of modern life including political, economic, environmental and cultural spheres (Giddens, 2003; Held & McGrew, 1999; Luke & Luke, 2013).

The origins of globalisation are widely debated (Harvey, 1989; Held, 2005; Waters, 2013), however, there is agreement that a degree of globalisation and connectivity has always existed (Giddens, 2003; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004; L. Sklair, 2002; Tomlinson, 2007; Turner & Khondker, 2010). While some locate its origins in Americanisation and the role of American hegemony (Ikenberry, 2007; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b), history points to a continuously globalising world (Buchanan & Moore, 2003). From the fifteenth century onwards colonialism and imperialism connected disparate world regions, through the mercantile interests of trade (Casinader, 2014; Waters, 2013). Unanimously agreed upon with few dissenters, globalisation is a phenomenon that today is a lived reality across most world societies, including those cities that house the classroom of this study, Dubai and Brisbane.

2.1.2 Themes and typologies of globalisation

The main themes portrayed in the literature are interconnectivity and change, which have implications for classrooms that experience global flows. Interconnectivity creates “a greater awareness of the globe as a common point of reference” (Turner & Khondker, 2010, p. 36). It connects ideas, information, capital and people (Held & McGrew, 1999) across most elements of social existence (Singh, Kenway, & Apple, 2005). Relations between local and distant events and social, political and economic activity is stretched, widened and connected across space and time often resulting in unintended consequences (Eckersley, 2007; Giddens, 1984; Giddens, 2003; Massey, 2005). The dissemination and diffusion of people, ideas, artefacts and knowledge fosters a dynamic connectivity across global, national and local arenas (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). A transregional interconnectedness expands and links human activity across diverse boundaries (Held & McGrew, 1999; Massey & Jess, 1995; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a; Turner & Khondker, 2010; Waters, 2013).

This “complicated, fluid and dynamic interconnectedness” (Tomlinson, 2007, p. 149) is a catalyst for dramatic change with respect to our “social institutions, cultural practices and, even our sense of identity and belongingness” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 161). Local places are transformed and reshaped and the lives of people disrupted (Gupta, 2003; Massey & Jess, 1995; Zajda, 2012). Such reshaping is marked with rapidity and disjuncture to social order (Appadurai, 1990) and is facilitated through vast and ever maturing technologised networks of communication and transport (Held & McGrew, 1999).

In many nations, the replication of an historical dominance of powerful nations with powerful agendas is forthcoming. For example, western interests land in local communities with inequitable outcomes to further socially stratify communities (Rizvi & Lingard, 2000). Local cultures must adapt to the ideologies of the dominant other, where oppressed people want to emulate their oppressors or are forced to live their lives neither one nor the other (Bhabha, 1994; Freire, 2000; Said, 2003). This diffusion and dominance surfaces in places like classrooms where teachers and students gather to teach and learn. Problematic until recently, much of the literature foregrounds economics through a Universalist approach, rather than locating globalisation in sociocultural and political processes (Connell, 2007; Rizvi, 2007). Charting this global diffusion of overlapping interconnectedness then becomes a complex task.

Many global theorists have attempted to tie down the processes of globalisation by framing it through distinctive typologies that are helpful in examining its decentering trajectories (Appadurai, 1996; Held & McGrew, 1999, 2007; Robertson & Khondker, 1998 ; Waters, 2013). Global economies and societies that can no longer be understood in traditional center-periphery models. The global trajectories study adopts a culturalist approach to globalisation to view it as an interplay of *flows* and *scapes* where flows have de-centering effects (Appadurai, 1996; Kearney, 1995; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a). In each of the classrooms, these flows bring broad dimensions of change with consequences for who and what is prioritised in acquiring an education (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

The above discussion paints globalisation as an overarching, fluid, dynamic and interconnecting change agent that disrupts and transforms local action through a variety of flows. The next section discusses the circulating debates and discourses that frame the globalisation literature, important for this thesis which examines how global flows influence social action.

2.1.3 Globalisation: Debates and discourses

A number of increasingly debated perspectives frame the globalisation literature where competing discourses work to shape understandings about its influential parameters, as well as how it is experienced locally, in places like classrooms. Discourses are perspectival ways of seeing the world and work to name the world in particular ways (Gee, 2011). The term globalisation is a discursive construction of the modern world, a term that can be de- and re-constructed to foreground different voices and perspectives (Held & McGrew, 2007). A brief tour of these discourses elaborates the slippage of meanings about globalisation. The following binaries, discussed below and returned to in Chapter Seven, illustrate its illusive nature—above/below; it's good/it's bad; it's East/it's West and it creates homogeneity/heterogeneity.

The literature that locates global processes in distinct *above/below* dichotomies where flows from above, for example, foreign curriculum lands in local schools to exploit, tends towards victimhood in the local as it is robbed, stripped and reduced by unstoppable global forces (Luke & Luke, 2013; Singh et al., 2005). Rather than overselling of the global phenomenon (Stiglitz, 2005), globalisation is better described as a push-pull effect “where social and economic policies ... have fallout with unpredictable half-life and collateral effects elsewhere on the planet” (Luke, 2011, p. 368). As “patterns of global interconnectedness appear to have proven extremely resilient” (Held & McGrew, 2007, p. 1), better descriptions lie in terms like “glocalization” (Robertson, 1995), “hybridized localization” (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b)

and “globalized localism” (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2012), a “glonacal agency heuristic” (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002), and a two-way local-global dynamic (Robertson & Khondker, 1998).

Such naming is indicative of a “mixture of globalization and localization” where local communities are “active rather than passive in modifying and shaping global processes” (Giddens & Sutton, 2017, p. 143). Globalisation is then an interconnected dynamic, “intertwined and porous” (Fay, 2013, p. 51) where a global-local connectivity shapes both above and below (Giddens, 1984; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Singh et al., 2005). Its processes are not distinctly top-down, but rather work as a connective dynamic interplay where local responses can be both positive and negative. These ideas are taken up in analysing the social response to global flows in each classroom in the global trajectories study.

There are polarising views about the *good/bad* debate about globalisation. Some see global poverty exacerbated (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004), others an increasing dependency on global capitalism and reliance of institutional aid through the International Monetary Fund and Wall Street (Eckersley, 2007; Held, 1999; M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Alternatively, historical materialists, argue that globalisation is the “consequence of inherent expansionary logic of capitalist societies” (Held & McGrew, 2007, p. 2) that perpetrates discourses of sustainable development and national and international competitiveness to further the trans-capital interests and power of global capital (Sklair, 2000). For example, in many colonised countries, like Canada, Australia and Brazil, global interconnections bring western biased discourses and traditions that work to subjugate and marginalise the century-long traditions and authority structures of Indigenous people (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2015; Held & McGrew, 2007; M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

While one feels a sense of out of control global vulnerability—for example, threats of terrorism, nuclear war and global warming (Eckersley, 2007)—others believe that globalisation has generated new possibilities and new forms of wealth. Examples are increased literacy rates through global educational interconnections and the building of infrastructure in developing

countries. Research shows that local responses to global flows are anything but universal (Luke & Luke, 2013) and that global processes are felt differently depending on where you are located in the world. Choosing two classrooms in two different world regions, the global trajectories study will elaborate this binary.

The *East/West* binary debate is important for the global trajectories study that will investigate two classrooms: one in the East (Dubai), the other in the West (Brisbane). However, there is little in the literature that suggests that globalisation historically was an East-West process (Luke & Luke, 2013), but rather is located in the policy prescriptions of neoliberalism that spread across the world through deregulation and liberalisation (Stromquist, 2002). Much of the literature holds that globalisation belongs neither to West nor East but is instead a worldly process inevitable in the history of the global movements and connections of mankind (Sen, 2002) and located in more distant historical times and so beyond the radius of modernity/westernisation and capitalism (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004).

Still others hold that it works to promote western hegemonic interests (Wylie, 2011), problematised through competing and contradictory discourses perpetrated through popular media and divisive government policies. Rizvi (2004) draws our attention to the way debates about globalisation have changed since 9/11 where new elements and discursive fields in the debate regarding West and Islam, and so East, work to spread angst and terror around civilisation clashes and peace. Such spreading results in a tightening of border controls as well as restrictive and divisive immigration policies (Eckersley, 2007). Perhaps a more authentic and useful description, given these competing interpretations, is that globalisation is a hybridisation process which gives rise to a “global mélange” where a non-western-western and South-North mix of peoples and their cultures intermingle (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004) in places like the two schools of the global trajectories study.

Such intermingling flags a *homogeneity/heterogeneity* debate and a tension between cultural homogenisation and cultural heterogenisation (Appadurai, 1996). Are we more the same or do

we retain our differences? Is diversity rendered invisible or flattened out? Are we heading for prophesised “clash of civilisations” and a war on and of difference as we struggle for cultural identity? (Huntington, 1996) Generating higher degrees in of human connection has also lead to a “predominance of generalisation and reductionism” (Casinader, 2014, p. 4) which tends towards homogeneity, for example, through the privatisation of goods and services which limits consumer choice (Kincheloe, 2011). Others see this human connection as an “opportunity to rescue or even reinvent local identities” permitting a renaissance of the local as a defense to infiltrating and dynamic global movements, an affirmation of heterogeneity (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a, p. 4).

The tension and truth between cultural homogeneity/heterogeneity is outweighed by history that shows that “homogenizing effects are always rearticulated in social fields where they are subject to local and regional force and power” (Luke & Luke, 2013, p. 276). This suggests a relationship between the local and the global where the local has some sense of retaliation with respect to global pressures and discounts the idea where “globalisation is so often read as a discourse of closure and inevitability” (Massey, 2005, p. 161). The homogeneity/heterogeneity debate plays out in the classrooms of this study where global flows might nurture an inclusivity rather than an exclusivity (Gough, 2014). These ideas will be returned to in the concluding chapters.

These above discourses call for a stance that sees the phenomenon of globalisation as unnatural and constructed through political and historical agendas and recognises global relations as dynamic, rather than all-encompassing and naturalised (Rizvi, 2007). This is reflected in the criticism of the term globalisation, as it “invites overstatement and smacks of an overweening tendency to universalize” and therefore, normalises both its processes and outcomes (Tomlinson, 2007, p. 148). Such discussion draws attention to the shifting and dynamic nature of globalisation and its slippery meanings, where the origins, avenues and consequences of globalisation are extensively debated.

In summary, globalisation is a significant twenty-first century phenomenon, one that influences vast areas of social life across vast spatial arenas, is relatively not well understood, and is highly contested, but most agree that it is a ubiquitous game changer, particularly with respect to education, as will be discussed in the next section. Although fiercely debated in many arenas, including education, “many implications and applications” of globalisation “remain virtual terra incognita” (M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 1). The phenomenon of globalisation is “one of the most ubiquitous, yet poorly understood phenomena of modernity and associated politico-economic, and cultural transformations” (Zajda, 2012, p. 83). In education there is a lack of literature about how globalisation influences the processes of schools and classrooms at the practical level—classroom and school teacher and student practice—as opposed to the policy level—for example, state institutions (Walker, 2011). Even less attention is given to the influence of globalisation on how educational policy, curriculum and pedagogy play out in the classroom (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Winter, 2012) and the literature is silent about the influence of globalisation on social practice in classrooms. The global trajectories study examines the interplay of globalisation, cultural differences and sociomateriality and will add to the limited literature at the practical level. The discussion now turns to review the empirical studies about globalisation and education with reference to the influence of global flows.

2.1.4 Globalisation and education

This key interest of the global trajectories study is how the interplay of people and other educational flows manifest in the human and material affairs of each classroom (Appadurai, 1996; Waters, 2013). Charting these flows enables a consideration of “how globalizing processes modulate material and territorial place, space, cultures, identities and relationships” in the two classrooms of this study (Singh et al., 2005, p. 9).

The following section reviews studies and other literature that examine how global flows play out in local school and classroom sites. The discussion is critiqued through three

overarching and recurring themes in the literature: 1) context matters, 2) global flows have unintended outcomes and consequences and, 3) power relations are unequally shared in many global-local interchanges. These themes will be returned to in the concluding chapter. To address and illustrate these themes, and to organise the discussion in a manageable and coherent way, the literature is discussed according to the type of flow that is studied. These flows constitute pedagogical flows, policy flows, curriculum and program flows, and people flows, with the last two important for the global trajectories study. A summary concludes this section to draw conclusions regarding the critiqued literature.

2.1.4.1 Pedagogical innovation as flows

The transportation of pedagogical reforms to shift local teaching practices, from teacher- to child-centered, has spread globally across the developing world and occurred in many schools where education is considered in need of modernising (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b; Tabulawa, 1997; Yao, 2014). This child-centered approach, which prioritises children as active in the learning process to education, is rooted in the liberalising arguments of Rousseau and Locke in 18th century and later progressed by the ideas, of Bourdieu, Montessori, Piaget and Vygotsky (Lall, 2011). Western notions posit learning as an active process that relies on interactivity “between students, as learning is constructed together in social activity” (p. 224). A few studies are relevant here.

The introduction of a child-centered approach to teaching in monastic schools in Myanmar (Lall, 2011), where traditional teaching was characterised as rote, was met with unexpected consequences and unequal power sharing. Many teachers spoke positively of the reform in that children were more curious, more motivated to come to school and appeared to have higher confidence levels. However, parents and elders, some male teachers and monks, saw the reform as creating disrespect amongst children, and so a threat to traditional understandings

of how children should behave. The western ideological understandings of the child, rooted in eighteenth century philosophies, were rejected as destabilising to traditional hierarchies.

Similarly, Bartlett and Vavrus (2014b) found that the introduction of a learner-centered pedagogy, in schools in Tanzania, resulted in unintended consequences. Teachers were relegated to powerless positions, unprepared and ill equipped to take up progressive and unfamiliar ideas about teaching, ideas that were culturally marked from their own understandings and experiences. Another study echoes these results. A pedagogical shift in a public secondary rural school in a large village in Botswana (Tabulawa, 1997) aimed to move teachers towards a more student-centered one was largely unsuccessful. There were many reasons for this failure, but most important was the lack of understanding of local contexts. The reform ignored the entrenched views of parents and students about the reasons for attending school—acquire and assimilate teacher knowledge to receive certification. As well, teachers were seen to resist changes to their pedagogical practices, largely due to their perceptions that they were imparters of knowledge and managers of classes rather than facilitators of learning. These studies highlight how context matters and that blindly transferring educational innovation for one country to another, and in this case developed to developing, is problematic.

While the global trajectories study is not about reform it does examine how imported educational ideas, through curriculum and materials, influences the social practices of teachers and students in the classroom. However, it goes further to consider what is actually happening in the classroom as teachers and students go about their daily classroom practice, which the above studies do not. Further, it looks at the intersection of two global flows, people and materials and how social action is influenced by these flows thus adding to the limited literature about the global influences of teacher and student practice in the classroom.

2.1.4.2 Policy flows

While the global trajectories study is not about policy flows, it is important to consider the lessons about adopting these flows that might be generalised to other flows, such as curriculum and people. The studies reviewed point to context as an important factor in policy resistance. Examples of blind policy borrowing (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) are prominent in the literature where ideologies endemic of one culture are transferred to other cultures with little reference to the fact that such context exists. Resistance, as briefly discussed below, comes in the form of people as well as cultural and political ideologies.

A study (Valdiviezo, 2009) that investigated the introduction of an innovative and top-down bilingual and intercultural policy, aimed at revitalising Indigenous language and culture in Peru was contested by the beliefs and practices of local teachers. The contestation of structures to support policy implementation by teachers, as policy actors, were central to the reproduction of inequalities of student bilingual competence and indigenous marginalisation. Another study by Gardinier (2012) documented the interplay between foreign expertise and local knowledge with the introduction of a citizenship program in Albanian schools. Noted was a “high degree of convergence at the policy level” met with “adaptation and localization” in practice at the school level (p. 233), where teachers reinterpreted and adapted foreign citizenship models to align with their own political experiences and understandings of curriculum and pedagogy. Further, the well-intended strategy of providing language support to international students, as a structural policy response to alleviate racism in Irish schools had unintended consequences when students reported feeling marginalised and othered as they were withdrawn from regular class (Bryan, 2009).

The theme of participation, a “pervasive component of educational and international development discourses” (Taylor, 2009, p. 75) is a pervasive policy flow. In Porto Alegre public schools increased participation was thwarted by the social and gendered dynamics of School Councils, populated by women usually passive in civic affairs, who worked against attempts to

democratize the schools (Wilkinson, 2009). The exportation of westernised and democratised models of political citizenship were appropriated by local conditions where different understandings of citizenship had been historically, politically and socially conceived were instrumental in the resistance of an educational reform in a Mexican secondary school (Levinson, 2005). In her study of a primary educational reform in Tanzania, Taylor (2009) found that although policy enabled a broader range of participation than in the past, the involvement by local actors was delimited by traditionally centralised educational systems with the result that their input into transformational policy was not permitted. These studies flag an understanding that important of foreign ideas and materials are often met with unintended responses at the local level—an important understanding for the global trajectories study that considers the import of foreign humans and non-human things.

People are not the sole resisters of reform, and often resistance is closely tied to local histories and culture. Zakharia (2009) explored the introduction of a language policy to prioritise Arabic as the official language (as opposed to French and English) in the context of Lebanon's continuing political and social instability. Despite a national policy of promotion of Arabic there was widespread devaluating of Arabic in school as Arabic was marked contrast to the social and political motivations for speaking languages other than Arabic.

Further, policy borrowing can marginalise local educational sovereignty. A continued rhetoric of global accountability is transparent in the Arabian Gulf where the adoption of global testing policies, for example, PISA, are considered benchmarks of achievement (Morgan, 2018). Heavy reliance on of educational programs, western curriculum, a foreign teaching workforce and the obsession with global educational consultants “erodes educational sovereignty and restricts the capacity of small states to develop and nurture alternative, indigenous and localised solutions” (p. 285). In North America's oldest Indigenous community, the Pueblo Indigenous communities in New Mexico, Luke (2011) considered the policy export of early childhood westernised standards. He found that this import posed a considerable threat to “language

retention, to cultural ways of childhood and child rearing, and indeed to their peoples' "sacred" knowledges and languages" (p. 371) further the marginalisation of "local histories, culture and difference" (Luke, 2011, p. 368).

In each of the studies above, local conditions like gendered and traditional roles, teacher resistance and cultural dissonance hamper educational reform. The global trajectories study researches the global educational context to consider the interplay of the local and the global through the flows of people and materials in the context of cultural differences and sociomateriality. It then adds to the existing research by including the social responses of teachers and students to global flows as they go about their regular school days.

2.1.4.3 Curriculum and program flows

The studies below tell similar stories to those about global flows of pedagogical innovation and policy, discussed above. In each case contextual factors work to impinge on the acceptability of the global flows, some with better outcomes than others. As was the case previously, each comes with unintended consequences and a rebalancing of the power relations at local sites. The curriculum flows, discussed below, are influenced by a curriculum goal, for example, STEAM, the International Baccalaureate, greater literacy acquisition, global citizenship, a return to the basics as well as the goal of increased inclusion.

Many schools prioritise subjects like STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) to the detriment of the social sciences and humanities bringing rapid changes to learning in educational systems across the world (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a). That the adoption of technology can improve learning is endorsed by powerful bodies like UNESCO, the World Bank, and IMF (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Further, these NGOs take on the role of spreading ideas, endemic of one culture to the cultures of others, as they force developing countries to adopt foreign

educational practices through educational flows like curriculum, policy and pedagogical models in the translocations of global educational visions (Carney, 2009).

The global adoption of the International Baccalaureate is one example of curriculum mobility that seeks to redefine the globality of students within a worldly context of global citizenship and cultural respect (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a). In many countries, this curriculum framework works to prioritise bodies as globally constructed and shifts what children learn and what teachers teach, putting pressure on teachers to teach, and students to learn, in new and particular ways. The importation of the International Baccalaureate in three remote international schools in Indonesia was traced through a policy trajectory approach to interrogate the lived experiences of participants (Fay, 2013). It was found that barriers to implementation of the curriculum, like the centrality of education staff and their tendency towards conservative pedagogical approaches highlighted inequality in social as well as power relationships along the policy trajectory (Fay, 2013).

The didactic teaching styles of teachers, as was the case in other studies discussed previously (Lall, 2011; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b; Tabulawa, 1997) is further discussed in the introduction in Hong Kong of curriculum that focused on global understandings and the information era (Po, 2007). Hong Kong teachers traditionally were transmitters of factual and non-controversial knowledge that was inculcated to passive students who absorbed information with little interaction. The shift to a pedagogical style that relied on discussion and real-life experience was unsustainable for these traditionally conservative teachers. Teaching for diversity, social justice and global awareness is not just dependent on teaching styles. The cultural identities of teachers with respect to alternative teaching styles is also a factor that might impinge on instilling these concepts in students (Clarke & Drudy, 2006), for example, as discussed previously, monks in Myanmar (Lall, 2011). There are, however, reports of positive effects where curriculum flows have made significant improvements to educational outcomes. The transnational export of an Australian literacy program to early years education to poor regions of

Chile changed classroom practices to include more intellectual engagement, teachers moved to a more scaffolded model of learning, and parents became more involved in what children were learning at school (Yao, 2014).

The redirection of curriculum to a back to basics notion is evident in many modern nations, including Australia, where there is a push for standardisation. The current Australian Curriculum (2016b), a backlash to an international trend of foregrounding competencies and dispositions (e.g., progressive programs like New Basics and the International Baccalaureate), is seen as a strong return to disciplined-based knowledge and one that is linked to the desire to improve a nation's performance on international tests (Lingard & McGregor, 2014; Rizvi, 2004).

Such curriculum pushes “exceeds the imperatives for interoperability, where rationalizations of fairness are used to justify sameness” (Luke, 2011, p. 375), and silences the knowledge of those representations of diversity in our classrooms, for example, Islamic, Indigenous or Buddhist.

For example, a United States study (Sleeter, 2005) documented the introduction of teaching materials to respond to school diversity where classrooms are becoming increasingly populated with white western teachers and an increasingly racially diverse group of students. However, this positive step towards inclusion is thwarted by the current standards-based reform that prioritises the delivery of state-mandated content.

The studies above represent the global educational dilemma where “localised processes of abjection intersect with objectifying global flows of people, ideas and images” (Kenway & Hickey-Moody, 2012, p. 141). They highlight a tension between nation-state and individual needs, where schools find themselves caught “between their traditional roles in reproducing national culture and national identity...and the expectation of preparing society's future adults” (Adams & Kirova, 2013c, p. 324). The schools in the global trajectories study are similarly placed and there is tension between the nature of the student body, the curriculum and teaching materials. It further complicates this tension by introducing another element, cultural differences.

To date, there is no literature that addresses all of these contexts in one study. It then goes beyond previous studies to research the influences on social practice of both human and non-human flows, not found in any of the literature.

2.1.4.4 People flows

The late twentieth century increase in the mobility and movement of people across the globe is an emerging focus in studies about globalisation and education (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a) and an important focus for the global trajectories study. Such transnational mobility works to reconfigure educational practice in local sites—an example, the rise of a notion of global citizenship as one characterised by world knowledgeability, intercultural understandings and respect for world peace and environmental sustainability (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a).

People, as flows, bring with them cultural identities from their home countries that may sit in contrast to those of their adoptive countries, as is the case in the global trajectories study. This difference manifests in the classroom when students are expected to participate in learning activities that might be foreign to them, or teachers are encouraged to adopt pedagogical styles of which they have little experience as the following studies highlight.

As part of most western early years classrooms, literacy material, like picture books, forms an important resource. Students from different cultural backgrounds, and who have had differing levels of opportunities to experience books, display different responses as they negotiate picture books in school. For example, Walsh, Cranitch and Maras (2012) studied how two different groups of children, one refugees with interrupted schooling, the other migrants who had attended education in their home countries, responded to the picture book, David Wiesner's *Flotsam*. Marked differences with respect to how each group responded to picture books were found—migrant children were able to participate to a high level demonstrating their prowess through oral and written responses, whereas the refugee group displayed their unfamiliarity and know-how with picture books. Whilst this contrasts children with different

levels of access to schooling and books, it also highlights that children from different cultural groups may have initial difficulty participating in book activities in school, a concept pursued in the global trajectories study.

That there are different interpretations of learning strategies and self from an East/West perspective was explored by Jarvis (2013). Jarvis concluded that human ways of looking at the world are culturally based rather than hard-wired and that children incidentally and intentionally internalise their respective cultures as they learn. Learning, then, is a cultural process and not grounded in the universal paradigm of western cultural understandings that can be traced back to Platonic ideas in early Hebrew and Greek thinking. This notion of student cultural identity was reconstructed in a study in an Australian context (Mok & Saltmarsh, 2014) that considered how Chinese children forged new transnational identities through border-crossings, from China to Australia. In Australia, their Chineseness was interpreted and demonstrated in different ways in that some children exhibited greater and lesser identification with respect to their Chinese heritage. While students display a high degree of difference with respect to learning, so too do teachers with respect to their attitudes and teaching styles.

In her comparative study, in south-eastern United States, of two public middle schools that offer the International Baccalaureate, Quaynor (2015) explored how teachers teach citizenship education to students from diverse cultures and backgrounds, as immigrant and refugee youth. She found that the practices of teachers were markedly divergent—teachers with a flexible approach to global education and citizenship were more inclusive and acknowledged cultural and linguistic multiplicity amongst their students as well as an open mind reading the different viewpoints that children brought into class. Teachers who were fixed in their understandings of global citizenship were less inclusive and often ignored the different experiences and understandings that children brought into class.

The studies above highlight how global flows of pedagogy, policy, curriculum and people play out in schools and classrooms. What is missing in the literature is how global flows interplay

with cultural differences in the everyday social and material worlds of the classroom. None of the studies reviewed mark cultural differences as a mitigating factor in how global flows influence classroom social practice, as is the focus of the global trajectories study. What follows is a summary of this section, about globalisation and education, with respect to the recurring themes—1) context matters, 2) global flows have unintended outcomes and consequences and, 3) power relations are unequally shared in many global-local interchanges—that were flagged at the beginning of this section. Each theme is related to how the literature informs the global trajectories study, but also how this study adds to the reviewed literature.

2.1.5 Concluding comments: Globalisation and education

Studying globalisation and education requires a sociocultural approach that takes account of how flows shape local action—often culturally produced as “friction” in social practice (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b). Much of the reviewed literature, above, highlights this friction and illustrates that in global-local interchanges context matters. Global-local interchanges always sit in political, social, cultural economic and sometimes religious contexts—the results being that globalising systems, for instance, democracy and capitalism, land in local contexts in fricative ways to create a “sticky materiality” of inequality, awkwardness and creativity (Tsing, 2011, p. 1). Such stickiness is apparent in: teachers’ propensity to hold on to conservative pedagogies or ways of being in educational contexts (Fay, 2013; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b; Taylor, 2009); teachers local understandings about participation and citizenship (Gardinier, 2012; Wilkinson, 2009); teachers appropriation and reinterpretation of reform concepts (Gardinier, 2012; Levinson, 2005) and teachers lack of access to support systems for implementation of reform programs (Po, 2007; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b).

Other contextual factors that impinge on the acceptability of foreign educational innovations are the constitutions of local political and social conditions where the reform is being attempted. Various studies (Valdiviezo, 2009; Zakharia, 2009) highlight the importance of

understanding these local conditions with respect to incoming educational flows. What is noted in the literature is that most reforms appear to occur in a vacuum, unaware of other local elements that might change the way the reform plays out, especially, as blind borrowing, when policies and programs are transported from other culturally different contexts. The global trajectories study contextualises each school and respective classroom with a global sense of place (Massey, 1991a) to understand how social relations in each site might play out but in response to global flows. The above findings are important for my study as they provide a background of empirical knowledge about the influence of globalizing processes in schools, particularly with respect to the import of non-human entities like curriculum.

Further, Luke (2011), as do others (McPherson & Saltmarsh, 2017; Morgan, 2018; Tabulawa, 1997) flag the universalising momentum of many reforms that work to marginalise local cultural and social practices in favour of those from other places. This results in power inequalities where the knowledges and customs of local teachers, students and other community partners are flattened out and sometimes disregarded. It is the case that the move towards standardisation in educational curriculum and outcomes necessarily puts pressure on local solutions to education that incorporate local knowledges, cultural ways and language. The interrogation of this pressure, in the global trajectories study, is on the cultural differences of the school population and how they work with or against such imports as curriculum to play out power relations.

There is good deal of literature about the experiences and actions of teachers in the globalisation literature—important as most reforms rely on teachers for enactment. However, and as pointed out above, there is less literature about how students respond to globalising influences in their classrooms as they go about their regular school days. Literature that considers the practices of students in their classrooms is less prolific (Mok & Saltmarsh, 2014; Quaynor, 2015; M. Walsh et al., 2012) and the constitution of students as cultural and embodied (Jarvis, 2013; McPherson & Saltmarsh, 2017; Quaynor, 2015; M. Walsh et al., 2012). The global

trajectories study will explore the social actions of students in classrooms, as they go about their daily tasks in response to globalising forces. It thus adds to the limits of literature about students in the classroom and globalisation.

As the above review identified, global flows manifest in local contextualised sites with unintended outcomes and power consequences and the connection between the local and the global resembles a two-way, push-pull, porous logic where the local becomes intertwined with the global. The phenomenon of globalisation “exerts simultaneous impulses for convergence and fragmentation, for universalism and localism” (S. Taylor & Henry, 2000, p. 502).

Education, “now considered an indisputable pathway to increased social mobility and works in the global imaginary as key to economic competitiveness of countries”(Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a, p. 8) is part of this global dynamic but, as discussed above, it is very much a one-way (Smith, 2012) and top-down process (Luke, 2011). Any discussion about globalisation and education must embrace its underlying processes as political, economic, social and ideological assumptions (Zajda, 2012).

Education is at the centre of the “uncharted continent of globalisation” (M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 1). As countries like Australia and the United Arab Emirates become increasingly populated with difference, the typical response by governing educational bodies is crass, market-driven interventions aimed to quick-fix by borrowing foreign curriculum materials, adopting teaching methods at odds with local cultures and ‘tick-and-flick’ assessment regimes requiring low level regurgitation (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Singh et al., 2005; M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). What the global trajectories study does is research how two curriculums—both inherently different—play out in two very different but culturally diverse schools to understand how cultural difference plays out in each. It does what no other study about globalisation and education has done in that it focuses on the interplay between cultural difference and the classroom social action of students in classrooms deemed to be global places

through the flows of people and materials. This literature review now turns to the second phenomenon of this thesis—culture and cultural differences.

2.2 Cultural differences

The previous section explored the background and empirical literature that frames the phenomenon of globalisation. Culture is a key phenomenon in the global trajectories study which considers how cultural differences interplay in the social action of culturally diverse classroom, particularly with respect to place and sociomateriality. The literature about culture shares the contradictory nature of the globalisation literature. It is examined in the following ways: recent concepts and shifting definitions of culture, how culture and globalisation are linked, and important studies that embrace cultural diversity of education.

2.2.1 Introduction to culture: Shifting definitions

Historically, as discussed in Chapter One, globalising processes have disrupted the anthropological rootedness, territorial fixity and neatly packaged definitions of culture (Massey & Jess, 1995; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004; Tomlinson, 2007). Rather one's culture is expressed as difference that has been comparatively, contextually and heuristically moulded through globalised movements across time and space (Appadurai, 1996). Newly defined, cultural differences exist as the collective empirical knowledge of lived lives and comparatively functioned, as the state of being different, the point of unlikeness and dissimilarity (Bhabha, 1994).

A scan of the literature yields some 300 definitions of culture (Anderson-Levitt, 2012), but most scholars unanimously agree that culture is a socially constructed phenomenon and “the opposite of natural, ‘instinctual’ or innate” (p. 443). Culture resonates as a group of people who stay together align themselves around certain attributes like values, norms, practices, interaction patterns, perspectives and language (Adams & Kirova, 2013a; Bloom, 2004; McCurdy, Spradley, & Shandy, 2005). Cultures are multifarious, richly populated with ideas, languages, art, music and

other symbolic forms, texts, relationships and technologies through which people experience and express meaning (Masemann, 2003; Swidler, 1986). Cultural meaning is made through mental and material artefacts, such as, greeting styles, and use of eating utensils and bodily contact (Gopinath, 2008) where social interaction enables people to “interpret experience and generate behavior” (Spradley, 1979, p. 5).

Culture is then a process of making meaning in people’s lives and linked to the operation of power (Anderson-Levitt, 2012), where meanings can contrast and come up against each other in the expression of differences. These ideas resonate with the culturally diverse classrooms of this study, where cultural expression and experiences flux in the everyday social action of students and teachers, and where global flows transcend to influence that social action.

2.2.2 Global-cultural links

It is uncontested that globalisation speeds up cultural transmission where cultural bodies and knowledges are transmitted to new places (Massey & Jess, 1995; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004; Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). As well, tourism, education and trade have increased the opportunities for people from different cultural origins to have more frequent interactions (Hall, 1995; Tomlinson, 2007). Global mobilities of people change the social dynamics in local sites and places like classrooms (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a; Tomlinson, 2007).

Through globalising processes local cultural ideas and norms have the potential to spread across the globe, making all culture potentially global and no longer constrained by borders (Anderson-Levitt, 2012). The social consequence of this spreading results in cultures more open and hybrid, where new ways of being, like cultural values, norms and practices, are shaped in once historically homogenised places (Hall as cited in Massey & Jess, 1995). This translocation of culture must be interpreted by others who actively draw on their own cultural knowledges to make meaning. Sometimes this meaning making causes “friction” (Tsing, 2011), and is

characterised by resistance and obstacles, and contestation over meaning (Anderson-Levitt, 2012) as seen in the classrooms of the global trajectories study.

Globalisation is synonymous with cultural mixing becoming cultural complexity, and thus, changing the cultural contexts in which society operates (Buchanan & Moore, 2003; Held, 1999). Whether cultural mixing results in “cultural differentialism or lasting difference [cultural heterogeneity], cultural convergence or growing sameness [cultural homogeneity], and cultural hybridization or ongoing mixing [cultural hybridity]” (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004, p. 42) have been discussed in the globalisation literature review. Differentialism (heterogeneity) and convergence (homogeneity) are at odds with the notion that culture is an open-ended and fluid process and that, historically, our world is indicative of rich cultural exchanges that have forged innovation and newly mixed social forms (Luke & Luke, 2013).

In summary, global flows disrupt culture in pervasive ways, complex and widely debated ways. The global trajectories study key focus is the interplay of cultural differences in place (Massey, 1991a), as part of structuration as power (Giddens, 1984), and the interplay with sociomateriality (Fenwick, 2012). Evidence is built throughout the global trajectories study to occupy a niche field within educational research, because to date, there are no classroom studies that theorise place, power and sociomateriality in relation to cultural differences. Such theorisation in the global trajectories study examines how globalisation, as global flows, interrupts and interacts with the social relations of culturally diverse teachers and students in classrooms. It further complicates this interaction to look at the way cultural differences interplay in these social relations, particularly with respect to sociomaterial practice. This following discussion reviews empirical studies that account for how educational practice is influenced by cultural differences, referred to in much of the literature as cultural diversity.

2.2.3 Studies form the field: Cultural diversity in education

Historically there is a strong link between education and culture (Ismail, Shaw, & Ooi, 2016; Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010), for example, as part of nation building, education worked to construct and fortify national and cultural identity (Casinader, 2014). As explored in the global trajectories study, it is in schools, as concentrated places of exchange, where the dominant discourses of globalised culture (Adams & Kirova, 2013b) disrupt the narrow and nationalistic transmission of cultural values.

A key theme across the literature is that the responses to increasingly culturally diverse classrooms is one of deficit, despite the fact that issues of migration have moved from cultural deficit models to current understandings around the complexity of cultural globalisation (Appadurai, 1996; Grieshaber & Miller, 2010). This noted deficit is well documented in all aspects of education, from university preparation of preservice teachers, to how schools and teachers respond to increasing cultural diversity, to how cultural inclusivity and exclusivity plays out in classrooms for teachers, students and their parents.

The literature reviewed below is drawn from global places including Australia, the USA, UK, Spain, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates and Wales. The review is organised according to three players in the educative process—schools and classrooms as responders to increasing cultural diversity, teachers who are at the interface, and students (and their parents) who populate culturally diverse classrooms. The discussion will highlight constraints and enablers that operate to restrict and promote an inclusive education in diversely cultured classrooms which is closely aligned to the second research sub-question of the global trajectories study. Despite isolated instances of positivity it remains the case that, with respect to culturally diverse classrooms, “inclusive education is still a project and not a reality in many educational settings” (Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto, 2018, p. 511).

2.2.3.1 The school response to cultural diversity

Although many school communities argue for the expression and inclusivity of cultural diversity, often actions at the local and state level constrain these desires; while other schools fail to see that communities and classroom are cultural sites (Sleeter, 2005). Top-down government standards and a preoccupation with national curriculum can work against the promotion of diversity in schools in a “pyramid of fear” (Buchori & Dobinson, 2012, p. 51). In early childhood education the siege from “standardization and accountability proponents touting a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach”, with an accompanying testing regime that is present in later grades, creates an environment that is “inherently inhospitable to the increasing diversity” visible in classrooms (Schoorman, 2011, p. 341).

Constraints like curriculum, the prioritisation of monolingualism and certain school practices work to promote a cultural exclusivity. Curriculum, often borrowed from elsewhere (Gardinier, 2012; Luke, 2011; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), and discussed in the globalisation literature, transports foreign ideas and understandings that are informed by cultural knowledges from elsewhere. In response to this import, many authors argue for a curriculum based on the lives of students (Coronel & Gómez-Hurtado, 2015; Schoorman, 2011). For example, when teachers, using a Reggio Emilia curriculum, adopted a pedagogy where all learning experiences began with the child’s interests culturally relevant teaching and learning experiences prevail (Durden, Escalante, & Blitch, 2015). The authors highlight how the use of “books, puzzles, family pictures, and children’s art work” created a “physical classroom environment rich in diversity”, where language, ethnicity, and gender diversity was displayed (p. 230).

Prioritisation of English is reported as thwarting the expression of cultural diversity of schools. Schools that advocate for bilingualism as part of their language program go some way to cultural inclusivity. However, it has been noted that although education departments advocate the benefits of bilingualism most official education operates in a monolingual environment and that schools “develop their own cultures and discourses within which to interpret and enact

government guidelines” (Dakin, 2017, p. 424). This is compounded when schools adopt withdrawal programs of language and civic instruction as noted in a multiple case study (Coronel & Gómez-Hurtado, 2015) in Spanish schools. Cultural diversity is then removed from regular class activities where teachers “wash their hands of this task and so do not consider it within their remit” (Coronel & Gómez-Hurtado, 2015, p. 409). This study concluded that diversity was considered an issue to be solved, “to be handled by a specialist”, rather than part of school culture, which relegated classroom teaching as culturally neutral (p. 409).

There is danger, particularly in EAL/D classrooms, where “power is invested in teachers to “know” and pedagogical imperatives are top-down”, that the practice of knowing, “operationalised through language, *the* mode of knowledge exchange” elides the “cultural work that is required of interculturality” (Reid, Diaz, & Alsaiani, 2016, p. 48). Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto (2018, p. 511) found that many teachers reject diversity “to impose similarity, uniformity and standard behaviour for the sake of cohesion”. Cultural diversity becomes invisible in the school and managed by work performed outside the classroom. In many studies teachers refer to a disconnect between what happens at school and what happens in home (Dakin, 2017). These studies examine how curriculum, the prioritisation of English, and the associated withdrawal of students limit the expression of cultural differences.

Cultural inclusivity in the classroom is sometimes relegated as invisible where teachers illustrate a lack of knowing that can result in teachers being unaware of important cultural information that might help their students to integrate students more quickly. A study (Dakin, 2017) in a culturally diverse primary school in England noted that if children wanted their cultures to be included they had to bring artefacts from home to share at school. Based on a review of other studies in the early 2000s, Hedges & Lee (2010, p. 259) note that where there are “cultural discontinuities between school and home ... teachers and parents were found wanting in a gap between expectations and actual practices”. There is an overwhelming sense in the literature that a home-school connection is vital in including cultural diversity in classrooms.

The global trajectories study focuses cultural difference as the phenomenon of interest, rather than language, and how it plays out in the school as well as the classroom across two different nations. It studies how cultural difference is expressed and also catered for across the school communities, as well as how global influences manifest to influence how it plays out in the classroom with particular reference to sociomateriality. It therefore adds to the existing literature by carving out a place that looks at the interplay of multiple phenomena which the above studies do not. This review now moves to consider the literature that deals with teachers and students and their experiences in culturally diverse classrooms. The studies above indicate the important role that schools play in promoting inclusive education with respect to cultural diversity. However, other players, like teachers, are of equal importance in the pursuit of cultural inclusivity.

2.2.3.2 Teachers: the central game players

As discussed earlier, teachers are part of the globalised mobility of the twenty-first century. This means that teachers increasingly find themselves in culturally diverse classrooms (Turner, 2013), and in many cases practice with limited knowledge of cultural diversity and multicultural education (Coronel & Gómez-Hurtado, 2015). Importantly, although teachers constitute this diversity worldwide, the student population continues to diversify, but the teacher population does not. For example, in the USA Black and Latino students are much more likely to be taught by White teachers who are sometimes ill-equipped to teach them effectively (Sleeter, 2005).

How teachers respond to cultural diversity and differences is at the heart of the global trajectories study. Charting the literature is important in informing this study, but in doing so it highlights that the global trajectories study is unique in that it works across the global and local realm to look at how cultural differences play out in placed communities (Massey & Jess, 1995), as part of the system (Giddens, 1984) and in classroom sociomaterial action (Fenwick et al., 2011). The following review discusses the literature that documents how teachers, as active

agents in the process of education, respond to ever-increasing cultural diversity. It first considers the problematic preparation of preservice teachers in universities, and then moves on to consider the experiences of teachers in schools.

Preparing culturally inclusive teachers. The following studies illustrate the constraints and enablers that operate in the preparation of preservice teachers to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, particularly with respect to raising self-awareness with respect to their own cultures. Although the global trajectories study is not located in this field, it warrants discussion to attempt to understand why teachers might reject and delimit the expression and inclusion of cultural and linguistic diversity in their classrooms. There is further evidence that many university courses do not recognise and cater for cultural difference amongst their own students, while preservice education students report that inclusive pedagogies, that are prioritised in courses, are more than often not modelled (Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016).

Students report a perceived tokenism where diverse teaching materials were only introduced at the conclusion of courses with little opportunity for discussion (Sleeter, 2005). Increasingly, universities must respond to cultural diversity in two ways—they must cater for cultural diversity within their student populations and at the same time ensure that teachers are well equipped to respond effectively to cultural diversity in schools (Turner, 2013). However, the persistence of normative models of teaching and learning that do not “offer pre-service teacher extended explorations about curricula that attend to intersections of ‘race’, ethnicity, gender, class and sexuality” prevail today (Grieshaber & Miller, 2010, p. 179). A study found that these models result in pre-service teachers expressing anxiety about teaching in CALD classrooms—30% expressed confidence, while 62% expressed anxiety (Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016).

Further and problematically, research shows that changing teacher’s attitudes and long-held beliefs about culture within the course of teacher education is relatively unsuccessful (Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016; Sleeter, 2005; Turner, 2013). In contrast to the finding above, Saudelli (2012) examined the perceptions of international educators who taught Emirate females

who attended Dubai Women's College and found that these educators expressed a willingness to let go of their ways to embrace the other ways with a "nuanced sensibility toward others" (p. 112). This is affirming, although as guest workers, perhaps, there was no alternative, creating a position that allows us to elude the divisive politics of polarity (Saudelli, 2012).

On a positive note, a study found that active learning strategies as opposed to didactic presentations "appeared to help White preservice teachers work through their defenses by engaging them in reflection about connections between key concepts and their own experiences and beliefs" (Sleeter, 2005, p. 568). To promote cultural self-awareness and intercultural understandings of students at Higher Colleges of Technology studying business degrees, James and Shamma (2013) designed an intervention course. However, similar to other studies (Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016; Turner, 2013) they found that although they raised higher levels of cultural self-awareness, instilling intercultural intelligence was limited in such a short time with limited experiential resources.

The experiences of teachers in culturally diverse classrooms The following highlights empirical studies that illustrate how teachers respond in classrooms that are populated by cultural diversity. Across the literature there is evidence that teachers value the cultural diversity of their students, but many constraints operate to marginalise this valuing so that the diverse cultures of many students are universalised and marginalised. The following discussion considers these constraints, in terms of teacher awareness of self and others as cultural beings and teacher practice. It also highlights positive examples of how teachers' work enables cultural inclusivity.

Cultural awareness of self and others—Classrooms with culturally diverse members offer challenges as well as opportunities for teachers—on the one hand teachers are expected to foster a climate of acceptance about difference and on the other, in many countries, they must satisfy political manifestations of assimilation—resulting in a tension for teachers with regard to language use and teaching in the classroom (Breton-Carbonneau, Cleghorn, Evans, & Pesco, 2012). Many studies report that teachers are not well prepared to teach in culturally and

linguistically diverse classrooms and that teachers often have static social-politically formed, monocultural conceptualisations of schooling (Grieshaber & Miller, 2010).

These conceptualisations about culture are formed through teacher's own participation in schooling and educational training institutions as well as their everyday social experiences, placed in their own geographies of social relations (Massey, 1991a, 1999). As noted above, changing these long-held beliefs and understandings is difficult (Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016; Sleeter, 2005; Turner, 2013). If teachers don't participate in self-identity and cross cultural work and question their personal beliefs and values with respect to their teaching practices, then they have little to call upon when dealing with culturally diverse children and their parents (Buchori & Dobinson, 2012; Grieshaber & Miller, 2010).

Further, many teachers are unaware of difference as a social construction and that even though they are aware of cultural differences in their classrooms they tended to "tap dance" around class differences, treating them superficially (Allard & Santoro, 2004). A mixed-method quantitative and qualitative study (Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto, 2018) in Catalonia, Spain, found that elementary teachers in culturally diverse classrooms, despite stated interests in cultural diversity, tended to emphasise similarities across cultures which works to minimise cultural differences. Rather, there was lack of recognition that "each culture has its own unique norms regarding expected behaviors within hierarchical relationships, particularly in the presence of figures of authority" (Cousik, 2015, p. 58) and "translating intercultural discourse into practice was rather poor" (Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto, 2018, p. 511).

Intercultural intelligence begins with a deep understanding of self-awareness of one's own cultural understandings, an awareness that other literature has corroborated with respect to White teachers in the USA (Sleeter, 2005). The Spanish study by Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto (2018) mentioned above found that teachers had little recognition of the patterns and behaviours in their own cultures, which then makes it difficult to see those patterns in other cultures, grounding classroom practice in a assimilationist conception.

In a school in New Zealand, Oranje & Feryok (2013) examined whether teachers regarded culture as important in teaching EAL students. They found that teachers had limited knowledge of the cultures of their EAL students with no appreciation of how this might influence their learning of English as well as their legitimacy as classroom members. This study reinforces the importance of “teachers to have knowledge about culture and its role in language learning” (p. 17). For example “researchers consistently find teachers to see White and Asian students as more teachable than Black or Latino students, and White teachers to be more likely than teachers of color to hold lower expectations for Black and Latino students” (Sleeter, 2005, p. 559).

Hedges and Lee (2010) cite literature that exposes the dominance of monocultural and western views that underlie teachers views, particularly in early childhood education that relies on a play-based learning environment. These findings are echoed in a study (Buchori & Dobinson, 2012) that explored the cultural perceptions of four early childhood teachers in an Australian school which had 80% non-English speaking students. They found that although teachers expressed positivity about cultural diversity, they fostered a recurrent othering through an air of ambivalence about children holding on to their cultural traits, naming them as “cultural baggage” or “an encumbrance” (p. 51).

Cousik (2015) suggests that teachers who are unaware that cultures have unique forms and patterns of behaviour may be tempted to treat cultural difference as behaviour problems that need intervention. For example, in some cultures students are expected to listen to and not question the teacher, and some Asian students are taught not to make eye contact (Huang & Brown, 2009). Rather, teachers see cultural diversity as an issue of adaptation where the students are expected to adapt to the local culture which means that “neither school policies nor teaching practices assume the commitments arising from cultural diversity” (Coronel & Gómez-Hurtado, 2015, p. 400).

In these studies teachers not only lacked knowledge about culturally and linguistically difference in students, but also lacked their own understandings of their cultural understandings which tended towards a cultural stereotyping of differences. The connection between globalisation and intercultural understanding is not automatic and flows of people across boundaries “does not always lead to open dispositions, which is a central aspect of cosmopolitanism” (Reid et al., 2016, p. 46). The global trajectories study global-local nexus to consider how cultural difference are constructed in multiple places. It departs from these studies as it is focused on schools, teachers and students in their everyday social and material practices of teaching and learning.

Teacher practices—Teachers’ lack of cultural knowledge is not the only constraint to teaching culturally diverse students. Breton-Carbonneau and colleagues (2012) studied how pedagogical and political goals of schooling might operate with cross purposes in early primary multicultural settings of Montreal and Pretoria where the pull of dominant languages—French and English—tended to marginalise home languages as well as cultural aspects. They found that the political rhetoric of assimilation—for example in some French classes in Montreal home languages were banned—deny significance about student language and cultures. Similarly, in Pretoria, a teacher read a book about a frog prince connected to the colonial past, but disconnected with the social and cultural lives of her students. Such practices take on a negative hue as it “denies the importance of the learners’ linguistic and cultural capital” (p. 380). This case illustrates that “assimilative political considerations sometimes operate at the expense of sound pedagogical considerations” (Breton-Carbonneau et al., 2012, p. 385). Modelling strategies, such as reading and discussing contemporary children’s literature that is ethnically sourced, has greater inclusive possibilities (Sleeter, 2005).

Hagelund (2007) looked at how cultural differences in the classroom played out in teacher’s work. The study’s findings indicate that culture is celebrated superficially and often symbolically in the form of flags and food rather than in the everyday experience of people. This

resonates with the view that culture is a ‘stable, bounded, relatively unchanging entit[y]’ (Hagelund, 2007, p. 134). The global trajectories study departs from the above studies, because it makes cultural differences an active agent in the process of examining classroom social action. It does not study cultural diversity as a given that responds to influences elsewhere, like the way teachers impart knowledge.

2.2.3.3 Students and parents in culturally diverse classrooms

The onset of transnational migration means that children arrive in foreign places where they often have little knowledge of the language and culture of the adopted country. Classroom cultural diversity means that many students draw on multiple ways of knowing and being and also multiple ways of learning and understanding (Reid et al., 2016). In many cases this resettlement is accompanied by a realisation that they are part of a minority group (Grieshaber & Miller, 2010), where they sometimes experience culture shock—feelings of bewilderment, anxiety and loneliness (Arenas, 2015).

Children from cultural and linguistic backgrounds different from the school are often relegated as “special needs” who need fixing and studies have observed that educating them is problematic (Tsolidis, 2011). Many teachers treat parents in deficit mode, but in many schools teachers feel that parents are not involved enough (Hedges & Lee, 2010). More so, one’s early childhood education will likely be the first time children are aware that they are culturally different. The migrant child must persist in curriculum environments that are not responsive to their cultural values and practices which can be isolating and marginalising (Grieshaber & Miller, 2010).

Children express their cultures in many ways. One study of five Norwegian multicultural elementary classes, examined the expressed objective realities of children about culture through written and pictorial representations (Belet & Duygu, 2009). Representations of culture ranged from things about a country (most popular) to meals (next most popular), dances and

celebrations, traditions, and how we use nature. A comparison of the written and pictorial representations showed that children were more likely to draw and not write about traditional clothes, sports, national heroes and flags.

Students, as do teachers, benefit from exploring ideas about their own and other cultures. Bak & von Brömssen (2010) interviewed young refugee children in Sweden to see how their diasporic dispersal, where discourses surrounding the process of migration were negatively constructed, shaped their everyday lives. Despite this background of negativity, they found that “children actively construct their interpretations and reactions to their families’ dispersal in ways that allow them to embrace multiple belongings and place-makings without feeling split or torn”, thus articulating expression of diasporic consciousness where they “maintain transnational social fields and networks” (p. 126). In Belgium, Christou & Spyrou (2012) studied the role of place making in the constitution of identity with Greek Cypriot children’s experience of crossing to the occupied part of Cyprus. The narratives of children were used to glean how they constructed a sense of place, once only in their imaginaries, and through innovative methodology captured children’s understandings on paper where “they selectively represent[ed] an idealized version of the territory, devoid of the other” (p. 313).

By coding the utterances of children to understand the influence of colonial histories on contemporary educational contexts, Ghiso and Campano (2013a) looked at how immigration was discursively constructed in two geographic spaces—the school and the community where the students lived. They found a disjuncture that revealed that the rich plurality with which students were constituted at home was not always given space in the classroom. This is important in the current political climate of Australia where “dominant discourses of assimilation and standardization, coupled with the sense of vulnerability so many immigrant families feel” tend to minimise the sharing of students’ rich and complex pluralities (Ghiso & Campano, 2013, p. 255).

The focus of another study (Agirdag, Van Houtte, & Van Avermaet, 2012) was how the relationships between teacher and students, in multicultural classrooms in Belgium, influenced their global self-esteem. Examining the “highly neglected role of teacher–pupil relationships as a mediating mechanism” between ethnicity and global self-esteem, they found that native student populations exhibited a greater global self-esteem in schools that were constituted of a greater share of immigrant students, as opposed to schools with less cultural heterogeneity; whereas immigrant students’ global self-esteem was not related to ethnic school composition. Importantly, the study found that teacher-pupil relationships had a positive effect on all students’ global self-esteem, but that “pupils’ feelings of teacher support and schools’ teacher support culture were both positively associated with higher global self-esteem of immigrant pupils” (Agirdag et al., 2012, p. 1152).

Although a higher education study, Turner (2013) examined what influences classroom participation of South Sudanese students in an Australian tertiary context and found that teacher and student expectation of class participation played out in powerful ways. Students who come from countries where the centrality of teacher dominant pedagogy prevails, “where everything is through the teacher” (p. 84) find limiting—they simply do not have the social experience the liberal open spaces of classroom discussion of Australian classrooms.

Braswell (2015) observed the experiences of East Indian-descent children (4–5 year olds) and their teacher and teacher aid of European decent in a US preschool classroom with respect to “how artifacts, spaces, adult-guided routines, and social conventions shape young children’s representational development” (p. 135). Braswell found variations in child participation as well as adult mediation when working with different representational practices, for example, reading, drawing, pretending. This variation tended to coincide with explicit and implicit mediation—explicit (prompting, giving feedback and describing processes) and acting as an equal (e.g., partnering in play situations, as opposed to implicit adult mediation were effective in shaping children’s representational development). The above studies relate findings with respect to the

knowledges about cultural ways, how culturally diverse students are dealt with in class and the relationships they have with teachers. None of these studies looks at how globalisation influences classroom social action and in particular sociomateriality around material imports like books and playdough.

In most western early years programs, the home school connection, discussed earlier, is paramount to creating a positive environment for the child. In culturally diverse schools, this connection can sometimes be compromised through language and cultural values and understanding about the role of schooling. As a dominant discourse it can also work to marginalise parents who are unfamiliar with talking to the teacher and place blame on parents and their children for unsatisfactory partnerships (Hadley, 2014). In a mixed methods study that used a survey to rank classroom experiences in culturally diverse early years classrooms in Sydney, Hadley (2014) found discrepancies in parents from other countries and teacher rankings. For example, teachers rated highly the importance of students being assertive and ensuring their individuality is recognized, whereas parents indicated that it was important that children conform. Further, parents ranked respect for rules less important (fifth) than teachers who ranked respect for rules as first. The global trajectories study stands in contrast to these study as it considers what teachers say about parent comments with respect to the cultural disconnect in each classroom.

A positive finding is worth noting in a three-year, qualitative study by Hamilton (2013) who examined what factors impacted on the learning experiences and well-being of migrant children from Eastern European heritages, in 14 primary schools in North East Wales. It was found that many of the children were so completely integrated into the school that their individual learnings needs, cultural heritage, and well-being, were at risk of being camouflaged. In the relaxed and supportive environments of the Foundation Phase (preschool education), however, it was noted that an emphasis on “learning through play and tuning into children’s interests” and “less emphasis on academic work and higher levels of one-to-one adult

facilitation” (p. 206), was conducive to higher levels of language learning, but also helped children with their transitions in unfamiliar environments. Keddie and Niesche (2012) in studying a group of Australian educators argue that when teachers support equity for culturally different students, greater recognition and understanding of cultural differences prevail. The global trajectories study is informed by these important studies, but departs in that it looks at cultural differences as an active interplay between globalisation and classroom social and material action—something that no other study to date has done.

2.2.4 Concluding comments: Culture and education

The literature review above highlights how children and their parents fair when they make up culturally diverse classrooms. Attending to cultural diversity is often constrained for many reasons but when “students and staff alike recognise, appreciate and capitalise on diversity, aiming to enrich the overall learning experience” (Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto, 2018) cultural inclusivity is more likely.

Further, a simple reified notion of culture as ideas or norms that belong to a group does not reflect the phenomena of culture forged through a local global nexus, as examined in the global trajectories study (Anderson-Levitt, 2012). Notions where cultural diversity is superficially represented as flags and food do not reflect the intricate and complex nature of what constitutes cultures. An essentialised view of cultural differences neglects its complexity and “continues to reinforce and perpetuate highly inequitable and exclusionary understandings about diversity through inferiorising group difference” (Keddie & Niesche 2012, p. 333). Constraints on culturally inclusive teacher practices through inappropriate curriculum and lack of in-class support, difficulty for schools to practice inclusive cultural diversity in the face of politically driven goals, like assimilation and accountability testing, and last, but not least, teacher unawareness and insensitivity towards the cultures of others.

The above review is not an exhaustive list, but it does signal some of the underlying issues with respect to teaching culturally diverse students. These studies treat cultural diversity as an end result and a given that must be attained to. The global trajectories study treats cultural difference as an active agent in meaning making where it is considered an interplay with globalisation and social action in the classroom. Further, it examines this interplay in two very different school systems, one in the East and one in the West. It therefore provides much needed research about education systems across the world, important when our world is more closely connected than ever. This review now considers the literature that informs the field of sociomateriality in education.

2.3 Sociomateriality

An important part of this research examined the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality in two early years classrooms in different parts of the world. This section reviews the literature that informs the field of sociomateriality with attention to its application in education. Chapters One and Three introduced sociomateriality as the dynamic and communicative connection between the social and the material, that proscribes an active relationship between humans and non-human entities (Mills & Exley, 2014). In this review, as before, my study is referred to as the global trajectories study.

Sociomateriality acknowledges the primacy of matter as part of social action (Coole & Frost, 2010) where materials are not merely tools, but constitute entanglements with social framings to critically shape action of humans in their affective encounters with materials (Fenwick et al., 2011; Johannesen, Erstad, & Habib, 2012; Lamprou, 2017; Orlikowski, 2007). A sociomaterial approach necessarily adopts a posthumanist stance that places humans “not above materials...but among materials” (Sørensen, 2009), thus resonating theoretically with the global trajectories study that looks at the interplay of humans and materials, and in this study’s case, humans who possess cultural markers. The concept of learning as materially enacted is applied in

this the global trajectories study (Aberton, 2012) but it takes the stance that learning is complicated by cultural differences.

By revaluing and reconceiving “the role of matter and material in human practices” (Edwards & Fenwick, 2015, p. 1385) sociomaterial studies move towards a politicisation of the “thing” that illuminates configurations of power “integral to forms of political experimentation” (p. 1395). This thesis studies the influence of globalisation in classroom action and calls for a perspective to examine how it is materially produced (Edwards & Fenwick, 2015) but also how globalisation processes are influential, significant and powerful in student classroom spatial relationships (Fenwick et al., 2011).

The analysis in Chapter Six explored how sociomateriality interplayed with cultural differences in each primary classroom, with particular interest on the concept of sociomaterial agency—networked, not reliant on bodies alone, a patterning of “heterogeneous relations” (Johannesen et al., 2012, p. 786) characterised by intersections of human and nonhuman things. As discussed in Chapter Three, agency is mobilised through networks of human and non-human assemblages, so that “human desire and interests” are “linked with things” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71). Such a stance challenges the centrality of the teacher as the sole implicative agent (Mulcahy, 2012) and, as in the global trajectories study, shifts the emphasis of examining classroom action into the realm of the spatial.

Spaces are problematic, their structures and properties active in the constitution of human action (Massey, 2005; Mulcahy & Morrison, 2017) where bodies and environments are “intra-actively constituted” (C. Taylor, 2013). In other words, our world is ineluctably material and the primacy of matter needs to be acknowledged in our theories (Coole & Frost, 2010). A turn to “relational materialism, where things and matter, usually perceived of as passive and immutable” are instead granted agency within human intra-activities (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 539), is understood as promoting a research practice that is more ethical. Our world is also, through a global sense of place (Massey, 1991a), and a key theme of the global trajectories study,

becoming increasingly culturally diverse. Places like classrooms, as established in Chapter One, are a dynamic mix of people and things from elsewhere.

The complexity of the key concepts of the global trajectories study—cultural differences in primary education, agency and the concept of place—is embedded in the notion that materiality of everyday life is wedded to both geographic and physical place (Gannon, 2009). This review will explore the sociomaterial literature in the following way: a review of the literature to contextualise this study and provide a critical evaluation of its historical trends; the literature with respect to classroom practice in primary education which is the focus of this study; and the body of literature that explores the concept of agency and culture within sociomateriality. A conclusion will highlight how the global trajectories study is unique in the field of sociomaterial literature and the contribution it will make to this emerging field.

2.3.1 Sociomateriality: An emerging field of study

This current research occupies and contributes to a niche field in the emerging literature about sociomateriality in education. Although a relatively new approach, references to materiality in research surfaced in the late 1990s (Mills, 2015), but earlier theorists like Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky were interested in the active agency of humans in material worlds (Fenwick et al., 2011). However, a recent material turn has produced literature that attends to sociomaterial relationships in many aspects of modern living. Such literature accounts for a prominent shift towards materiality and the recognition of context, where the dynamic containments of human and non-human interaction is recognised as critical in shaping the actions of individual practitioners (Fenwick, 2015; Fenwick, Nerland, & Jensen, 2012). The material shift is illustrated in a range of studies, for example, the relationship between technological artefacts and social settings (Lamprou, 2017), the sociomaterial dynamics of workers and their technological environments (Sawchuk, 2003), the perspectives of teachers, parents and children of digital tablets for educational purposes in an early learning context (Neumann, Merchant, & Burnett,

2018) and the impact upon professional practices of digital technologies, especially big data (Fenwick & Edwards, 2016).

The above studies signal important learnings about how technologies are impacted in the classroom as well as the workplace and a growing awareness of the role of non-humans in contemporary educational contexts is present in the literature (Waltz, 2006). Studies have also concentrated on the material aspects, moving away from technologies, for example, how learning is practice-based and reliant on materials (Hager, Lee, & Reich, 2011), how the sociomaterial practices of teachers, in day care centres in Denmark, posited an interrelationship between knowledge and the pedagogical action of teachers (Plum, 2018), and the materiality of the teacher's chair located as a chair-body assemblage capable of power over students (C. Taylor, 2013). These shifts characterise a movement from epistemological approaches to ontological ones that includes a participatory performativity between humans and non-humans (Fenwick, 2015; Jensen, 2007).

A growing body of literature about the social contexts of education, both in and outside the classroom, represents a growing trend towards the sociomaterial reflecting a “widespread humanist approach” to educational research (2009, p. 2). There exists a large body of literature about the sociomateriality of technologies in education (Johannesen et al., 2012; Lamprou, 2017; Orlikowski, 2007), for example, how the social actions of children interplay with digital technologies (Maureen Walsh & Simpson, 2014). However, it is still the case today and noted by Sørensen a decade ago that a “blindness toward the question of how educational practice is affected by materials” is pervasive (p. 2). Instead, materialism tends to be relegated to a sporadic and marginalised realm (Coole & Frost, 2010) and there exists a “general tendency to grossly under-estimate materials as mere instruments to advance educational performance” (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84).

A trend to move beyond the use of technologies, as is the essence of the global trajectories study, is evidenced in more recent literature. McGregor's (2003) study of school departments as

active workplaces, considered a hidden curriculum that influenced teachers to act in particular ways. Other studies have explored the configuration of the learning environment as a socially and materially active space (Mulcahy & Morrison, 2017); how innovative learning spaces discursively position children's social action (McPherson & Saltmarsh, 2017); how teachers' pedagogical practices are material laden (Mulcahy, 2012); the sociomateriality of educational policy and how reassemblages of humans and non-humans are actions in educational places (Landri, 2015); and how materiality is tied to both physical and geographic place (Gannon, 2009) and influential in activities like school field trips (Nespor, 2000).

The above studies represent an indicative selection of the emerging literature, all of these studies examine the active choreographies (Youdell & Armstrong, 2011) that encompass classrooms as sociomaterial places. They argue for the primacy of matter in any examination of social action (Coole & Frost, 2010) where "sociomaterializing processes configure educational actors, subjectivities, knowledge and activities" in classrooms (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 2). All afford a political materialism where "material bodies, substances, setting and devices" actively configure power and are "integral to forms of political experimentation" (Edwards & Fenwick, 2015, p. 1394). The global trajectories study settles well within this approach paved by others, but departs from these previous studies in that it considers sociomateriality in the context of globalised multicultural classrooms to problematise the relationship between children's social action, their cultural differences and things in the classrooms, as global flows. The following section looks more closely at the literature that focuses on sociomaterial research in early primary education, the context for the global trajectories study.

2.3.2 Sociomateriality and classroom practice in primary education

Classrooms can be conceived as "*knots* of things, practices and mobilities" while schools are *vehicles* of social and material landscapes (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 149) where new communicative practices are co-shaped through social interaction with technologies (Burnett & Merchant, 2015).

Deemed to have a material culture the place of the classrooms acknowledges the interrelationships between the time, scale, space, resources, people, and interactions—for example writing is a sociomaterial process where the work of hands, tools, paper and texts intermingle (Kervin, Comber, & Woods, 2017). Science education can be seen to be co-shaped through interactions of materials and human actors that relies on “human-technology relations” (Roehl, 2012). These relations are realised through entanglements with objects deemed as epistemic and vital to the process of learning scientific processes and information.

The relationship between tools, children’s engagement and their verbal and embodied actions was examined as preschool children explored the formation of shadows (Impedovo, Delserieys-Pedregosa, Jégou, & Ravanis, 2017). They found that tools manipulation was directly related to the children’s participation and involvement in the experiment about shadows. The global trajectories study considers the participation and involvement of children in relation the complexities of cultural differences. A study closer to this current study considered the power relations evident in the sociomaterial play of children in Norwegian kindergartens (Nordtømme, 2012). As is the case in the global trajectories study, place, space and materiality are not considered as independent entities. The focus of Nordtømme’s study is on how the physical world of the classroom acts on the children, not how the cultural differences of children interact with the material environment. Recent studies mirror these shifts in approaches to materiality in educational research where the focus moves from “affect as an inner psychological state of human-ness” to affect that is seen as “embodied practices of assembly, human and otherwise” (Mulcahy, 2012, p. 11).

These ideas were explored by Nespor (2000) to consider the significance of the school field trip in US schools. He found that the social and material landscapes produced particular student performances in the ways in which they were organised according to time and space and that there were implications of this organization for knowledge acquisition and knowledge-building practices. The significance of materiality and matter, as sociomaterial processes in

classroom pedagogic practices considered how teachers enacted their pedagogic performances through corporeal capacities that influenced power relations between teacher and learner (Mulcahy, 2012). As suggested by Mulcahy (2013) in her study of learning transfer (and the intersection of the social, the textual and the material) in graduate teachers, such focus pins the learner to the world in which they act.

This focus on things that actively constitute the social world of the classroom is the focus of this current study. It departs in that its interest lies in how young children who are cultural marked from each other interact with materials in the classroom. Although studies have looked at multilingual children's interactions with iPads (see, for example Toohey & Dagenais, 2015) and the connection between the technologies of play and artefacts of identity of two boys from different cultural backgrounds who drew on their cultural resources in artful play to show identity (Vicars, 2011), neither were focused on cultural differences as a factor of sociomaterial interactions across the geographical divide, as is the global trajectories study's point of interest.

Commenting on the recent upsurge and interest in materiality in educational research, Mills and Comber (2013) point out that in classrooms, materials not only "function as heuristics for learning" but the connections between human and non-human things should be "mapped and problematised" (p. 114) in relation to the world outside the classroom. The idea of connection is important in global trajectories study that seeks to problematise how culturally different children interact with their material surrounds, many of which are imported through global flows from the world beyond. For example, a study (Rautio & Winston, 2015) that examined the concept of play and its educational relevance as children interacted with matter in their playful encounters resonates with this current study. While quarantined to a homogenous group of children in a Finnish school, Rautio and Winston's work is important as it reconceptualises play as "intra-active and comprising improvisation with language and matter" and play spaces as sites "for producing and contesting as well as acquiring knowledge" (p. 15). Play is complicated as it is a space that combines social and material relationality for children to

experience. The global trajectories study builds onto the complication of play to examine play and sociomateriality across two classrooms, and how cultural differences limits or affords interaction with materials. It puts learner and world together (Mulcahy, 2013), as evidenced in other studies discussed, but with emphasis on the phenomenon of the globalisation, global flows and cultural differences.

2.3.3 Sociomateriality, agency and culture

This research analysis is embedded in place theory (Massey, 1991a) and structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), and like Gannon's (2009) study that argued for a placed materiality, implicates geography and the process of globalisation in the social relations of place. As part of structuration and discussed more fully in Chapter Three, agency refers to the capability, rather than intention to do things, and is therefore, concerned with events that are perpetrated by the individual (Giddens, 1976).

Sociomateriality contributes to a theoretical concept of agency by de-coupling “learning and knowledge production from a strictly human-centered socio-cultural ontology” to “liberate agency from its conceptual confines as a human-generated force” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 114). Agency, as part of sociomateriality, connects humans to non-human things. While structuration (Giddens, 1984) holds that agents procure power by harnessing certain resources; sociomateriality holds that material entities create certain affordances with respect to social action. Agency is dependent on the relational couplings between people as they interact with things (Fenwick et al., 2011). A critical stance, as taken in this research, sees that some of these couplings can be more or less productive than others—social activity is “never located in bodies and bodies alone” (Law, 1992, p. 4).

Although agency is at the heart of sociomaterial studies, few articles make it explicitly so. Noteworthy examples exist in the literature: Sandpearl (2016) used a sociomaterial lens to examine how senior theater students interacted with digital apps and viewed their action through

an assemblage of apps, agency and the real and virtual worlds of students; while another study (Mulcahy, 2019) traced the movements and learnings of children as they visited a museum exhibition to reveal their material agency as they interacted with art. Important in their foregrounding of the agentic nature of sociomaterial interactions, each were set in different contexts unlike this present study, which locates global/local approach to sociomateriality in lower primary classrooms, and concerned with cultural differences.

The sociomaterial notion of agency was studied in an explorative case study (Johannesen et al., 2012). Using actor network theory (ANT) the sociomaterial contexts through which teachers acted—for example, time, resources, teaching beliefs, and curriculum and policy documents—were charted to understand the way that materials shaped teacher action. The global trajectories study the sociomaterial contexts of children in two different classroom locations and in particular how their cultural differences interplayed with the sociomateriality of the classroom. Children's sociomaterial action was examined in a study (Toohey & Dagenais, 2015) to see how multilingual and monolingual children made videos with iPads to ask “what kinds of activities, discourses and material objects are assembled” in video making (p. 312). Focusing on one very adept girl with literacy difficulties the authors showed how action was encased as sociomaterial assemblage where the girl harnessed both linguistic and physical (and manipulation of the thing) engagement to make a successful video. In this way, the tool and the user mutually constituted each other and the relational coupling with the iPad created a productive outcome (Fenwick et al., 2011).

The focus of this latter study is how literacy deficient children gain power through their interface with materials that afford productive outcomes. The global trajectories study is interested in this sociomaterial interaction through the lens of culture rather than literacy ability. Another researcher (C. Taylor, 2013) employed the concept of agency with respect to how gendered power is enacted in interaction with materials in UK sixth form college. Similar to Taylor's (2013) study, the global trajectories study adopts the notion of objects, bodies and

spaces as entangled and that agency is “distributed...brought into being through the constitutive enactments of human-nonhuman apparatuses” (p. 701). It does so, however, to understand how cultural difference influences classroom sociomaterial action.

The coupling of culture and sociomateriality is a central inquiry in the global trajectories study. While not particularly present in the literature, a few studies have embraced this important coupling. The experiences of youth and post graduate students in culturally diverse settings (Balakrishnan & Claiborne, 2017) was used as a research platform to argue for the use of participatory action research to examine the divergent sociomaterial environments in multicultural classrooms. Discussed previously, Toohey and Dagenais (2015) explored the sociomaterial action of children with different linguistic backgrounds and Vicars (2011) proposed that the technologies of play were connected to artefacts of identity. The second study is more closely aligned with the global trajectories study, but the focus is on cultural identity and how each participant drew upon their cultural resources to display and construct their cultural capital. The focus of the global trajectories study is on the way that cultural differences are agentive in procuring educational outcomes with respect to interaction with classroom resources and so how systems and practices that are part of the local/global network are connected across time and space (Fenwick & Edwards, 2011; Massey, 1991a).

2.4 How this study is unique: Sociomateriality, agency and cultural difference

Earlier in this literature review the vast arena of research about globalisation, and in particular global flows and education, was discussed. As well, a review about the literature about cultural aspects and education pointed to a gap in literature concerned with the interplay of cultural differences and classroom materiality. What is missing in the literature that forms a backdrop to the global trajectories study is how changes, brought on by globalising forces, influence social action in the classroom (Fenwick et al., 2011) and the way that culture is transmitted, “spoken, written and practiced through embodied, individual subjects” (Saltmarsh, 2015, p. 30). The

global trajectories current study attends to this omission in the literature to consider classrooms as “multiple, mobile and material” intersections (C. Taylor, 2013, p. 688) with global connections, where young culturally diverse children interface with globally transported materials in their classrooms. This study then connects globalisation, culture and sociomaterial action in ways that no other study has achieved.

The above review has evaluated the emerging literature about sociomateriality, moving from broader studies to those that have particularisation with respect to this project. This review highlights the importance of considering how “tools and users and contexts and discourses mutually constitute one another” and how in this process power emanates from and with material use (Toohey & Dagenais, 2015). Further, it has been established that “relational materiality is often overlooked in educational research” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 1), particularly within the globalisation literature.

Like other studies, the global trajectories study examines the networked and messy textures woven as part of social action and “resulting ambivalences – that intersect in pedagogical processes” (Fenwick & Landri, 2012, p. 3). But in the case of the global trajectories study, these networks are constituted as cultural to add to the mess of the sociomaterial. The point is that material things are performative, “they emerge and act in what are indeterminate entanglements of local everyday life” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 70). Things act together with other things, procuring forces that invite, exclude, and regulate participation (Fenwick, 2015). In the global trajectories study these indeterminate entanglements are understood to be influenced by global, cultural contexts which have the power to participate. So far, no other study has attended to these powerful entanglements.

3 Theoretical framing for the study

Chapter Two reviewed the relevant literature that informs this research study. This chapter presents the theoretical framework used to answer the overarching research question (and three sub-questions not included here): How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two different nations in the context of globalisation? As drivers of the research it is imperative that theory and research questions work synergistically to interrogate the data. To complete a “reading of the data” qualitative researchers need to “use theory to think *with* their data” or, in other words, “to use data to think *with* theory” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. vii). Interpretation of qualitative data requires deep and multi-layered approaches to analysis where theory works to prize open and diffract—to break the data up and bend it in useful directions—rather than crystallise meaning making (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

In this research classroom social action is contextualised in the wider system of education and the overarching phenomena of globalisation and migration. Classroom action does not occur in a vacuum; its action is constituted and contextualised by a wide range of economic, political, social and religious elements that are endemic to local and, as a consequence of globalisation and migration, more distant communities. Migratory flows of people can never be separated from the contexts and places from which they originate, and understandings of classroom cultural differences and social action must always be grounded in the contextualising and more universal—globalisation, global flows and migration—as well as the immediate and more particular—localised classroom social interaction with human and non-human aspects (Giddens, 1984; Robertson & Khondker, 1998).

3.1 Integrating three theories: Globalisation, structuration theory, and sociomateriality

The theoretical framework brings together three useful frames—the notion of place as globalised and socially dynamic (Massey, 1991a), the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) and the concept of sociomateriality (Fenwick et al., 2011). These theories are used to examine the

classroom as a dynamic social site where culturally diverse teachers and students, through their interaction with non-human elements, like learning materials, as well as each other, act in particular ways. Theorising place as globalised and socially dynamic allows an imagining of each school and classroom as lively and multiple, where social relations are caught up in power-geometries that privilege some and marginalise others (Massey, 1991a, 1999, 2005). Concepts within the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1976, 1984) are useful for this research as they enable an examination of how global flows form linkages between schools and their classrooms and the broader sociocultural world in which each is contextualised. These linkages across the system—the global world, the nation-state, the institution of schooling, the school, the classroom and the community—can be examined for how they work to structure the nature of classroom social action in signifying, dominating and legitimating ways (Giddens, 1984).

Further, Giddens's concept of agency (1984)—the continuous flow of conduct as repetitive practices across time and space (Thrift, 1985) is combined with the concept of sociomateriality and agency (Fenwick et al., 2011), as discussed in Chapter Two, and concerned with how agents make meaning through their interaction with their material environment. Of interest here is how culturally diverse students make meaning as their cultural differences interact with the sociomateriality of each classroom. Figure 3.1 maps the research questions with the main theoretical concepts of this research. Each of the first two sub-questions call upon separate theoretical concepts while the third uses a combination of structuration theory and sociomateriality. The main research question operationalises all theoretical concepts and will be returned to in Chapter Six. These mappings are further extrapolated in Figure 4.1 in Chapter Four, where the inclusion of data sets and methods detail the research data analysis.

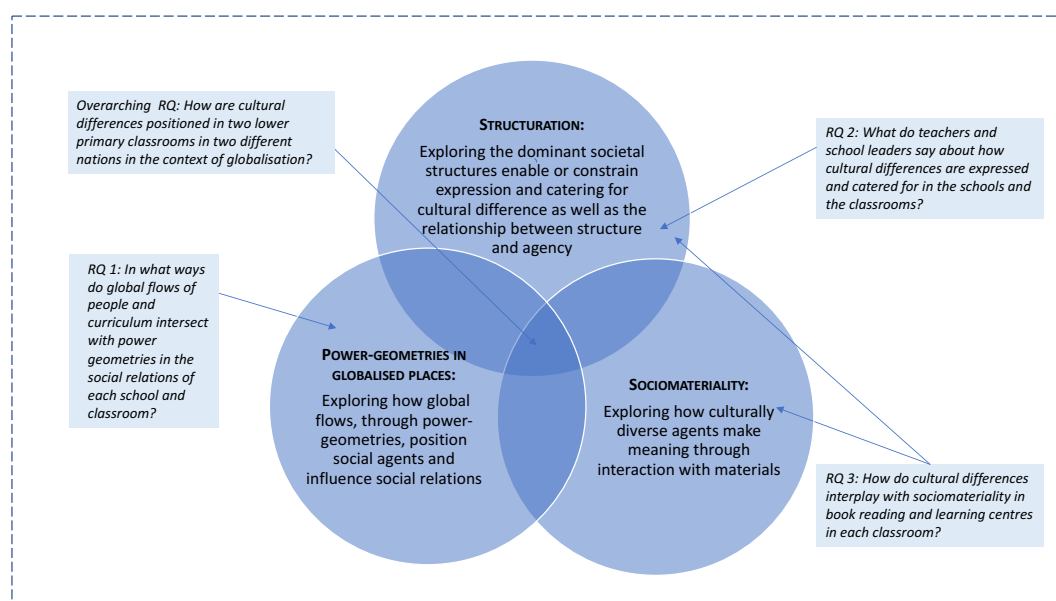


Figure 3.1 Links: Research questions and theoretical concepts

As discussed above, the classrooms of this research are located in a global-local nexus. The selection of the three theories and their relevant concepts resonates with this nexus to enable an interrogation of the intersections of globalisation, place, systems and local social relations and action. Further, the theoretical concepts enable a critical appraisal of the social site of the classroom by foregrounding the way that social actors are positioned, as culturally diverse members in culturally diverse classrooms, as will be discussed in more detail, below.

3.1.1 Classrooms as sites for critical social analysis

Critical social theories, as explained in more detail in the sections below “attempt to understand and explain the causes of structural domination and inequality in order to facilitate human emancipation and equity” (Levinson, 2011, p. 2). The theoretical framework for this research—the power-geometries of place (Massey, 1999), structuration and in particular agency, as well as the structuring principles of signification, domination and legitimation (Giddens, 1976) and sociomateriality where social action interplays with a contrived material context (Fenwick, 2015)—enable the analysis to be grounded in an “emancipatory approach” (Hardcastle et al., 2006; Masemann, 2003). Taking an emancipatory approach means that classrooms are viewed as

sites for renewal where all students can have access to an education that will secure productive futures for individual, national and global gains. A critical social approach situates the classroom social action, subjective experience and the conditions in which that action occurs as social processes that are mediated by immediate and contextualising contexts—contexts that can be contested (Hardcastle et al., 2006).

Classrooms are seedbeds for individual and societal outcomes where education contributes to the way “social structures do their work to distribute power and knowledge and life chances unevenly” (Levinson, 2011, p. 15). In this study, external globalising forces like policy borrowing (Luke, 2011; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a) and migration mean that classrooms are sites where western curriculum knowledge and notions of behaviour are taught to students who are culturally non-western—curriculum knowledges and behaviours that are, perhaps, at odds with student’s prior life experiences. Critical social theories enable an observation and contestation of classrooms through a critical lens that can expose the mechanisms of domination, normed behaviours and social practices that position teachers and students in particular ways. Such contestation avails an opportunity to analyse, contest and reconstruct the relations of power in the pursuit of emancipation and renewal.

In this research the data is interpreted through the lens of the theories above—place, structuration and sociomateriality—as social critical theories to examine how cultural differences, as a result of global migration, is positioned in each classroom. Although each theory was developed to respond to different social problems in different times, combination in this research brings a useful lens through which to study classroom social action. Massey’s (1991a) globalised sense of place enables an examination of how power-geometries, brought on by global flows, construct social relations in local places, while structuration theory enables an investigation of how society structures work to signify, dominate and legitimate (Giddens, 1984) social actions. A sociomateriality approach uncovers how culturally diverse students make

meaning as they interact in their material classrooms. This aspect of each theory, to examine social action critically, is further examined as each theory is unpacked below.

This chapter discusses the three theories to outline the concepts used in this research—power-geometries of place, the principles of agency as well as signification, domination and legitimation within structuration theory and sociomateriality—in the following ways. The first two theories are discussed in terms of their historical underpinnings and contextualised as critical social theories. This discussion is followed by a detailed analysis of the theoretical concepts of each used for this research as well as a discussion about the affordances and limitations of each theory with reference to its use in other empirical research contexts. The concept of sociomateriality, discussed in Chapter Two, is revisited with respect to the concept of agency, also used in the theory of structuration, as discussed above. This chapter concludes with a summary to draw together key points and ideas from this theoretical exposure and discussion.

3.2 Theoretical framing: Power-geometries of place

In this section, the work of Doreen Massey and the construction and constitution of place in a globalised world is discussed. Her notion of place is used to answer the first research question—In what ways do global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom? This section briefly discusses the historical underpinnings of her work to locate the theories and concepts of place as socially critical. It then expands on the notion of power-geometries to uncover how global flows influence the nature of social action in each school and classroom. After a short discussion of the limits and affordances of this theory it concludes with a summary to draw the main elements of the theory with respect to this research together.

3.2.1 Introduction to the work of Massey as a social critical theory

Massey's work is significant in its "insistence on the importance of *conceptualising* place and space" (Callard, 2004, p. 299). This insistence translates simply to the notion that geography matters and

where one is in the world influences the nature of social relations. Massey's work, dating back to the early 1970s, has changed the direction of human geography, particularly how it relates to other areas of inquiry, like sociology and cultural studies. Her work "encourage[s] the social sciences to take on board the complexity of place and space within their formulations" (Callard, 2004, p. 299). Massey's earlier path-breaking articles, in the 1970s, disrupted dominant neo-classical and a-spatial thinking of industrial location by insisting on the spatial dimension of localities, thus linking them to the global world beyond (Callard, 2004).

In 1984 she published the transformative monograph, *Spatial Division of Labour*, which "argued for and offered a rejuvenated and radically transformed geography" (Callard, 2004, p. 300). Since then, her work has been centred around three key tropes—the construction of gender relations in economic and social processes, her theorisation of place where places are imagined as porous, networked and sites for unequal power sharing and last, her concept of space-time in which she problematises the cemented divide between time and space to suggest that space and time are inseparable (Callard, 2004). Her work is useful for this research as it supports an interrogation of the social relations of two classrooms in schools located in different geographical places.

As a critical social theory, the writings of Massey as theories, frameworks and empirical studies, have revolutionised geographical thinking and, through her reconceptualising of the terms place, space, region and locality, have enabled strong links to be formed with the social sciences (Callard, 2004). She is interested to "understand spatial differentiation, uneven development and historical and geographical change" (Callard, 2004, p. 300) but also "how to effect transformation in and of" (Callard, 2004, p. 299) the social world. In particular, she developed the term, power-geometries, to account for the ways that "different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to" (Massey, 1991a, p. 25) global flows and interconnections. The neologisms of power-geometries and space-time have had influential theoretical impact, but they have also provided a "structuring framework for those

keen to understand how fights over place and space might be understood as fights about spatialised power” (Callard, 2004, p. 303). Her theory’s ability to interrogate the place of the culturally diverse classroom for power relations, with respect to cultural differences, fits the socially critical aims of this research. This discussion now turns to developing an understanding of the key concepts of Massey’s work that are employed in this research.

3.2.2 A dynamic sense of place

The ability to spatialise social theory is important for this research that examines the social relations with respect to cultural diversity in two distinct geographical classroom placings (Massey, 1999). Both this research and the writings of Massey are contextualised within the phenomenon of globalisation, where globalisation intensifies the syncretic nature of culture—culture no longer dependent on place—and where globalisation produces multidirectional flows that result in places characterised by diversity, hybridity and locally unique (Massey & Jess, 1995). The processes of globalisation characterise space with “fragmentation and disruption ... no longer inhabited by homogenous and coherent communities” (Massey, 1991a, p. 24). Global flows produce places with a sense of extroversion in terms of conscious links to the wider world, through material and social flows and relations. These linkages add to the “uniqueness” of place—this local uniqueness distinct from other places (Massey, 1991a), a place where “all those uniquenesses and interdependencies through which the various local elements are constituted and interconnected” (Massey & Jess, 1995, p. 227). Each classroom for this research is timely unique in their social and material makeup—next year and after this research is finalised, as a place, these classrooms will be constituted differently with different sets of social relations.

3.2.2.1 A global sense of place: Time-space compression and “throwntogetherness”

Massey’s work develops a “global sense of place” (Massey, 1991a, p. 29), “open, porous and hybrid” (Massey, 1999, p. 41) where globalisation is read not as a “discourse of closure and inevitability” (Massey, 2005, p. 161), but as a constructed neo-liberal process which pervades free

unbounded spaces (Massey, 2005). Such construction harbours powerful geometries which prevail in these unique places to constitute local social relations. Massey alerts us to different imaginings of globalisation—one should think of it as a spatialising concept because “the way we imagine globalisation... will affect the form that it takes” (Massey, 1999, p. 35). The global is seen as a “wider set of social relations and interactions” alive within the local where “all those uniquenesses and interdependencies through which the various local elements are constituted and interconnected” (Massey & Jess, 1995, p. 227). Such thinking allows a notion of the local influencing the global and vice versa. For example, the importation of the International Baccalaureate in one school, as a global flow, is interpreted with local knowledge through local teachers for children to learn about the world, thus reinforcing a global-local nexus of interchange and interaction.

An important concept in Massey’s reinvention of place and space is time-space compression. Through globalisation, the world is “increasingly dominated by movement” (Massey, 1991a, p. 24) where, among other things, people, images, materials and ideas are moving faster and spreading out across the globe. This movement and communication across space as a mobility of human and non-human things stretches out social relations and communication, so that interaction can occur without copresence (Massey, 1991b). Massey (1991a) questions the power-geometries of time-space compression and asks who are in charge of it, who can benefit from it, and whose power and influence does it increase? In each classroom, how do global flows like curriculum and associated knowledge benefits some students while marginalising others?

Massey also questions people mobility—some, like the guest workers in Dubai who come from poor third world countries do most of the moving, but benefit from earning money that would not be forthcoming in their own countries. However, the pay differentials—some unskilled workers earn less than \$AUD 200 per month—and working conditions—up on 60 story building sites with no safety protection from the ground below or the incessant and

debilitating heat—might contrast greatly to those of their jet-setting and highly-remunerated employers who work inside 60 story luxurious air-conditioned, glass confined offices. Such power-geometries produce a “highly complex social differentiation” and the ways in which people are placed within time-space compression are “highly complicated and extremely varied” (Massey, 1991a, p. 26).

Defining place and space as open, porous and hybrid allows for a progressive sense of the local whose specificity is “constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). As meeting places classrooms are articulated as a set of social relations “where a larger proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28) than is defined for the moment in that place. Classrooms are not only a “meeting-up of histories” (Massey, 2005, p. 4), but also a meeting place of human and non-human things that weave together to produce particular social relations in the educative process. Such a meeting place brings in other narratives, other ways of being and, in the case of each classroom for this study, other cultures and materials which disrupt and juxtapose (Massey, 1999) each other to “form the absolute particularity of the mixture of influences found together there” (Massey, 1999, p. 41).

Places, then, are characterised by a “throwntogetherness” , open and “made out of multiple trajectories” (Anderson, 2008, p. 7)—where human and non-human things permeate “as a constellation of trajectories, both ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’” (Massey, 2005, p. 149), a “gathering of diverse entities into relations” (Anderson, 2008, p. 7). Such a notion opens the possibility of the politics of connectivity, as well as local responsibilities with respect to global flows, to account for the wider spatialities of relations (Anderson, 2008). Throwntogetherness brings a sense of place as dynamic and lively, in process and progress (Massey & Jess, 1995), always being constructed, “unfinished and always becoming” (Massey, 2005, p. 59), an “ongoing

achievement that is never finished or closed” (Anderson, 2008, p. 6), contrived and often riven by global otherness (Massey, 1999).

It follows that place has a multiplicity, not just of the humans that inhabit its spaces as multiple identities, but also in the way that “space-time” convenes space through a “multiplicity of trajectories” (Massey, 2005, p. 5), to exist as a “sphere of coexisting *heterogeneity*” (Massey, 2005, p. 9). This multiplicity means that space is the condition for the unexpected but, importantly, that the multiple identities of place can be either a “source of richness or a source of conflict, or both” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). The classrooms of this study are places grounded in this multiplicity, where multiple trajectories of human and non-human things convene as “throwntogetherness” (Massey, 2005, p. 150) to influence the nature of social relations. Schools, as do other social spaces, bring together “diverse communit[ies] of people with distinctive histories, roles, and resources” that co-create them as particular types of meeting places (Comber, 2013). Space, then, becomes grounded in the political because “to think spatially is to engage with the existence of multiple processes of coexistence” (Anderson, 2008, p. 7). A relational politics is opened up based on the “the negotiation of relations, [and] configurations” (Massey, 2005, p. 147).

3.2.2.2 The politicisation of place: Power-geometries in social relations

Such an imbrication of the spatial and the political (Anderson, 2008) and the notion that places might be imagined as “porous networks of social relations” (Massey, 1994, p. 121) introduces power to the work of Massey. The power-geometries of time-space compression mean that individuals and groups that are inherently different “are placed in very distinct ways” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25) in relation to the multiple identities of local places where global flows, movement of human and non-human things and interconnections contrive and construct social relations. Massey notes that some people are more in charge than others—“some initiate flows and movement, others don’t; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are

effectively imprisoned by it” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25). Some act as agents of globalisation while others are agentless. The ability to manipulate time-space compression means that some groups are able to undermine the power of others. The “geography of social relations” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28) then are stretched out over time and space at every level from the overarching and encompassing global to the local, and in this study, from the outside world to the classroom.

Conceptualising space as the “constant open production of the topologies of power points to the fact that different ‘places’ will stand in contrasting relations to the global” (Massey, 2005, p. 101), which means that within wider power-geometries space is differentially located. For example, the students in the classroom in Dubai might be said to occupy powerless positions in relation to the enforced and foreign English curriculum to defer to an alternative nationalism. The official nationalism (Anderson, 2001) of the United Arab Emirates reflects its Arab cultural and religious history through documents like Moral Education United Arab Emirates, the United Arab Emirates National Agenda and United Arab Emirates Ministry: Vision 2020 (see Table 4.5 in Chapter Four). However, the adoption of English curriculum in schools, with inherent English and western ideas, values and knowledge, reflecting nationalistic understandings from England, disrupts the knowledge systems within its educational institutions with a creolised nationalism (Anderson, 2001). The official nationalism is then confronted by a foreign set of national ideas which are imparted through teaching and learning to inculcate in students’ alternative national understandings that embrace the other.

As well, many students across the world who attend international school might be forced to silence their mother tongues in favour of the English language as part of learning. Massey’s view of globalisation names powerful entities that work to dominate and subordinate economic, cultural and social relations (Massey, 1991a), thus enforcing globalisation’s politicisation, “beyond the terms of for it or against it and around the terms of what it’s for and what form it’s going to take” (Massey, 2005, p. 103).

3.2.3 Massey: Affordances and limitations

Massey's conviction "that the social and the spatial need to be conceptualized *together*" (Callard, 2004, p. 302) suits this research that seeks to examine how cultural differences are positioned in two different classrooms in the world. Her dedication to understand the interactions of human and non-human things as relational reinterprets spatial objects as "products of the spatial organisation of 'relations'" (Callard, 2004, p. 302) and so marries place and space with social relations. Although her work is sometimes criticised, for example, some feminists geographers criticise her decision to base much of her analysis on the workplace (see: Cochrane and Harvey in Callard, [2004]), Massey's work helps shape our understanding of the workings of the social world. Her conceptualisation of place and space as multiple and heterogeneously constituted, as connected, open and relational triumphs in a global world of increasing and expanding mobility, movement and interconnectivity. Her emphasis on place as characterised by "mobility, openness, flow and power differentials" (Callard, 2004, p. 305)—all guiding terms in human geography studies—is fitting for this research that attempts to trace the influence of global flows through the social sites of culturally diverse classrooms with respect to its power relations. The theme of social relations is paramount in the work of Massey and is also taken up by the work of Giddens as the next section explores.

3.3 Theoretical framing: Structuration

In this section, the conceptual underpinnings of Giddens's (1984) structuration theory are discussed to highlight how it is used, primarily but not completely restricted, to answer the second and third research sub-questions—What do teachers and school leaders say about how cultural differences is expressed and catered for in the schools and the classrooms? and How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in book reading and learning centres in each classroom? After a brief introduction to the theory, including its historical underpinnings, a detailed discussion of key theoretical concepts useful for this research, including its ability to

work as a social critical theory, are discussed. The limitations of structuration theory are also discussed with links to other research studies that have used structuration theory. Finally, a conclusion provides a summary of this theory with respect to its applicability to this research.

3.3.1 Introduction to structuration theory

Anthony Giddens, a renowned contemporary British sociologist and politician, is well known for his theorised sociology that reflects and explains the modern times in which we live (Giddens, 1990, 2003; Warf, 2004). He has been a member of House of Lords since 2004 and was a leading political advisor for the Labour party in Britain for Prime Minister Tony Blair in 2003. Giddens's novel academic work addresses an extraordinary range, "its inventiveness, and its ability to illuminate what is otherwise obscure" important for the emergence of social theory that critiques contemporary relations of power (Giddens & Cassell, 1993, p. 1).

In Giddens's vast works, Cassell (1993) identifies a "first" Giddens where he presents a critical reinterpretation of the classical theories of Marx, Weber and Durkheim to a wider and more general world through major publications like *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971) and *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (1973). A "second" and later Giddens follows to propose the theory of structuration, which illuminates the important and reciprocal relationship between structure and agency in, among other works at this time, *The Constitution of Society* (1984). What interested Giddens in this second stage was a vitalisation of agency to explain why and how people acted the way they did. It is this second Giddens that is of interest to this research as it provides a tool to examine and situate the classroom within a system perspective, vulnerable to forces beyond its boundaries.

More recently Giddens has turned his attention to the crisis of modern society—global warming, the spread of uncontrollable disease and the rise of fundamental religious terrorism—all much the consequence of modernity and globalisation (Giddens, 2003). Further, Giddens' work has embraced sociology's emphasis on the "cultural turn" in the early 1980s (Swidler, 1986)

to understand the role of culture in daily life, where different cultures draw on different cultural scripts to guide everyday social action (Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum, & Carr, 2014). In studying society Giddens and colleagues (2014) warn against adopting an ethnocentric view of culture where judgement is made according to one's own set of standards. Rather, they advocate for cultural relativism, the practice of judging another set of cultural traits through that culture's standards.

Accordingly Giddens, extrapolates that culture consists of sets of values or norms, abstract ideals and principles or rules that a group follow—those ideas “held by individuals or groups about what is desirable, proper, good, and bad” (Giddens et al., 2014, p. 54)—a toolkit or blueprint for living. It must be remembered that these norms and values are contrived and serve to secure power and are not impervious to change (Giddens, 2003). Norms operate to enforce culturally conformity and are usually learned in childhood with parents playing a prominent role—ingrained norms become normalised (Giddens et al., 2014). This makes him an appropriate theorist for this research, concerned with cultural differences fuelled through the mass migration of people as part of late modern societies and globalisation.

3.3.2 Historical underpinnings of structuration theory important for this research

Giddens proposed the theory of structuration in the 1970s–1980s when the field of empirical sociology was grappling with fragmentary and incomplete ideologies and, important for this research, the “fundamental problem of linking human agency and social structure” that historically stalked through sociological theory (Archer, 2010, p. 225). Archer (2010) notes that to counter this incompleteness “successive theoretical developments have tilted *either* towards structure *or* towards action, a slippage which has gathered in momentum over time” (p. 225). Giddens’ revision of orthodox theories and the dilemma of the relationship between structure and agency offers new insights into examining social practices to explain the dynamic and reciprocal interrelatedness of structure and agent and the reason for social change (Giddens &

Cassell, 1993). He reformulated the work of Parsons, and other social theorists of this time, that did not provide an adequate explanation for the fact that agents could influence and change structures like social institutions and traditions (Giddens & Cassell, 1993, p. 1).

To counteract this, Giddens proposed a duality where agents and structures construct each other through a perpetuating cyclical process of reproduction (Giddens, 1984). Further, rejecting Durkheim's functional approach, which treated individuals as compliant and passive in the construction of the systems that contained them, Giddens enabled a sociological perspective that recognised the circulatory dualism and connectivity of structure and agent (Giddens, 1984). The sociological thinking of orthodox theory was unable to examine action and structure as separate elements and therefore unable to see them as co-constructing and interconnected. Further, the conceptualisation of structuration theory allowed Giddens to reject the more epistemological approaches of orthodox theories which examined social practice from a theory of "knowledge" and instead adopted an ontological approach, which focused on a theory of "being" to examine social practice (Giddens, 1984). He then forced social science "to take seriously the contextual and contingent nature of human consciousness" (Warf, 2004, pp. 179-180).

Giddens thus brings about an ability to examine praxis as an exploration of being, a phenomenon of which previous sociological theory was incapable (Stones, 2005). Noting the importance of this exploration in context, his concern is to re-theorise the interrelation of human agency and social structure as a contextual process (Thrift, 1985). This notion of praxis and its associated prioritising of the social actions of humans (Edwards, 2016) suits the purposes of this research to examine how cultural differences are positioned in classrooms that are contextualised as globalised, and where global flows constitute the nature of each classroom. Further, the work of Giddens provides an advancement with regards to the Marxian notion of power—where power is ground in class conflict—to a two-way notion of power linked to the capability of agents as they interact with their non-human environments but also with each other in social sites (Evans, 1987). This ability to examine power structures in social sites aligns with the critical

social aspect of this research to examine the interplay of cultural differences and social action in the classroom, the influence of globalising forces and, whether students are culturally positioned in this interplay.

3.3.3 Structuration theory

Structuration theory provides an ontological framework that studies social sites through the interrelations of their subjective and objective factors. Classrooms are dynamic sites where human subjects, as teachers and students, and non-human factors, like curriculum documents and learning materials, interact with each other to produce social action. Structuration holds that the relationship between the social actions of human actors (agency) and the social systems in which social action takes place (structure) is reciprocal—meaning that agents act in accordance with structures, but at the same time reproduce those structures that govern their social action (Giddens, 1984). Society can be considered a structuration process, “whereby human actions simultaneously structure and are structured by society” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 32) or, as Giddens (1979) explains, social conduct is both structured and structuring in, what he refers to as, the duality of structure.

The social relations of the two classrooms of this study are “embedded in wider reaches of time and space” (Giddens, 1984, p. 374) where foreign learning materials and culturally diverse teachers and students, as global flows, converge in time and space in the process of education. These global flows must be considered in any examination of the social relations of each classroom as they constitute the social action within. The classrooms cannot be extracted from the spatial and temporal contexts in which they are situated. Social systems and their structural properties “exist only so far as forms of social conduct are reproduced chronologically across time and space” (Giddens, 1984, p. xxi). Any analysis of social interaction must contextualise time-space coordination, what Giddens refers to as time-space distantiation, the stretching of social systems over time and space (Giddens, 1984, p. 377).

Time and space are considered to constitute the social reality of the classroom (Giddens, 1984) and classrooms are considered “not just places but *settings* of action” located and nested in other places, some close, some far and some constituted differently (Giddens & Cassell, 1993, p. 165). Practices within the classroom are also influenced by other times, for example, the continued use of the school bell to regulate school timetables, harking back to a more distant era of industrialisation and factory floor labour regulation. Giddens argues that these “[p]atterns of relationships only exist in so far as the latter are organized as systems, reproduced over the course of time” (Giddens, 1984, p. xxxi). Such contextualisation means that disrupting and affirming influences, from a geographically and temporally elsewhere, but connected through social institutions across time and space, exert pressure in situated places like classrooms where human agents, as teachers and students, act (Giddens, 1984).

The following discussion considers the key concepts of structuration theory with particular reference to the field of education and classroom practice—the focus of this research. Before those key concepts are outlined, it is important to understand the view which structuration theory takes with regards to social sites. A few definitions are useful here. Structuration is a complex theory and it is helpful to be able to refer to these definitions in the complex discussion to follow. A social system is understood to be the “reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organised as regular social practice”, (Giddens, 1979, p. 66)—the “pattern of situated actions of agents” (Thrift, 1985, p. 612); whereas, social institutions are “clusterings of practices that constitute social systems” (Thompson, 1989, p. 61). Systems are then the social patterning within major institutions like those of government, legal and education as well as systems of class and socio-economic stratification—the “most deeply-layered practices constitutive of social systems in each of these senses are institutions” (Giddens, 1979, p. 65).

Importantly, systems are produced temporally and spatially and are considered to be the results of reproduced practices that pattern them over time and space—they are dynamically constituted to reflect imminent social action (Giddens, 1984). Structuration is the “conditions

governing the continuity or transformation of structures, and therefore the reproduction of social systems” while structures are the “rules and resources, organised as properties of social systems” that exist as structural properties (Giddens, 1979, p. 66). Structuration theory is decidedly not a coherent theory, rather it offers an approach and a set of tools with which to elucidate social practice (Kaspersen, 2000). Such a theory enables an examination of the two classrooms where there is a dynamic interplay between globalising forces and culturally diverse classroom practice, an interplay that is situated in different geographical places.

3.3.4 Key concepts of structuration theory for this research

As indicated above, structuration theory presupposes a recursive relationship between agency and structure and is concerned with the interaction between social structure and human agents, to explain how social practice is tied to structures as part of systems. It is held that social action ensues when agents act in accordance with structures, and through a complex dynamic, how structure works to enable or constrain that action. The following discussion outlines and defines these two integral concepts—agency and structure—in terms of their characteristics and their convergence and how, in particular, they interrelate to enable social practice. The use of structuration theory provides a focused lens on the nature of classroom action, particularly with respect to the way global flows, that influence structure in the school and the classroom, interplay with the social practice of students in each of the culturally diverse classrooms of this study.

3.3.5 Agents in the classroom: Agency and action as social practice

To understand the nature of the social actions and practices of teachers and students in culturally diverse classrooms, the notion of agency is useful. According to Giddens (1984), human agency occurs in a continuous flow of conduct. It is devoid of start or endpoint and “steams through life in an infinite fashion” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 36) as a “series of generally repetitive practices...across time and space” (Thrift, 1985, p. 612). Agency is considered as a processional

concept where agents continually create social activities in routinised acts, those basic elements of everyday social activities (Evans, 1987). This continuous flow means that teachers and students might transport social practices from other parts of their social day or life, that might be culturally marked, into the classroom. Further, the action of agents is produced through the structures of social systems but importantly, “agents reproduce the structural conditions that make the activities possible” (Evans, 1987, pp. 276-277). For example, the behaviour management policies of schools, that are influenced by the wider educational system, are both a means for the student to act, but also an outcome of individual student actions, which then reinforce the behaviour policies.

Giddens theorises agency to have a transformative capacity—the ability to refrain from or intervene in action where such intervention can influence a specific social process or state of affairs (Giddens, 1984). This ability then connects agency to power. Action refers to an agent’s interference in daily events producing certain outcomes “with intended action being one category of an agent’s doing or his refraining” (Giddens, 1979, p. 88). Agents have control over their actions so that “there is a dialectic of control when both those in authority and those who are subordinate can influence outcomes” (Evans, 1987, p. 277). Such transformative capacity is dependent on the mobilisation of resources where the “facilities that participants bring to and mobilize as elements of the production of [social] interaction” (Giddens, 1979, p. 93) influences the course of any action. Power in structuration theory is realised in a relational sense as the action of agents to secure definite outcomes is dependent on the agency of others.

Agency refers to the capability, rather than intention to do things, and is therefore, concerned with events that are perpetrated by the individual (Giddens, 1976). Agents are considered to be knowledgeable—the knowledge that they possess “is not incidental to the persistent patterning of social life but is integral to it” (Giddens, 1984, p. 26). What constituent actors know about the social world is not separate from their actual worlds where events and objects combine in the *durée* of their daily life (Giddens, 1984). Agents possess different types of

knowledges that influence the way they act. When interacting in social sites, agents display conscious, non-conscious and unconscious knowledge and their actions at any one time will incorporate elements of all three. The teachers and students of each classroom are capable social actors that call upon certain knowledges to drive their action. In culturally diverse sites these knowledges, as conscious, non-conscious and unconscious, that social actors draw upon, are likely to be tied to culture and manifest in differences. Studying the patterns of classroom social action of children from different cultural backgrounds, as they go about their regular school activities, affords an opportunity to theorise cultural differences through the concept of agency.

3.3.5.1 Teachers and students: Knowledgeable actors in the classroom

In this study, teachers and students in each class come from diverse cultural backgrounds. As agents their action is tempered by the knowledges they possess. Understanding the ontological nature of these knowledges is useful in examining their actions as diversely cultured beings. Conscious knowledge entails what can be expressed about an agent's daily activities. Termed discursive consciousness, it shows us what people "say" about their social relations "including especially the conditions of their own actions" (Giddens, 1984, p. 374) in the sense that it "articulat[es] such 'know how' propositionally" (Pearson, 1995, p. 73). As part of this study, the social actions of teachers and students in each culturally diverse classroom, collected as part of classroom observation, are examined with respect to how cultural differences are positioned through their discursive consciousness, as part of agency. For example, in the classroom, teachers sometimes take misbehaving students to a visual display of the classroom rules to articulate and rearticulate their recalcitrant behaviours with respect to the rules in the hope that such reflective discourse changes future behaviour patterns.

Studying the discursive consciousness of agents can illuminate discursive patterns as discourses which can then uncover underlying and perhaps non-conscious thoughts and ideas. It is through language that non-conscious knowledge can be brought into consciousness, as was

demonstrated in Cassidy and Tinning's (2004) study about the transmogrification of messages, from those intended by teacher educators to those received by student teachers. They found a considerable "slippage" between the pedagogical intentions of teacher educators and what was taken up and understood by the student-teachers (Cassidy & Tinning, 2004).

Non-conscious knowledge is the tacit and social norms that guide routinised and regular behaviours and, in structuration theory, is referred to as practical consciousness. To understand social life and to study the life worlds of teachers and students, as they go about their day in culturally diverse settings, practical consciousness is most important to look at as it is the "tacit knowledge of the agent [which is] especially important for the maintenance and reproduction of social life" (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 36). Practical consciousness refers to the wealth of knowledge a person has about their daily lives and is concerned with what they "know" about their social relations and conditions, but choose not to express discursively (Giddens, 1984, p. 375). It therefore represents knowledge that actors cannot articulate or immediately account for—the tacit knowledge that is enacted routinely and automatically as agents interact in social sites (Kaspersen, 2000). For example, the practical act of speaking a language does not need a knowledge of linguistic theory nor the rules of grammatical syntax—speakers enact the language entirely without any reflection of their knowing (Giddens, 1984; Kaspersen, 2000).

In the classroom, examining the social actions of teachers and students, and in particular why they might choose to act in certain ways, can illuminate the practical consciousness that might implicitly underlie their actions. For example, I observed in my field notes that in the school in Dubai, western teachers expected a democratised notion of responsibility with respect to the self-regulated behaviours of their culturally diverse students who may have limited knowledge about rights and responsibilities (Field notes, 22/11/17). In the Australian school, conflict sometimes arose between the expectations of teachers and Asian parents with respect to the nature and frequency of their children's homework (Field notes, 29/10/17).

The ontological origins of practical consciousness lie in the sociocultural worlds that agents inhabit, and initially, and important for this study of young children as they start their formal schooling in culturally diverse classrooms, in the homes and community groups that nurture their identities. These nurturing worlds of social groups engender in children certain values and norms about aspects of life like daily behavioural routines and cultural customs of touching (Giddens, 1976). Moreover, the establishment of these routines and cultural practices enable agents to go about their daily lives without having to consciously assess their social practice (Giddens, 1976). The non-conscious knowledge of culturally diverse children in a lower primary classroom can be equated to the conditions, experiences and contexts from which they come (Edwards, 2016). Given that their homes would be representative of their respective cultures, it might be the case that children in culturally diverse classrooms arrive at school with different understandings of the tacit norms that guide their social practice. Exploring the way students enact their agency, through incidences of classroom action, is useful in understanding how cultural differences might play out in each classroom setting.

Unconscious knowledge is concerned with the aspects of desire and tends to reflect those more transportable skills, like gesture and habits of speech and so is tied to particular locations in time and space (Stones, 2005) as well as values and worldviews, perhaps formed elsewhere, but transportable across locations. For example, many people of Southern Indian decent tend to use a head shake—a side to side movement of the head to indicate “yes”, agreement or understanding which departs from the western nod for “yes” and head swivel for “no”. For example, some Southern Indian people often perform this movement automatically when communicating with others even when they are people from other cultural groups who may not understand these bodily gestures. A way of looking at unconscious knowledge is through a pragmatic horizon analysis, an analytical tool developed by Carspecken (1996) and applied in this research in Chapter Five. A pragmatic horizon analysis is located in Habermas’s (1987) communication theories. In the Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas’s (1981) presumes

that communicators draw from pre-interpreted patterns, experienced through objective, normative and subjective lifeworlds, and which influence both expression and understanding. Pragmatic horizon analysis is also reflected in the work of Giddens which regards “action rather than perception to be the most primary in experience” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 103). Pragmatic horizon analysis is further described below.

Giddens (1979) believes that unconscious knowledge is linked to ontological security—the need of an agent to have a grounded and secure identity with which to participate in different social settings. In social sites, to feel safe with oneself and the world, agents attempt to maintain an ontological security—a confidence and trust expressed as “an *autonomy of bodily control* within *predictable routines*”—where they tend towards routinised and continuous rules to govern and guide their everyday actions (Giddens & Cassell, 1993, p. 14). Ontological security works to “control diffuse anxiety and self-esteem” to “provide us with a feeling of security and trust” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 39). Further, agents act with an intentionality, a process where the “vast majority of actions are purposive, the intentional being as inherent element in all human behavior” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 37). Purposive actions are ones that are continuously reflected on by agents in order to monitor what they, and others around them, are doing as well as the contexts and settings that surround their social action (Thompson, 1989).

To intervene in daily events all actions undertaken by individuals rely on this knowledgeability and consciousness, more often practical consciousness. The processes that agents procure to take action, in the continuous flow of events, are both subjective and reflexive—agents undertake action and at the same time that action “simultaneously becomes part of the agent” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 37). The following three elements, discussed below, “are not expressions of states, but processes which take place inside the agents and which are maintained, enacted and repeated infinitely by the agent” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 38). Reflexive monitoring of action occurs as part of practical consciousness when an agent continually reflects on the activities in which he or she participates, is realised in intentional and purposive

behaviours, and occurs as an evaluation of activity and context and setting. Rationalization of action is the tacit understandings of why a particular action is being undertaken, while motivation for action is the potential for action and not used in the routinised daily action, but only when routines are broken (Giddens, 1979). As students and teachers act and interact in the social worlds of their classrooms some of their action is reflexive, which enables them to continuously monitor their actions in relation to others.

As well, the recursive activities of agents can create unintended consequences, for example, Giddens refers to the fact that one speaks with the intent of communication and understanding, but in doing so, one reproduces the language one is using. Unintended consequences may become the “unacknowledged conditions for further acts” (Thompson, 1989, p. 71) and are associated with social change.

Knowledgeable human agents act, interact and have relationships with other knowledgeable humans in social sites—temporally and spatially situated places, like classrooms, that are contextualised in wider networked and encompassing places, like education institutions and the political, economic, social, religious and cultural systems of nation states. Studying how agents act in local sites with respect to how they mobilise different aspects of their knowledgeability is important in this study to understand how cultural differences might play a role in influencing these knowledges and ensuing social practice. Looking at an individual’s knowledgeability, then provides a vehicle to understand human action (Giddens, 1979). The ability to act, or choose not to, grounds agency in a transformative capacity, as will be discussed in the next section, following an explanation of pragmatic horizon analysis, with regards to the interface of agency and structures, through rules and resources.

3.3.5.2 Pragmatic horizon analysis: A useful way to interpret meaningful acts

As mentioned above, a pragmatic horizon analysis is useful to interpret the meaningful acts in which agents engage “where meaning reconstruction is carried forth into new levels of

precision” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 103). Meaning reconstruction can be derived through a lens of certain validity claims about action—objective claims in relation to materials and positioning, subjective claims that rely on personal states of mind, like feelings and beliefs, and normative claims that rely on veracity (Mills, 2003). Further, it is assumed that all social action occurs in some sort of backdrop, or horizon, where powerful and privileging structures might influence social communication and activity.

To examine the social actions of diversely cultured teachers and students in classroom activity the use of claims is useful in reconstructing meaning to uncover underlying and implicit cultural dispositions, ways, beliefs and feelings. By analysing and articulating these claims made by agents, overt and implicit meanings of communication can be illuminated (Mills, 2003). As unconscious knowledge is implicitly applied and not available through discursive or practical consciousness—using a pragmatic horizon analysis to reconstruct validity claims then avails an opportunity to “see” a reconstruction of possible meanings to interpret how cultural differences are positioned in the backdrop, or horizon, of classroom action.

3.3.6 Structures of social systems

The study of social action, as agency, “necessarily involves ‘making sense’ of observed actions” (Giddens, 1979, p. 52) and in structuration theory the observer must look to the virtual order that contextualises such social action. This order is what Giddens refers to as structures and they are made up of rules and resources. Although structure is “characterized by the absence of acting subjects” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 42), it works to articulate and make up social systems (Giddens, 1984). Further structure is of a sociocultural nature as it influences and orders daily social life, like the way a set of curriculum documents order the nature of knowledge that teachers teach and from which students learn. Structure is expressed through human activity—it has no reality other than its tracings, appearing only “in our memory traces when we reflect discursively over a previously performed act” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 42). However, structure is apparent in the

actions of humans (Giddens, 1979) and as will be established further on, it is both the medium and the outcome of the social practice it governs (Giddens, 1984).

For this study, structuration provides the means to examine the classroom as a culturally diverse and globally resourced place, where a relationship exists between structure and agency expressed through the social actions of teachers and students in classrooms. In this study the relationship between structure and agency is of interest, for example, how global flows that make their presence in classrooms to interplay with the nature of social action in culturally diverse classrooms and, in particular, how they in turn influence the nature of structure. It can be seen that structure “enters simultaneously into the constitution of the agent and social practices, and ‘exists’ in the generating moments of this constitution” (Giddens, 1979, p. 5).

In these social systems humans, as agents (social actors), are sensitive and knowledgeable about their world and themselves and the manner in which they act in situated spaces (Giddens, 1984). Agents, like teachers and students, produce social action in accordance with structure. For example, in the system of education structure, like codes of behaviour (rules) and curriculum documents (resources) call for a particular social action of agents, but at the same time the patterns that are repeated create the “foundation of social order” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 41). Thus, the relationship between structure and agency is recursively implicated and each works to produce and reproduce each other. The following discussion provides further details about the structuration process with respect to its component parts—structure (rules and resources) and agency—and their interdependent relationship known as the duality of structure (Giddens, 1984).

3.3.7 The structural properties of rules and resources

The individual acts that constitute our social lives are not random and are tempered and shaped by forces and rules that are part of the society structures in which we operate. As discussed earlier, these structures are contextually-specific (Edwards, 2016) and are composed of rules and

resources that work to enable agents to communicate meaning, exercise power and evaluate and judge other knowledgeable agent conduct (Giddens, 1979). The fact that they enable an exercise of power immediately brings forth a notion of critical positioning, as will be discussed in more detail, forthwith. Agents use rules and resources “in accordance with fundamental principles of organizations ... [s]uch principles guide just how rules and resources are transformed and employed to mediate social relations” (Turner, 2003, p. 481), as well as the ways that these are “mutually implicated in each other to produce varying patterns of human organization” (Turner, 2003, p. 477).

Giddens (1984) refers to structures as structural properties in that they are “sets of transformation relations” (p. 25) that exert an ontological force to structure the day-to-day activities of human agents. Systems have structural properties—“they are not structures within themselves” (Giddens, 1979). Structural properties, as rules and resources, constitute institutional practices of society (Giddens, 1979; Jones, 2011). In social institutions agents use these rules and resources to guide social action, but also in the enactment of this guidance they reproduce the structural properties in the duality of structure, discussed more fully, later. Classrooms are social systems that are constituted with structuring properties like ways of behaving and carrying out classroom activities as well as material items like curriculum documents, teaching and learning resources and classroom materials that work to structure the nature of the social action of teachers and students within classrooms.

3.3.7.1 Rules in the classroom

Social action in the classroom is governed by rules. Rules are “techniques and generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social life” (Giddens, 1984, p. 21). They are not “formally defined and legally enforceable laws” rather they are the sociocultural norms and sanctions that work to mediate contextualised social action and influence the actions of humans (Edwards, 2016, p. 47). They represent the formulas or procedures for social action.

Rules “incorporate informal, implied and unarticulated social expectations, or the ‘social norms’, that work to mediate human behaviour” which fuses them together in a relationship of interdependence. (Edwards, 2016, p. 47).

Rules have two aspects with regard to the way they mediate human behaviour. On the one hand they relate to the constitution of meaning, while on the other they sanction modes of social conduct in social sites (Giddens, 1984). An example of the way they constitute meaning in the classroom is that to make meaning through written scripts, students who write in English must know that all words must contain a vowel (or vowel substitute). This contrasts with other languages, like Arabic, where some words are vowel-less. In culturally diverse classrooms this rule might need to be discursively and explicitly taught to children whose language background is not English and who may have had little prior experience with reading printed English text. Rules that sanction moral conduct might be expressed in the way early years students line up to go outside—usually in pairs, holding hands and not talking. Such a social pattern might have been learned in interactions with other similar social institutions like early learning centres or in children’s homes. When children have had limited experience with these norms, they find it difficult to “know” what to do and sometimes their teachers are unaware of this lack. Evans (1987) includes a third aspect for rules in that they legitimate action, as will be discussed further in the section on power.

Used to guide everyday social action, Giddens (1984) refers to rules as “intensive” as they govern many “seemingly trivial processes” (Evans, 1987, p. 272). Intensive rules make up the knowledge about how to act and which actions are appropriate in different social encounters meaning that they “have much influence on the generalizations that people make about how to act in interactive situations” (Evans, 1987, p. 278). Teachers who expect children to know how to line up is an example. Knowledge about rules is usually tacit and not at the discursive level, for example, Indian children often belch after eating to show appreciation, but if asked why, at such a young age, they would not be able to articulate the cultural reason for their actions.

Giddens' notion of rules follows Wittgenstein's proposition of actors knowing how to go on, they are the social norms that "incorporate informal, implied and unarticulated social expectations" (Edwards, 2016, p. 47). Importantly, most of these social rules are unconsciously known and applied—"as competent social actors we know countless rules which we would have difficulty stating in an explicit way" (Thompson, 1989, p. 63). This is important as social rules are synonymous with cultural knowledge—we learn many of these rules in the social interludes of our everyday lives. Rules only exist in conjunction with social action—they guide the way that social action is executed (Giddens, 1979).

Social practices are not rules, but social action is expressed through reference to rules, this reference system is called upon in order for people to behave appropriately, but also the manner in which to communicate with each other (Turner, 2003). A cautionary warning is flagged by Thompson (1989) who points out that it is difficult to clarify the precise character of the rules that Giddens proposes and the examples he uses to illustrate, for example, the rules of grammar in use, are too far removed from the dynamics and intricacies of social life. Nonetheless, looking at the social site of the classroom, where the daily activities of teachers and students are very much guided by rules—some explicit and some implicit—and studying them as part of social action will offer important insights into how they regulate and constitute the way culturally different students and teachers go about their regular school days. Importantly, it must be remembered that social rules are generalisable and weakly sanctioned (Giddens, 1984). They can be normative or explicitly understood (how things should and ought to be) or exist as assumed and, often unspoken, expectations. The notion of rules has implications for culturally diverse classrooms where learning of rules, as normed behaviours, might spring from different cultural understandings and contexts.

3.3.7.2 Resources in the classroom

Most classrooms across the world, particularly in the early years, are rich with physical resources, like learning materials and guiding documents to facilitate teaching and learning activity. As teachers and students go about their daily activities, not only do they rely on sociocultural rules to guide their social actions, but they also call upon, what Giddens refers to as resources—the entities that actors use to get things done, the means called upon to guide their acts (Giddens, 1976, 1984). To produce social practices, Archer (2010) sees that actors draw upon a matrix of rules and resources and they work together to enable action—“the medium by which the agent acts” (Thompson, 1989, p. 42). In structuration theory, resources are not tangible physical items, rather, they exist only in the minds and interactions of beings as they interact with the structuring properties of social sites. More so, they represent an agent’s capacity to perform tasks and are thus, tied to the generation of power where “domination depends on the mobilization of two distinguishable resources” (Giddens, 1984, p. 33) as discussed below.

Resources can be allocative—where agents have control of material aspects of their worlds—and authoritative—derived from the “the co-ordination of the activity of human agents” (Giddens, 1984, p. xxxi), and where agents have control of others. They necessarily tie social relations together and are “what actors use to create, sustain or transform relations across time and in space” (Turner, 2003, p. 478). Allocative resources allow agents “dominion over material facilities, including material goods and the natural forces that may be harnessed in their production” and are the “media through which power is exercised” (Giddens, 1984, p. xxi).

Such resources refer to the capability of agents and “more accurately the forms of transformative capacity” (Giddens, 1984, p. xxi), and are equated to “capabilities which generate control of *objects*” (Thompson, 1989, p. 61). Examples of allocative resources in schools might be the way that curriculum materials from England in international schools in the United Arab Emirates have dominion over the knowledge that student learn. Students from different cultural backgrounds and countries might have difficulty accessing curriculum content knowledge that is

derived as English. Another example would be the allocation of play-based materials among students—children with little experience of play, as part of their cultural upbringing, might struggle to make meaning with educational manipulatives with which they are unfamiliar.

Authoritative resources, unlike allocative, represent the “capabilities which generate command over persons” (Thompson, 1989, p. 61). These are the non-physical resources that afford agents “the means of dominion over the activities of human beings themselves” (Giddens, 1984, p. xxi). For example, authoritative resources are illustrated in being captain of the netball team in school sport, head of curriculum in the English department, or the command over language use in culturally diverse classrooms, where English is the medium of instruction. These examples represent positions of power that might lead to coercion and domination of others and are therefore “types of transformative capacity generating command over persons and actors” (Giddens, 1984, p. 33).

Importantly, rules and resources are not considered pre-given, but are constructed through social systems and acquired by the agents as active subjects who participate in that system. The appropriation of rules and the harnessing of resources connect the notion of power to agents. Thus structures, as rules and resources, work to enable and constrain human agency and action. In schools, such enabling and constraining capacity might translate to children from mixed cultures sitting together eating their cultural foods and some children poking fun at a child eating a culturally marked chapatti or a rice ball. Allocative and authoritative resources are complexly interrelated—access to a greater degree of allocative resources might work to enable an agent to an elevated authority which then translates to additional access to allocative resources (Edwards, 2016). An example might be a child in a lower primary classroom, who has experience with playing with tangible learning resources, such as clay. The exercising of this experience means that a greater degree of learning is available to that child with respect to playful experimentation. This would also be representative of power sharing where students mimic each other through copied social action.

Power, then, is forthcoming of the “complex and dynamic interrelationship between contextually-specific rules and resources”, and the ability of agents to exploit and mobilise sets of structural properties to “create an asymmetric distribution of resources” (Edwards, 2016, p. 49). Tracing how rules and resources play out in the culturally diverse classrooms of this study with respect to teacher and student social action enables an understanding of how the interrelated complexity of structuring properties call for and position particular social practices in each classroom.

Structural properties, then, are synonymous with power. An agent’s ability to mobilise certain resources to harness particular agendas and advantages, or to have knowledge and currency about which rules are inherent in the design of social sites, affords them positions of power as they go about their day to day social activities. The ability to mobilise allocative and authoritative resources strongly influences the agency of humans, signalling the means for obtaining domination over others (Arts, 2000). As Turner (2003) discusses, unequal human relationships are built through the unequal access to allocative resources, as material goods. For example, children in lower primary classrooms often have unequal access to books due to different social practices around the way that books are utilised within their homes.

It is important to study these resources, as part of the social system, as they work to enable and constrain human action. Harnessing rules and resources is expressed through the modalities of structural properties, what Giddens calls, structural dimensions of domination, legitimation and signification (Jones, 2011). In the culturally diverse classrooms of this study some children are not able to engage productively with respect to the structural properties of materials, each other, and rules. Studying the way that rules and resources are structured from elsewhere, through global flows, and then examining how these structural properties work to position certain understandings of social practices in culturally diverse classrooms is the essence of this research.

3.3.7.3 The recursive connection between structure and agency: The duality of structure

As discussed previously, structuration theory attends to a central problem of social theory and holds a relationship between structure and agency—what Giddens (1984) refers to as the duality of structure. In the duality of structure, the relationship between structure and agency is reciprocal, whereby individuals are socially produced as part of their interaction with social systems but, importantly, the social practice in which they engage, within these social systems, also works to reproduce those systems (Giddens, 1984).

As established earlier, agents have a relationship with structures through their capacity to mobilise rules and resources in social sites in interaction with others. Social activities, then, occur within a framework of structures, as rules and resources, and as structural properties they are integral to the formation of institutional practices in society (Giddens, 1979). Such that the “rules and resources drawn upon in the production and reproduction of social action are at the same time the means of system reproduction” (Giddens, 1984, p. 19). While structural properties work to produce the social action of agents, they also help to reproduce and sustain those structural properties upon which they draw (Turner, 2003). Thus, agency and structure are positioned in a duality (Rose, 1997; Yates, 1997), its nature relates to the recursive character of social practice expressing the “*mutual dependence of structure and agency*” (Giddens, 1979, p. 69).

As illustrated in Figure 3.2 human agency—the discursive and practical consciousness which constitutes action—and social structures—established traditions and ways of doing things—combine through action, as an interface, to produce social practice. Both agency and structure work in a recursive way, each working to produce and reproduce the other (Giddens, 1984). Structures that function as part of systems, then are the actual functioning of human relationships (Giddens, 1986), the resultant outcome of this duality is contrived, particular and socially situated practice.

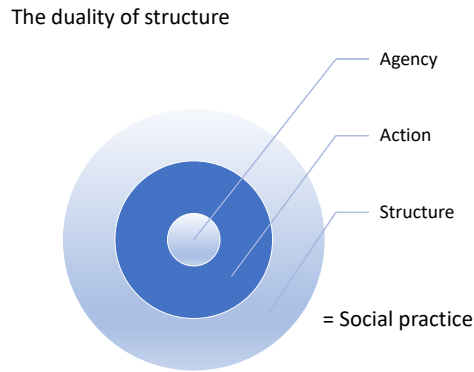


Figure 3.2 Structuration and the duality of structure (adapted from Karspersen, 2000, p. 33)

Thus, both structure and agency are recursively dependent—each reliant on the other for the production of social practices over time—and are referred to as the “mediating concept between agency and structure” (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 33). In the classroom the everyday social acts of teachers and students, ones that define their cultural differences, are then dependent on structures as part of the social system of the school and the education community. Pressure from outside the classroom, as global flows, are visible in expected social practices like the assumption that children will read and care for books in the classroom, the tradition of children following school rules or an expectation that in the lower primary children will self-regulate their behaviour in independent learning centres. But in the culturally diverse classroom this relationship is tempered by the cultural differences of its members. To act in accordance with structures might prove difficult for some children who have little or no prior experience of the expected practices. The ability to examine the relationships between structure and agent is important in this research as it allows for an examination of how global flows, that influence the nature of rules and resources, interface in the classroom to call for particular sets of social practices and how these social practices then work to articulate the system that appropriates global flows. Action and structure can and should be simultaneously examined: actions construct and maintain structures, but on the other hand, structures give meaning to the action of agents (Giddens, 1984).

3.3.8 Power in the classroom: Agency and structure in action

Classrooms are not considered to be neutral sites, in fact, there is much contestation of power as teachers and students go about their daily classroom activities. For example, teachers use power to make students behave in complicit ways or to pressure or encourage them to complete their work. Students also have access to power, and they use this to gain superiority of others, like not sharing play resources, or to resist teacher domination with regards to behaviour and work ethics. One of the aims of structuration theory is to account for the distribution of power in social sites. As discussed above, power and agency are logically connected in that agency in its “transformative capacity” (Giddens, 1984, p. 376) refers not the intent of action, but to the capability to manipulate that action. Agents have the potential to act differently—they have the power to either intervene or alternatively refrain from intervention (Kaspersen, 2000). This ability to intervene or refrain enables agents to influence a “specific process of state of affairs” (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). Power, in its transformative capacity, is intrinsically tied to human agency and “actors secure outcomes where the realisation of these outcomes depends upon the agency of others” (Giddens, 1986, p. 93). Agents in the classroom harness power, through the control and dissemination of different types of resources—like knowledge or perhaps food choices or classroom practices around books.

Further, agents use rules, as tacit norms and social sanctions to harness particular agendas and advantages or to accept or resist expected practices. The complex enmeshment of structuring properties, as contextually-specific rules and resources, and an agent’s transformative capacity to exploit and mobilise these to procure an “asymmetric distribution of resources” (Edwards, 2016, p. 49) results in power. The structural properties of rules and resources operate to both constrain and enable human activity in that agents have a choice about taking action and at the same time are governed by structure to take particular action. Choosing to act with appropriate communication and social sanctions ensures the maintenance of presupposed power

relations. Choosing to act in opposition to communication and sanctions then challenges the structural properties (Arts, 2000; Giddens, 1979; Giddens, 1984).

Giddens (1984) argues that power is not absolute and that all actors have the ability to resist or maintain power structures. Even the least resourced individuals possess knowledgeability and can influence others who try to dominate them. The presupposition of power in the theory of structuration reflects the emancipatory nature of Giddens' project in recognition of the transformative capacity—"the capability to intervene in a given set of events so as in some way to alter them"—an agent's ability to secure specific outcomes (Giddens, 1986, p. 7). Power is further complicated in modern societies, as it is dynamically transient across greater expanses of space and time, for example, the current educational regime of testing and accountability, spurred by global bodies like the OECD, transcends across time and space to influence teacher practice at local sites in many countries (Lingard, Martino, & Rezai-Rashti, 2013).

In the classroom, experienced social reality is shaped and constructed by teachers and students in relation to the structuring properties that contextualise them. Rules and resources "combine to mediate human interaction" (Edwards, 2016, p. 49) by defining particular sets of social practices with respect to behaviour, communication and other classroom practices like expectations around learning behaviour. What is of interest in this study is that social actors in this study are marked by cultural differences, but also how the social forces that interplay with the actions of these individuals play crucial roles in the construction of expected social practice.

3.3.8.1 Dimensions of power: Signification, domination and legitimation

Schools are part of a social system in which structuring properties that encompass that system have dimensions that enable agents to express power. These dimensions are fluid and active in nature and are realised when actors draw upon structures, which at the same time "bind the actor to the system" (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 60). Such binding factors consist of the following:

communication and meaning structures (signification), power and control structures (domination), and structures involving norms and sanctions (legitimation). Signification structures are analysed as “systems of *semantic rules* (or conventions)”, domination structures as “systems of *resources*”, and legitimation structures as “systems of *moral rules*” (Giddens, 1976, p. 130). Agents use these structural dimensions, some of which refer to rules and resources, in their everyday life activities.

The examination of these structural dimensions, as recursive stimulants between structure and agency, is then important when looking at the social practices of teachers and students in the situated place and context specific classroom. Structural dimensions, as part of the duality of structure in social interaction, are represented by Figure 3.3. The concepts on the first line refer to “properties of interaction”, modalities, on the second line, “the mediation of the interaction”, while the third line represents the “characterizations of structure” (Giddens, 1976, p. 129). Jones et. al (2000) eloquently state that “structural properties (signification, domination and legitimation) are constantly reproduced from social interaction (communication, power and sanctions) by means of the modalities (interpretative schemes, facilities and norms) that are drawn on by knowledgeable, reflexive actors” (p. 161). Each structural dimension will be discussed with reference to Figure 3.3.

INTERACTION	Communication	Power	Morality
(MODALITY)	Interpretive scheme	Facility	Norms and sanctions
STRUCTURE	Signification	Domination	Legitimation

Figure 3.3 The duality of structure in social interaction, from Giddens 1979, p. 129

Signification structures encompass the language and communication patterns and include the ability to make coherent meaning. These structures present agents with access to the tools of communication and meaning making through various interpretive schemes—the “standardised elements of stocks of knowledge, applied by actors in the production of interactions...the core

of mutual knowledge” (Giddens, 1976, p. 83). Figure 3.3 shows that for agents to communicate they call upon various interpretive schemes to make meaning—what sense is made by participants “of what each says and does”—and can be considered a “cognitive order” shared by a community (Giddens, 1976, p. 129). By drawing on these cognitive orders, social actors, through these interpretive schemes, then reconstitute that order (Giddens, 1976).

For example, the modes of discourse apparent in curriculum documents signal certain student practice expectations with regards to their participation in learning centre activities. When students act within these shared cognitive orders, they then reinforce the interpretive schemes within the discourses of school documentation with regard to classroom practice. The norm-governed practice of book reading through a western notion of book practice, which translates into quiet bodily-controlled action where student attention is on the page, is reinforced and reproduced when student practice aligns with this interpretation.

The examination of signification structures can illuminate whether power is legitimated through these communication channels, including the materials aspects of the classroom like cultural artefacts, dress, and food. By accessing and complying with these signification structures, teachers and students, in the duality of structure, reinforce the social practices for which the structures call. In this research, the signification structures are inherent in the discourses of teacher and principal talk with respect to how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the classroom, the discourses apparent in official school and classroom documents that seek to position students in particular ways and understandings about particular classroom practices like book reading.

Domination is dependent on the mobilisation of the two distinguishable resources—allocative and authoritative—discussed earlier. Human agency, domination, and control of social interaction are strongly influenced by access to, and harness of, material and organisational resources, as structural properties of social sites. This access enables capabilities and translates into resources and power being synonymous (Giddens, 1984). Human agency is then intrinsically

related to the concept of power (Rose, 1997), where access “to and control over such resources result in power for the individual and the institution” (Evans, 1987, p. 279). As indicated in Figure 3.3, social actors generate outcomes that influence the conduct of others by harnessing the facilities of resources to gain power—these facilities both draw from “an order of domination and at the same time, as they are applied, reproduce that order of domination” (Giddens, 1976, p. 130). Giddens sees that domination is structured in two ways: agents manipulate allocative resources (material wealth and technology) and authoritative resources (the social organisation of time, space and the body) to dominate others (Giddens, 1986).

The mobilisation of allocative resources enables agents a transformative capacity to generate command over material phenomena. Authoritative resources, on the other hand, gain their transformative capacities through a generation of command over people (Giddens, 1984). How the resources of the classroom work to position teachers and students in powerful and less powerful ways and whether that domination is transformative in nature is of interest in this research.

Legitimation structures comprise the rules or procedures for action that are “incorporated into the production and reproduction of social practices” and “typically intersect with practices in the contextuality of situated encounters” (Giddens, 1984, p. 18). Rules, as legitimation structures, have transformative capacities in that they work to constrain and enable classroom action. In the classroom, examining legitimation structures makes visible how social actors harness rules to enable and constrain action, for example how teachers manipulate students to respond to the rule of keeping their hands and feet to themselves.

In Figure 3.3, the legitimation elements refer to the norms and sanctions, as modalities, which operate to constitute meanings in social settings and regulate social conduct as the “moral constitution of interaction [which] involves the application of norms that draw from a legitimate order” (Giddens, 1976, p. 129). The application of these norms then reconstitutes the moral

order. In this research, legitimization dimensions are examined with respect to how they interact with the social actions of culturally diverse students.

This study researches the way rules, realised through tacit norms for social conduct, as socially acceptable and unacceptable sets of behaviours, and social sanctions, that work to regulate modes of social action, operate to legitimise particular sets of behaviours of children as they go about their regular school days (Mills, 2003). In particular, interest lies in how these rules might work to constrain or enable social action of children from different cultural backgrounds. For example, western classroom rules that legitimate how students are to control their bodies as they interact with each other or how they should show respect to each other are not universally taught in or in alignment with those taught in the homes of different cultural groups. Children who have little practical consciousness regarding these tacit knowledges then are at a disadvantage when trying to participate in classroom learning experiences governed by such rules.

The structural dimensions of interaction as communication, power and morality are integral in their application within social systems, and all social actions have to be grasped in connection with the others (Giddens, 1976, 1984). Therefore, in this research, social action with respect to these structural dimensions are examined together and any instance of classroom action examined for the presence of this integral trichotomy.

3.3.9 Problems with structuration in the real world of empirical research

Operationalising a theoretic framework that is not built through empirical research devoid of any attempt to observe the world directly with respect to the theory comes with limits. Ingold (as cited in Lorimer, [2011]) refers to this dilemma as the “reification of hyperabstraction”, where one starts with an abstraction that is turned into a quality of more abstraction to arrive at an imagining that this “meta-abstraction is concretely and plurally present in the world instantiated

in the very things from which the whole process of abstraction” initially began (p. 252). This hyperabstraction has salience with other critiques of structuration theory that are worth noting.

Although structuration theory has potential to attend to the contextual aspects of research location and thus, move social theory away from a predisposition to separating beings from their institutional structure, its lack of empirical applicability and guidance renders it more a collection of theoretical concepts rather than a coherent theory (Thrift, 1985). This is acknowledged by Giddens (1984) in his own admission. Urry (1982) comments that to understand the nature of social action one must go beyond the simplicity of the agency-system-structure. He alerts us to the problematic relationship between generating structure and the social systems in which it is grounded, as well as the existence of agent knowledgeability as skilled accomplishments with respect to “social struggles against a given structure” (p. 105). The obsession with agents as routinised and the importance Giddens gives to the power of routine leaves little room to develop agents as creative rather than just capable social actors, a factor in general missing from social theory (Thrift, 1985).

Others are critical of the concept of the duality of structure where an over-integrated view of the agent relates to the minutia of daily life events (Archer, 2010), while others are concerned with his notion of agency and the reconciliation of choice and routinised patterning of social action (Loyal & Barnes, 2001). Further, structuration theory lacks prescribed recommendations and conventions with respect to its employability in research sites (Edwards, 2016), with further lack of theoretical relation to empirical research (Thrift, 1985). Further, despite the problems with structuration, there are few empirical studies in education that have utilised structuration theory, but some are notable.

A study by Pearson (1995) considers how the views of social life, interpreted as action and therefore tied to agency, are shaped by cultural understandings and how this in turn influenced the structures of educational practice in art education. In another study Edwards (2016) used structuration theory to explore the dance and interrelationship between structure and agency in

the classroom with respect to how teachers implemented environmentally sustainable curriculum in geography.

An ethnographic work that illuminated inequality in the schooling system is illustrated in *Learning to Labour* (Willis, 1977), a study of working class boys in a school located in a poor area in Birmingham. The non-conformist actions of the lads in school, (agency) and in some ways reinforced in the school setting by authoritative distancing of teachers and other staff (structures), delivered them into unrewarding low-level shop floor employment—where they had limited life chances—to reinforce the structural properties of their dispositions in school. As will further explored in Chapter Four, structuration theory means adapting its theoretical concepts through a methodological approach that permits exploration of the relationship between structure and agency.

Regardless of these limits, but with them firmly in mind, and with the knowledge that structuration theory is not well used in educational research, the theory of structuration is an appropriate theory to investigate how globalisation works to influence the social activities in culturally diverse classrooms. As Giddens (1976) points out, the very nature of the duality of structure is now even more applicable to the globalised social worlds in which we live and work. Current globalising trends transcend into the minutia of everyday classroom activity where “the reproduction/transformation of globalizing systems” (Giddens, 1976, p. 8), as global flows of people and learning materials, has consequential implications for local action. More so, the ability to unite structure and agency in a more holistic framework that explores it from an ontological perspective gives credence to schools and classrooms as social sites of power and change. This exploration provides an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the classroom as a nested site within globalising forces, where cultural differences is marked and has deep implications for social justice in education.

3.3.10 The critical social aspects of structuration

Structuration theory works to liberalise the relationship between agents and their contextual systems by prioritising an ontological rather than epistemological approach to social order (Warf, 2004). Developed in the 1980s to respond to the inadequacies of orthodox theories of Marx, Durkheim and Weber, the theory of structuration theorises how social actors exert power to change social conditions and institutions—rather than actors being at the mercy of social change from a higher order (Warf, 2004). This introduction of recursivity by Giddens is important as it explains how social change occurs in that “individuals are both produced by, and producers of, history and geography” (Warf, 2004, p. 179). Such a recursive relationship between agents and systems lays bare the opportunity for emancipatory action on behalf of agents.

Structuration theory relies on an ontological rather than an epistemological approach which foregrounds the “conceptions of human being and human doing, social reproduction and social transformation” and this is useful to study the connectivity of cultural differences to contextualising systems in which the classroom sits (Giddens, 1984, p. xx). Structuration theory examines the nature of being within two structures—agency and social institutions—and assumes that social beings do not operate at random and are shaped and constituted by influential surroundings. To gain a complete understanding of human action, in terms of what, how and why people act in particular locations, one must look at the contexts that shape that action (Giddens as cited in Bryant & Jary, 1991). Classroom experience is inseparable from its physical environment, which shapes and changes the way teachers and students behave (Kenway & Youdell, 2011). This ability to examine the interrelatedness of agency and structure is appropriate for this research as classrooms are contextualised in other realms like global movements, state education authorities and local communities. Moreover, structuration theory affords the opportunity to critique the interrelatedness in terms of power. In structuration theory power is signalled as transformative in that it is tied to human agency and action, and therefore, controlled by humans to foster particular outcomes.

To summarise structuration theory, knowledgeable agents participate in social practices in situated locales. In these locales, agents engage in social practice and interaction that is regulated and structured by certain rules and resources. Such action is always embedded in action from afar so that structure and agent are recursively linked. As established above, rules and resources constitute structures. These structures work to articulate social systems, but are also considered the medium in which social action takes place. Structure then enables action through “rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction” meaning that structure takes on a dualistic role (Giddens, 1984, p. 50). This is what Giddens refers to as the duality of structure: the structural properties of systems that are tied to human action and are “chronically implicated in its production and reproduction”, operating as both the “medium and outcome of the conduct it recursively organizes” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). The system can then be seen as an extension of agents and those agents operate within the systemic rules and traditions to continually reproduce that system. Structuration, then, is “the structuring of social relations across time and space, in virtue of the duality of structure” (Giddens, 1984, p. 374).

Structuration theory is suitable for this research as it enables an examination of how the structuring properties of the social system that contextualise the classroom are influenced by global flows that influence social practice and action, as the duality of structure. Further, through the concept of agency, structuration affords the ability to examine the nature of social action deemed to be socially constructed through globalisation—universalising forces like migration as well as other global flows like curriculum. This classroom action can then be further examined for concepts of power, as legitimation, domination and signification. The next section considers the fit between sociomateriality and structuration, as these theoretical concepts will be mobilised to answer the third research sub-question, as detailed below.

3.4 Theoretical framing: The concept of sociomateriality

As discussed earlier, and to answer the first two research sub-questions, this research uses the notion of globalised place (Massey, 1991a), and structuration of the social system (Giddens, 1984). The theoretical concepts of power-geometries (Massey, 1999) and Giddens' concepts of agency and signification, domination and legitimation afford an examination of the nature of each school and classroom as a globalised place as well as how the structural properties of global flows influences the social action of culturally diverse teachers and students as they go about their daily activities. The third research sub-question—How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in book reading and learning centres in each classroom?—calls for a further concept to examine classroom social action with respect to cultural differences and its interaction with materials. The last question will use the theory of sociomateriality (Fenwick et al., 2011) in conjunction with Giddens' theoretical concept of agency, and discussed in detail below.

The literature informing sociomateriality was discussed in Chapter Two. Sociomateriality studies how social actors make meaning through their interaction with material entities thus proscribing a communicative relationship between humans and non-humans. It thus acknowledges the primacy of matter as part of social action (Coole & Frost, 2010). Materials play a prominent role in teaching and learning, particularly in lower primary where teachers and students teach and learn through items like tables and chairs, painting easels and the contents of home corner, wall charts and curriculum materials, food and books, play dough and dress up clothing, as well as the discursive and material action between teachers and students. Sociomateriality holds that these materials are not just tools and that human action is critically shaped through interaction with these materials (Fenwick et al., 2011).

Sociomaterial studies are an emerging field and are concerned with the patterns of human and non-human, or material, interactions in everyday contexts. Material is synonymous with the “everyday stuff of our lives”, that is “both organic and inorganic, technological and natural”

(Fenwick, 2015, p. 86) and includes entities like objects, bodies, action and artefacts, and in the classroom, texts, discourses, learning materials and personal items like clothing (Fenwick et al., 2011). Rather than label materials as “simply tools that humans use or objects they investigate”, sociomateriality holds that humans and materials are interrelated and that human action, as part of daily action, is “critically shaped through the material ... in indeterminate entanglements” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 1). The concept holds that “humans are not regarded with greater attention than the object with which they interact” (Mills, 2015).

Classrooms, as indicated above, are constituted with a variety of materials through which teachers and students “associate, move and enact” various classroom actions. In the classroom there is a dynamic relationship between the social—interactions, bodily arrangements and spoken language—with the material—classroom texts, wall displays, food, adornments and clothing (Mills & Exley, 2014). As indicated above, classrooms are richly imbued with material entities which intertwine, entangle and interact with the social acts—of individuals, and within subjectivities and relationships—of teachers and students within. To make meaning in the classroom, teachers and students call upon these social as well as material entities (Mills & Comber, 2015), in what Fenwick (2012) refers to as an embodied dimension of practice. Practice is then configured of the material dimensions of human activity as well as those non-human participants like room settings, play materials and bodies. These practices can be explicit, “comprising a recognized collective activity”, assembled, like literacy practices, or they can be implicit and therefore inherently taken for granted or tacit, for example “particular knowledge practices of sorting, interpreting, coding etc.” (p. 68).

The study of sociomaterial patterns shifts the focus from a human personal and social agency to a de-centering of human entities (Fenwick et al., 2012). It asks how material assemblages “associate, move, and enact what may appear to be distinct objects, subjects, and events” (Edwards & Fenwick, 2015, p. 1401) given they are not “independent transcendental entities or processes, but immanent assemblages” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 6). Humans act but,

importantly “non-humans act on and with humans” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 3) and so sociomateriality studies the world as “more-than-human” (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84). A subject, then, is inseparable from an object and in sociomateriality, things, as matter, matter—individual objects do not have agency, but sociomaterial assemblages of things exercise force on humans and cannot be considered separately (Fenwick, 2010, 2012; Fenwick et al., 2011). A sociomaterial approach considers agency as a “distributed *effect* produced in material webs of human and non-human assemblages” and therefore only possible through these networks of assemblages “whereby human desire and interests... become linked with things” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71). In the classroom these things might comprise a set of curriculum documents or the contents of child’s lunchbox—agency then becomes caught up with social action that is embodied by these materials.

This study examines the influence of global flows as people and curriculum in culturally diverse classrooms. Employing a sociomaterial lens on classroom action then extends the capability of structuration theory to consider how culturally diverse teachers and children, through their agency, make meaning with respect to the material environment—the everyday stuff of their classroom lives (Fenwick, 2015). This opens up the possibility that classrooms are places “where non-human forces are equally at play” in the constitution of students’ social becomings (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 525). A sociomaterial approach considers agency as a “distributed *effect* produced in material webs of human and non-human assemblages” and therefore, only possible through these networks of assemblages “whereby human desire and interests ... become linked with things” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71).

This notion of agency resonates with the concept of agency within structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), described in detail earlier. According to Giddens, agency is a processual concept where agents, who are knowledgeable about their activities, continually participate in routinised acts (Evans, 1987) in a continuous flow of conduct. Agency refers to the capability,

rather than intention to do things, and is therefore, concerned with events that are perpetrated by the individual (Giddens, 1976).

While many extol the applicability of the theory is a useful at examining the interplay between cultural difference and sociomateriality in this research, authors warn of limitations. Mapping the amalgamations of social and material connections “will always be partial and incomplete” (Mills, 2015, p. 123). This warning flags the importance of developing careful delimiters in research boundaries from the outset.

From the discussion above, there is resonance between the theory of structuration and the concept of sociomateriality. Both are focused on relationships between human action and other entities—in the case of structuration it is the structural properties of systems, while sociomateriality marries social actors with materials in the process of making meaning. As well, both foreground agency in terms of relative and proximal otherness—in structuration agents act when they interact with structural properties while, in sociomateriality, agents or social actors, like children in the classroom, communicate and act with and through the material aspects of their social worlds. Further, both structuration theory and sociomateriality offer researchers a critical stance through which to interpret the social action in research sites as each are capable of attending to power relations. Sociomateriality holds that materials can act on humans to afford or limit social outcomes (Fenwick et al., 2012). For example, children who have limited experience with classroom material aspects like pencils and paint brushes, initially struggle to use these in any sense of meaning making. Similarly, the theory of structuration enables a critical appraisal of social action through the structuring properties of legitimation, domination and signification, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Combining these overarching concepts of place, structuration and sociomateriality, as part of the theoretical framework for this research, capacitates a capability to craft meaning and understanding through different lenses: to examine the placed nature of the classroom from above and within, how social actors are influenced by structural properties, and how this in turn

interplays with cultural differences and how social actors, with culturally diverse identities take up these proprieties in the material sense to communicate in the classroom.

3.5 Summary of this chapter

This chapter has sort to expose in detail the theoretical framework for this research. It has justified the selection of the three theories to examine the dynamic social site of the classroom. Applying place theory (Massey, 1991a, 1999, 2005) enables the schools and the classrooms of this study to be seen as globalised, socially dynamic, and multiple, where social relations are caught up in privileging and marginalising power-geometries. Structuration theory (Giddens, 1976, 1984) is useful to examine how global flows are linked to the broader sociocultural world in which each school and classroom is contextualised as well as how these flows work to structure the nature of classroom social action in signifying, dominating and legitimating ways (Giddens, 1984). Sociomateriality is useful to see how culturally diverse students make meaning as their cultural differences interact with the sociomateriality of each classroom (Fenwick, 2015). The next chapter turns towards that data to outline the methodological approach for this research.

4 Methodology

Chapter Three outlined the three theoretical constructs upon which this research is contextualised. Chapter Four describes, elaborates and justifies the methodology for this research in relation to the research questions, as well as the theoretical framework chosen for this study. It provides details regarding the use of critical ethnography, outlines the research design, and describes the nature of sites and participants, as well as details of a pilot study. Further it documents the method of data collection, including data sets, data analysis and interpretation. The chapter then discusses some general problems of validity, limitations of this research, and ethics. A summary concludes the chapter.

1.1 Introduction

This research studied the nature and dynamics of cultural differences in the context of globalising forces, but in particular, the way cultural differences were positioned in the actions of teachers and students as they went about their everyday practices around each other and material aspects of their classrooms. The methodological approach was ethnographic to study the “meaning of the actions and events of the people [the researcher] seek[s] to understand” (Spradley, 1979, p. 5). Its ethnographic style adopted a critical approach—as was discussed in Chapter Three, but also discussed briefly below.

A critical ethnographer is interested in emancipation at the site of study and works to expose power relations that limit social participation and, in this study, to uncover relations of power with respect to how cultural differences were positioned in each classroom (Carspecken, 2001). In the classrooms of this study, it was assumed that power relations, tied to cultural differences, operated to include and exclude certain knowledges, practices and actions and that these worked to dominate and marginalise the social actions of students and teachers (Janks, 2000; Luke & Luke, 2013). Such an approach provided the opportunity to do “political analysis,

in which [researcher] role, as well as that of the teacher, the students, and the educational inequality itself, is defined in new ways” (Masemann, 2003, p. 119).

The context of this research is situated in a dialect between the local and the global (Masemann, 2003; Massey, 1991a). The two schools were deliberately selected to mirror different educational settings and different cultural choreographies in two different geographical locations (Silverman, 2013). One school is in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, the other in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. The schools in each country were in many ways similar—culturally diverse in nature, each have, among others, mostly western trained teachers and each is influenced by global flows of people but also western educational materials. Their differences lie in the geographical positioning of each in the world with accompanying political, social, cultural and religious variants, as discussed in Chapter One.

The research design used a qualitative approach through ethnographic case study which added to “existing experience and humanistic understanding” and served as “a basis for naturalistic generalization” of the nature and interplay of cultural differences in two lower primary classrooms in two different nations (Stake, 2000, p. 24). As critical ethnography calls for the researcher to be present and to participate in the site’s routine action, I became an integral part of the classroom activity (Heath, 1983). I spent time working, and sometimes teaching and playing, with the children and doing teacher tasks like gluing student work into workbooks, filing, filling paint pots, finding and preparing resources, tidying up at the end of the day and consoling distraught children. This participation built an understanding of the routines and meaningful acts in each classroom in the hope that I could “make the ordinary extraordinary” and look at what people “do” as well as what they think and feel with respect to cultural differences. I was intent upon reconceiving “apparently ‘small’ happenings as extraordinary events within complex choreographies” in two classroom richly mixed and culturally diverse (Silverman, 2013, p. 49).

The ethnographic field work included observations of no less than 30 full school days in each classroom which produced no less than 35 pages of field notes, including journal notes, for each site. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected school leaders, as well as teachers and teacher assistants who taught across the lower primary (early years) level in each school—a total of ten in the school in Dubai and seven in the school in Australia. More informal interviews were conducted during breaks and after school with each classroom teacher where the observations were carried out. These informal interviews numbered 11 for the school in the United Arab Emirates and six in the Australian school. This discrepancy occurred as in the United Arab Emirates there was more time when the teacher was available and often the interviews were smaller in time, so there tended to be more of them. Official documents were collected—school curriculum and planning publications—to build an understanding of how each classroom was contextualised with regards to outside influences and culture. Often these documents originated from elsewhere, and therefore were indicative of the types of flows that manifested in the classroom. These enabled an examination of the “networks that stretch across space and time and connect scales, places, and actors” (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b, p. 119). These documents will be detailed later in this chapter. Many photographic images were recorded, on a daily basis, to capture and record each classroom’s regular and routine activities, particularly when students and teachers interacted with material objects. Some of these were used to provide a visual background within the analysis.

4.1 Critical ethnography: Suitability for this research

This research sought to explore how cultural differences were positioned in two lower primary classrooms in the context of globalising forces where the mobility of people is accompanied by materials and practices, perhaps unfamiliar, to classrooms. Further, it endeavoured to understand how cultural differences influenced the typical and routine actions of teachers and students as they interface with each other, as well as materials, in their classrooms. A critical ethnography is

useful for this research as it situates the local social action and subjective experience of the classroom—and the conditions that influence that action and experience—as social processes, mediated by immediate and contextualising contexts, like global flows of people, materials and educational ideas in schools (Carspecken, 2001; Hardcastle et al., 2006). It thus enabled the social life of each classroom of this study to be viewed in a coherent and comprehensive way (Pearson, 1995).

The participants and the locations the research traversed are products of regional and more distant histories and these must be reflected in any discussion and analysis about classroom social actions (Heath, 1983). The classrooms, as research sites, are understood to facilitate action through the intersection of three core concepts: meaningful action, culture and social systems (Carspecken, 2001). These core concepts compliment the multi-theoretical framework for this research as discussed in Chapter Three. The notion that place is globalised, unique and power-filled enabled an understanding to be built about how global flows influence social action in local sites (Massey, 1999). Structuration theory examined the relationship between the social actions of agents, as teachers and students, and structural properties of social systems that produce and reproduce particular action (Giddens, 1984). Further, the concept of sociomateriality complimented this examination of classroom social action to consider the patterns of human and non-human, or material, interactions in everyday contexts (Fenwick et al., 2011).

A critical ethnographic approach enabled the collection of data according to “epistemological principles and substantive concepts”—like cultural differences and social action that are reflected in the very fabric of a system’s constitution—but importantly to critically analyse “existing social structures, inequalities, injustices and cultural ideologies” at a local level (Carspecken, 2001, p. 21). Thus, this research took on a hermeneutic-reconstructive approach where the researcher, through a position-taking role, attempted to make meaning of routine acts by locating and reconstructing the themes of cultural groups within wider systems of social organisation (Carspecken, 2001). This act of locating and seeing cultural and social themes in

particular ways and across particular realms then enabled the positioned researcher to make tentative, but grounding claims, with respect to the experienced and contextualised nature of action within the classroom.

A critical ethnographic methodology afforded the researcher a small window through which to observe and ultimately, interpret the sociocultural and sociomaterial nature of the classroom, as located in more distant political, social, cultural, religious and economic contexts. There are many examples in the literature, and documented in Chapter Two, of others who have used an ethnographic approach to glean important findings about schools and classrooms: as culturally diverse (Arenas, 2015; Buchori & Dobinson, 2012; Dakin, 2017), about the influence of global flows on education (Bryan, 2009; Gardinier, 2012; Zakharia, 2009) and about the way sociomateriality plays out in classrooms (Kervin et al., 2017; McPherson & Saltmarsh, 2017; Vanden Buerie & Simons, 2017). Critically analysing meaningful texts and routinised action found in the classroom, as well as its contextualising layers, built a relationship between power, language, sociomateriality and society in each school and classroom (Iyer, Kettle, Luke, & Mills, 2014).

4.2 Aims and research questions

As discussed in the overview, the aim of this study was to investigate the influence of global flows on the classrooms, how cultural differences were positioned in two lower primary classrooms—one in Australia, the other in the United Arab Emirates. The research questions, below, reflect a particular view of globalisation and education. Globalisation increases the flows of people between countries, but importantly brings other flows, like curriculum documents, educational ideas and learning materials. These manifest in classrooms to change the nature of social action. Cultures, once bounded by geographical location, now mix to a historically unprecedented degree. This cultural mixing fosters greater concentrations of cultural diversity and differences in countries and places like classrooms. Classrooms are sociomaterial

environments where social beings—mostly teachers and students—interact dynamically with material entities through the process of education.

4.2.1 Research questions

The overarching question that frames this research is: How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two different nations in the context of globalisation? This question is explored through the following sub-questions that were introduced in Chapter 1 and restated here for ease of reference:

1. In what ways do global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom?
2. What do teachers and school leaders say about how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the schools and the classrooms?
3. How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in book reading and learning centres in each classroom?

These questions called for a research design that gathered data sets to illustrate how each class, where teachers and students interact in the processes of teaching and learning, was contextualised, through global flows, and constituted as cultural, social and material places. Figure 3.1, in Chapter Three, highlighted the connection between theoretical concepts of place (Massey, 1991a), structuration (Giddens, 1984) and sociomateriality (Fenwick et al., 2011), research questions and data gathering environments that contextualise the research design.

4.3 Research design

This qualitative research draws conclusions about the social action that is influenced by the interplay between global flows, cultural differences and sociomateriality in two classrooms, their similarities and differences connected through a global phenomenon. Figure 4.1 illustrates the extent and contextual nature of this study, as well as the object of inquiry, the interplay of cultural differences.

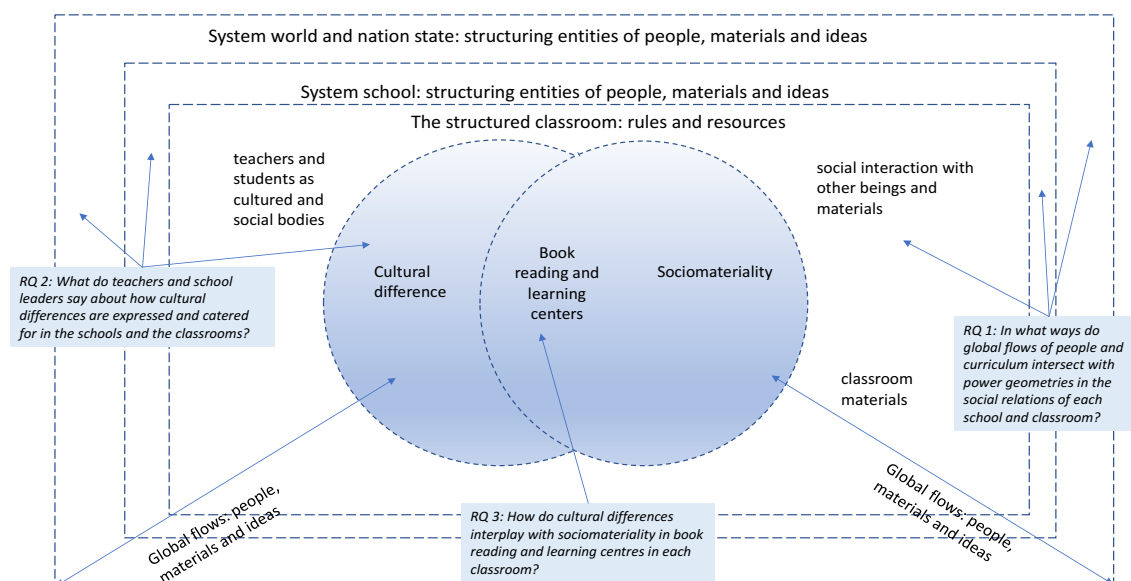


Figure 4.1 Research questions and contexts for research

Further, it illustrates and contextualises the social systems that constitute the classroom and which each research sub-question targets (Giddens, 1984). The classroom is depicted as a research site where social action is structured through the social, cultural, and material systems in which it sits. Such contextualised actions can be seen in meaningful and routinised classroom acts, like book reading and learning centre activities, carried out by teachers and students.

4.3.1 Operationalising the research

The five stages of Carspecken's (1996) critical qualitative research, as indicted in Table 4.1, were used to operationalise this research. Table 4.1 summarises the research design, according to these five stages to detail the what, where, who and how of data collection and analysis. Research site 1 (RS1) and research site 2 (RS2) refer to the classrooms and their contextual locales of Australia and the United Arab Emirates respectively.

Table 4.1 Five-stage research design (adapted from Carspecken, 1996)

5 stage model	Stage 1 Compiling a primary record: observational data collection	Stage 2 Preliminary reconstructive analysis	Stage 3 Dialogic data generation: democratising the research process	Stage 4 Discovering systems relations within broader contexts	Stage 5 Using systems relations to explain findings
Research focus and purpose	Build up an intensive set of observational notes about the cultural and sociomateriality of each classroom	Reconstruct and articulate cultural themes and system factors through coding	Conduct fieldwork that engages participants in a safe and supportive normative environment	Conduct system's analysis across site, locale and other relative systems	Link reconstructive analysis to social-theoretical models of place, structuration and sociomateriality
Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classrooms • School surrounds including playground, staffroom, hallways and meeting rooms 	Off site	Classrooms, meeting rooms, school leader's office	Off site	Off site
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Students 	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • School leaders • Students (minimal) 	None	None
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes • Journal notes 	Low level coding for themes to connect classroom practice with theoretical concepts	Semi-structured interviews (30–45 minutes each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teachers (1) • teacher assistants (1) • school leaders (1+) • continued field and journal notes, recording of images 	Interpretation of data using discourse and image analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • field and journal notes • images • interview transcripts • official documents 	Synthesis of data across two distinctive sites

Data set	Field and journal notes (written up at night)	Data collected from stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected from stage 1 • Interview data • Continuing field and journal notes • Visual images of school and classroom (physical attributes and social interactions) 	Official curriculum and policy documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Curriculum in England and International Baccalaureate curriculum framework, • School documents e.g., unit and daily plans 	Entire corpus of data from two sites
Research period	RS1: 10 days of observation (includes 5 days of pilot study) RS2: 5 days of observation prior to data collection	RS1: ongoing RS2: ongoing (reflective consideration)	Interviews RS1: 4 teacher, 1 teacher assistant and 2 school leaders RS2: 6 teachers, 1 teacher assistant and 3 school leaders Approx. 5 hours in RS1 and 7 hours in RS2 Additional classroom observation 2 x 25 days per site	Unspecified	Unspecified
Time period 2017	RS1: July 2017 RS2: October 2017	RS1: July–Sept RS2: October–November	RS1: September RS2: November	RS1: December 2017 RS2: December 2017	January–July 2018

The following discussion further elaborates Carspecken’s (1996) five stages of research design used in this research. These stages are meant to be flexible and loosely cyclical to enable research to proceed in a way that allows for revisiting the stages over time (Hardcastle et al., 2006; LeCompte, Goetz, & Tesch, 1993).

Stage one—Compiling a primary record: observational data collection—took a period of one week and was used at both sites to build up a primary record though the collection and compilation of thick descriptions supplemented by not so thick field notes and journal entries (Hardcastle et al., 2006). Thick descriptions bring scientific imagination “into touch with the lives of strangers” (Geertz, 1973, p. 16). Limited notes were taken during direct observation but were written down later, as soon as possible and away from the classroom. This was important to

build trust with both teachers and to scan the classroom for important signposts regarding its social, cultural and material nature. Such passive observation over a set time period was invaluable as an initial record of classroom action. It enabled capturing the classroom's complexity through the recording of information that detailed not only what was happening (those meaningful and routine acts), but also the nature and context of the classroom in terms of its immediate and contextualising contexts (what curriculum documents were used, and the nature of artefacts brought into each classroom).

In *stage two*—Preliminary reconstructive analysis—reconstructed the classroom as a cultural, social and material place. This reconstruction acknowledged that classrooms do not occur in a vacuum and are shaped by contextualising influences from elsewhere. These contextualising influences were not at once visible in the classroom and needed to be carefully considered. The derivation of linguistic representations in field and journals notes recorded in stage one built meanings from the unarticulated aspects of the classroom, aspects like power relations and other intersubjective structures (Hardcastle et al., 2006). In this stage rudimentary coding began in the form of low-level coding to look for relationships between social action and contextualising contexts.

Stage three—Dialogic data generation: democratising the research process—was transformative in that the researcher ceased to be the sole voice of interpretation and instead, through a facilitative role, included the voices of others who participate in, and contribute to, the social dynamics of the classroom. This dialogic data generation records what others think, rather than observationally recorded, to provide rich and perhaps, alternative perspectives and suppositions developed from the preliminary reconstruction (Silverman, 2013; Spradley, 1980). In this stage the voices of teachers, teacher assistants and school leaders provided a rich addition to the data. These alternative perspectives were derived through semi-structured interviews characterised by maximum flexibility with regard to questions posed (Hardcastle et al., 2006;

Holstein & Gubrium, 2002). A sample of these interview questions are included in the section on data sets.

The interviews were aimed at understanding other significant views and feelings about cultural differences and classroom experience and action. Importantly, to ensure that discussion with participants worked towards a collaborative construction of otherness and understanding of the setting, the interviews accommodated for the fact that interviewers are constituted by endemic and normalised cultural categorisations (Ryen, 2002; Tierney & Dilley, 2002). Further continued observations within the classroom, taken as thick records, and where the researcher assumed a participatory role as teacher, supplemented the observational reconstruction produced as part of stage one and two, above.

Stage four—Discovering systems relations within broader contexts was characterised by a more critical stance and examined the relationship between the classroom social action and the structural properties of each school social site. These sites were indicated in Figure 4.1 above as systems and locales that constitute social action in the classrooms (Giddens, 1984). Pragmatic horizon analysis, used in Chapter Five, section II, went far beyond the field findings of stages one through three, to locate classroom cultural differences in broader social realms. Locating classroom action in relational cultural reconstructions of other realms enabled an examination of the recursive action through which social institutions and agents interact (Giddens, 1984; Hardcastle et al., 2006).

Stage five—Using systems relations to explain findings—was marked with a deeper critical analysis that sought to harness social change. It relied on further researcher inference to ground the findings of stages one through four in the broadest system features (Hardcastle et al., 2006). The reconstructive analysis was linked to the key theoretical concepts of this research—place, structuration and sociomateriality—to suggest how cultural differences was positioned in power relations in each classroom. It was an epistemologically important stage as it allowed a broadening of constructed meanings of the classroom—that would normally sit in alienation to

such action—to situate these meanings within the multi-theoretical framework (Hardcastle et al., 2006).

It is noted here that in Carspecken's five-stage design stage four and five are optional. However, this research sought to understand how cultural differences were positioned in each classroom, and therefore, future potentials for teachers and students. Including stage four created an understanding of systems relations of the classroom with respect to the contextualising broader contexts of globalisation, global flows and place. As part of stage five, the findings from stage four were linked to the socio-theoretical models of the chosen theories to ground the research findings in a social critical context that held that classroom contexts can be contested and can be seen as social sites for renewal (Levinson, 2011).

4.3.1.1 An important lesson in using the stages of Carspecken

The following anecdote illustrates the importance of restraint in initial data collection and is documented here in the hope that other novice researchers will heed to warnings of caution and trust-building with research participants. In the first week of data collection, at Southern College, a valuable lesson was learned, as indicated in the following observation notes:

I worried that I have created an atmosphere of distrust by writing things down and not being part of the class. Need to amend this and to build rapport with both Bella [teacher] and Christine [teacher assistant]. So no more writing for a few days ... As a reflection, things went a lot better once I put away the book and recording devices early in the data collection. I aroused suspicion and it did not do anything for trust building.

Things went better today as I spent more time on building the rapport as my supervisor had suggested. I did not realise how important this was until I sensed it on day one of data collection. Definitely having my little notebook in the classroom and writing things down made everyone feel uneasy, including me. This day went better, and I only slipped into the office a couple of times to write things down—I tried really hard to remember things that

happened and took advantage of time in the staffroom to write—this seemed to be acceptable as Bella was also busy writing on her computer. The other thing that worked well today I think was to be part of the classroom as much as possible—this meant sitting on the floor with the students and joining in. This was good for me and the students benefited as well.

Due to this important learning, as part of early data gathering, I spent one week in each classroom without any recording devices. Away from the classroom I made useful notes that would help to fine-tune future data collection in each site. A sample from each school is included Figure 4.2, below.

Midtown School pilot study notes	
<i>Early reflections</i>	<i>A selection of initial observations</i>
<p>Data collection will begin next week but this week I am getting acquainted with the teacher and her class and settling into the school.</p> <p>It's good that I am able to spend a week getting to know the teacher and the students but also how the school runs – it is giving me a really good understanding and helping to build that important rapport. Staying back for lunch and also lending a hand a good idea.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The reception area of the school reminds me of a very upmarket hotel with many staff running around in different uniforms and also a long reception desk with about 3 young Pilipino girls working there. The interesting thing is that the uniform is usually matched with the nationality – I will try to spend some time just sitting and observing this are during my stay – perhaps, sooner than later. ➤ On the first day I attended a training for safety run by Sara Hedger the DP. It was interesting and there are now new laws to report on the safety of children in the UAE. They fall into the following categories – sexual, physical, emotional and neglect. The training was for parent volunteers and there were about 15 women from many different nationalities there both western and eastern. ➤ The children in FS2F are younger by approximately one year than their peers in Australia. They are not only younger but are also equipped with less skills in many ways.
Southern College pilot study notes	
<p>Worried that cultural differences will not be really attended to. And then how to write this up?</p> <p>Worried that cultural differences <u>is</u> superficially attended to in modern Australian schooling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reading buddies activity – children are paired male/female and I assume for some reason. Today they read <i>The Surprise Party</i> by Pat Hutchings. They then play a game of Chinese Whispers although TL does not refer to it as this. Of course, the message gets completely transformed every time we play it. Have a look at this book for cultural representations – e.g. humanising of animals with clothes. Notions of a party to celebrate a birthday. ➤ Eating time fruit snack – nothing particularly notable here but not seeing any significant differences – just the usual western food in western packaging and lunch boxes. Eating habits do not appear significant.

Figure 4.2 Journal notes from Southern College

4.4 Site selection and description

This research provided an ethnographic window into two lower primary classrooms, deliberately chosen for their cultural diversity. Once a space characterised by homogeneity across most of the world, many classrooms no longer support such “oneness”, but rather an “otherness” pervades. Both Australia (see <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3412.0/>) and the United Arab Emirates, one of the most globalised and wealthiest of all Arab states (Cocchetti, 2008; Powell, 2012) have seen massive shifts in the diversity of population in the last two decades as a result of global people flows. In the United Arab Emirates these shifts mean that more expatriates than locals now inhabit classrooms and teachers are more likely to be western from Europe, America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Cocchetti, 2008; Morgan, 2018). It is also the case that in Australia, these flows translate to classrooms constituted with a growing cultural diversity.

The first primary classroom is in a school in the state of Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, where a white western-trained expatriate educator teaches the National Curriculum in England (Department of Education, 2013) to students from twelve different nations. The school, Midtown School (pseudonym), an international and co-educational school under the GEMS Education brand and runs from September to July. *Global Education Management Systems* (GEMS) is an international education company that has many schools in the United Arab Emirates and elsewhere across the world. The class consisted of 24 children, 16 boys and 8 girls, from the following countries—Pakistan, India, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Scotland, England, Iraq, Lebanon and Sri Lanka. As a foundation classroom its students, aged between four to five years of age, were entering their second year of pre-primary education—Foundation Studies 2. At the time of this research the students had been at school for four weeks before I arrived in early October to begin data observation and collection. Even though it was meant to be their second year of preschool, some students had experienced very little school due to time away from class

in their first year. The classroom was one of 20, made up of ten Foundation Studies 1 and ten Foundation Studies 2.

The other classroom was in a private and international school, Southern College (pseudonym), located in Queensland, Australia. Southern College is a P–12 co-educational school that offers the International Baccalaureate and is part of the Independent School Association. This classroom was also marked by cultural diversity—the teacher has Dutch heritage and the students from many places including recently arrived immigrants, those with parents from other lands and Australian nationals. As a preparatory class it consisted of 18 children, ranging in age from four to six (they must turn five during the prep year). Children in this class were all Australian citizens, but their backgrounds were often from elsewhere—for example, Iranian, Vietnamese, Hong Kong Chinese, South Korean and Indian. There are four other preparatory classes in this school. In Australia the school year runs from January to December and at the time of this research, in late July, the children were already halfway through their school year.

4.5 Participant selection and description

This research accessed two sets of participants—one set from a Brisbane international school and the other from an international school in Dubai. The selection of these groups was purposive to yield the greatest outcome with respect to the research questions (Silverman, 2010), which focus on how cultural differences were positioned in the classroom. The criteria for selection of the two schools was that they must have a high cultural diversity amongst their student population. Each school was selected through an invitational process, where the principal of the school was contacted to invite participation. Both principals agreed in the first instance and they became the go-between to find a suitable and willing classroom teacher with whom to conduct the research.

Once teacher participation was granted and ethical clearance was gained from the university, I formalised the research agreement in each school through the distribution of information letters and consent forms to gain informed consent from the participants—the principal and other school leaders, the classroom teacher, teaching assistants for each class, other teachers who taught in the same year level and students and their parents—a sample of these can be found in Appendix A.

4.5.1 Participant roles

Table 4.2 details the participants from each research site, Southern College and Midtown School and includes details of the roles each of them played in contributing to this research. There are five groups of active participants, parents were not active in data collection but have been listed below as they contributed to allowing students to participate by giving their consent.

Table 4.2 Participant details and roles

Participant	Southern College	Midtown School	Contribution to research data
<i>Principals and school leaders</i>	Steven (Primary principal) Anna (Deputy primary principal)	Robert (CEO) Neville (Primary principal) Margaret (FS leader)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read research information package and provide consent for researcher to enter classroom • Act as a go between for researcher and school • Participate in a 45-minute semi-structured interview and other informal interviews upon request
<i>Classroom teacher</i>	Bella (Prep BC teacher)	Susan (FS2S teacher)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for consent for researcher to enter and observe teaching episodes over a period of about six weeks including an initial period of familiarity, getting to know and undocumented observation • Participate in one 45-minute semi-structured interviews and more informal interviews when needed for clarification and suitable • Provide researcher with lesson artefacts (teaching plans, student work samples, discussion about day to day classroom events) • Participate in member checks of collected data and validate field notes, transcripts and collected images • Respond to researcher's analysis of data
<i>Teaching assistant</i>	Christine	Bindhu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consent to participate in interviews • Participate in one 45-minute semi-structured interviews and more informal interviews when needed for clarification and suitable
<i>Year level teachers</i>	Minh, Alice and Wendy (prep teachers)	Nerida, Jane, Ieasha, Therese, Gabriella	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consent to participate in interviews • Participate in 45-minute semi-structured interview and be willing to talk to researcher on a more informal basis, like in hallways or meeting rooms

<i>Students</i>	18 students, with cultural backgrounds —Iranian, Vietnamese, Hong Kong Chinese, South Korean, Indian and Australian	24 students from Pakistan, India, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Scotland, England, Iraq, Lebanon and Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read information package and provide consent to participate in research by returning signed (tick a smiley box) consent form (Note this was carried out for the children in Southern College, however, due to ages of the children at GEMS and the lack of language skills, the teacher and I decided that gaining consent was unsuitable for children. Consent was obtained from children at Southern College, this was done in class when I took them in small groups to explain the process of consent.) • Participate in regular classroom activities with researcher as observer and teacher in data collection over a period of about six weeks, including one week prior to research when no data was gathered • Talk to the researcher about regular classroom activities where appropriate, only with their consent • Allow researcher to photograph regular classroom activities, including student work
<i>Parents</i>	Parents of students in each class	Parents of students in each class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide consent for their students to participate in research • Become aware about research duration, purpose and parameters

The following section outlines the specific details regarding each group of participants.

4.5.1.1 Principals and school leaders

This study selected schools that are typical of each state's private education system, international schools in Brisbane and Dubai. The principals from each school belong to similar teacher nationalities and are both western. At each site principals were asked to provide ethical consent and were part of interviews to discuss school background as well as the positioning of cultural differences in the school and classrooms.

4.5.1.2 Teachers

In this study the selection of the classroom was important. However, it was also important to select a classroom teacher who was willing to allow participatory research to be part of his/her classroom. Of interest in this research was how teachers and students in two isolated globalising countries responded to increasing cultural differences in the classroom; but it was also of interest how those differences were positioned in the classroom. Typically, in the United Arab Emirates, in both the state and private sectors, teachers of English, Maths and Science are of western

origin and usually non-Arab, unlike many of their students. Whereas in many Queensland schools, teachers, usually western and more than often of Australian nationality, teach students like them, but in recent times, increasingly students who are culturally different, as discussed in Chapter One. The teachers (the classroom teacher where the research was conducted and other teachers in the year level) who agreed to participate in this research fitted the descriptions above and were, with one exception—Ieasha, a Foundation Studies 2 teacher at Midtown School, was South African and of Indian origin—western and white. Teachers are participants who have historically tended to be considered in the know. Including teacher viewpoints rather than teacher knowledge, shifted the epistemological focus of data analysis from definitions to interpretations of reality to gain a wide perspective on the interplay of globalisation, cultural differences and sociomateriality (Tierney & Dilley, 2002).

4.5.1.3 Students

Students were representative of many countries in each of the classrooms studied. It was not the intention of this research to directly interview students. Recording devices to capture oral and visual data were used in both classrooms to capture and record those instances of teacher and student action as they went about their regular classroom activities. It was important to attempt to include student social action as they went about their regular routines in the classroom, knowing that students are the products of cultural families, but importantly the receivers of an education that might be influenced by the cultural differences of others (Tierney & Dilley, 2002).

4.5.1.4 Student family background

The purposive sampling was reflected in the nature of cultural diversity in each classroom. For example, in the United Arab Emirates students come from a diverse array of families that are made up of local Emiratis, those originating from surrounding Arab states like Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, come from India, Pakistan or Bangladesh or perhaps, from other western nations like Germany, France, Ireland or Canada. In the city of Brisbane at international schools,

students are more likely to be white, non-Indigenous nationals, first, second and third generation immigrants from a multitude of countries throughout the world and newly arrived immigrants who have come to Australia for resettlement recently. Knowing a little about family backgrounds added to the knowledge about cultural differences in each classroom.

4.6 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted for one week, prior to the research period, in the first school, Southern College, to trial the process of data collection—to think about how the analytic tools chosen for this research would work with the proposed collection of data. The pilot study occurred in June 2017, after ethical clearance, and mimicked stage one of the Carspecken's (1996) five-stage design, but was used to build a preliminary understanding of the classroom as well as the type of data to gather that would illuminate the classroom as a cultural, social, and material place. No data was actively recorded in the classroom and journal notes were written up at night for reflection about the way the data might be collected, and what it might yield.

Instead the week was spent observing, interacting with students and teachers, considering data gathering techniques with respect to proposed knowledge building around the interplay of cultural differences and sociomateriality. It also helped to consider and plan when and how to use recording devices, so as not to be intrusive. Note that a decision was made before data collection to exclude video recording in both classrooms due to the sensitive nature of identity, particularly with respect to Muslim females in the United Arab Emirates. It is considered a cultural and social taboo to take pictures of Muslim female faces without their prior consent. Given that this type of recording would not be used in one site the decision to not use it in the other site seemed reasonable. Insightful ideas during this pilot are recorded in the excerpts reproduced from my journal below:

The elaborate observation recording sheet I had designed (see appendix B) was not going to suit the data collection in a busy, sometimes chaotic preschool classroom—it had too many sections to fill in and I felt that many of these sections were irrelevant. What was important was to capture what was happening in the classroom and this data gathering tool was abandoned for a notebook, which was used daily and notes transferred to an electronic copy each afternoon after school.

The field note conventions that were originally developed (see appendix B) were also too detailed, as it was not possible to capture this level of detail from multiple children in the noisy and busy classroom where I was an active member.

All collected recordings were transcribed at a later date. The pilot study availed opportunities to observe the classroom with a particular focus, to trial the data design and collection and an invaluable experience to fine-tune research skills.

4.7 Data design and collection

Data was collected from the two sites: Midtown School in Dubai and Southern College in Brisbane. As illustrated in Figure 4.1 these classrooms are influenced by immediate, but also geographically removed sites and contexts. As this research is interested in not only the nature of cultural differences as constructed by other contexts, but also how cultural differences interplayed with social and material aspects of each classroom, a range of data was collected to answer the research questions. The following section details the method of data collection and the nature of the data. A data collection plan is outlined in Table 4.3. This will be followed by a detailed discussion about each data set.

The method of data collection was influenced by Carspecken's five stages as outlined in the research design in Table 4.1. This research collection method divided data into monologic and dialogic sets. As they capture a lot of detail, monologic data sets were useful for surveying the field to build a preliminary picture of the cultural, social and material nature of each

classroom. Dialogic data depart from monologic in that they gather data from others who participate in the research site (Carspecken, 2001).

Using both types of data enabled a fuller understanding of the ethnographic site, where other voices were included. Interviewing others about cultural differences provided an opportunity to form a double hermeneutic in which the interview was considered an active interaction between the researcher and the participants (Fontana & Frey, 2008; Giddens, 1984). This double hermeneutic highlighted that the interviewer structures and influences the interview, and so any texts created must be deconstructed to expose the researcher's bias and assumed notions (Fontana & Frey, 2008). Thus, two frames of meaning were brought to analysis, cognisant of a broader understanding of the research data that added to validity. Further, it was important to consider the interviewee responses as to whether they represented the direct experience of the teachers and school leaders as opposed to my "actively constructed narratives" of cultural differences in the classroom (Silverman, 2010, p. 45). To ensure I captured experience, rather than narrative, I asked interviewees wherever possible to give examples to illustrate their responses.

Monologic data consisted of field notes, as well as journal notes completed at the end of the day, and photographs of classroom displays, clothing, food and artefacts as well as images of teacher and student social action. In this stage of data collection, intensive observations that attended to its cultural, social and material nature captured the complex nature of the classroom. The reconstruction of these data sets, as part of stage two, enabled an identification of the cultural themes and system factors that contextualised and influenced classroom social action at each site.

Dialogic data collected in stage three, as part of critical ethnography, worked to enrich and authenticate the monologic data collected in stage one. In this stage, I adopted a facilitative role, as opposed to a fully observational role in stage one (Hardcastle et al., 2006). Stage three data was generated by people rather than recorded information about them, and in this study, is

represented by semi-structured and informal interviews of teachers, teacher assistants and school leaders, as well as further classroom observations (Hardcastle et al., 2006). The use of interview data captured perspectives and understandings that complimented the conclusions generated from the monological analysis of stage two.

Table 4.3 Data design and collection

Overarching research question: How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms of two different nations in the context of globalisation?			
What interests me about the sites/issue?	What did I need to study to satisfy these interests?	Data collection instruments	Data sets accumulated
In what ways do global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective experiences of people in place • Interactions between people at the schools • Social routines and meaningful acts of the classroom • Material representations of cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes: intensive/casual observations • Journal notes • Photographs • Self-reflexive notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field and journal note transcripts • Photographs of classroom (artefacts, displays and resources, clothing, food) • Interview transcripts
What do teachers and school leaders say about how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the schools and the classrooms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher talk • School leader talk • Official documents (system, school and class) • Teacher action • Student action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Collection of curriculum documents • School planning • Field notes: intensive and casual observations • Photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview recordings and transcripts for teacher, school leaders • Transcripts of official documents • Field note transcripts • Photographs of classroom
How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in book reading and learning centres in each classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher talk • School leader talk • Official documents (system, school, class) • Teacher action • Student action • Teacher and student interaction • Material classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Journal notes • Collection of documents • Field notes: intensive and casual observations • Photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview recordings and transcripts for teacher, school leader • Transcripts of official documents • Field note transcripts • Photographs

An important validity requirement of these first three stages was that the researcher conduct member checks to ensure that data is representative of what subjects think happened, and to allow time for them to challenge any misconceptions and miscommunications illuminated in the

data and reconstructive analysis. Member checks also worked to equalise power relations where researcher meaning constructions were shared with the subjects of the study (Hardcastle et al., 2006; Lofland, 2006). Flexibility was required here, and I was aware that sharing explicitly in stage one might have adverse effects on teachers, thus producing the Hawthorne effect, where research participants alter their behaviour in response to raised awareness (Hardcastle et al., 2006). Member checks were conducted regularly with the classroom teachers in each site to ensure that observations were authentic. They were usually done at the end of the day, when appropriate. As well, field notes and interview responses were often shared with the two teachers at each site, especially if there was active discussion around daily events.

To situate the classroom in broader contexts, and as part of stage four, data was collected from the social sites that worked to structure the social action in the classroom, for example, education departments and the wider school community. Official documents like curriculum and policy documents and other school documentation, for example, school plans and teacher unit plans, were collected from each site. Table 4.3 relates the data collection to the previous research design in Table 4.2 and includes the research questions. It illustrates how particular research interests called for particular data instruments to derive particular data sets capable of exploring and answering the research questions. This table served as map for research conduct and data collection with respect to the research questions.

4.7.1 Data sets

As indicated above an array of data was used to capture the social, cultural and material aspects of each classroom and school. These included field and journal notes, semi-structured and less formal interviews with teachers and school leaders including some student talk, official documents, and photographs of classroom activity.

4.7.1.1 Field notes and journal notes

Field notes served to keep an intensive record of the cultural, social and material nature and action in the school and the classroom during observation. Field notes, initially, were quite detailed as I was unsure of what data would reveal the greatest yield, but as I observed the classes over the research period and became more familiar with their social arrangements, I was more discerning in collecting field notes. Observation notes were typically short and condensed and expanded after observation periods to capture more detail (Spradley, 1980). At night and away from the classroom, after I entered my hand-written field notes electronically, I reflected on my interpretation of daily events, usually in a column to the left of the recorded notes as illustrated below in Figure 4.3 and further described below as journal notes. The distinctively different nature of these notes was useful as field notes, taken on the go, provided a window on the action of the day whereas journal notes were imperative for the recording of my subjective thoughts and introspections (Silverman, 2013).

As I recorded field notes I was mindful of researcher subjectivity evident in any recording and interpretation of data (Silverman, 2010). I was aware of my own bias towards understandings of education built through my own experiences of teaching as I observed classroom action and asked questions of teachers and school leaders in the school in Brisbane. This was also the case in the school in Dubai, and although I had had experience teaching in the United Arab Emirates, I understood that the lens through which I viewed classroom and school action was rooted in western norms and understandings about education, but also culture, and that this would entail inherent comparison and perhaps influence the way I understood the system (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009).

Like field notes journal notes were dated and returned to as a source of data over the research period, these notes also served to record any problems or ideas experienced, as illustrated further below in two excerpts from journal notes during the observation periods (Silverman, 2010). Figure 4.3 contains an example of field and journal notes from Bella's (the

teacher at Southern College) classroom that records typical day events in her classroom, as well as more personal journal notes that mirror my fears about my researcher role in her classroom.

Southern College	
Journal notes	Field notes
<i>Things are settling down and we are getting into a fairly regular routine and I think we are both comfortable with each other. At first, I felt like a shag on a rock in the classroom and I felt that everyone was looking at me – which is weird as I am the one looking at them. It's a fine line I think and shows up researcher vulnerability – not something I would have thought that I would experience.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Eating time and book reading is a lovely activity – what are children doing here – they are eating and listening attentively – not usually talking and very concentrated on the reading of the book. Bella reads carefully to them and uses appropriate tone, pitch pace to ensure attentive listening. The children are grouped on the eating mat and they are outside the classroom in the fresh air. They have spent some time in the yard playing and are now ready to eat. This is a reverse of what usually goes on around break time in schools. All of the teachers do this, so it must be part of school routine or at least prep routine. ➤ We are doing an activity where children are finding out the origins and birthplace of their parents. There is a map that Bella is using to indicate place of origin and there is an image of this as it is being developed daily. Inquiry is part of IB and it is attended to usually daily. Some of the children do not know where their parents were born which is understandable at this age. This is an activity worth discussing and noting and perhaps have some student conversations when it is done.

Figure 4.3 Example of field and journal notes, Bella’s classroom

I made journal notes in a separate column, as indicated in Figure 4.3, and followed up with the classroom teacher or other school staff if I needed to check for understanding or question my subjective interpretations. Journal notes differed from field notes in that they enabled me to include reactions to events and perhaps feelings experienced with reference to my daily observations. As illustrated in Figure 4.3, reflections in this journal were of a personal nature and included such things as, “ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arise during fieldwork” as well as reactions to and feelings sensed from others (Spradley, 1980, p. 71). The excerpt below, taken from field notes, illustrates the concerns I had about being able to “see” the mixing of cultures in classroom action:

Concern is where cultures mix – in this context, how do they mix? Or is one culture predominant? Do all get an opportunity to express their culture? In what ways? I feel it is deficit to talk about cultural differences as this is at once divisive. I need to reframe culture

so that it can be looked at as a cumulative phenomenon rather than an othering (Midtown School: field notes 15/10/17).

Further, this journal was used to consider how researcher subjectivities, opinions and value orientations, as discussed above, might intrude on not only the collection of data, but also how this data were analysed (Hardcastle et al., 2006). Such introspective records of fieldwork, recorded as personal journal notes, built an understanding and acknowledgement of personal biases and concerns I felt as I gathered and interpreted data (Spradley, 1980). The following excerpt is indicative of trying to set down my researcher biases with respect to how education should proceed and be enacted:

One thing that is interesting is the fact that if you just sit long enough, there are things that pop up that you did not see before and that if you can just set aside the norms that flavour how you think education should be happening then interesting things surface as you look at them in blank ways. So the afternoon activity of writing up the summary caught my eye today and it was quite intriguing to see it play out and why Susan would be using such an activity in this culturally diverse environment (Midtown School: field notes 5/11/17).

Field notes proved an important data source in this ethnographic research as they enabled me to build up a rich detail of the physical, social and material environment in which the social action of the classroom took place (Grbich, 2013). Although they were extensively coded as part of analysis, I returned to them often to seek clarification for events and details. Further the ability to present them overtly (Grbich, 2013; Silverman, 2010) meant that recordings and reflections were able to be openly discussed with both teachers as follow up or discussion about interesting topics.

4.7.1.2 Semi-structured interviews for teachers and school leaders

Interviews are a crucial component of ethnographic research as they opened spaces for collaborative voices, where the interviewer becomes an advocate for the study (Fontana & Frey,

2008). By including interviews, as researcher, I signalled power sharing around knowledge creation, and showed research participants a willingness to tell the research from other perspectives (Hardcastle et al., 2006). The purpose of the interviews in this research was to understand, rather than gather, precise data (Fontana & Frey, 2008) about the nature of cultural differences from the experience of teachers, teacher assistants and school leaders who were endemic to the immediate contexts of the classroom and the school (Tierney & Dille, 2002). The content of the questions was updated several times—the original interview schedules were slightly edited after spending considerable time in the first school, Southern College, where I became more aware of the sites' particularities regarding cultural differences and then again at the second school for the same reasons.

Semi-structured interviews were recorded on a small audio recorder with all participants. Each interview took approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted away from the noise of the classroom—in school leaders' offices and after school or at break times with teachers and teaching assistants in quiet areas. All interviews were filed as audio files and transcribed at a later date. At each school, school staff were interviewed later in the research period, as part of stage three, as it was important to have completed an intensive reconstruction of classroom action to learn as much as possible about the site, but also to capitalise on familiarity built with participants in stage one.

Participants were informed about the explicit purpose of the interview as well as the ethnographic process including information about recording and storage and use of collected data (Spradley, 1979). At the conclusion of each interview, daily journal notes were written up to capture anything else noted in the interview that was non-verbal and useful (Silverman, 2010).

Semi-structured interview schedule Table 4.4 provides an outline for interview questions, developed from the domains and themes of the research questions, as indicated in the left-hand column. Each of these themes was then unpacked into a series of lead-off statements or questions about how cultural differences were tied to the theoretical frames of place (Massey,

1991a), structuration theory—domination, signification, legitimation —(Giddens, 1976), and sociomateriality (Fenwick et al., 2012), as discussed in Chapter Three. The questions were formulated using Spradley’s (1979) three main types: descriptive: a sample of the informant’s language—can you describe; structural; how have informants organised their knowledge; and contrast questions: what the informant means by elaborating on terms—what’s the differences between? While this seems like a plausible organising device for the interviews at the time, other useful ideas were incorporated later in the research to ensure that the questions developed elicited useful responses from the teachers and school leaders with respect to the research questions (see: Lofland, [2006, p. 145]).

Table 4.4 Original schedule constructs for semi-structured interviews

Domain/theme of cultural differences	Lead-off statement/question
Social and cultural beliefs	How are cultural differences expressed in the school/classroom? What role do you play in delivering education to your class/school?
... and ‘other’ (e.g., teacher, students from other cultures)	What opportunities exist in the school/classroom to support students to access information and understandings about other cultures?
... and curriculum materials	In what ways are cultural differences expressed/not expressed in curriculum materials (daily and unit plans, school plans)?
... and teaching resources	In what ways are cultural differences evident/not evident in teaching resources used as part of instruction?
... and classroom displays	Are cultural differences reflected in classroom displays? If so, in what ways? E.g. wall displays, static displays, children’s work, science/maths table
... and literature	In what ways are cultural differences reflected in the literature that is used in the classroom/library?
... and cultural artefacts	Do students bring cultural artefacts to school? How are they incorporated into learning in the classroom? Are they used in teaching, for example, history?
... and material (e.g., food)	What opportunities do children have to share and learn about food objects of their cultures?
... and material (e.g., clothing)	What opportunities do children have to share and learn about clothing objects of their cultures?
... and material (e.g., adornments)	What opportunities do children have to share and learn about adornment objects of their cultures?

... and the arts	Are the arts incorporated into the curriculum? In what ways are they used to enhance learning? (music, dance, drama, visual arts). Do all children participate in artistic learning?
... and hygiene	Do children display different cultural behaviours around hygiene—dental, nose blowing and toilet customs? Can you talk about some that you've noticed?
... and religion	In the classroom/school, do you think that religion and custom is blurred? In what ways and can you give an example?
... and gesture (eye contact, touch, bodily movements)	In what ways are cultural differences evident/not evident in the way students use gesture?
... and the use of silence	In what ways are cultural differences evident/not evident in the way students use silence to communicate messages?
... and habits or dispositions	In what ways are cultural differences evident/not evident in the way students express their culture through habits and dispositions?
... and dialogic and behavioural customs	Are there any other ways that cultural differences are aired in the classroom/school? For example, bodily gestures, eye contact, ways of speaking

The interview questions in Table 4.4 were not rigidly fixed and were meant to be a guide for interview questions. This is because specific questions might change after the reconstruction work in stage two but importantly, they were also meant to be flexible enough to allow for questions to be devised *in situ*, depending on participant responses. The interviews followed a format where the researcher gave scenarios around particular themes and then asked respondents to elaborate from their own experience of the domain of theme. In Table 4.4 all informants were teachers and school leaders.

As the research progressed in each site, the table above proved a useful reference point to develop interview schedules for each participant. The questions were updated before they were used at Southern College and further updated for use at Midtown School. The final interview schedules used at each site, can be found in Appendix C where they are accordingly labelled. Two additional interviews were developed at Midtown School for the following members—the administration team (CEO and primary principal) and the teacher assistant at Midtown School whom I felt did not have the knowledge about some of the items on the teacher interview. I wanted to ask questions that might probe further ideas about cultural differences, largely in response to events I saw occurring at the school, these interview schedules also appear in

Appendix C (as C3 and C5). A sample interview schedule—Southern College, school leaders—appears below as Figure 4.4.

Construct: Cultural differences and social and cultural beliefs
1. Can you describe yourself as a cultural being? (cultural origins, beliefs, customs and understandings).
2. What role do you play in delivering education to your school? Does culture play out in these roles being enacted? If so in what ways?
3. Is it important to teach students about other cultures? Why and give some examples.
4. In what ways does the IB curriculum framework help students to learn about the cultures of others? How is this enacted across the school?
5. In your experience, in what ways does an IB school cater for cultural differences?
Cultural differences and 'other'
6. How are cultural differences expressed in the school?
7. What types opportunities exist in the school to support students to access information and understandings about other cultures, including their own?
Cultural differences and policy/curriculum materials
8. In what ways are cultural differences dealt with in policy documents and curriculum materials?
Cultural differences and teaching resources
9. In what ways are cultural differences dealt with in teaching resources used as part of instruction?
Cultural differences and classroom wall displays
10. Do you see evidence of cultural differences reflected in classroom displays? Can you describe some?
Cultural differences and literature
11. In what ways are cultural differences reflected in the literature from the library?
Cultural differences and cultural artefacts
12. In your experience do students bring cultural artefacts to school? If so, how are they incorporated into learning in the classroom?
13. How are cultural differences represented in the foods that children bring to school and what whole school opportunities do children have to share and learn about food objects of their and others' cultures?
14. What opportunities do children have to share and learn about clothing objects of their and others' cultures and what whole school opportunities do children have to share and learn about adornment objects of their and others' cultures? (hair styles, special jewellery, head dresses and other bodily adornments)
Cultural differences and the arts
15. Are the arts incorporated into the curriculum? In your experience what ways do the taught arts reflect knowledge about different cultures?
Cultural differences and dispositions
16. In what ways is cultural differences evident in the way students express their culture through habits and dispositions across the school community?
17. Do children display different cultural behaviours around hygiene – dental, nose blowing and toilet customs? Can you talk about some that you've noticed?
18. In the school, do you see evidence of religion and culture connected? In what ways and can you give an example?

Figure 4.4 Interview questions: Southern College

As well as the more formal semi-structured interviews, other less formal ones were held with classroom teachers to illicit a free flowing and conversational approach to information exchange

(Foley & Valenzuela, 2008; Holstein & Gubrium, 2016). At the two schools I recorded informal talks with the classroom teachers, Susan and Bella, after school and in break times, usually to clarify and find out more about events that had occurred throughout the day—Susan 11 and Bella six, as explained earlier. I also revisited the primary principal at Southern College to follow up with further discussion about cultural differences at the school and had three informal discussions with the primary principal at Midtown School. Interview data was transcribed, firstly by the researcher, but as it was taking a long time, remaining transcriptions were outsourced for transcription.

4.7.1.3 Photographs of classroom activity

To study cultural differences in the classroom and in particular its interplay with sociomateriality I took photographs of the interactions of teachers and students with material aspects that might indicate any interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality. I used a mini iPad camera to take the photographs of selected classroom events—still shots that would help tell the story of cultural differences in each classroom (Pink, 2012). The camera was also used to capture photographs of classroom interaction between social actors as well as social interaction with materials.

<i>Date: 18 August Southern College</i>	
Field notes	Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spotty Dog activity – this is a maths activity that helps children practice number and number representation recognition. I have recorded two groups interacting around the cards. Think about the sociomaterial representation of a concept like number recognition – how does this interplay with culture – is <u>it</u> cultural differences or do we see one culture dominating? Taken some images. ➤ Songs for transition – Bella uses a range of songs for getting children to move around the classroom song as these fit in with the theme of current UOI being studied - plant song. ➤ Science experiment and growing a seed – Bella modelled carefully what they would need to do and wrote the steps on the whiteboard. Have a picture of this. ➤ There is an interview in the files with Sierra and her Asian beans ... interview about this and it is in the audio file. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Images of children playing spotty dogs Recording student activity playing game Bella singing plant song Images of students seed experiment Sierra and her beans

Figure 4.5 Record of field notes supplemented with visual/audio files

These photographs supplemented field notes to build up a sociomaterial picture of the classroom with respect to globalisation and cultural differences, as illustrated in the excerpts of field notes in Figure 4.5. The images that were used in Chapter Five section I, and as part of building up the primary record were coded and analysed according to their portrayals of power and place (Massey, 1991a, 1999) and, in Chapter Six, as sociomaterial action (Fenwick, 2015) On a daily basis, these images were transferred to my laptop computer and filed in relevant folders like “eating”, “cultural dress”, “teaching resources”, “student and teacher activity”, “use of sociomaterial” and “cultural events”. Examples of the photos taken are represented in the Figure 4.6 below—in each section, left-hand photos are from Southern College and right-hand ones from Midtown School.



Figure 4.6 Examples of photographs taken from each class

Ethical clearance was provided for taking photographs of the participants, but not to share faces of children. I was mindful about the recording of facial images as guided by ethical approval for this research, and the particular cultural context within the United Arab Emirates, as discussed previously. For publication purposes and use in this research I cropped photos where student faces were inadvertently recorded but gained permission from both classroom teachers to display their facial images in future publications. Thus, an entwinement, of the visual with other collected data, enabled this ethnographic research to be richly populated with different data sets that portrayed different perspectives (Pink, 2006).

4.7.1.4 Transcripts of official documents

A purposeful selection of relevant official documents that influence how schools operate with respect to cultural differences was gathered. These official documents comprised curriculum and policy documents, as well as teaching unit and daily plans and other classroom texts like communications to parents, as indicated in Table 4.5. It was important to build up a thick record of information across data sets to capture a comprehensive view of each classroom in its situated contexts (Silverman, 2010). These data were coded with other texts according to the themes of power and place as explained in the data analysis section.

Table 4.5 Coded list of documents collected from each school

Document No	Origin	Description
Documents from Southern College		
Southern College S1	System	History of International Baccalaureate.pdf
Southern College S2		International Baccalaureate: 5 Essential Elements.jpg
Southern College S3		Making the Primary Years Program Happen
Southern College S4		What is an International Baccalaureate Education?
Southern College Sc5	School	School nationality
Southern College Sc6		Policy: Respectful Acceptance of Multi-Faith and Cultural Practices
Southern College Sc7		Policy: Schools Guide to Ramadan
Southern College Sc8		Policy: Spirit of Behaviour Influence and Management
Southern College C9	Class	Unit plan: Where are we in place and time unit?
Documents from Midtown School		
Midtown School S1	System	Development Matters: Early Years Foundation Stages
Midtown School S2		Early Years Foundation Stages: Statutory Framework 2017
Midtown School S3		Moral Education United Arab Emirates
Midtown School S4		Primary National Curriculum in England
Midtown School S5		The GEMS Education Core Values
Midtown School S6		United Arab Emirates Ministry of Education Vision
Midtown School S7		United Arab Emirates: National agenda for parents
Midtown School S8		United Arab Emirates: National agenda
Midtown School S9		Knowledge and Human Development Authority: Framework
Midtown School Sc10	School	Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2017
Midtown School Sc11		Nationalities list
Midtown School Sc12		Student attendance letter
Midtown School Sc13		Uniform Policy & Guide 2017
Midtown School Sc14		Foundation Studies Parents Reading Ready Workshop
Midtown School C1	Class	Oasis List (class members)
Midtown School C2		Unit plan Transport: Foundation Stage 2
Midtown School C3		Week 4 Planning: Foundation Stage 2
Midtown School C4		Unity Makes Us Strong: English

After the data were collected, filed and safely stored, according to ethical requirements, consideration was given to which data sets might yield rich and illustrative responses to the research questions, and to make use of the theoretical framework that married place,

structuration and sociomateriality. The next section describes the analytical methods used in this research.

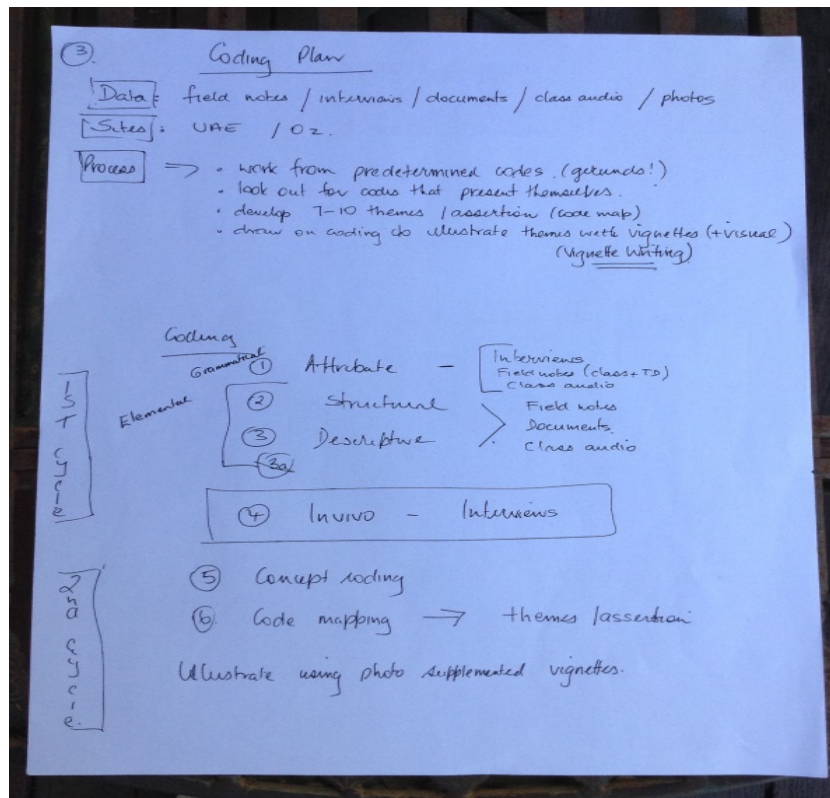
4.8 Data analysis

This research interrogated the nature of two primary classrooms in terms of globalisation and how cultural differences were positioned. To examine and understand this positioning in a complexly globalised and culturally diverse context a multidimensional approach to data incorporated three methods of qualitative research—coding, following Saldana (2013), discourse analysis, following Gee (2011) and Fairclough (1992) and a pragmatic horizon analysis following Carspecken (1996). Using these three analytical tools enabled a comprehensive analysis of each classroom where teachers and students make meaning through a complex selection and configuration of texts, linguistic and non-linguistic action, and interactions with each other and with materials (Jewitt, 2014). The following discussion highlights the key features of each method chosen for this research with a justification for its suitability.

4.8.1 Coding the data: Field notes, interview transcripts, photographs and official documents

More than often, qualitative data analysis relies on some form of coding—where a researcher-generated coding construct is employed to symbolise and translate the data to value-add to the story of the research (Saldana, 2013). Coding is an iterative process and allows for data reduction and simplification but can also allow for data expansion, transformation, and reconceptualisation (DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, & McCulloch, 2011, p. 138). Such transition identified patterns across the data that helped to confirm descriptions of what Saldana (2013) refers to as the 5Rs: “routines, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships” with which to create “concrete instances of meaning” (p. 6). Coding then translates everyday actions and texts to tell new, and perhaps hidden, research stories (Silverman, 2010).

Across the analysis, three different types of coding were used—structural coding which related directly to the research questions, concept coding which was generated from key theoretical concepts and descriptive coding which provided a topic inventory in relation to categorising, for example, social actions with regards to cultural differences (Saldana, 2013). Although NVivo coding is highlighted in Figure 4.7 it was not used as part of interview analysis, instead concept coding was used to match key theoretical concepts of structuration theory and system reproduction (Giddens, 1984). In the development, enactment and refinement of the codes a memo, as suggested by Saldana (2013), was kept to track the problems and processes of the codes as well as coding processes. The use of memo writing (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011; Saldana, 2013; Silverman, 2016) proved an invaluable tool for data analysis as it enabled a record of what happened “backstage”, but also provided a way of keeping a detail of any analytical dilemmas experienced (Saldana, 2013). Figure 4.7 illustrates the coding plan that was used to keep coding on track and an excerpt from my thinking about the process of coding as a memo.



- To understand the process of coding the following is noted:
 - ✓ I am looking at the relationships and understandings of the participants
 - ✓ I am interested in the rules, routines and rituals that colour their action and the relationships between them
 - ✓ I am looking for the emergent patterns, categories, concepts, themes and assertions that spring from my analysis (Saldana, 2013).
 - ✓ I am also interested in the networks and processes
 - ✓ And not to forget writing about the blurry moments (Saldana, 2013)—those glitches that arise in coding and analysis.
 - ✓ In MEMO writing I am mapping, extracting, maintaining momentum and opening communication (Saldana, 2013, p. 53).
- To maintain a detailed record, I will keep the following table up to date: not sure if this

Figure 4.7 Coding plan and memo writing for this research

All data were imported into an NVivo software program version 11.4.3 for computational coding. A detail of how the codes were generated and applied appears in each research account below.

4.8.2 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis was applied to a selection of official documents, interview transcripts, and field notes. Coding for the themes power and place, and sociomaterial action revealed texts that were concerned with contextualised language that articulated social action in the classrooms (Fairclough, 1992). Discourses can be interrogated to make visible the relationship between a particular discursive event, as a social practice, and its contextual surrounding (situation, institution or social structure). Such interrogation enabled me to go beyond selected texts and produce new texts that illuminated positions of power and marginalisation with respect to place and sociomaterial action (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This analysis illuminated how these texts were “shaped by relations of power and ideologies” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 12).

In this study, deconstruction of chosen linguistic texts from inside (e.g., field notes of recorded social action about cultural behaviours) and outside (e.g., foreign curriculum documents and picture books from other lands) illuminated how teachers, school workers and students were positioned in particular ways with respect to their cultural differences. Further, discourse analysis was further called upon to consider the sociomaterial actions of children as they went about their regular classroom activities around books and learning centres.

For example, selected excerpts of curriculum documents identified, through coding, how language functioned to privilege some and marginalise others. The example in Figure 4.8 shows how discourse analysis was used in this research. The following text, Figure 4.8, was taken from Midtown School’s public website, an official school document, as the principal’s message of welcome (Cashin, 2017). The school is an international one that operates in the United Arab Emirates under an English curriculum. This text will be briefly deconstructed to reveal how discourses work to socially situate understanding and action regarding cultural difference.

Important in discursive analysis is to situate this text in the wider world which contextualises it. In the United Arab Emirates there are many international schools which are attended by culturally diverse students and teachers. Teachers are usually Western unless they

teach Islamic and Arabic, and students comprise both local nationals as well as a proliferation of many other nations, some Western like Germany and Australia, some Eastern from Bangladesh and Pakistan. The schools rely heavily on curriculum imports and teaching ideologies from Western countries like the USA and also the UK. The International Baccalaureate is a major drawcard for parents and many schools have adopted this curriculum. In context then, schools are Western focused servicing a variety of students that are both West and East and perhaps an eclectic mix of both.

As newly appointed Principal at GEMS Metropole School, I am thrilled to join the vibrant GEMS community. An Australian, with 30 years in educational leadership across six countries and the past five years in the United Arab Emirates, I possess a true appreciation of cultural diversity and an understanding of Emirati culture and heritage.

Established in September 2014, GEMS Metropole has grown rapidly in reputation and population. It boasts a technology-rich, safe and enthusiastic learning environment in a media-rich location. GEMS Metropole's modern design offers stimulating, flexible, open-plan learning environments that lend themselves to creativity, innovation, and collaboration. Digital media and science laboratories, specialist music and art rooms and a variety of fully equipped sports facilities cater to the holistic educational experience of our students.

Whilst upholding the highest academic standards, our highly qualified staff challenge students to question, inquire and develop the skills to become independent future-ready learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to our world.

I look forward to sharing in your children's academic journey.

Figure 4.8 Welcome message by principal

In the text above how is cultural difference constituted? What discourses operate to influence this constitution? What themes and ideologies are inherent in these discourses? Is there a relationship between the text and the context? Although a more thorough analysis would reveal much in terms of the above questions, for the purposes of this chapter a few will be discussed. In paragraph one, the prominent discourse of cultural tolerance tempers the text. The principal documents his wealth of experience of cultural diversity in years and also the number of countries in which he has worked. He is an experienced world worker and has possesses knowledge and respect for other cultures, in particular the one in which he is working. He sets

himself apart as an Australian in a foreign land but says he has a ‘true appreciation of cultural diversity an understanding of Emirati culture and heritage’ (see line 3 above).

In paragraph two, the discourse of Western education is apparent through phrases like *technology-rich, safe and enthusiastic learning environment and stimulating, flexible, open-plan learning environments, and creativity, innovation, and collaboration* (line x). Such phrases signal the ideological underpinnings of a Western education in terms of student focus and active and creative learning. Further the provision of *Digital media and science laboratories, specialist music and art rooms and a variety of fully equipped sports facilities*—many of these at odds with an Eastern and Islamic understanding of education—*cater to the holistic educational experience of our students* (paragraph x, line x).

The last paragraph signals the discourse of active citizenship where students will *question, inquire and develop the skills to become independent future-ready learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to our world* (line x). Active citizenship stems from a democratic value of inclusivity, knowledgeability and community participation. These values are inherent in a Western curriculum, especially within International Baccalaureate schools. The United Arab Emirates is a modern state where its citizens have little constitutional rights. Rights tend to be exercised through hierarchical tribal methods of wealth and ownership.

What can be gleaned from this brief analysis? Considering the discourses apparent across the three paragraphs there is conflict about cultural difference. On the one hand, the principal is offering an education that is steeped in cultural respect and tolerance. As was evident in paragraph two and three, the dominating discourses of western ideologies and values about education are apparent. Thus, what is set out as tolerance about cultural difference is then supplanted by other ideological values that are western in origin and not culturally tolerant. The discourses are in conflict. Cultural difference is constituted in this text as tolerance and ideological Western. The themes and ideologies inherent in the text are decidedly Western. The context in which this text occurs, a school leader’s message to parents and an invitation to send children to the school, on a school website, shapes the text. Cultural difference is ignored.

The above is an illustrative example of a “systematic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data” (Wodak & Meyer, 2016, p. 4) collected from immediate and contextualised contexts enabled an understanding of how linguistic texts functioned to privilege and marginalise different cultural groups (Hardcastle et al., 2006).

4.8.3 Pragmatic horizon analysis

Pragmatic horizon analysis, referred to in Chapter Three, is a method used by Carspecken (1996) to interrogate statements as objective, subjective and normative in order to open up claims, and what people say, for wider interpretation (Habermas, 1981). Pragmatic horizon analysis does not attempt to reduce the data, like coding does. Rather it attempts an expansion to open it up to a range of interpretations (Carspecken, 1996). This analysis supported an examination of the system relations with respect to its structural properties of signification, domination and legitimation, as part of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984). As discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three, a pragmatic horizon analysis is useful to interpret the meaningful acts through which social agents, as teachers and students, engage and carries meaning reconstruction into new and higher levels of precision (Carspecken, 1996).

The process of applying a pragmatic horizon analysis involved analysing selected verbatim data for claims that were subjective, objective and normative (horizontal) and claims that were vertical in nature—foregrounded, backgrounded and intermediate (Carspecken, 1996, 2001). These data were identified through a process of coding the teacher interview transcripts (semi-structured = 20, and informal = 17). Key themes for coding were generated from structural theory (Giddens, 1984) as signification, domination and legitimation. As critical ethnographer, I selected the strongest examples of each key theme to look closely and more deeply at selected portions of text.

Table 4.6 Pragmatic horizon analysis example: Legitimation of cultural customs

Actor: Teacher, Date: 07/09/2017 Response to interview question about how cultural differences were expressed
'It's a very westernised place, Dubai, with bringing in all the holidays, bringing in drinking and all of that.'
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I feel that Dubai is a very culturally diverse place. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> I think that it is a shame that western celebrations and customs are now part of the Dubai cultural scene.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Dubai embraces ideas from other parts of the world. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> Dubai is an eastern country with particular customs and dispositions.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> It's good to embrace other cultures. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Embracing the cultural customs of other nations might cause friction with home grown customs that are in opposition to these. <i>Background, remote</i> Nation states like Dubai have cultural and religious customs that are opposed to drinking and other, perhaps western, customs.

In this way a range of possible meanings was generated. An example is illustrated in Table 4.6. which explored the statement, taken from an interview with a teacher in Midtown School—It's a very westernised place, Dubai, with bringing in all the holidays, bringing in drinking and all of that—for possible horizontal and vertical meanings. This statement was not used in the data analysis chapters and was chosen from all of the verbatim speech, analysed using pragmatic horizon analysis, for its indication of underlying power. In this case, meanings generated point toward the possible claims that this speaker could make with regard to what is legitimated as cultural customs in a place like Dubai. These complex ideas are further explored in the relating of analysis two below.

The combination of coding, discourse and pragmatic horizon analyses availed powerful ways to interpret the data collected for this research in that it afforded an interrogation of the complex interplay between the texts, both spoken and written, and social and material action that

constituted each classroom. The next section justifies the selection of analytical methods with respect to the research questions and provides illustrative examples for each research sub-questions.

4.9 Analytical methods: Illustrative examples for each research question

Table 4.7 connects the drivers of this research, the research questions, with the data sets, the captured data, and the theoretical and methodological framework to describe linkages across the research design. Each research sub-question contributed to answering the overarching research question: How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two different nations in the context of globalisation? In Table 4.7 data sets have been prioritised according to the extent of their use for the indicated research question. The data gathered across the two sites during the research period that can be categorised as social events that occurred during normal classroom practice or as part of conversations with others analyse the data at each school.

Table 4.7 Data analysis: linkages between questions, data and methods

Research sub-question	Data sets	Descriptions of captured data—events, dialogue, documents and images	Theoretical/Method concept
1. In what ways do global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field and journal notes • Official document transcripts • Interview transcripts • Photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to day description of school as a culturally diverse place (people, materials and ideas) • Excerpts of official documents - lower primary curriculum and behaviour management • Conversations with school staff in formal and informal interviews • Identification of power-geometries that position social action • Images of the social and material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept coding • Descriptive coding (Saldana, 2013) • Discourse analysis (Gee, 2011) • Theory of place and power-geometries (Massey, 1991)
2. What do teachers and school principals say about how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the school and the classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview transcripts • Field and journal notes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations with teachers and school leaders in semi-structured and less structured interviews—what school staff say about how cultural differences plays out in the classroom with respect to the social practices of their students and how the school caters for cultural differences • Day to day description of school as a culturally diverse place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept coding • Structural coding • Pragmatic horizon analysis (Carspecken, 1996) • Structuration: legitimation, domination and signification and system analysis (Giddens, 1984)
3. How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in classroom book reading and learning centres in each classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field and journal notes • Official document transcripts • Interview transcripts • Photographs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of classroom action (from field notes and images) where cultural differences appear to interplay with the sociomaterial action in each of the classrooms in powerful/less powerful ways • Events to examine the nature of agency with respect to its relationship with materiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourse analysis • Agency, structuration (Giddens, 1984) and agency sociomateriality (Fenwick, Edwards, & Sawchuk, 2011)

The following sections are illustrative of the methodological processes followed to process the data according to each research sub-question as three distinct, but interconnected, analyses, united in the overarching research question as stated above.

4.9.1 Analysis one—global flows and power-geometries

To answer the first research sub-question—In what ways do global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom?—the first task was to set up a descriptive narrative of the social sites for this

research. Of interest here was the cultural, social and material nature of each school and classroom with respect to place and the influence of global flows of people and learning materials. This narrative was assembled through a coding approach to map, extract and open communication about the data (Saldana, 2013) with respect to key theoretical concept of place (Massey, 1991a, 2005). Transcripts from field and journal notes, interview transcripts and official documents were coded using NVivo software, program version 11.4.3 to find evidence to build a sense of globalised place, where power-geometries worked to position people in particular ways, at each school (Massey, 1999).

Two types of coding were used to analyse the data for this research question—concept, which was theory-driven, and descriptive codes which described categories of social action and cultural differences, given that this question aimed to determine the ways that social relations, around culture, were positioned. These codes, and their sub-codes, together with illustrative examples from the data, are detailed in Table 4.8. As described above they were generated using key theoretical concepts of place theory—globalisation, global flows, positioning, for example, power-geometries (Massey, 1991a), and descriptive categories of cultural social action—cultural differences, cultural being, cultural doing, cultural knowing, cultural mixing, cultural othering (Bhabha, 1994). This coding scheme was discussed with an experienced coder and a fellow colleague to ensure that the process and codes developed were appropriate with respect to the first research question. As coding proceeded data-driven (emergent) codes that sprang from the data were also investigated (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

Table 4.8 Conceptual and descriptive codes RQ1

Concept (theoretical) codes: Globalised place How do global flows contribute to power-geometries to position social relations?	
Codes and sub-codes	Examples from the data
Place as throwntogether: –with people –with materials	E.g., Each classroom was considered throwntogether with students and teachers originating from many different places Classrooms were places that were constituted of materials that came or were developed in other global places
Place as locally unique: –social place –material place	E.g., The foyers of each school were representative of people—many different cultures present at Midtown School, white western workers at Southern College—and things that were locally unique—burning oud in Dubai.
Globalising place: –global flows of people –global flows of materials	E.g., People in Dubai come from over 120 nations to work and to live and curriculum in both schools is imported form another place.
Power-geometries: –marginalising –privileging	E.g., In Dubai, labour apartheid means that some nations are relegated to low-skill jobs despite being qualified to work in other areas. Curriculum works to privilege certain cultural knowledges over others.
Descriptive codes: Categories of social and cultural action	
Codes and sub-codes	Examples from the data
Dynamic nature of place: –as socially constructing –as culturally diverse –as materially constructing	E.g., Classrooms are places where teachers and students socially interact in particular constructed ways. Culturally diverse teacher and students influence the nature of classroom place. Materials in the classrooms call for particular social actions e.g., at the play dough table as opposed to on the mat during circle time.
Positioning social action: –social domination –material domination	E.g., Teachers direct students to behave in particular ways. Children are taught to respect books in the classroom.

These codes were applied to the data sets, detailed in Table 4.7, to elicit recurring patterns the relationship between global flows, power-geometries and social relations. Note that the majority of the descriptive codes were developed as gerunds (Saldana, 2013; Silverman, 2016) to ensure that action was captured as it was structured, rather than static concepts, like curriculum documents that worked to influence social action (Giddens, 1984). In this way, the coding worked towards accounting for the notion of globalised place and power-geometries in each school and classroom—key to Massey’s (1991a) theory of place.

Discourse analysis was used to analyse the key messages of selected curriculum documentation with respect to culture inclusivity and differences. Each analysis was enacted by selecting strategic passages from each curriculum framework to illuminate the way that each

crafted underlying messages about culture inclusivity and cultural undertones about expected social action in the classroom. For example, the textual choices in the “Respectful Acceptance of Multi-Faith and Cultural Practices Policy” (see Table 4.5, Southern College Sc6) portray cultural considerations towards fasting Muslim students during the month of Ramadan. Words like “show sensitivity”, “may impact upon” and “able to decide whether or not they wish to participate in swimming” suggest a sensitivity towards other cultural customs. In this way, the analysis was able to identify the way culturally derived curriculum materials might work to position classroom social action in each school and classroom. The next task was to examine the data collected from teacher and school leader interviews to find out what was said about cultural differences in the school and the classroom—how they were expressed and catered for—as part of analysis two.

4.9.2 Analysis two—what teachers and school leaders say about cultural differences

The second task was to describe how cultural differences played out in the school and the classroom from a second source of information—teachers and school leaders at each school site. This task attends to the second research sub-question—What do teachers and school leaders say about how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the school and the classroom? This meant processing the data from stage three of the research design—dialogic data collection—which was intended to confront researcher subjective understandings and democratise the research process by bringing in other voices and perspectives about cultural differences (Carspecken, 2001). In some ways this was an easier and less messy task to the one above as the initial round of coding used pre-determined and structural codes (Saldana, 2013) that were derived from the constructs of the interview questions, as outlined in Table 4.4.

The following table, Table 4.9, exposes the original domain and themes from the interview schedule that translated into similarly worded constructs. Some domain and themes were omitted after stage one of the research design as they were not encountered in the classroom to a

great degree. Also, some domains and themes were subsumed into much broader constructs, for example, “cultural differences and artefacts, food, clothing and adornments” became just “cultural differences and artefacts”. In the second round of interviews, with teachers and school leaders at Midtown School it became apparent that language was an important cultural indicator in the classroom, and this was added as part of “cultural differences and habits and dispositions”. The last column in Table 4.9 indicates the main codes used for NVivo coding for both sets of data from each school.

Table 4.9 Semi-structured interviews: domains, themes, constructs and codes

Initial domains and themes	Revised domains and themes after stage one	NVivo codes
Cultural differences and social and cultural beliefs	Cultural differences and social and cultural beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and teachers • Cultural being • Culturally derived roles • School aims
Cultural differences and ‘other’ (teacher, students from other cultures)	Cultural differences and ‘other’ (teacher, students from other cultures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn about other cultures • See cultural differences • Catering for cultural differences in the classroom
	Cultural differences and school/education	Educational aims of school
Cultural differences in curriculum materials	Cultural differences in policy/curriculum materials	Cultural differences and policy/curriculum
Cultural differences through teaching resources	Cultural differences through teaching resources	Cultural differences and teaching resources
Cultural differences in classroom wall displays	Cultural differences in classroom wall displays	Cultural differences and displays
Cultural differences and literature	Cultural differences and literature	Cultural differences and literature

Cultural differences through cultural artefacts	Cultural differences through cultural artefacts	Cultural differences and cultural artefacts
Cultural differences and material (food)		Cultural differences and food
Cultural differences and material (clothing)		Cultural differences and clothing and adornment
Cultural differences and material (adornments)		
Cultural differences in the arts	Cultural differences in the arts	Cultural differences and the arts
Cultural differences and gesture (eye contact, bodily movements, touch)	Cultural differences and gesture (eye contact, bodily movements, touch, silence)	Cultural differences and gesture
Cultural differences and habits or dispositions	Cultural differences and dispositions	Cultural differences and dispositions
Cultural differences and hygiene		Cultural differences and language use

The codings from the interview transcriptions were then regrouped and four main themes were used to consider the data from this section to answer the research question. These four themes with their associated codes are indicated in Table 4.10 which details the themes.

Table 4.10 Reorganised codes for making meaning about cultural differences

Main theme for analysis	Reorganised codes	Example
Catering for cultural differences e.g., in what ways does the school acknowledge and support cultural differences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn about other cultures • Catering for cultural differences in the classroom 	At Midtown School an International Day was held showcase and celebrate the different cultures of the school population
Expression of cultural difference e.g., in what ways does the school and classroom promote cultural differences to be expressed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and teachers • Cultural being • Culturally derived roles • See cultural difference Cultural differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and cultural artefacts • and food • and clothing and adornment • and gesture • and dispositions • and language use 	At Southern College, children of Sikh and Muslim heritage were allowed to wear head coverings and the school canteen catered for different cultural foods e.g., Halal and vegetarian.
Cultural differences and other (teacher, students from other cultures) e.g., do students have the opportunity to learn about the cultures of others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn about other cultures • Cultural differences and cultural artefacts • Cultural differences and food • Cultural differences and clothing and adornment 	Children in Dubai spend one week learning about the local Emirate culture.
Cultural differences and educational interaction e.g., do classroom educational materials interface with cultural differences of students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational aims of school Cultural differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and policy/curriculum • and teaching resources • and displays • and literature • and the arts 	The International Baccalaureate embraces other cultural knowledges through the study of cultural celebrations.

Pragmatic horizon analysis, as discussed previously, was employed to interrogate these data patterns. Table 4.11 provides an index of the pragmatic horizon codes that were used to critically analyse the verbatim speech. The table indicates the theoretical concepts of signification, domination and legitimation, as structural dimensions of social systems (Giddens, 1984), the patterns of discourse across each concept and an example of coded speech that indicated each index.

Table 4.11 Pragmatic horizon index, discourse patterns and examples

Theoretical concept	Patterns of discourse	Examples from data from each school
Signification	The way the rules, if any, communication and meaning making structures	Teacher Midtown: "... their parents take it over the top and they will spend thousands and thousands of Dirhams to prove that their country, their culture... it becomes a very big competition". Teacher Southern: "Your teachers are too friendly in the classroom. They should just be making students do their sums, do their operations, do their maths. They're not doing enough maths".
Domination	The way resources were mobilised to either privilege or marginalise cultural differences	Teacher Midtown: "... hey colour their friends with their proper skin colour. We've got cultural pencils this year that they can practise". Teacher Southern: "There's not a single program of inquiry out there that doesn't look at the how we express ourselves through cultural values and beliefs, or who we are with regards to our individual cultural beliefs and values".
Legitimation	The way the social norms and sanctions were legitimated to constrain or enable classroom cultural activity	Teacher Midtown: "No, I don't want to clean up, I'm not used to cleaning up." "Well, we're cleaning up now!" Teacher Southern: "I have seen a parent go and get an eraser, and make their child rub their numbers out and write them in properly".

In this way, the data were coded on three levels to relate the second account about how cultural differences were catered for and expressed in each classroom. Analysis three required a different approach and instead used data collected as events and displays of social action around two defining areas of social and material action—book reading and learning centres as the following discussion illustrates. The third analysis was driven by the third research sub-question to explore the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality in each classroom.

4.9.3 Analysis three—the interplay of cultural differences and sociomateriality

The first two accounts of this research painted the social site of each school and respective classroom as a place where global flows disrupted the social order and where power worked to position cultural differences in particular ways. The purpose of the third analysis was to examine how cultural differences operationalised to interplay with sociomateriality in each classroom and answer the third research sub-question—How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in classroom book reading and learning centres in each classroom? Children and

teachers engage socially with materials in the process of education, and this analysis targeted book reading and learning centre activities as sociomaterial processes in each classroom (Fenwick et al., 2011). A discursive analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 2011) was applied to a selection of texts to answer the third research sub-question. The whole data set was coded for sociomaterial action, but the field notes were more prevalent in describing the social nature of such action. The chosen texts were illustrative of recurring themes indicated in the broader patterns in the data. The following discussion illustrates this process.

Through previous coding for the first and second research question, a number of events were identified that were useful in illustrating the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality in each classroom. These events were indicative of events observed over the course of data collection at each site and were chosen as strong examples of how culture influences sociomaterial action in each classroom. Table 4.12 details the events selected, matches them to the third research sub-question components and justifies their selection.

Table 4.12 Research question component parts, matching events and justification for selection

Context of data collection	Cases	Justification
Book reading	Book reading in Susan's classroom	Book reading is a practice that is commonplace in many western preparatory classrooms. However, not all children are ready to participate in book reading activities and this is largely dependent among other factors, on cultural background. A discursive construction of book reading activities in both classrooms enables a consideration of how cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality.
	Book reading in Bella's classroom	
Learning centres	Choice time in Susan's classroom—five girls at the play dough table	Again, the learning centre is a practice that many lower primary classrooms and stem from a western understanding of how children learn. Both classrooms used this practice, but it was structured in different ways and children with different cultural backgrounds interfaced with this practice in different ways. By contrasting how children from different cultural backgrounds from each class interact as agents with materials and each other in learning centres, through a discursive analysis, a further understanding of how cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality was be gained.
	Choice time in Bella's classroom—Parth in home corner as part of learning centre activity	

The phenomenon of interest in the third research question was the interplay of cultural differences and sociomateriality. The texts of each classroom event or vignette, were interrogated through a discourse analysis to reveal how power inequalities operated through the human entanglements with material assemblages to position children and their teachers in particular ways (Edwards & Fenwick, 2015; Fenwick & Landri, 2012).

Discourse analysis of selected texts foregrounded the way that sociomaterial acts contained power. For example, a critical discourse analysis, following Fairclough (2010), examined the discourses shaped by powerful cultural sanctions about the pig's place in the United Arab Emirates, as well as how the pig is illustrated in books used in lower primary classrooms. Locating statements about the pig in contextualising discursive and social practice unearthed "contradictions between what is allowed in one place but not in another" and so a struggle to shift boundaries about the conception of the pig (Fairclough, 1992, p. 69). These discourses were found to illicit a number of conflicting messages about the pig in a classroom resourced by western-styled book materials in an Arab and Muslim land.

Further, discourse analysis, following Gee (2011), was employed to uncover the discursive messages that contextualised classroom texts, like overarching curriculum frameworks, carried about the expected social action in the classroom. An illustrative example can be found above in 4.8.2. In this case, the analysis involved examining the text for words and phrases that identified particular ways of being with respect to the social and the material in classroom action. Further used in interrogating social action in learning centre activity, a discourse analysis revealed the nature of social action of five girls as they played at the play dough table.

In summary, this section has sought to provide details about the data analysis for each research sub-question. Links have been made across the data collected, and the methods and key theoretical concepts used to explore the data with respect to the three research sub-questions with justification for data analytical choices.

4.10 Interpreting results

The main research question—How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two different nations in the context of globalisation?—subsumed and overarched the findings of the three sub-research questions. As discussed above, these findings sit within an interpretive framework that combines aspects of place theory and power-geometries (Massey, 1991a), structuration theory—agency, legitimation, domination and signification (Giddens, 1984) and sociomateriality—agency—(Fenwick et al., 2011)—as discussed above. These theories and relevant findings will be returned to as part of Chapter Six, section II discussion.

4.11 Validity and limitations

The following discussion attends to the validity and limitations of this study—its authenticity and trustworthiness, its claim to rigorous research and the associated “conflation between method and interpretation” (Guba & Lincoln, 2008, p. 272). These are important criteria in critical ethnographic work (Carspecken, year). In light of these understandings and the notion that the act of analysis is always an interpretation, and with respect to this study, the discussion below attends to three areas of validity that have been addressed to ensure research rigour (Silverman, 2010).

Transcriptions of interviews were completed and checked by the researcher (involved checking the transcripts with the audio recording) to ensure that transcriptions were consistent and accurate. Interview data were attended to on a daily basis and any ambiguities and inconsistencies were clarified with interviewees when necessary. Further, while there can never be any assurance that views expressed by interviewees in interviews are reflective of the experiences outside the interview, I felt assured that their claims were authentic as they were witnessed by me as participant observer over a lengthy period of observation (Peräkylä, 2016). Image and audio data were collected through state-of-the-art devices to ensure viability.

Field notes were recorded on a daily basis and these were always immediately (after school) transferred to a secure file so that the experiences were fresh in my mind. In the process of gathering field notes in both schools I was aware of “cultural and cognitive perspectives” that might be brought to research recordings (Peräkylä, 2016, p. 414). In both schools I was mindful that I might make subjective judgements about the processes of teaching and learning within each context, as I had already been a teacher for many years and with experience, often comes entrenched perceptions about the “how” of education. Also, in Dubai, I was acutely aware of my westernised thinking patterns and how these might mediate between subjective and objective recording and understanding. To try to counteract this subjectivity and clarify researcher bias I used a journal that was self-reflective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This reflexivity is demonstrated in Figure 4.3 which illustrates my concerns and thoughts during data collection. Keeping a self-reflective journal heightened awareness around researcher influence on data collection and interpretation.

The analysis and findings relied on a corroboration of evidence through multiple data sets (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 260). Data were gathered across the two schools from different sources—teachers and school leaders, classroom observations of children in action and a collection of official documents—to shed light on the positioning of cultural differences. Further, to strengthen corroborating evidence and interpretive analysis, this study relied on different methods of analysis as well as theories to illuminate the research findings. Using such corroboration techniques then worked towards research validation. Limits are acknowledged, however, in that the selection of data for analysis was purposeful and aligned with the research questions and the theoretical concepts.

As researcher I understood that my naïve realism located and situated me in particular ways, with particular biases and value orientations that temper any meaning making (LeCompte et al., 1993; McCurdy et al., 2005). This meant that in any analysis the collected data of talk, written scripts and action, I acknowledged the existence of other ways of meaning making, and

that these might be different from my own (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). I knew that “the observer and the observed are not entirely separate categories” (Tedlock, 2008, p. 467). In this study it was important to acknowledge the nuances of language and meaning making across different cultures. I understood that ethnographic description (the end product of researching meaning making) is always considered a translation, so for this study I was aware that any new texts produced in the process of analysis were tempered with the subjectivity of “me” (Spradley, 1979). It was further understood that transcriptions were reduced versions of reality which prioritises some details and marginalises others (Flewitt, Hampel, Hauck, & Lancaster, 2014).

As researcher, I took meanings from the specific to the general to examine how global flows manifest and play out in the social action of two classrooms only. Looking across an array of data from each site worked towards limiting this specificity, however, I am aware that such research is only a moment in time in a particular global space and that all meaning making is limited to confined temporal and spatial contexts. Further limitations are discussed in Chapter Six, discussion.

4.12 Research ethics

This research was conducted in an ethical manner and adhered to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research as well as the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research to be found at <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/r39> and <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/e72> respectively. The project gained ethical clearance from the University Human Research Ethics Committee: Ethics approval number 2017-1-2H (low risk) start 27/06/17, end 30/06/17. Progress reports were submitted on 20/11/2017. A sample of consent forms can be found in Appendix A.

Ethical concerns in ethnographic research revolved around three main factors: informed consent, the right to privacy, and protection from harm (Willis, 1977). In this study the first two were of higher importance as it was not considered dangerous in any way for the observation

and data collection. Informed consent was paramount to ensure trust was built and informants were informed in careful and truthful ways about their participation in the research. Their right to privacy was protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Classroom activities that were photographed were checked for human images and informed consent for any facial images to be used in the research was sought, for example, the teachers Susan and Bella. Ethical consent was obtained for all classroom students, and as the researcher worked alongside the teacher and classroom routines and procedures were not deviated from there was no concern. Written, voluntary, informed and understood consent was obtained from all research participants including principals, teachers and students and their parents.

4.13 Summary

This chapter has described in detail the methodological approach that was applied to each of the research questions. Adopting a critical ethnography that unpicked the everyday life worlds of the social action within the classrooms was a powerful way to interrogate the social order with respect to globalisation, cultural differences and sociomateriality in each site. It was further useful in that it afforded the opportunity for the researcher to gather important stories about classrooms that are increasingly becoming more culturally diverse. Chapter Five reports of the results and findings of this critical ethnography with respect to the first two research sub-questions.

5 Power-geometries and system reproduction

Chapter Four described the methodological design for this critical ethnography. It provided details with respect to school site and participants as well as the analytical tools used for data interpretation. The purpose of Chapter Five is to present the research findings and analysis with respect to the first two research sub-questions. The third research sub-question will be answered in Chapter Six, which will also include an overall discussion with respect to the overarching research question: How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two different nations in the context of globalisation? Chapter Five is divided into two sections—each of which focuses on the first and second research sub-questions, as outlined in Chapter Four, and reproduced below in each of the two sections.

Section I introduces each of the schools and the classrooms as places characterised in a “throwntogetherness” (Massey, 2005) where, in relation to global flows and in the context of cultural globalisation (Appadurai, 1996; Waters, 2013), power-geometries (Massey, 1999) operate to position social actors in powerful and less powerful ways. It portrays each site as temporally and spatially constituted by a dynamic of things—both human and non-human and both local and global—that constructs the sites in particular social, cultural and political ways (Anderson, 2008). This construction brings about a unique set of social relations in each site. It thus, provides a contextualising underlay about the social relations at each site which is useful for the two sections that follow to explore, further, how cultural differences are positioned in the each site’s social spaces (Spradley, 1979).

Section II reports an analysis of the talk of teachers and school leaders at each school with respect to how cultural differences (Bhabha, 1994), brought on by cultural globalisation (Appadurai, 1996), plays out in the school and each classroom—what participants say about how students express their cultural differences, and how the school caters and responds to the cultural diversity within each school. Structuration theory is employed to examine how the

structuring properties of signification, domination and legitimation position teachers and students, as agents, in the school and the classroom with respect to their cultural differences (Giddens, 1984). These positionings are charted through the trajectories of identified global flows across multiple social systems in an attempt to understand the “patterning of social relations across time-space” and how systems are reproduced (Giddens, 1984, p. 377).

Each of the two sections can be read as distinctive parts, but taken together, they work to answer the overarching research question—about the positioning of cultural differences—as represented above. An overall summary occurs at the conclusion of this chapter to gather the findings from the first two analyses. Section I answers the first research sub-question:

In what ways do the global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom?

The task for this section is to examine how global flows contribute to power-geometries and how these power-geometries position social actors in the school and the classrooms of Midtown School, Dubai, and Southern College, Brisbane—pseudonyms for each school. As will be revealed in the analysis, globalisation works as a politicising phenomenon—it brings forth the idea of place as social and political, where social relations pivot around topologies of power that lie behind the process of globalisation (Massey, 2005).

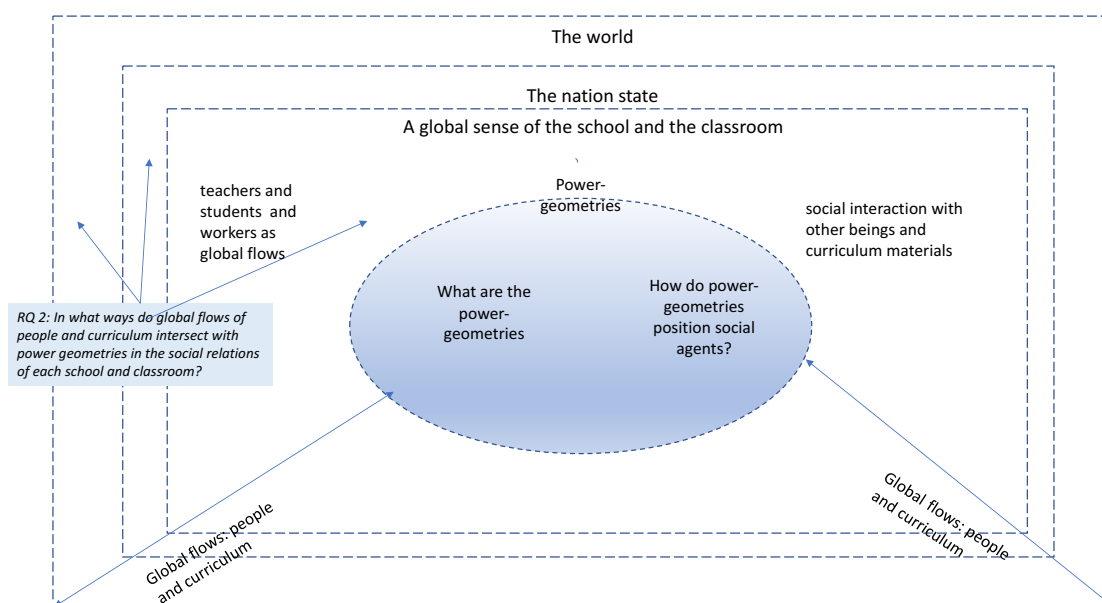


Figure 5.1 Context of research sub-question 1 and power-geometries

Figure 5.1 depicts an influential relationship between power-geometries, brought on by globalisation and the mobilities of humans, as workers, students and their parents, and non-human things, like curriculum documents, and the geographies of social relations within each site to constitute them as power-filled (Massey, 1991a, 1999). The following analysis examines each school and classroom with respect to their physical and social constitutions. Each site is understood to be constructed “out of the intersections and interactions of concrete social relations and social processes in a situation of copresence” (Massey, 1991b, p. 277). These processual relations mean that local sites are dynamic, always in the process of being made (Anderson, 2008; Massey, 2005). Data from observational notes, excerpts from curriculum documents, images, and selected excerpts from interview transcripts were used to explore the relationship between global flows, power-geometries, and social relations in each place.

5.1 Section I—Schools and classrooms: Global flows, power-geometries and social relations

As discussed in detail in Chapter Three, the work of Doreen Massey (Massey, 1992, 2005; Massey & Jess, 1995) provides a plausible way to examine how globalisation works as a

spatialising concept to change the nature of place (Massey, 1999). In each school, global flows, for example, as people and curriculum, move across geographical spaces through “time-space compression” to geographically stretch social relations out across space (Massey, 1991a, p. 24). Although there is a myriad of multidirectional global flows within each school, this analysis concentrates on two—people, and curriculum. Places, like schools and classrooms—through multidirectional flows, both human and non-human—can be considered a “mixture” of diversity and hybridity (Massey, 1999, p. 43), as well as constituted as locally unique (Massey & Jess, 1995). This mixture and “uniqueness” signals a global sense of the local and a global sense of place in each school site (Massey, 1991a; Massey & Jess, 1995).

However, globalisation also brings a “throwntogetherness” of spaces where “an ever-shifting constellation of trajectories” (Massey, 2005, p. 51), from “the global to the intimately tiny” (Massey, 2005, p. 9) act as power-geometries to influence the social relations of place (Massey, 2005). Places are fraught with fragmentation and disruption, no longer inhabited by homogenous and coherent communities—places where power relations are unequally shared (Massey, 1991a). Although power differentials in local sites are nothing new, globalisation, through mobilities and movement, energises a different set of power-geometries that work to privilege some and marginalise others (Massey, 1999). The following analysis teases out “the mutual imbrication of the spatial and the political” in each school site (Anderson, 2008, p. 4).

The schools and classrooms that are the focus of this research are complex social sites situated within a global-local nexus. They are constituted by an intricate and interlinking web of economic, social, political, religious, cultural and political aspects, but also through the multidirectional trajectories of global flows (Massey & Jess, 1995). The interrelations of this intricate and interlinking web, coupled with specific global flows, construct them as locally unique (Massey, 1991a). Thus, there is a “global sense of the local, a global sense of place” in each brought on by a global-local connectivity that brings with it power-geometries to influence social relations (Massey, 1991a, p. 29). The following analysis sets up each school and respective

classroom as global places where multidirectional global flows of people and curriculum influence the nature of place through power-geometries that position social relations (Massey, 1991a). In this section, each school and classroom will be considered in turn, Midtown School in Dubai followed by Southern College. A short summary will conclude this section to gather the main ideas caught through analysis in preparation for the second analysis about the expression of and catering for cultural differences.

5.1.1 Globalisation comes to school

Globalisation, a ubiquitous phenomenon, means that many schools and their classrooms are characterised by global interconnections (Held & McGrew, 1999), where they are “increasingly dominated by movement – of people, images and information” (Massey, 1991a, p. 24). The schools of this research are no exception, and each experiences multidimensional flows, particularly, and among others, flows of people, as workers and students, and educational materials, like curriculum. These flows influence the nature of each place and the social practices within through power-geometries as “different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25). The following excerpts, recorded as field notes, together with a selection of photographs tell one story, among others, about globalisation and power in each school and classroom.

The global flows of people are visibly evident in each school, as soon as each respective school is entered, for example, Dubai’s economic workforce relies heavily on the mobilities of people (Morgan, 2018). Global flows of curriculum are also visibly displayed, and within the classroom educationally enacted. Spending time in the foyer and other places outside the classrooms of each school tells much about the social relations within, as the following analysis explores.

5.1.1.1 Midtown School: A global sense of place, power and positioning

This analysis begins with an exploration of the foyer of Midtown School as a global sense of place. The following excerpt is taken from field notes and includes three photographs, as Figure 5.2, and represents first impressions of the school.

As I enter GEMS Midtown, for the very first time, a British school in its third year of operation with a student population of 2300, I am struck by the five star plushness of the foyer—the tinges of gold paint, the natural light effusing through floor to ceiling windows, the highly polished tiled floor that mirrors my image, the richly decorated tent-like majlis in which parents sit, the towering three-storied walls carefully decorated with important and vividly coloured and elaboratively contrived messages about the nature of the British education at Midtown School which offers the National Curriculum in England, the well-stocked cafeteria with a spring-like flow of expresso coffee. Not a speck of dust is visible on any recently wiped surface and the entire foyer is infused with the sweet smell of smouldering Arabic oud (Elaborated field notes, 13/10/17).



Figure 5.2 Foyer Midtown School: (from left) opulence, coffee, educational messages, majlis tent

The descriptive passage above and the images in Figure 5.2 allude to an air of grandeur and richness, a plush material ornateness that signals that education at Midtown School is an

expensive business. The place of the foyer is richly imbued by an opulence that is standard in international schools in Dubai, and in fact, in the United Arab Emirates, in most public and commercial buildings that service people. Concentration on the space around the people—foreign workers, expatriate teachers and parents—tells one story of place about a country that has become recently endowed with extreme wealth, enveloped in time (Massey, 1999) and constructed in space (Massey & Jess, 1995). The physical nature of the foyer shows how “people make places” and they can do this “through the deliberate construction of images” to highlight distinctiveness, prestige and superiority (Massey & Jess, 1995, p. 221).

The nature of physical place, that surrounds the people, is diversely cultured. It reflects a richly and newly arrived Arabic celebration of culture and power, an envelope of space time (Massey, 1991a) socially constructed and contrived. Before the discovery of oil and gas, Arabs of the United Arab Emirates were typically nomadic, relying on fishing and date farming, trade with other nations, and the relentless search for water in the desert. However, there is no reference to this past history in the foyer, but rather a sense of grandeur that celebrates local Arabic traditions like the majlis tent, where, traditionally, men gather to socialise, and the burning of oud. Coffee, flowers, towering glass windows, highly polished tiled floors and foreign curriculum are newcomers to this land, and represent a global trajectory of things that enliven this place of the foyer with multiple identities (Massey, 1991a). Its throwntogetherness (Massey, 2005) signifies a permeable, porous and open space characterised by hybridity (Massey, 1999). This sense of throwntogetherness and multiple identity is further explored in the next two excerpts in relation to power topologies and people flows.

Like the flows discussed above, the people flows at Midtown School create a place characterised by differences, diversity and hybridity rather than a homogenous coherent community (Massey, 1991a), as the following excerpt highlights.

I catch the downward gaze of three larger than life portraits of stately sheiks—His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, His

Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founder of the Federation and His Highness Sheikh Khalifa, Ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the United Arab Emirates. They remind me—a foreigner and an interloper—where I am in the world. Perhaps if I were Arab and Muslim, I would not even notice the three grand overseers who appear to preside over the business of the foyer. Below these sheiks, in their splendourous Arabic robes of gold, black and white, three Filipina women, in crisp white and navy, sit behind opulent floral arrangements at the front reception, ready to assist the constant human traffic who stream into the foyer, mostly parents from both the east and the west and foreign service workers from eastern countries like Nepal, the Philippines and Thailand—the abundance of staff from many different nations immediately othered by uniforms in different colours and designs. In head scarf and to their left is Sada, an Arabic lady from Syria, specifically employed to deal with persistent parents who wish to bend the rules around policies like child pickup times. To their right is the well-stocked cafeteria complete with capped and uniformed barista from the Philippines, smiling, always obliging and always there. (Elaborated field notes, 17/10/17).

The place of the foyer presents a kaleidoscope of peoples that intermingle with the towering presence of the local; a meeting place (Massey, 2005) where “a constellation of trajectories, both ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’” (Massey, 2005, p. 149) are co-present. Its place as porous, open and hybrid (Massey, 1999) constituted by human trajectories in the comings and goings of many nations. The natural resource boom of the United Arab Emirates has changed most, if not all, workplaces, including most international schools, from culturally homogenised places to sites now characterised by accelerated cultural diversity and mixing (Hall, 1995). Cultural globalisation is highly visible in this school environment—a result of people movement for labour (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a)—where all workers are foreign and no local Emiratis are present (Source: Robert interview 28/11/17).

The trajectories of people flows convene diverse cultures in this place to create, like the physical aspects above, a sense of multiple identity which “can either be a source of richness or a source of conflict, or both” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). Striking in this foyer, and experienced by the researcher across the working landscapes of Dubai, is that certain groups of people appear to be relegated by nationality to particular jobs. Those from the Philippines tend to serve coffee and attend to lower-skilled office work, those from Arabic nations, like Sada, tend to have more responsibility in positions of management. This cultural apartheid of the labour market in the United Arab Emirates is noted by James and Shammas (2013) and resultant of the recruitment practices of hiring companies and enforced through local policies, not discussed here. The foyer, then, suggests that there is a “particular constellation of social relations” where nationality and job status are contrived and people go about their dovetailed work duties in isolation (Massey, 1991a, p. 28).

The social relations in the foyer hint at stories of global differentiated mobilities, where “some people are more in charge...than others” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25). The downward gaze of the three portraited sheiks, who occupy a physically elevated position, appear to preside over the flows of people in the foyer, reminding everyone that this place belongs to the United Arab Emirates—their country where their royal reign is omnipresent and binding. Below the portraited and splendidly robed sheiks the activities of real bodies go about their daily work in uniforms that signify their job status. The foyer’s place has a global sense, where, through time-space compression (Massey, 1991a), differentiated mobility plays out to place different groups and individuals “in very distinct ways in relation to these flows” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25). Unequal power relations appear to circulate where some staff have power over their social mobility, in terms of role, while others have little control over their roles and working conditions (Massey, 2005). Progression through the foyer to the hallways of the school reinforces the foyer experience of differentiated power relations and mobilities of people.

After receiving security clearance—which works to exclude free parent movement around the school—and meeting Neville, the Irish primary principal and Robert, the Australian CEO, I make my way through several secured doors and down the long airconditioned hallway that leads to the foundation stage (FS) classrooms. The obsession with security measures immediately attracts my attention as I move about the school. Each door is heavily guarded by sometimes two security guards—usually dark-skinned and often from Kenya, Somalia or Kerala—and only accessible with a security pass. As I make my way down the hall, I pass the American Science and Technology teacher and the Filipina teacher who runs the Inclusive Education Action Team. I hear accented teacher voices speaking English with Irish, Scottish, New Zealand, Australian, South African and British lilt. I notice others—loan figures in red uniforms hovering and idle outside the classrooms. These people are the cleaning staff, mostly Nepalese, Filipina and Sri Lankan women who usually arrive speaking limited English and, who will, at a moment's notice, enter the classroom to clean. The typical and constant state of the foundation student toilets means that a clean-up job is very much in demand at many times throughout the day (Elaborated field notes, 20/10/17).

The hallways that lead to the classrooms are places that echo the “throwntogetherness” of the foyer, a meeting place where work is characterised by cultural apartheid, and people diversity and job status signified by uniform, or, in the case of teachers, accented ways of speaking English (Massey, 2005). The time-space compression—“the movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching-out of social relations” (Massey, 1991a, p. 24)—effectively speeds up and spreads out the movement of people to foyers and hallways but with differentiated outcomes. Power-geometries operate alongside this time-space compression to place people in “highly complicated and extremely varied” ways (Massey, 1991a, p. 26)—the flows of people in this school relegated to job status depending on where they are from in the world, regardless of their education or skills. For example, in many international schools, Filipina

and Indian trained teachers are mostly employed as learning assistants and rarely as teachers. Further, as evidenced in the foyer and repeated in the hallways, there exists an East-West divide, where management and teachers tend to be western with service workers from the East. Thus, the hallways and foyer of Midtown School resonate a global sense of place, where power-geometries through global flows play out to differentiate the nature of people's work and their daily lives (Massey, 2005).

The security measures in the school, presided over by men and women from Kenya, Somalia or Kerala, work to regulate who comes into the school. Parents are largely restricted, as are non-authorised individuals who have no security clearance. While all spaces are regulated in some way (Massey, 2005), the explicit rules regarding security work to marginalise the free movement of parents about the school, and to regulate some of the workers who might only be attributed to some sections of the school. For example, cleaners in the foundation stage area would have no security access to the high school. At the end of the school day, a security guard signals to the parents, with the removal of a rope barrier, that they are allowed to enter the foundation classrooms to collect their children. In this place autocratic controls work to marginalise the free movement of parents about the school (Massey, 2005).

Thus, there appears to be two spaces in the foyer and the school that tell very different stories about this school—one of opulence, grandeur and wealth that looks down on the other as subordinated, marginalised and controlled. Time-space compression is experienced in different ways at the two levels of the foyer—some, like the oil rich Arabs of the United Arab Emirates, benefit from it, while the flows of workers from the East do not. With respect to people mobility and interconnection “[d]ifferent social groups have distinct relationships” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25). However, in some places in the school the intersections with power-geometries is different.

The following observation provides an alternative sense of place as extroverted “which includes a consciousness [and expression] of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a

positive way the global and the local” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). It was observed in the staff room when learning assistants and service workers from the foundation classroom area, who mostly come from eastern countries like Sri-Lanka, India, Nepal and the Philippines, gathered in their break in the foundation stage staff room to eat.

In the common room I hear the constant and bird-like chatter of communal friendship in native tongues of Tagalog, Sinhalese, Malayalam and Hindi. At break time when many of them are in the common room the aromatics of Indian and Filipino food fuses to ignite the senses with the smell and sight of rice, dhal, chapatti, fish and more rice, the aromatics of fenugreek and mustard seeds wafting amongst the sweet smells Kutsinta, the sticky brown cake made of tapioca starch from the Philippines (Elaborated field notes, 16/10/17).

The above observation tells a story of a meeting place as extroverted (Massey, 1991a), where global links of people from many other places freely talk in their own languages and indulge in their customary cultural foods, uninhibited, perhaps, by the gaze of the three sheiks and the formality and division of the foyer. In this staff room, their uniforms are not a social barrier to interaction, they talk amongst each other, in English if they can, and, amongst those from the same country, in their own languages. The regulated and controlled place of the school and the cultural apartheid (James & Shammas, 2013) as described above, is shut out to “foster a particular ‘here and now’” (Anderson, 2008, p. 7). As a place, the staff room’s “throwntogetherness” achieves a coherency through the social practice of eating and taking a break (Massey, 1991a). In this place, a sense of the global is infused in the aromatics of food and the chatter in native tongue not smelt or heard outside in the incoherency, regulation and disruption of the hallway (Massey & Jess, 1995).

The above analysis illustrates some scenarios that set up the place of the school in a global sense where links across the global-local nexus, through the flows of people as well as some other physical flows, enables the differentiation of social and power relations. The discussion

described how the flow of some of the people in the school are positioned, at least in employment, in differentiated and controlled ways. School management and those whose job it is to hire workers are in charge of who comes, and more so, what jobs they will do when they arrive—they are initiators of flows and movement (Massey, 1991a). The discussion gives credence to the notion that the school is an “open, porous, [and] hybrid” meeting place diversely people, where power-geometries position social agents in particular ways (Massey, 1999, p. 41).

In this place social relations are controlled through power-geometries that work to marginalise some and privilege others—like Sada’s work as opposed to the school cleaners from Nepalese, Filipina and Sri Lankan. Some workers are effectively imprisoned by these power-geometries where they are on the receiving end in terms of the nature of their employment. Through global flows of people the processes of globalisation then work to politicise the local (Massey, 2005). However, some places in the school, like the staff meeting room, escape from such regulation and the diversity that constitutes the school makes for a different set of social relations. This analysis now turns to the other school in this research, Southern College.

5.1.1.2 Southern College: A global sense of place, power and positioning

As multidirectional trajectories, global flows in Southern College in Australia are less apparent than those at Midtown School—its place has a lesser sense of the global than the school in Dubai. The army of foreign workers is nowhere to be found, the opulence of Arabic physical place nonexistent, the multidirectional flows that result in places characterised by diversity and hybridity less obvious (Massey & Jess, 1995). There are, however, traces of the global in the mobilities of people—as students and their parents and the rare foreign teacher—and an international curriculum framework, the International Baccalaureate, that originates from Geneva, Switzerland. An exploration of the nature of place of Southern College foyer tells a different story about global flows and social relations, reasserting the notion that, with respect to the influence of global flows, geography and place matter (Massey, 2005).

I find my way to the Southern College using my GPS and pull into the carpark. Mothers—and some fathers—and their children scurry with purpose across the well-defined zebra crossings heading for the school buildings beyond. I see some Asian people and a few other faces that reflect other nationalities—a covered woman from a Muslim country and Indian men and women with shiny, recently oiled black hair. I walk up the covered walkway where the only security measure is a gate that is closed with a child secure latch, but not locked during school hours. There are many parents coming and going and they greet me warmly as I pass (Elaborated field notes, 31/07/17).

The geography of social relations (Massey, 2005) in the carpark and on the walkway up to the school tells a story that is mimicked across many schools in Australia—a story about the mobility of people who come to Australia from elsewhere to settle and become Australian citizens, people like the parents and their children at Southern College in the school surrounds. The “power-geometries of time-space compression” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25) and the nature of their mobilities means that these people come to this land with residency and status, where they have the right and power to choose where to send their children to school and where they might work. (It is understood that this is not true for every Australian migrant, particularly those who arrive as stateless refugees).

Further, and in contrast to the school in Dubai, the global sense of place is less restricted, less open to the other and, more so, less hybrid (Massey, 1999), the mobilities and diversity of people less obvious and where there appears to be no clear East-West divide amongst workers in the school. The power-geometries that work to relegate workers according to their nationalities are not as visible here. On the other hand, there is a sense of openness to this local educational place, not experienced in the school in Dubai, and perhaps dictated by its geographical positioning in the world. The Southern College’s “geography of social relations” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28) means that the security measures evident in the school in Dubai do not operate to keep parents out. Rather, its spaces are “open, multiple and relational”—people come and go freely,

intermingle with each other, smile warmly as they pass (Massey, 2005, p. 59). The experience of the people, as global flows, and their social relations are in marked contrast to those discussed as part of the analysis of Midtown School. There is further contrast in the physical space of the foyer as described below and illustrated in Figure 5.3.

I enter the foyer of the administration building—it's small and functional. At the only desk sits a solitary secretary—the receptionist named Carol. She handles everything from student late and leave passes, sick students who need their parents contacted, parent requests, teacher concerns, visitor queries and a never-ending barrage of phone calls. There is a brownness to this single storied entry point of the school foyer—brown carpet, beige walls and wood finishes on furniture and wall displays. The walls are bedecked with commercially produced branding and posters that celebrate the school as an International Baccalaureate school, student art works adorn the walls. A homely fish tank sits in the corner, pot plants and flowers freshen the room and student trophies, honour boards and art work portray images of student participation and ownership (Elaborated field notes, 30/07/17).

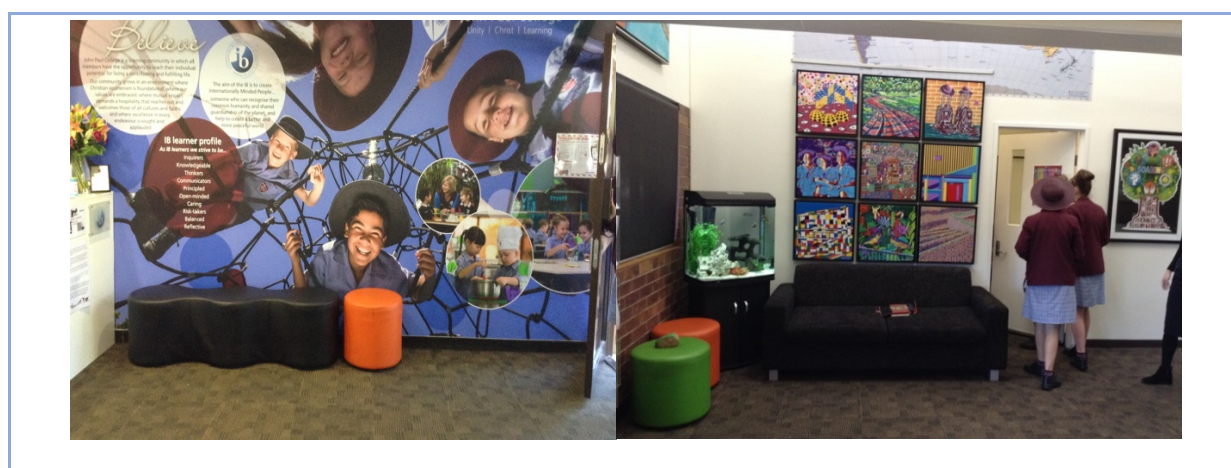


Figure 5.3 Foyer Southern College: (from left) International Baccalaureate material, student art work and students at the door

The foyer of Midtown School is both welcoming and functional. There are no gracious pictures of hierarchical leaders, not a whiff of anything aromatic, and there is only one person seen working. Rather, there is a functionality about this place that is characteristically educational and

perhaps, characteristically Australian—its functionality a product of the “geography of social relations” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28) in which it sits. Its sense of the global is less visible with only one small poster—to the right of the girls—of the international curriculum to link it to other places.

The foyer at Southern College is less opulent, less peopled, but its single storied brownness, complete with friendly fish, educational and student wall displays and achievement artefacts and the presence of students seeking to talk with the principal, conjures a sense that this school signifies and prioritises a student-centered approach. The place of the foyer, as a socially constructed and a labeled “envelope of space” (Massey, 1999, p. 42) reflects where, geographically, it is in the world. It sits in marked contrast to the multiple identities and power-geometries present in the foyer and hallways of Midtown school (Massey, 1991a). As was the case of the school in Dubai, Southern College has a unique sense of place where cultural diversity is less apparent, and power-geometries are harder to identify.

The above analysis of the two schools has sought to describe each school with a global sense of place with respect to the mobility of flows, mainly of people, in an era of globalisation. In doing so it has found that place, in its global sense, differentiates people in distinctively different ways and that through time-space compression, the “relations of power in relation to place and space” mean that social relations are differentiated differently (Massey & Jess, 1995, pp. 226-227). Place matters and the geographies of social relations are dependent on both its global constitution as well as its local social construction. This analysis shows that the “social and the spatial are inseparable and that the spatial form of the social has causal effectivity” influenced by geographical, as well as economic and cultural, positionings in the world (Massey, 1992, p. 71). This analysis now turns to consider other important places in the school—classrooms—where the intersection and interconnections of people and things influences the power-geometries and nature of social relations of teachers, students and their parents as they go about the social practice of education.

5.1.2 Globalisation comes to the classroom

The analysis above has concentrated on those places and spaces outside the classroom, where global flows, mainly focused here on people, interact to create meeting places that are differentiated through geography to create a different set of social relations at each school. The next section will examine the global sense of place of each classroom where globalisation, as a mobility of things, both human and non-human, brings a different set of circumstances, which in turn influences the placed social relations within. Each classroom is characterised as a place of fragmentation and disruption (Massey, 1991a), but also a place where diversity and hybridity settle alongside each other to coexist with locally unique places to “produce new reworkings, combinations and transformations – new uniquenesses” (Massey & Jess, 1995, p. 223). People flows in each classroom will be considered first, followed by the flows of curriculum in Midtown School and the Southern College respectively.

5.1.3 The power-geometries of people flows in each classroom

As established earlier, places like classrooms are meeting places. Each classroom for this study can be understood to be “particular constellation[s] of social relations” between, mostly, teachers, students and their parents and constructed from other times and spaces (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). The process of education, particularly in lower primary education with respect to the presence of parents, involves the interaction of these different groups in order that teachers teach, students learn and parents support. Some of the people that make up the two classrooms come from elsewhere—they are global flows of people who come to each country for different reasons. For example, in the case of Australia they emigrate with the intention of gaining permanent residency and status; in the case of the United Arab Emirates, where they are very unlikely to ever gain residency, they have dubious status, they come to work (James & Shammass, 2013). In each place, what is common about their coming is that they bring with them a sense of otherness, of differences—knowledges, customs and understandings that perhaps depart from

the local “uniqueness” to which they arrive (Massey & Jess, 1995). Their coming changes the social relations of local places, like classrooms, where sometimes incoherent spaces are produced and power relations ensue (Massey, 2005). In Midtown School, this is the case, as discussed below.

5.1.3.1 People flows: Spaces, places and power relations at Midtown School

At Midtown School teachers, learning assistants, students and their parents are highly diverse in cultural nature. Foundation stage teachers come from and are usually educated in western countries like the USA, Australia, England, Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand and South Africa; learning assistants are from Sri-Lanka, India and The Philippines and tend to have little experience with western education in their home countries and any tertiary education usually not in the field of education. Although teachers form a homogenous group with respect to being western, students in their classrooms, like their learning assistants, reflect far greater cultural diversity.

The overwhelming majority of the 2400 primary students enrolled at Midtown School—there are 22 Emiratis in the entire school—don’t come from the United Arab Emirates, rather they represent 117 different nations. The majority of students come from the East while a minority, about 26 per cent, originate from western nations like UK, USA, South Africa, Australia, Canada, Italy, Belgium, Sweden and Spain (Source: Midtown Sc 11: Nationalities list). Parents reflect the cultural origins of their children and, perhaps, have lived longer in their countries of origin than their young children who might have spent all their lives in Dubai. Given that most non-western parents would have received an education that was traditionally teacher-focused, and that Midtown School offers the National Curriculum in England, many will struggle to understand an education from a western, child-centered approach.

The above statistics and discussion illustrate the “throwntogetherness” of place where diverse elements, as people, propelled by “multiple [human] trajectories”, their coming together

fostering that “particular ‘here and now’” (Anderson, 2008, p. 7). The Britishness of the school stands in stark contrast to the “un-Britishness” of the majority of its student population. In this school and its classrooms, teachers (as well as learning assistants), students and their parents originate from a great number of contrasting and different places, where their experience of education might differ from that offered within. Therefore, a wider set of social relations and connections are used to negotiate the educational space of the classroom (Massey, 1991a). Social relations in each classroom are then influenced by the politics of connectivity through “wider spatialities of relations” (Anderson, 2008, p. 8). It is worth noting the cultural constitutions of foundation stage classrooms to consider how these wider sets of social relations might play out.

A typical class constitution in foundation stage, where there are 56 nationalities represented, is the foundation stage 2 class of Ieasha, “I’ve got Egyptian, I’ve got Jordanian, Spanish, Italian, South African. One British, two from Pakistan ... I think majority of my class is all Egyptian and one is from Saudi” (Source: Ieasha interview 29/11/17). Whereas, Nerida has a lot of students from Arabic countries, “Most of the class is Islamic, except for four children [Indian, Spanish, Romanian, and Pakistan], so it is a very Arabic, Muslim” (Source: Nerida interview 22/11/17). The 24 children in foundation stage 2S, the classroom for this research (where the S stands for Susan) come from many lands—Pakistan, India, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Scotland, England, Iraq, Lebanon and Sri Lanka. The exceptions to being non-western are Isabella from Scotland and Saima who has English residency and Pakistani heritage. Thus, including Susan and Bindhu, her learning assistant and software engineer from India, the class makeup represents 12 different nations.

Foundation stage classrooms mimic the culturally diverse nature of the foyer and hallways of Midtown school where time-space compression means that its space becomes an “articulation of social relations including local and also stretched away in time-space relations” (Massey, 1999, p. 41). But as meeting places, and unlike the isolation of interaction in the foyer and hallways described above, classrooms rely on intensive and conducive social interaction. The geographies

of social relations in this classroom are characterised by a high level of cultural diversity and ideas and understandings about education as imagined communities (Anderson, 2006) where local knowledges might be in conflict with those expected through the National Curriculum in England (Department of Education, 2013), an English curriculum. A clash and collision of trajectories (Massey, 2005) might ensue. Social relations in the classroom might be fraught with clashes and conflicts where dominance and power circulate to effect daily lives (Massey, 1991b, 2005). Such collision and clashing are illustrated in the following scenario reported by Susan, the teacher of the classroom of this research, where she talks about parent expectations and educational understandings in her classroom:

My experience is that parents chose the school [be]cause they want a western experience for their child. They may not have had that experience. When the parents come to the door, there are a couple of elements – there is a competitive element, in terms of they will look at what the other children are doing, academically. My experience [in Australia] is that they want to know are they happy and do they have a friend. Here, what parents are interested in is, can they write their name, did they learn their sound today. They are much more academically focused. (Source: Susan interview 23/10/17)

The multiple identities, explained in the teacher's words above, "can either be a source of richness or a source of conflict" (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). The understandings about education of many parents in Susan's classroom—"can they write their name"—departs from her experience of those parents in Australia—"are they happy?" Cultural understandings about how children learn and what is important in learning conflict and clash between what Susan and Australian parents, all westerners, think and what many of her eastern parents only know. The social space of the classroom is then disrupted by globalising influences in the form of people mobility and the educational ideas that accompany such movement (Massey, 1999). Through curriculum, imagined communities spring forth from the confluence of official and creolised nationalism (Anderson, 2001; 2006). The learning of content that has been developed in a foreign country,

like England, means that despite a nationalised version of knowledge, students instead develop understandings about the world that are imagined and therefore not real.

The “geographies of social relations” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28) in the classroom, then, are informed through “wider spatialities of relations” (Anderson, 2008, p. 8) and ideas about education are influenced by the “juxtaposition of other narratives” (Massey, 1999, p. 41) about what counts for learning. Whether there is conflict, clash or richness will depend on how Susan, the teacher and in a position of authority, responds to the airing of such differences. As the parents willingly choose this school that operates through a western approach to education, it is more likely that her ideas about learning will dominate and attempt to change entrenched parent educational understandings (Massey, 1991a). Thus power-geometries brought on by time-space compression operate in the classroom to privilege the education ideas of some over others, as Susan articulates in the following, where she has to “have a conversation” with a parent about an unacceptable classroom practice:

‘They will, for example with my sign in books, they will look at what the other children are doing. I do have one mother, in particular, whom I had to have a conversation with, and she would come in and hold her daughter’s hand and write her name for her at sign in time. (Source: Susan interview 23/10/17)

Susan’s influence and dominance over this parent’s values and understandings about education and learning to write represents the idea that globalisation is a spatialising concept where place opens up opportunities for different ways of being, for parents and their children. Susan’s classroom is “absolutely not a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everyone shares” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28), but a place where multiple identities construct multiple relations that have connection to multiple places. The multiple identities that inhabit the space of this classroom can be sources of richness or conflict (Massey, 1991a). In this case, perhaps, richness abounds as parents learn new ways to nurture children in the art of writing. Alternatively, this scene can be interpreted as one of dominance where western values about education supplant

those from the East through the power-geometries of time-space compression (Massey, 1999). These multiplicities and power-geometries are evident in other narratives of classroom place as illustrated by Margaret, a foundation stage leader, who comments on how parents see the play-based nature of the English curriculum of the school:

... because it's more a play-based, parents come for that, rather than sit down. But then the parents expect test results every week, and that's not the type of school that we are. We don't sit them and test them and give over and over homework, and parents struggle with that (Source: Margaret interview 26/10/17).

The power-geometries of time-space compression clash in the foundation classroom through the trajectories of people flows and their accompanying ideas (Massey, 2005). In the case above, parents seek out educational practices that do not align with the school's western focused curriculum. Although they choose Midtown School for its play-based teaching and learning ideologies, parents' entrenched understandings about education influence them to want education activities like tests and homework—practices at odds with the lower primary philosophy espoused through the National Curriculum in England (Department of Education, 2013). In this global space of the classroom, multiple identities, representative of East and West, clash over what education should be, and while not discussed in the excerpt above, parent's understandings will be dominated by western educational ideas—there will be no homework and or weekly tests. This clash of trajectories where dominance and power circulate, has an effect on daily lives of members of the early years classrooms at Midtown School (Massey, 2005).

The global flows of people in foundation stage classrooms represent great diversity and the classroom becomes a place characterised as unique. With this mobility of people comes ideas and understandings that fill the space with new ideas, as well as ideas that are unique to the place, and ideas that are in conflict. In the social relations of this place, these competing ideas are worked out, negotiated, and in the case above, fought over. The dominance and power that circulate to tame this fighting has implications for social relations in Susan's classroom (Massey,

2005). The classroom, as a global place, is then a process of social relations where “new reworkings, combinations and transformations” are produced (Massey, 1991a; Massey & Jess, 1995, p. 223). Moreover, this production, as illustrated in the scenes discussed above, is influenced through power-geometries. At Midtown School power-geometries, that operate as part of the process of globalisation, played out to place different individual and cultural groups “in very distinct ways in relation to these [global] flows and interconnections” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25). This discussion will now turn to the lower primary classroom at Southern College to consider how global flows of people colour the nature of place, and whether similar power-geometries are evident.

5.1.3.2 People flows: Spaces, places and power relations at Southern College

The people flows at Southern College, while less culturally diverse than at Midtown School, still represent flows of people from elsewhere. Teachers at Southern College, mainly western and Australian citizens, are recruited for their experience in international schools, which means they have spent considerable time working and living elsewhere in countries like Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, UK and Austria. Typical of this constitution is the prep (lower primary education) team which is comprised of five Australian women who have taught in international schools in the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore. Bella, the teacher of the classroom of this study, who has Dutch heritage, has taught in Malaysia and Singapore. While teachers, as part of global flows of culture, appear to form an homogenous group, their vast experience of international education means that they bring a sense of the global world to their classrooms (Massey, 1991a). Further, through their global experiences, it is assumed that they might also bring a source of richness as opposed to conflict (Massey, 1991a) to the social relations, with parents and their children, within their classrooms. Thus, the “geography of social relations” might interact differently in these lower primary classrooms compared to the ones at Midtown School (Massey & Jess, 1995, p. 217). The

excerpt below, where Bella talks about how she uses her international experience to smooth social relations with parents in her classroom contrasts with the conflicts noted earlier in Susan's classroom:

... in my interaction with parents ... using that knowledge, or the understanding that I have of different cultures in your interactions. Knowing that parent's expectations differ for their children and broaching different topics in different ways. But, making the parents feel comfortable by adapting my interactions with them. ... to sort of know how to approach their home life, or approach their way of learning, or how they're best going to interact with people, and things (Bella interview 9/05/2018).

This excerpt illustrates how power-geometries can work as a source of richness rather than conflict where intercultural understanding and respect foster an interconnection between social relations (Massey, 1991a). The constellation of social relations "meet and weave together" in the locus of the classroom to influence the partnership between the teacher and some of her parents (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). The richness is illustrated by Bella's dealing with some parents, where she is sensitive towards the multiple identities through which the parents construct their understandings of education. However, this smooth sense of social relations is not always apparent, as the following statistics and discussion illustrate.

Like Midtown School, the teaching team in prep classes is made up of a teacher and a learning assistant. All learning assistants are western and have little international experience. Unlike the learning assistants in Dubai, most have qualifications or, at least, experience in working in lower primary classrooms. Christine, the learning assistant in the class for this study, is western and holds a qualification as a lower primary classroom assistant. The cultural diversity and multiple identities evident in the teaching workforce of Midtown School, are not apparent, however, student and parents from elsewhere are notable (Massey, 1991a).

Although Australian students comprise the majority of the college's student population (72.5 %), 42 other nations are represented (Source AEC Sc 5: School nationalities list). Most

populous is Chinese (9.7%), South Korean (2.9%), Vietnamese (2.1%), Hong Kong (2%), and New Zealand (1.9%). The 18 children who make up Prep BC (Bella's classroom) are all Australian citizens, but for some, their national heritage is from other countries like Iran, Vietnam, South Korea, China, Hong Kong and India. Like those of GEMS Midtown, parents come from diverse backgrounds, countries and have different understandings about education—although the figures show that this diversity is less so at Southern College. The majority of parents at Southern College are western, but movement around the school highlights signs of diverse cultural identities—Indian women in traditional clothing, Asian parents dressed in suits or gym gear, some women in headscarfs, and Chinese men in casual attire.

The teachers and learning assistants reflect a culturally homogenous group, and more so than those from the school in Dubai, where a mix of western and eastern was noted. However, the cultural diversity of the students (and their parents) signifies the classroom as a global place that does not house a single community with a “single sense of place which everyone shares” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). Rather, Bella's classroom, like Susan's, is culturally diverse and is populated by a sense of the multiplicity, of multiple identities and diversity amongst students, as well as teacher knowledge, that connects them to the world beyond. However, in Bella's classroom, although there was limited evidence in the data, similar power-geometries operate to circulate dominance and power over others (Massey, 2005). The following excerpt, in conversation with Bella about her classroom parents' educational understandings, illustrates these power-geometries:

... the way parents interact with their children as they come in ... [it's] always interesting to watch the cultural differences ... some parents are very keen to get down on the floor and interact and play with their children, or are very encouraging in terms of that play-based learning. There are other parents who are more interested in seeing the books. I have seen in the past, where a child, you know, they're only five, so they're reversing

numbers. But I have seen a parent go and get an eraser, and make their child rub their numbers out and write them in properly (Source: Bella interview 9/5/18).

What Bella is referring to here is the cultural differences she notices about the way some parents interact with their children when in her classroom. Like the eastern parents in Dubai, some parents, mostly from Asian countries, might have different perspectives about how they interact with their children. This means that they are unfamiliar with some of the education philosophies like the importance of play in lower primary learning—getting down on the floor and physically engaging with their children in play-like interactions with intended and intentional outcomes (Edwards, 2010; 2017). Rather, they are more intent on “seeing the books” and getting things “right”, like the writing of numbers. Of the multiple identities that constitute Bella’s classroom, some parents’ understandings depart from the dominant ideas about how children learn and what is important in that learning. Like the parents at Midtown School, these notions about education conflict and contrast with those of the teacher and the school. The social relations in Bella’s classroom are also influenced by power-geometries, perhaps to a lesser extent, and “[d]ifferent social groups have distinct relationships” with the teacher and also with the educative process of the classroom (Massey, 1991a, p. 25).

The above discussion has sought to uncover the power-geometries that operate, through the mobilities of people, to place groups and individuals in distinct social relations within each classroom. The stretched social relations in the meeting place of each classroom, an outcome of time-space compression and people mobilities, brings together an assemblage of multiple identities. Power-geometries worked in different ways in each classroom, this working influenced by the geographies of place as open, dynamic and porous and “particularized as the product of interaction” (Massey, 1999, p. 41). This discussion now turns to the mobility of another flow, the non-human flow of curriculum which, as will be discussed, has a far greater influence on the social relations of each classroom than the flows of people.

5.1.4 The power-geometries of curriculum flows in each classroom

The analysis above highlighted the power-geometries that operate in the school and each classroom to position its inhabitants in particular powerful and less powerful ways. Its focus was the nature of social relations that ensue from the mixity of people who gather, from different places, in the place of the classroom. The nature of schools and classrooms, as other occupied places, is characterised by many things, both human and non-human, some from near, some from far away—a mobility of things that link places like classrooms to the global world beyond (Massey, 2005). This section will explore how curriculum content, a flow from elsewhere, influences, through power-geometries, the social relations in each school. In each case, in each school, and as discussed earlier, the curriculum is imported from elsewhere. Through time-space compression the importation of curriculum, as a trajectory, permeates the local classroom, and so connects it to distant global places (Massey, 2005). Such interconnection ties together separate places and spaces through a type of relational politics to construct them as unique, but also disrupted and full of conflict (Anderson, 2008; Massey & Jess, 1995).

5.1.4.1 Power-geometries in the foundation classroom: Curriculum flows at Midtown School

Midtown School follows the English National Curriculum (Department of Education, 2013), developed as the statutory national curriculum for schools in England. It is a discipline-based curriculum designed specifically for students in English schools and provides an outline of core knowledge within twelve subjects, classified as core—English, Mathematics and Science—and other foundation subjects like art and design, citizenship, computing, design and technology, languages, geography, history, music and physical education.

As would be expected, content of the National Curriculum in England includes information about life in England—important events like the Great Fire of London and historically significant British individuals, like William Caxton and Queen Victoria. It does embrace the wider world—for example, in Geography, it addresses the need to understand

geographical similarities and differences between the UK and a non-European country and to learn “significant aspects of the history of the wider world” (Department of Education, 2013, p. 188). Its global outlook includes content about the activities of Christopher Columbus and Neil Armstrong, as well as learning about the Roman Empire and its impact on Britain (Department of Education, 2013). Such content is westernised and is situated in and narrated through an inwardly English perspective, as one would expect of a curriculum developed for a place characterised by its Britishness. England’s sense of place, through the content of the curriculum, is less heterogenous and diversified by cultural other than the global sense and multiple identities of place in Midtown School, as established above.

The importation of curriculum, across time and space, as a global educational flow, prioritises the cultural knowledges of a place that is far removed from the United Arab Emirates in most social aspects of life as well as the cultural knowledges and understandings of the majority of the student population of this school. Social relations within each classroom, then, are predicated on one set of knowledges and understandings about the world—not multi-focused, not embracing the other. Such predication is an example of “domination and subordination, stretched out over the planet at every different level, from the household to the local area to the international” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). Social relations around knowledge are stretched out across time and space. Power-geometries operate to privilege one country’s history and geography over another with the outcome that other temporalities and stories are ignored (Massey, 1991a, 2005). The following excerpts illustrate the power-geometries, as part of curriculum flows, that position students in particular ways.

Key stage 1 Geography asks students to “use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to: key physical features, including: beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley, vegetation, season and weather” (Department of Education, 2013, p. 185). However, in the United Arab Emirates only beach, coast, hill, sea, ocean and weather would be observable and familiar features to students who live there—the other features of cliff, forest, mountain, river,

valley, vegetation and season only experienced when students visit other places. This cultural mismatch of knowledge is further illustrated by Margaret's observation about teaching science in the foundation stage:

Right [now] we're going to do a science topic on bugs and soil and we now need to plant.

Where? But the plants don't stay alive because it's too hot. It's trying to link a British

curriculum within a time climate of Arab desert (Source: Margaret interview 26/10/17).

The last excerpt is particularly powerful in illustrating how the geographies of place influence the social relations in the classroom to position students and teachers in powerful and less powerful ways with regard to knowledge. In particular it is an example of how knowledge, as a global flow, is transferred through time and space to tie together the social relations of two distinctly different places (Anderson, 2008). The knowledge and the practices that are part of the science curriculum work as a disjuncture— “the plants don't stay alive because it's too hot” and illustrates an inappropriateness of the science learning in which the children are expected to participate. Thus, power-geometries, through curriculum content, work to subordinate children to learn about science and geographical aspects that are not endemic to their local places, and more so, difficult to enact. Learning about their local places, life in the desert, is then marginalised and sidelined.

The privileging of one set of knowledge over another is further exacerbated by the framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Department of Education, 2017), which prioritises an approach to education that might be foreign to many of the students in foundation stage at Midtown School. As Susan point out, “this school sells itself as a British education and parents come here because they want the National Curriculum for England to be taught” (Source: Susan interview 25/10/17), but such Britishness sits in stark contrast to the plethora of other nationalities that make up the student body. These “geographies of social relations” play out across time and space to influence the nature of learning, in both content and practice (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). The following example illustrates the power-geometries that operate

through this global flow of curriculum to influence social relations with respect to classroom practice.

In the foundation stages—the years of education prior to formal schooling—the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (Department of Education, 2017) defines teaching and learning through a set of standards for the educational development and care of students from birth to five years. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework aims to develop “children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships, and thrive” through defined areas of learning and development. These areas include communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development and are enacted through specific curriculum areas—literacy, numeracy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design (Department of Education, 2017, pp. 7, 8 & 10). It inscribes effective teaching and learning with three characteristics—play and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically.

It is noted elsewhere in this research and further explored in Chapter Six, section I, that many eastern students in foundation stage arrive at school with an inability to engage in the three characteristics prescribed through the early years framework, particularly the processes of play, as Susan discusses below:

It’s play skills, the skills of play. And I think that a lot of them are socialised with adults.

They don’t have as much, as many play dates as you might get, I mean you might get the kids at the end of the street in Aussie [Australia] playing in the cul-de-sac with their scooters. That doesn’t happen as much here – a lot of children are going home on the bus. They might leave here at twelve, they might only get home at three, and they might be at home with the maid ... and not see their parents until late (Source: Susan interview 22/11/17).

The quote above indicates the lack of play skills in many of Susan’s students, very much an outcome of the social relations of their home lives, where access to leisure time with their

parents might be restricted. Further, the geographies of place in which they sit mean that some students spend a lot of time travelling to and from school, which results in less access to leisure time at home. When they do arrive home, they often spend their time with a nanny, who might come from a third world country, where a different set of social relations about childhood and socialisation might be the case. This is further complicated as the curricula that govern teaching and learning bring content and classroom practices designed for a different place with its own set of social relations and particular unique local conditions of England. While it takes account of this otherness, for example, teachers “must also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English”. Furthermore, they “should take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that covers race...” (Department of Education, 2013, p. 8), as well as other differences, essentialising the student population as a “coherent social group” (Massey, 1991a, p. 28) housing a singular community.

Children who are not equipped with the skills of play then find negotiating the activities in Susan’s classroom a struggle. This tension is further noted in the prioritising of Early Years Foundation Stage pedagogical characteristics of play and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. These practices might be unfamiliar to the social practices of many of the students in foundation stage, whose eastern origins mean that they may have little or no experience of such classroom practices.

The global flow of curriculum, as a spatialising concept, introduces a sense of Britishness to a place where the student population, as established earlier, is multifarious and highly diverse, and rarely from England. The cultural knowledges inherent in the National Curriculum in England invokes power-geometries where students are forced to learn content knowledge and participate in foreign practices that does not reflect their multiple and diverse identities, or the places (and knowledge sets) from which they have come. As learners, students at Midtown School “are more on the receiving-end of [time-space compression] than others ... and are effectively imprisoned by it” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25). Perhaps this is an unrealistic expectation, as

Susan remarks, “We are trying to make a UK system work and I think for the most part that it does work, but you have to have teachers who are quite skilled in adapting it to the needs of their children, and that’s hard” (Source: Susan interview 25/10/17). This discussion now turns to the imported curriculum at Southern College.

5.1.4.2 Power-geometries in the prep classroom: Curriculum flows at Southern College

The International Baccalaureate program is an educational response to a world on the move, where the global situatedness of families and their children is in flux. The International Baccalaureate was developed, in 1968, as an inclusive content-free curriculum framework; its mission, globally, is to pioneer an educational program that develops “inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect” (Source: Southern College S4, p. 4). Further, it encourages, “students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right” (Source: Southern College S4, p. 4). The ideas of the key thinkers that inform this program—John Dewey, A. S. Neill, Jean Piaget and Jerome Bruner—transcend through understandings like natural curiosity, personal freedom, learning through cognitive cycles and learning by doing. Its key themes and ideas differ greatly from the disciplined-based National Curriculum in England.

The International Baccalaureate Continuum cycles through four stages from primary (PYP), middle years (MYP), diploma (DP) and career related certificate (IBCC). As well, the school has statutory obligations to follow the Australian Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, 2016a) for content and processes—and the International Baccalaureate then to organise that curriculum knowledge according to its key themes which massage content into relevant and globally oriented units of work. Moreover, as Anna, a school leader points out, it’s a globally adaptable curriculum:

... when you're teaching the PYP in Australia, you would look at the Indigenous people of Australia, or the first fleet to arrive, in terms of historical units. Whereas, if you were overseas, you might adapt it more to the culture, or the location that you are at (Source: Anna interview, 7/09/17)

and, as Bella discusses:

[The International Baccalaureate] is written in such a way that you should be able to transport it to anywhere in the world and be able to teach that within any religious or cultural influenced sort of area (Source: Bella interview, 10/08/17).

As a global flow, this curriculum originates elsewhere, but with the specific intention to address the global nature of the current world. Its reliance on themes like intercultural understanding, respect, and acceptance of differences to produce students who are inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective, as part of the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile (Source: Southern College S4), immediately embraces the era of globalisation in which education currently occurs. Teaching and learning are predicated on an active citizenship where student inquiry, action and reflection embrace multilingualism, intercultural understanding and a global engagement through a curriculum that transcends the local and the national. Such attributes represent a “broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond intellectual development and academic success” and imply “a commitment to help all members of the school community learn to respect themselves, others and the world around them” (Source: Southern College S4, p. 3). Cultural diversity is a source of richness where the knowledges and understandings of other are embraced as part of the curriculum.

The global flow of curriculum ties the local to the global: it does not tie the local to another local as was the case in Dubai where England and the United Arab Emirates are linked (Anderson, 2008). The International Baccalaureate has been developed as a global curriculum, thus reflecting many local places across the world. Its inherent content and practices are then not

local, but reflect a global sense of place the knowledges it proscribes are inherently conceptual, transportable “to anywhere in the world” and adaptable “to the culture, or the location” in which one sits (Massey, 1991a). The culturally diverse student body in Bella’s classroom is positioned in ways that celebrate their cultural knowledges, where units of work are developed to reflect cultural diversity. Through the curriculum, teachers recognise that the classroom is a source of multiple identities, which offers them the opportunity to exploit it as a source of richness (Massey, 1991a). These ideas will be further discussed in Chapter Six Section I where the interplay of cultural differences and sociomateriality is explored.

5.1.5 Section I summary

Section I has explored the relationship between global flows, power-geometries and social relations at each school site, where a global sense of the place described each as thrown together. It examined how global flows contribute to power-geometries and how these power-geometries positioned social actors in each school and each classroom. Such examination developed a notion of each site being contrived and constructed through global flows of people and curriculum, which forged particular social relations and social processes in copresence (Massey, 1991b). The copresence of each site saw how different power-geometries operated to manifest different social relations—at Midtown School, some workers were marginalised and the monocultural nature of the English curriculum and pedagogical influences ignored the cultures of the majority of the school population. At Southern College, an international curriculum celebrated and utilised cultural diversity, but cultural differences were noted in parent’s educational understandings. The next section attends to the second research sub-question to explore what teachers and school leaders said about how cultural differences plays out in the two schools and classrooms.

5.2 Section II

Section II reports an analysis of the talk of teachers and school leaders at each school with respect to how cultural differences, brought on by global flows and its associated cultural globalisation plays out—how cultural differences are expressed and how the school caters and responds to the cultural diversity of the school population (Appadurai, 1996) . Section II, then, answers the research question:

What do teachers and school leaders say about how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the schools and the classrooms?

Figure 5.4 elaborates on the research landscape of this research question by contextualising it within five social systems—world, state, school, classroom and local community—which are indicative of the pathways of global flows. As established in section I, each school and classroom is contextualised within a social system that works to pattern their social relations across time and space (Giddens, 1984), this patterning influenced by power-geometries that position social relations in local places (Massey, 1999). In this research, which implicates flows of the global world in classroom social action, this patterning occurs across multiple systems, as indicated in Figure 5.4. As such, the two classrooms are not independent of the social system in which they sit (Carspecken, 1996)—the social action within is contextualised by the structural properties without (Edwards, 2016; Giddens, 1984). The talk of teachers and school leaders provides a discursive journey about cultural differences across the social system in which each school and classroom is contextualised.

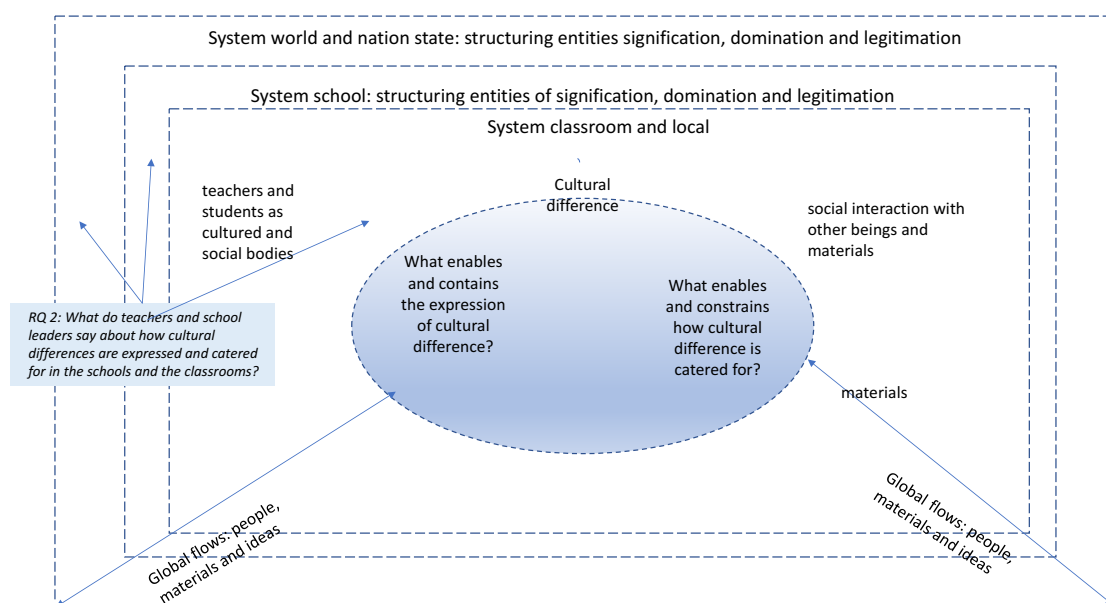


Figure 5.4 Context of research sub-question 2 and systems relations

Discursive consciousness—what people “say” about their social relations “including especially the conditions of their own actions” and so their agency—is able to be studied through a discourse and pragmatic horizon analysis (Giddens, 1984, p. 374). Teacher and school leader talk provides a commentary on these social relations and how complex system relations, across world, state, school, classroom and local community, influence the way cultural differences play out. A discursive exploration of their talk enables identification of the dominant societal structures which work to distribute power to enable or constrain expression and catering for cultural differences in each school and classroom (Gee, 2011). These dominant societal structures are examined through the three structural dimensions of social systems—signification, domination and legitimation—as part of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), and theorised in Chapter Three.

As established in Chapter Three, signification structures are modes of discourse that operate within “systems of *semantic rules* (or conventions)” to communicate how meaning is interpreted, domination structures are “systems of *resources*” that actors use to gain dominion over materials and humans and legitimation structures are “systems of *moral rules*” that comprise

the rules of procedures for action (Giddens, 1976, p. 130). Teachers and school leaders (and their students), as social actors in complex systems, draw upon these structures as a means for making meaning through their cultural differences; but these structures also are a product of their actions (Kaspersen, 2000). This is what Giddens (1984) refers to as the duality of structure, where structural dimensions act as recursive stimulants between structure and agency to explain how system reproduction reinforces social action. Thus, through a discursive interrogation of talk, systems relations, in the context of cultural globalisation, can be identified to see how cultural differences are privileged or marginalised in the school and the classroom.

The data for this section were gathered through semi-structured interviews, as detailed in Chapter Four. The talk of teachers and school leaders provided a rich addition to the information collected through researcher observation to provide ideas and perceptions of other key school members about cultural differences in the classroom, thus generating dialogic data through alternative perspectives and suppositions (Silverman, 2013; Spradley, 1980). The discussion below reflects the responses from seven teachers and three school leaders at Midtown School and in the case of Southern College, five teachers and two school leaders.

Interview transcripts were organised into meaningful categories—i) expression of cultural differences: celebrations, artefacts, food and habits and dispositions and, ii) catering for cultural differences and how schools and teachers cater for cultural differences: through curriculum, learning materials, literature, classroom displays and the arts, as well as incidental ways and teaching about the other. The expression of cultural differences was drawn from data collected according to questions: 1, 2, 6, 7, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and for how cultural differences was catered for from questions: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17 and 18 (see interview schedule details in Chapter Four). Note that the data from questions 1 and 2, which explored the cultural nature of teachers, as well as their cultural educational origins, yielded codes for the expression of and catering for cultural differences.

These data were then coded for signifying, dominating and legitimating structures to examine how they articulated the social system with respect to how cultural differences were enabled or constrained. What became apparent in this round of coding was that separating how cultural differences played out—how they were catered for and expressed—occurred within similar themes that occur outside and inside the classroom, for example, cultural celebrations, the influence of curriculum and cultural norms. Cultural differences at each school is then discussed according to these emerging themes and how they manifested in signifying, dominating, and legitimising ways to implicate social relations across the system from both outside and inside the classroom.

Quotes have not been linked to respondent's names as it was felt that it interfered with the textual flow, however, each speaker's identity is signalled by their teacher or school leader status. The examined discourse of teachers and school leaders is contextualised with explanatory notes from field observations and official documents. Section II will progress in a similar way to the section preceding in that it will consider each school in turn, starting with Midtown School and followed by Southern College. An overall summary occurs at the conclusion of this section to reflect the findings for Chapter Five Sections I and II.

5.3 Cultural differences at Midtown School—what enables and constrains the way they are catered for and expressed?

The discussion below expands upon the findings summarised in Table 5.1 to trace and tell stories about what teachers and school leaders, at Midtown School, say about the manifestation of cultural differences in two key categories—outside the classroom and inside the classroom. These stories weave vertically and horizontally throughout Table 5.1 to illustrate how cultural differences are enabled or constrained.

Table 5.1 provides an overview of the findings of how cultural differences are expressed and catered for at Midtown School with respect to structural dimensions—signification, domination and legitimation. The table illustrates how structures work across multiple systems to

influence social relations with respect to cultural differences in the school and the classroom.

The telling of stories about situated cultural differences must reflect these system relations. For example, students have limited opportunities to express themselves in cultural celebrations in the school and the classroom due to state and school sanctions that regulate the number of cultural celebrations; and certain social behaviours like bodily control, that are nurtured in the local system, manifest as tensions in classrooms where teachers and students have different expectations with regard to classroom behaviour. These interesting, dynamic and interrelated social relations will be explored below to reflect the system reproduction as specified in the lower shaded section of Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Systems relations: Expressing and catering for cultural differences at Midtown School

Midtown School: enabling/constraining influences for expressing and catering for cultural differences			
System	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
Class room system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher social action and beliefs enables children's cultures to be catered for in class time • Cultural differences are evident in the behaviour—polite vs rude and lack of independence—and the foods children bring to school • Classroom wall displays prioritise the UAE culture • As part of International day children study the cultures of others—often the classroom teacher's culture • Parents are invited to read and share cultural stories with children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some teachers authorise other celebrations in their classrooms e.g., Diwali • Allocative and authoritative resources like role play areas and incidental teacher practice provide students with opportunities to play with aspects of their cultures but it is teacher dependent • Some allocative resources cater for cultural differences, but all official resources, including library books, come from England • Allocative resources like cultural pencils and multicultural dolls provide students with opportunities to draw skin colours and identify with each other's cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural norms like bedtimes, behaviours of self-regulation, language use and cleaning up are in contrast to those acceptable by teachers • Personal hygiene about toilet use and teeth is marked • Teachers report that they must have a wall display promoting UAE culture as well as their social studies wall display • Teachers report that there is tension between the strict rules of the UAE Muslim culture and the curriculum with regards to certain subjects

School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The culture of the UAE is prioritised, celebrated and learned across this school setting • International day caters for the expression and celebrations of other cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited authoritative resources, as official documents, address cultural differences e.g., the National Curriculum in England where cultural diversity insignificant • The structure of the EYFS as an authoritative resource enables flexibility to cater for cultural differences • Competing authoritative resources of official documents make it difficult to cater for cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is regulated as to the number of special celebrations for students • The lateness policy does not discriminate for different cultural groups • The uniform policy allows the wearing of cultural adornment like hijabs but limits other cultural expression • Teachers say that the culture of the UAE needs to be emphasised and report unseen sanctions forbid the representation of other cultural symbols e.g., Christmas, trees and Jesus
Local system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home life plays a big role in cultural differences that students express at school • Some children express their cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of classroom allocative resources including library books come from England – local evidence of global connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some teachers see the home as the source of certain cultural habits—bedtimes, behaviours of self-regulation, language use, cleaning up, personal

Midtown School: enabling/constraining influences for expressing and catering for cultural differences			
System	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
	<p>through polite behaviours while others are rude</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents come to the school to promote their cultures • Parents choose the school for its family-oriented and catering for everyone focus • There is limited restriction of the children's food 		<p>hygiene about toilet use and teeth—that are not aligned with the school norms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are sensitive towards the cultural and religious taboos of children and their families
State system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The culture of the UAE is prioritized in learning time • The UAE is a very culturally diverse place where selected cultural symbols of others are displayed e.g., Christmas trees and Santa are visible in malls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritative resources of many official state documents compete to make it difficult to cater for cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers report that they are aware that they live in a Muslim country where the rules are very strict, and that Islamic rules are given priority across schools in the state, as expressed in state documents. • Safeguarding issues - disciplining children are punishable by UAE law
World system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are aware of their cultural backgrounds whereas Foundation Studies students are less aware • Teachers do not want children to be ignorant about their cultural heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an authoritative resource the National Curriculum in England has not been developed to address the school's cultural diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of Dubai are westernised (education, social trends, dress codes) and adopts some cultural symbols of others • Western teachers find some students' habits and dispositions unacceptable and not aligned with the teachers view of acceptable social norms • Western teachers are culturally sensitive towards UAE culture

Midtown School: enabling/constraining influences for expressing and catering for cultural differences			
System	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
System reproduction	<p>Signification: Expressing and catering for cultural differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enabled by one cultural celebration, food choices and eating customs • enabled by teacher-initiated classroom practices and beliefs about the inclusion of cultural knowledges of children • enabled by the inclusion of parents as readers • enabled by parent perceptions about the inclusion of cultural differences • marked by dispositions and hygiene habits that differ from those of teachers • constrained by prioritisation of the UAE culture 	<p>Domination: Expressing and catering for cultural differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enabled by the authoritative resource of the programming of an International celebration (school) and teacher-initiated celebrations • enabled by authoritative resources that allow teachers flexibility for what and how to teach and teacher attitudes towards including cultural aspects in learning • enabled by some allocative resources like cultural teaching materials and items in role play areas • constrained by allocative and authoritative resources that originate in a different country • constrained by authoritative resources that overload teachers and compete with each other and do not address cultural diversity • constrained by the planned prioritisation of UAE culture 	<p>Legitimation: Expressing and catering for cultural differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constrained by the differences in social norms towards certain behaviours • constrained by social sanctions that limit expression of other religious and cultural customs • constrained by state law with respect to disciplining children at home • constrained by the uniform policy which legitimises no cultural adornments but allows Islamic dress code and some religious covering • constrained by unseen cultural sanctions that promote teacher fear about what is right and what is wrong and what must and must not be included • constrained by mixed messages about cultures inside and outside the school, including those from parents

5.4 Cultural differences outside the classroom: Signification, domination, legitimation

A number of elements operate to enable and constrain whether cultural differences are expressed and catered for outside the classroom, across the school community. Table 5.1 traces these elements as uniform and lateness policies and cultural celebrations and discourses about culture. The uniform policy, an authoritative resource, works to legitimise the degree of cultural expression that is allowed to be signified as part of everyday clothing and adornments—it allows Islamic covering, but as a teacher explained, during cultural celebrations disallows “red bangles that [Indians] wear, just because of the safety of the children”. The school policy then restricts some cultural expressions but allows others—Islamic coverings are privileged, whereas

adornments of Indians subordinated (Kaspersen, 2000). On the other hand, the lateness policy is targeted equally at the whole school community as explained by a school leader, “It doesn’t matter who you are, where you’ve come from. It’s a strict policy and I think that’s where we don’t alleviate for different people. That’s set in stone, this is our school, these are our rules”. However, this policy, as part of the school’s Ten non-negotiables (overarching school behaviour codes and not discussed here) that set the standards for school-wide behaviours—Staff/Students/Parents/Visitors to be punctual at all times—serves to authorise and legitimise school punctuality behaviours that many Arab families (and Arab teachers) ignore.

During data collection two cultural celebrations were planned for and enacted. A school leader indicated that the official number of celebrations in the school was regulated by the state, “as to how many special events we can have in a school”. The limit is two—national week and international day—as illustrated in Table 5.1 in signification and legitimisation columns across the state and school systems. These regulatory structures then communicate the symbolic order (Giddens, 1984) of celebrations—who and what is celebrated, as further discussed in the next section.

5.4.1 Cultural celebrations: Signification, domination and legitimation

In early December, the school spends one week celebrating United Arab Emirates National Week, “The Emirati government like likes to push obviously their own cultural identity”, a school leader said. In foundation studies students view, draw and play with the cultural artefacts of the Emiratis—national dress, the traditional Arabic coffee pot and the oyster shell and pearl, in reference to traditional economies of the past. They decorate United Arab Emirates flags, read one or two United Arab Emirates stories (these are limited), learn the history of the seven Emirates and the names of the respective Sheiks and, perhaps, sample some of the local food like Umm Ali (bread pudding) and Haress (chicken porridge). The United Arab Emirates culture is also taught in weekly foundation assemblies, as recounted by a teacher, “we’ve started to build

in the United Arab Emirates... I know they're only really young, so we've talked about the United Arab Emirates culture and we've incorporated it into our assemblies". Teachers are also expected to have a permanent United Arab Emirates display in the classrooms all year round. Learning about the culture of the United Arab Emirates is highly prioritised to the exclusion of the other cultures of the school population—of the 2400 students, 2378 are not Emirate—and operationalised by dominating state authoritative resources that generate command (Giddens, 1984) over the expression of other cultures within the school.

In contrast, for one day of the year, in mid-December, the school celebrates international day for the other 116 nations in the school—a whole school event “where everybody comes and parents take a lot of pride in their culture” and students “dress up in national clothing”. A teacher commented that, “We study a country. Last year we studied my country, but they get a little taste of all the different countries...”. Another teacher recounted:

They have a whole fair, and it's all to do with the parents and the parents' group together in their nationalities and they celebrate theirs. You go to the stalls, you cook the food, you do crafts and their parents take it over the top and they will spend thousands and thousands of Dirhams [3 Dirhams + \$1AUD] to prove that their country, their culture... it becomes a very big competition.

A sentence in the quote above is worth further exploration. Table 5.2 represents a pragmatic horizon analysis, as discussed in Chapters Three and Four, that interrogates the social actions of parents, as reported by the teacher. A pragmatic horizon analysis identifies the subjective, objective and normative claims that a research participant can make and carries research analysis into a new level of precision, but always grounded in the meaningful acts of participants (Carspecken, 1996). As indicated in Chapter Four, all interview data was examined and coded for elements of power with respect to how cultural differences played out in classroom social action. If the possible claims derived from the analysis in Table 5.2 are considered holistically—that this teacher might think that the behaviour of the parents is uncalled for, inappropriate and involves

too much time and money—then it is important to ask what might make parents behave in such a way.

The mobilisation of authoritative resources as state regulation work to limit the cultural expression of most of the school population by allowing only one day for celebrations of all cultures other than those of the United Arab Emirates Arabs. This restricting resource then generates command over others to limit cultural expression of the majority of the school (Kaspersen, 2000), and so represents an “expandable character of power” that operates across time and space to co-ordinate the social system with respect to cultural differences (Giddens, 1984, p. 258). Parents of marginalised cultures attempt to use “communication, power and legitimation” to assert their cultural symbols and knowledges by allocating time and money to signify their country and cultures (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 61).

Table 5.2 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Signification structures for parent behaviour International day

Actor: Teacher leader, Date: 26/10/2017
Response to interview question about how cultural differences are expressed
‘...their parents take it over the top and they will spend thousands and thousands of Dirhams to prove that their country, their culture... it becomes a very big competition’
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I think that some parents turn International day into a big competition, spending inappropriate amounts of time and money. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> The behaviour where they feel they have to be highly competitive is uncalled for.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Parents spend a lot of time and money to make sure that their cultural and country representation is the best. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> There are many nations represented at this school and they all want to be recognised culturally.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Parents spend too much time and effort in trying to prove their country is the best. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> The behaviour of parents is not appropriate in the school setting. <i>Background, remote</i> It is incredible that culture is becoming competitive, and it shouldn’t be.

The cultural signifiers of the United Arab Emirates nationals are privileged above all others and the cultural artefacts of the United Arab Emirates Arabs act as allocative resources that procure dominion and priority of certain cultural artefacts, and not others, over the students of this school (Giddens, 1984). This is perhaps understandable given that the United Arab Emirates is the host nation and all foreigners are guests, rarely citizens. The symbolic structures of the United Arab Emirates culture texture the school life in terms of what children learn in national week and as part of assemblies (Mills, 2003). Given the prolonged learning time apportioned to this celebration, children make meaning through the cultural artefacts of others. Further, domination structures, as unseen state authoritative resources, dictate whose cultural diversity is foregrounded and enabled.

5.4.1.1 Christmas: Legitimation of a cultural taboo

The expression of cultural artefacts and customs is further complicated by what one teacher said, and many others agree, about Christmas: “Obviously, we’re not allowed to put on any other culture but Islamic. It is hard, because you have to steer around, you have to be careful”.

Christmas, as a cultural and religious celebration, is not openly acknowledged even though 26% (as well as others, e.g., some people from the Middle East, especially Egyptians, are Coptic Christians) of students are assumed to be of Christian religion. Christmas is celebrated as a Winter Festival—it’s winter in the United Arab Emirates in December. There are no Christmas trees on display at school and children are allowed to sing “Jingle Bells” but not “Away in a Manger” which mentions Jesus. Another teacher comments on this restriction, “We can’t talk about Christmas, it’s not allowed... but for me I think that you need to touch upon it or else children are going to grow up and be not understanding of other people’s religions and things”.

Further complicating this restriction about Christmas, is that fact that, as one school leader points out, “The [Dubai] Mall in the United Arab Emirates has got the biggest Christmas tree”.

When asked about this restriction in the school, he replied, “I think [that this] is not necessarily

in the school but throughout the UAE ... the ruler and the ruling families are quite open to different cultures and to different religions and different events”. There is tension here—teachers are disallowed by perceived cultural restrictions to talk about or celebrate Christmas, yet the school leader believes that the ruling families of the United Arab Emirates are open to different cultures, religions and celebrations. Unnamed authoritative resources circulate power to inhibit the open celebrations of Christmas in the school. Teachers, who would mostly celebrate Christmas, operate in a culture of fear where a powerful and unseen authority stops visible social action, as teacher agency, with respect to the engaging in symbolic signs of and communication about Christmas.

Unseen agents then generate command (Thompson, 1989) over teachers and students in the school who are Christian. Dominion (Giddens, 1984) over the activities of western teachers and some students restricts cultural (and religious) expression and social action about important cultural celebrations. Some teachers resist such domination by discursively declaring that for children to grow up culturally aware about “other people’s religions and things” then teachers “need to touch upon it”. Cultural sanctions then operate in conjunction with domination resources to limit the symbolic order of Christians.

The application by unseen agents of such “sanctions in interaction [draws] upon norms ... and the use of power in interaction involves the application of facilities which enable agents to secure specific outcomes” (Held & Thompson, 1989, pp. 60-61). The social system then produces a limitation on some agents to express themselves culturally, and also religiously, and their limited actions with respect to expressions of their cultural differences then reinforce the social system which seeks to limit it. Thus, the duality of structure (Giddens, 1984) operates where social structures “are both constituted *by* human agency, and yet at the same time are the very *medium* of this constitution” (Giddens, 1976, p. 121).

However, teachers do not always comply with these modes of discourse and social sanctions and resist the signification, domination and legitimation structures about cultural

celebrations by allowing unregulated celebrations in their classes. These social acts then work to allow for a greater expression of cultural differences in their classes than across the school community. Teachers can be seen to reject the social order of the school and in this way destabilise rather than reinforce it, as the next section illustrates.

5.5 Cultural differences in the classroom: What signifies, dominates and legitimises?

The following discussion expands on Table 5.1 to explore how cultural differences is expressed and catered for in the classroom, where teacher action has greater command over the social actions of children with respect to their cultures. How cultural differences are expressed will be followed by how they are catered for.

5.5.1 Expressing cultural differences in the classroom

Teachers pointed out that as the children wear uniforms, there is little visible adorning signs of their cultures in the regular school day. As noted in Table 5.1, teachers expressed that the cultural differences of children were not overly prominent in the classroom, and that many students were not aware of their cultural heritage, "... like the kids all grew up here [Dubai] ... even though they [say] I'm Egyptian, I'm this or I'm that. They all grew up here. If you ask them, where were you born? [They say] Dubai. They don't really know that much about their heritage". Another teacher remarked, "The only time they'll tell you they're from another country is [if] they're going on holiday, or they went there for holiday". This statement implicates that, unlike the teachers, children are unaware of their bodies as cultural entities. Perhaps this is due to their age, or perhaps it is due to the fact that, at this school, expressions of cultural differences are limited, as evident in the discussion above and below. Given the privileging of the United Arab Emirates' culture, as previously exposed, why is the culture of these children insignificant? What communication, power and legitimation structures (Kaspersen, 2000) operate to make this so?

When asked about the expression of cultural differences in the classroom, teacher replies were similar. "Not really. It's not really expressed. Only maybe if you speak to a child and they'll

probably have a different accent, but that would probably be the only way you'd be able to identify it". And, "You would hear it anyway especially what the children talk about, you would hear the different languages that are going on, there's I think about six or seven different languages in the class".

Teachers talked about cultural differences evident in the foods the children bring to school. "Obviously, because they're all from different countries, they do have very different diets". "I have a girl from China, and she has a lot of Chinese food in her lunchbox and then a lot of the Indian children have lots of rice". Others commented on the way children eat, "Some of my children eat purely with their fingers, some of them have forks and knives". A teacher with a lot of Arabic children commented, "A lot of children would bring in Arabic bread, and we'd always comment on that like, it's Arabic bread. We had dates with our heavy and light [science activity] this week". More so, one teacher commented on the natural curiosity of children:

They're interested in each other's food. I've got a little boy who's Chinese, and he had dried seaweed, and the person next to him was like, "Oh, what's that?" He was wondering what it is, and he was explaining that he has this in his house. It was nice to see the conversation coming from just different meals.

Given the cultural diversity across the school, food is a prominent cultural signifier and children use food to communicate aspects of their cultures, like the way they eat and what they eat. More so, in foundation studies children are keen to learn about each other's food, a learning encouraged, for example, by the teacher above. Eating time gives children the opportunity to draw upon important symbols of their cultural lives in non-threatening environments and share coherent meaning making (Giddens, 1984) with others about important cultural signifiers. What signifies children as cultural beings in the classroom, and as reported by teachers, is their language and accents, and their food. However, children do have the opportunity to express

their cultures in incidental ways, as facilitated by the authoritative resource (Giddens, 1984) of teacher cultural inclusivity.

On regular school days in foundation studies the cultural artefacts of the children in each classroom are visible in incidental ways. For example, one teacher spoke about how, during role play, “when there was a kitchen set out and they’re playing café, probably they would tell about different items they eat”, but there were few examples in their talk. “They [artefacts] rarely would come to school. Even when I was at school, on their birthday we [wore] coloured dresses. But that sort of thing is not here, they all wear the uniform” and “...they haven’t yet bought in any artefacts from home. I think when it comes up to [inter]national day, it will be nice for them to bring in something”. An exception to this practice is when, at the beginning of the school year, foundation studies students participate in the “About Me” unit and children have the chance to “express and talk about themselves, their cultures, for the children to realise that we don’t all come from the same background”. Teacher social action about cultural inclusivity mobilises dominion over both authoritative and allocative resources (cultural artefacts), intrinsically tied to power (Giddens, 1984), to enable children to participate as cultural beings in some aspects of the classroom, including the celebrations of unsanctioned cultural events.

Other cultural celebrations also occur but are more incidental in nature, sanctioned and within the regulations and are not part of the official program of the school. Due to the number of Indian children at the school in some classrooms, Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, is one exception where children are adorned with Indian cultural artefacts and teachers and students talk about cultural customs. However, it is up to the teacher.

When it was Diwali, I had one come in, in a sari and we talked about how beautiful it was in front of the class and she did a little dance for us, so that was really nice. So yeah, it would be recognised when that happens but on a day-to-day basis, it’s not very obvious. The social actions of teachers, then allows for inclusion of cultural artefacts and customs as part of role play, other celebrations and conversations with teachers. Teachers, then, are mobilisers of

the allocative and authoritative means for cultural expression through their planning and flexible classroom practices—role play areas, space for cultural celebration and opportunities to discuss cultural artefacts. Teacher’s agency, then, through structural properties (Giddens, 1984), transfers power to students to enable them to express themselves culturally in unrestricted contexts. Social relations “are perpetrated across [classroom] time-space” through authoritative and allocative teacher resources that involve (and transfer) student “control of information and knowledge” about their cultural differences (Giddens, 1984, p. 261). However, as discussed below, cultural differences are more likely to be expressed and visible in the classroom as socially unacceptable behaviours, habits and dispositions.

5.5.1.1 Cultural habits and dispositions: Signifying and legitimising structures

Table 5.1 details the ways cultural behaviours are signified and legitimised across the classroom and local system. In response to the question about whether students express their culture through habits and dispositions, including ways of speaking and cleanliness, teachers had much to say. A recurring word in the teacher interview responses is the word “home” which occurred six times throughout teacher responses. The following quote is indicative of the message from teachers about the connection between home and some student behaviour, “The home really plays an important part with how a child interacts, or copes, with the classroom rules and routines” and, when referring to the cause of unacceptable behaviour, “It must be to do with home”. The behaviour of some children caused angst in teachers, especially students from Egypt, as one teacher recounts:

So, I have quite a lot of tantrum takers and they scream out. One girl in particular, she’s from Egypt and when you say, ‘No’ to anything, she will just scream [an] incredibly high-pitched noise, for a good ten minutes. Takes a tantrum, she’ll throw herself on the floor, she’ll kick, just because you’re taking something away or tell her to clean up, ‘No, I don’t

want to clean up, I'm not used to cleaning up.' 'Well, we're cleaning up now!' And she screams ... very difficult.

This utterance of the teacher describes the behavioural response to a “No” from a female student in her class and identifies a mismatch in the cognitive order of coherent meaning making with respect to behaviour in this classroom. This mismatch is expressed as differences in what social norms each actor—the teacher and the student—employs to act and the divergences in their “stocks of knowledge” about how to act (Giddens, 1984, p. 29). To explain this divergence the teacher implicates the cultures of home life as responsible for the girl's unacceptable behaviour. The following pragmatic horizon analyses, in Table 5.3 and Table 5.4, uncovers the subjective, objective and normative claims in two parts of the above statement to illustrate how the interpretive schemes and social norms of the teacher work to signify and legitimate what behaviour is socially acceptable in this class.

Table 5.3 implicates the signifying structures at work here to show how behaviours in the classroom are filtered through the interpretive scheme of the teacher. The girl's behaviour does not meet the expectations of the class behavioural norms—her inability to make coherent meaning shows that her knowledge stocks about behaviour do not meet the classroom meaning and communication structures (Giddens, 1984; Kaspersen, 2000). As she lies on the floor, kicking and screaming, she is powerless as she cannot engage in the interpretive scheme of the teacher and the classroom. From the teacher's perspective, and her communication in response to interview questions, unacceptable behaviour is due to parents, in this case Egyptian parents, not teaching their children the behaviour patterns expected in the classroom.

Table 5.3 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Signification structures about unacceptable class behaviours

<p>Actor: Teacher of foundation studies, Date: 12/11/2017</p> <p>Response to interview question about cultural habits and dispositions, referring to a student in her class</p>
<p>‘One girl in particular, she’s from Egypt and when you say, ‘No!’ to anything, she will just scream [an] incredibly high-pitched noise, for a good ten minutes. Takes a tantrum, she’ll throw herself on the floor, she’ll kick... And she screams ... very difficult.’</p>
<p>Possible subjective claims</p> <p><i>Foregrounded, immediate</i></p> <p>I am concerned that when I say no to this student that she behaves in unacceptable, loud and lack of self-control ways.</p> <p><i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i></p> <p>My classroom has behavioural expectations and I find it difficult when students behave in unacceptable ways.</p>
<p>Possible objective claims</p> <p><i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i></p> <p>This child does not know how to behave in accordance with classroom expectations.</p> <p><i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i></p> <p>Egyptian families do not teach their children to self-regulate their behaviour.</p>
<p>Possible normative-evaluative claims</p> <p><i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i></p> <p>Children have a responsibility to behave according to the classroom rules.</p> <p><i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i></p> <p>She is behaving very badly, and she is showing lack of self-control.</p> <p><i>Background, remote</i></p> <p>Egyptian children often do not show responsible behaviours in the class.</p>

Table 5.4 uncovers the cause of her behaviour—home life where the child is not used to cleaning up. The teacher and the child do not share mutual understandings about the classroom rules and procedures for action (Giddens, 1984) and the classroom moral order, as legitimised by the teacher, is not upheld. The teacher’s normative claim is that “A classroom that is clean and tidy is a good place to work”. All children who participate in the class activities should show responsibility and clean up—highlights the social norms that guide her view. In her classroom the cognitive order is destabilised and shared understandings about behaviour are not practiced across the classroom community (Giddens, 1976). Power is then legitimated through the communication channels of the teacher and the knowledge stocks on which the child draws to participate in the classroom, in this case legitimated as culturally unacceptable and inadequate (Giddens, 1984).

Table 5.4 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Legitimation structures about responsible classroom behaviour

<p>Actor: Teacher of foundation studies, Date: 12/11/2017</p> <p>Response to interview question about cultural habits and dispositions, referring to as student in her class</p>
<p>‘No, I don’t want to clean up, I’m not used to cleaning up.’ ‘Well, we’re cleaning up now!’</p>
<p>Possible subjective claims</p> <p><i>Foregrounded, immediate</i></p> <p>I don’t care what you are used to, in my classroom you are expected to clean up. You have contributed to the mess and it is your responsibility to clean it up.</p> <p><i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i></p> <p>My classroom is a tidy place and I want you to clean it up. I expect you to do this as a member of my class.</p>
<p>Possible objective claims</p> <p><i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i></p> <p>This child is not familiar with the practice of cleaning up.</p> <p><i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i></p> <p>Egyptian families do not teach their children to look after places in their homes.</p>
<p>Possible normative-evaluative claims</p> <p><i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i></p> <p>A classroom that is clean and tidy is a good place to work. All children who participate in the class activities should show responsibility and clean up.</p> <p><i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i></p> <p>You are refusing to clean up, but you should clean up.</p> <p><i>Background, remote</i></p> <p>Some children often do not show responsible behaviours in the class.</p>

The analysis above is further supported in the quote from another teacher who speaks about the behaviour problems of some of her children:

I find that I have to spend a lot more time in the classroom—and this classroom is quite heavy with Egyptian, middle eastern children—I spend a lot more time teaching things like gentle hands and gentle feet, and quiet voices because that’s not something they come into the classroom with.

The ability to share and take turns was another area that teachers made comment about, “you can see a lot of not waiting turns, I find a really big one ... obviously it’s improving, but ... it’s all coming from home”. Such communication patterns, as analysed above, lay bare the source of behaviour problems in classrooms—the home life of students, as indicated in the pragmatic horizon analysis in Table 5.4. The behaviour patterns of some children, and in the two cases above, Egyptian children, constrain them from making coherent meaning according to the

classroom cognitive order of behaviour, as legitimated by the teacher. The children in the scenarios above are unable to operate within the classroom interpretive schemes and the normative regulation with respect to acceptable classroom behaviours, largely due to their home life (Giddens, 1979). This unacceptability is also reflected in the hygiene of some children.

5.5.1.2 Cultural hygiene: Signifying and legitimising structures

The question about hygiene and cultural differences was met with many tales of children having difficulties around responsibility regarding toilet, teeth and nose hygiene. In particular, the toilet causes major issues for teachers and the comment below is indicative of what other teachers say about the issue:

We have lot of parents wanting the toilet to be cleaned after every child has used them. Obviously, we do have cleaners around and they clean as much they can, but what they [parents] would like is a toilet attendant in there, in every toilet to clean up after the children. We have had ... a lot of parents complaining because we need to have cleaned their child. It's not usually towards us, it's usually towards the teacher's assistant. They see the teacher's assistant as a nanny in the classroom not as someone who is supporting their child with their curriculum.

Two pragmatic horizon analyses in Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 interrogate two parts of this statement. Table 5.5 uncovers the legitimation structures at work in the teacher statement. Two sets of social norms meet in the classroom—those that are characterised by responsible and independent toilet use and those that rely on others to facilitate toilet practice. Social action in the toilet is regulated by a set of procedures for action (Giddens, 1976) that are not shared across the community. Parents attempt to assert their authority by insisting on certain practices that align with their social norms, these are rejected by the teacher. The western social order that dominates the “moral constitution of interaction” in the classroom is reproduced with the teacher's insistence on not cleaning up. (Giddens, 1976, p. 129).

Table 5.5 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Legitimation structures about toilet issue

Actor: Teacher of foundation studies, Date: 26/10/2017 Response to interview question about cultural habits and dispositions, with reference to the toilet issue
‘... what they would like is a toilet attendant in there, in every toilet to clean up after the children’
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I think that it is unreasonable for someone to have to be constantly in the toilet to clean up after children. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> I do not support the practice of cleaning the toilet after each child visits.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Children need to be able to toilet themselves when they come to school. Some children from eastern families find this difficult. The cultures of many families mean that they have very different hygiene requirement to those of western people like the teachers at this school. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> Many families are insistent about particular hygiene practices around toileting. Western notions of the toilet differ from these.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Children who are of school-age should be able to manage themselves in the toilet. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Toileting problems are not my problem. <i>Background, remote</i> It is not the job of teachers to clean up after children have been to the toilet.

Table 5.6 illustrates that two different interpretive schemes dictate the practices around the toilet. On the one hand, the teacher’s communication pattern reveals that toilets are a functional part of school and that children should manage themselves in toileting. Parents’ priorities are different and are governed by a set of interpretive schemes that try to dominate toilet practices by requesting that toilets must be cleaned and that it is up to the teachers or teacher assistants to do this cleaning. Thus, as was established above, the cognitive order (Giddens, 1984) around toilet practices is not shared, and there is tension between groups of actors (teachers and parents) in the classroom as to what culturally signifies toilet behaviour. Power is instilled within the practice of toileting by the teacher who refuses to clean up toilets and children, but also in admonishing the toileting desires of parents. Children are helpless actors in this scene, stranded in toilets with few skills to release them to the classroom. A conundrum appears where social reproduction is

in conflict—the child is caught between the social practices of toileting from different parts of the system—the classroom and home (local).

Table 5.6 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Signification structures about the toilet issues

Actor: Teacher of foundation studies, Date: 26/10/2017
Response to interview question about cultural habits and dispositions, with reference to the toilet issue
‘They see the teacher’s assistant as a nanny in the classroom, not as someone who is supporting their child with their curriculum’
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> As a classroom teacher my role is to support children academically to learn through the curriculum. I should not have to clean up children as part of toileting. Neither should my teacher assistant. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> I do not support the practice of cleaning the toilet after each child visits, and my teaching assistant should not be doing that either.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> My teacher assistant’s job is to support children to learn. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> Many families do not see that the role of the teacher and the teacher assistant is to support learning, not toileting.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Teaching assistants should not have to clean the toilet or clean children after they have visited the toilet. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Toileting problems are a waste of important learning time. <i>Background, remote</i> It is not the job of teachers to clean up after children have been to the toilet.

All of the teachers I interviewed commented on the state of children’s teeth. While some thought that it wasn’t an issue, others talked about the very poor state of their teeth. “A few of mine have very, very black teeth and I’m not sure why. It must be to do with home ... I have quite a few children with teeth missing already or very, very black teeth”. Another teacher commented, “A lot of rotten teeth. Mostly Arabic, yeah. Sweets, fast food, all that kind of stuff”. A recurring theme of blame is indicative in these comments by teachers, where teachers point to cultural home life as the cause for tooth decay, especially those children from Arabic families who eat a lot of sugary sweets. The teachers’ modes of discourses within their statements above signal that parents are to blame for the poor state of their children’s teeth and that allowing them

to eat sweets results in poor oral hygiene. Such western social norms (Giddens, 1984) about mouth hygiene are not shared across the class community and the resultant social practices from each group—parents (mostly eastern) and teachers—produce social action from each part of the system—local and classroom—that is in contention.

Many foundation teachers talk about how children deal with runny noses, but when asked this question about hygiene and nose blowing, there was an overall feeling that some cultures attend to it better than others. “They don’t blow their nose. It’s in the mouth, it’s all over their clothes. It’s just not, it’s not taught”. Through their discursive communication teachers reaffirm that behavioural expectations around aspects of hygiene are not shared across the whole classroom community. Children are not taught by their parents to look after their noses, resulting in unhygienic social practices in the classroom. In all of the scenarios above, including that of noses, children’s ability to make coherent meaning through social practice is not reinforced by the dominant interpretive schemes and legitimation orders of the classroom teacher. Power, then, is unequally distributed and the cultural habits and dispositions of some children are marginalised and discounted. Cultural dispositions are then imbued in a negativity that renders children powerless and under resourced. While teacher communication patterns serve to reinforce the interpretive schemes about cultural dispositions, the social actions of many of the children and their parents resist such order and so coherent meaning making is constrained (Giddens, 1976). These unequal power distributions are further noted in the way culture differences are catered for, as discussed below.

5.6 Catering for cultural differences in the classroom

At Midtown School there are many documents that guide what is taught in schools. Guiding documents—the English National Curriculum, the Early Years Foundation Stages, the United Arab Emirates National Agenda and Vision, as well as United Arab Emirates Moral Education—prove a planning nightmare for teachers, “I think the challenge is, there’s so many different

documents, there are so many different agendas that have to be aligned. And I think the challenge is to know are you ticking everyone's boxes".

No teacher or school leader could articulate that cultural differences were dealt with in any of these documents, "We don't have a great deal of policy documents that talk about culture and cultural differences", said one school leader. Upon a brief perusal of each, this was confirmed, as illustrated in section I, which highlighted the cultural ethnocentric nature of the English National Curriculum. One teacher commented on the Early Years Foundation Stages, "I think [it] can be followed through in all different cultures". The Early Years Foundation Stages enables a more open approach that allows the catering of cultural differences as one teacher commented:

I suppose you're understanding the world in curriculum. It's very broad at the moment.

It's kind of like art, science, dealing with people, communities where you're from. I

suppose it is out there, and there is a lot that we can do, people and communities.

Skilled and experienced teachers might see the open link to culture referred to above and given that the Early Years Foundation Stages is a curriculum framework, as discussed earlier, rather than a content document, there exists an ability for teachers to incorporate inclusive cultural activities. The Early Years Foundation Stages, as a global flow, could work as an authoritative resource to enable children to explore and celebrate their cultural differences as part of learning, but this is difficult, as one teacher points out, as teachers must be quite skilled to be able to do this.

As an authoritative resource, the overarching curriculum from England does not address the cultural diversity of others, and therefore marginalises the cultural differences of most of the school population. As mobilisers of this curriculum resource, teachers, sometimes unknowingly and depending on their experience, transfer the facility to deliver an education that is devoid of cultural awareness. This interaction—the delivery of curriculum content to children through the agency of teachers—implicates power whereby teachers "are able to generate outcomes through affecting the conduct of others" (Giddens, 1976, p. 129). The order of domination, through the

facility of curriculum, works to constrain expression or learning about cultural differences, and, through this application, reproduces the order of domination through the duality of structure (Giddens, 1984). The Early Years Foundation Stages framework works in different ways.

As discussed above and restated by a teacher, the Early Years Foundation Stages is a curriculum framework that “that can be followed through in all different cultures” and therefore, is more likely to be able to cater for cultural differences in the classroom. As an authoritative resource, the Early Years Foundation Stage offers an opportunity for the social action of teachers to incorporate the cultural differences of children into learning experiences. It therefore can work in opposite ways to the National Curriculum in England to be inclusive of cultural differences—classroom interaction lead by the agency of teachers, transfers power to children with respect to generating outcomes that include their cultural identities (Giddens, 1976). The enabling and constraining of cultural differences is perpetrated across the system, from world through to the school and the classroom in the shape of imported curriculum, and system reproduction is achieved through the dominating forces of these authoritative resources. Interaction in classrooms amongst teachers and students is tempered by these authoritative resources generating command and control over the catering for cultural differences (Kaspersen, 2000). Allocative resources, discussed below, tell different stories about power.

Table 5.1 shows that most allocative classroom resources, including books, come from England, as one teacher points out, “All of our teacher resources actually come from England ... particularly the books they’re taking home, they relate to the British curriculum, they’re like *Beth, Chip and Kipper*”. Within the foundation studies classrooms, teachers acknowledged that they respond to the differences in culture as they emerge through classroom interaction and that children have opportunities to learn about other cultures and express their own through activities like role play, painting and drawing:

A lot of it’s really incidental, a lot with painting, and painting each other, and drawing pictures. They’re really conscious that they draw ... they colour their friends with their

proper skin colour. We've got cultural pencils this year that they can practise, or that they can use for skin colour.

A pragmatic horizon analysis in Table 5.7 examines how cultural pencils—a set of pencils that mimic skin colours of humans—operate as an allocative resource in a diversely cultured classroom. As material resources cultural pencils enable a transformative capacity (Giddens, 1984) for students to explore their skin colour differences. All students have the capability to generate command (Kaspersen, 2000) over these material resources, and they express their agency by engaging in the social practice of drawing and painting each other to signify their differences. The teacher is key to this exploration and engagement, as her subjective and normative-evaluative claims indicate, her discursive representations open-minded about differences in her classroom. Of course, the opportunity to use these cultural pencils in ways that marginalise others—for example, if children are worried about their skin colours—needs to be managed by the teacher. Cultural pencils, as allocative resources, work to give power to students, but could also be used in ways that generate power over others.

Table 5.7 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Domination structures about the use of cultural pencils

Actor: Teacher of foundation studies, Date: 22/11/2017 Response to interview question about the use of resources in the classroom
‘... they colour their friends with their proper skin colour. We’ve got cultural pencils this year that they can practise...’
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I believe that cultural pencils are a great resource to help children explore their differences. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> I want my students to be open-minded about differences.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Children are aware of the different skin colours in their classes and they use cultural pencils to illustrate this. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> Students in my class have different skin colours and my student are aware of this.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> It’s important for children to openly express cultural differences through painting and drawing. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Cultural pencils are a great way of helping children normalise differences in skin tone. <i>Background, remote</i> It’s good that children are openly aware of the different skin types.

As discussed above, teachers facilitate unstructured ways to cater for cultural differences in their classrooms. Given the constraints of the National Curriculum in England, but the affordances of the Early Years Foundation Stages, which allows teachers to structure classroom activities in more open-ended ways (role play and art activities), teachers are then powerful players in the cultural lives of the students in their classrooms.

The discussion so far has concentrated on the expression and catering for cultural differences at Midtown School. It was found that power was unequally shared across the social order with regards to cultural knowledges and customs, where some were privileged over others. Children’s cultural identities were often marginalised both in and out of the classroom, and those of the west and the Emirates privileged. This power sharing was traced through a systems analysis to explore how, across the five identified systems (see Table 5.1) signification, domination and legitimation structures worked to influence the expression of and catering for cultural differences in the school and the classroom. This analysis will now be applied to

Southern College to explore power sharing and cultural differences through a system perspective. Like that of Midtown School, the discussion below tells stories about what teachers and school leaders say about cultural differences in the school and the classroom. The two key categories that were used above—outside the classroom and inside the classroom—organises this discussion.

5.7 Cultural differences at Southern College—enablers and constrainers of cultural differences

Table 5.8 provides an overview of the findings of how cultural differences are expressed and catered for at Southern College with respect to the structural dimensions—signification (how meaning is interpreted), domination (resources actors use to gain dominion over materials and humans) and legitimation (comprises the rules of procedures for action) (Giddens, 1976, p. 130). How structures work across multiple systems to influence social relations with respect to cultural differences is illustrated by the table. To ground this analysis in the meaningful acts of participants, as was the case in Midtown School analysis, the use of a pragmatic horizon analysis (Carspecken, 1996) supports the identification of the subjective, objective and normative claims that research participants can make to enable a greater understanding of situated meaning.

Table 5.8 System relations: Expressing and catering for cultural differences at Southern College

Southern College: enabling and constraining influences on the catering for cultural differences			
	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
Classroom system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers report that cultural differences are highly expressed • Unit on cultural celebrations (Where we are in place and time) highlights the cultural artefacts and customs of many cultures • Children celebrate their cultural differences in the memory box activity (Unit Who we are) • After celebrations unit children much more likely to share their cultural differences at school • Cultural differences are represented by the cultural artefacts that children bring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authoritative resource of curriculum promotes activities where children use knowledge of their cultures to learn • Teachers as authoritative resources encourage and accommodate for incidental learning about culture • Allocative teaching and learning resources not always targeted towards different cultures and often very Anglo • Artefacts incidentally brought in by children are used in class time for discussion and often incorporated into physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are accepting of and knowledgeable about the cultural differences of parents with respect to educational expectations • Cultural behaviours are more marked in parents than in children • Personal hygiene about toilet use and teeth is not marked in the classroom and teachers make little comment • Teachers are culturally sensitive towards their students and their cultural dispositions towards learning

Southern College: enabling and constraining influences on the catering for cultural differences			
	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
	<p>to school and all teachers reported that time is given in classrooms to discuss these</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural behaviours are evident in the classroom to some extent e.g., patriarchal and forthrightness, some lack of independence and personal touch • Cultural differences are evident in food children bring to school • Some children hide cultural knowledge about their food whereas others advertise it • Some children express their cultural differences through cleanliness habits e.g., clean Asian children, but the state of teeth not a noticeable difference • Teachers possess understanding about different parents' perceptions about education and the need to be sensitive towards these • Teacher sensitivity towards inclusion for all cultures, they try to acknowledge multiple perspectives as well as open-minded towards other cultures • Teachers understand that the cultural background of children can impact on ability to learn and interact • Students need to be exposed to different cultures to develop positive attitudes towards differences 	<p>learning areas where children can experience them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PYP transdisciplinary themes authorise, encourage and rely on students expressing their cultural differences in class. E.g., the cultural celebration unit promoted an environment of open-mindedness with respect to cultural differences and student openly shared aspects of their culture during as well as after the unit was taught • Teachers draw on student cultural backgrounds to teach them about the wider world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents' cultural dispositions towards education—rightness and class interaction with their children—are commented on by teachers
School system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and school leader knowledge and understandings about the importance of international mindedness in the global world where children are empowered about their differences but at the same time open to differences • Teacher and school leaders are encouraged to live the IB learner profile • Cultural differences are visible through the enactment of curriculum, school initiatives and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical allocative resources like spaces for cultural activities and canteen food cater for cultural differences • Authoritative resource of IB curriculum and PYP transdisciplinary themes prioritises learning about and within culture to promote international mindedness and intercultural understanding • An Islamic parent group has input into the social actions for Muslim students e.g., halal sausages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The uniform policy allows for religious and cultural adornments • Cultural behaviours and understandings are evident in some parents use of carpark and homework expectations • The school allows students to practice religious and cultural customs within the school property • The school canteen offers a variety of cultural foods and observes cultural and religious food restrictions

Southern College: enabling and constraining influences on the catering for cultural differences			
	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wearing of some religious identification Mother tongue sessions give students the opportunity to express their cultural differences Cultural food customs are honoured by the canteen e.g., Halal sausage sizzle and Indian food No cultures are signified above any other Some teachers believe there is room for improvement in the expression of cultural differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language policy as mother tongue sessions authorises the expression of and catering for cultural differences School promotes use of mother tongue as part of student led conferences Library resources reflect transdisciplinary themes of PYP to cater for cultural diversity as well as learn about other cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The language policy sanctions the use of mother tongue throughout the school in formal activities
Local system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home life plays a role in the cultural differences that students express Cultural differences of parents is visible in their attitudes towards their child's education and their behaviours when in classrooms Parents are able to exercise their cultural practices through councils and ability to withdraw students The language policy promotes the use of mother tongue for communication in formal school activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are encouraged as a resource to help students learn about the artefacts and customs of their own as well as other cultures Children and parents' cultural knowledges are used as primary resources for learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When cultural behaviours are different to those of the teacher, cultural practices at home are often cited Personal hygiene about toilet use and teeth is not marked, nor commented on by teachers The language policy sanctions the use of mother tongue to encourage parents and children to communicate in home languages
State/nation system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia is a very multicultural society so promoting international mindedness important No official prioritising of one culture over another 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authoritative resource of IB curriculum developed through ACARA provides opportunities to cater for cultural differences Allocative resources are nationally sourced and so are mostly western in nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IB curriculum framework legitimises what counts for knowledge with regards to cultural studies
World system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers recognise differences as well as core of humanity that grounds us together Teachers and school leaders understand that the world is very small and that we live in transcultural communities Teachers and students are aware of their cultural backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authoritative resource of IB curriculum is a transferable content-free framework that addresses big global concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is minor reported discrepancy between the cultural expectations of teachers and students e.g., student dependence, patriarchal, quiet and shy, forthright
System reproduction	<p>Signification: The expression of cultural differences is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enabled by the nature of the curriculum including the PYP transdisciplinary themes, cultural awareness 	<p>Domination: The expression of cultural differences is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enabled by allocative resources like physical spaces for children to express their cultures 	<p>Legitimation: The expression of cultural differences is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enabled by the cultural sensitivities of the school community expressed

Southern College: enabling and constraining influences on the catering for cultural differences			
	Signification	Domination	Legitimation
	<p>of the school community, school initiatives like the mother tongue sessions, teacher willingness to share cultural artefacts that come into the classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enabled by a global understanding about differences and sameness in a pluralistic and multicultural country • enabled by beliefs about empowering children to be internationally minded and culturally open • enabled by the inclusion of parent knowledges and language in formal school settings • marked by certain cultural dispositions—cleanliness, dependency, etc. which teachers see are culturally derived—as well as the foods children bring to school and some cultural behaviours of parents • constrained by the uniform policy • constrained by the prioritisation of some cultures to the exclusion of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enabled by authoritative resources like the curriculum, school initiatives, the use of parents' knowledge about their cultures and opportunities to share their cultural artefacts during class time • enabled by authoritative resources of curriculum that promote international mindedness and intercultural understanding • enabled by policies about mother-tongue inclusion • enabled by allocative resources like parent and student cultural knowledge, physical spaces and food choices and culturally diverse library resources • constrained by some Anglo-focused classroom resources 	<p>through some procedures for action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • constrained by the uniform policy and when some parent cultural behaviours are deemed as inappropriate social action • enabled by teachers' cultural sensitivity towards the cultural differences of others • enabled school practices that allow other cultural and religious practices, including language, to be catered for • constrained (but also enabled) by the uniform policy

The stories about cultural differences at Southern College are contextualised across interactive systems, as indicated in Figure 5.8. For example, students are afforded multiple opportunities to express themselves as cultural beings in the school and the classroom due to the nature of the adopted curriculum—the International Baccalaureate, a global flow from elsewhere. As well as the inclusion of parents as primary resources of knowledge about culture from local to the classroom, and the creation of mother tongue sessions for children to celebrate their languages as well as aspects of their cultures linking global cultures to the school. Tensions around cultural dispositions of children are less marked than those in Midtown School, however some constraints operate to limit cultural expression. These observed social relations, explored below through a system reproduction analysis below, implicate signification, domination and

legitimation structural dimension (Giddens, 1984), which are highlighted in the lower shaded section of Table 5.8.

5.8 Cultural differences outside the classroom: Signification, domination, legitimation

Outside of the classroom a number of elements operate that are inclusive towards cultural differences. The uniform policy that is, “very respectful towards either Hindu or Islamic students” allows parents of Muslim girls to negotiate the wearing of longer school tunics and veils and Sikh students can wear the Dastaar—turbans that cover their hair. Religious differences are also catered for, “we have a space for our Islamic students to go and pray, a space for their prayer mats and fathers still check their sons out for afternoon prayer”. Thus, authoritative and allocative resources, as policies, operate to enable students to express differences through adornments, as well as spaces within the school (Giddens, 1984).

The school canteen provides foods that are culturally sensitive, for example, when the school “[puts] on a sausage sizzle [there are] Halal sausages so all can participate”. At the school canteen, “one of the regulars is an Indian vegetarian curry and I’m assuming because we have people on site who can’t eat certain meats”. There is a shared understanding through communication patterns about the inclusion of the cultural other with respect to food. The “communication of meaning” (Held & Thompson, 1989, p. 61) through the school leader’s discursive consciousness (Giddens, 1984) indicates that the school community shares intercultural understanding and knowledge about the cultural practices about foods—for example, Indian people (some) are vegetarians and Muslims cannot eat meat that is not halal. Further, the school has an Islamic parent group that supports students in extracurricular activities, like school camps, where eating regular food might cause issues especially during Muslim Ramadan.

The school mobilises an array of policies and activities that authorise, communicate shared meanings, as well as allocate space for the expression of and catering for cultural differences of

students. These dominating and signifying structures enable a transformative capacity—students can harness such resources to “generate command” over material and human resources with regards to their cultural differences (Giddens, 1984, p. 33). Other elements, more culturally marked, and mentioned often by interview participants are parental attitudes, mother tongue sessions and the home-school connection, as discussed in more detail below.

5.8.1 Cultural differences and parental attitudes: Signification

In response to the question about how children express their cultural differences through habits and dispositions, respondents were more likely to talk about the habits and dispositions of parents. One school leader talked about certain behaviours of parents that he deemed were influenced by culture. A disengagement with the rules in the carpark sees some parents—“dropping off and picking up [their children] ... not always to the signs, and to the rules”. As well, expectations of homework, where parents demand, “Less free choice. A lot of our homework is about choice—choose four out of those six things to do ... [but for some parents] a different cultural understanding [operates] ... Yeah, you do all six of them”. Teachers agreed that they often observed cultural differences in the parents of their students, where “cultural expectations of having to have everything right” often prevailed. The school interpretive schemes (Giddens, 1976) about the practice of homework is not shared across the entire community. Other interpretative schemes are not shared—the school leader also spoke about what parents say about the types of learning that parents want to see in the classrooms. He related what one parent had told him, “Your teachers are too friendly in the classroom. They should just be making students do their sums, do their operations, do their maths. They’re not doing enough maths”.

A pragmatic horizon analysis in Table 5.9 illustrates the semantic meanings of the reported parent’s communication patterns with respect to their cultural dispositions about student learning, as quoted above. It is shown that some parents with different cultural backgrounds

believe that education should be conducted in a didactic manner where the children obey the teacher and do individual work in maths. Their “programmed communication of already established meanings” about learning and perhaps echoing cultural differences, is in conflict with those of the school (Giddens, 1976, p. 111)—the interpretive schemes between the two in contrast (Giddens, 1976).

Table 5.9 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Signification about parent’s cultural dispositions about learning

Actor: School leader, Date 05/09/2017
Response to interview question about how you would see cultural differences in the school
‘Your teachers are too friendly in the classroom. They should just be making students do their sums, do their operations, do their maths. They’re not doing enough maths.’
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I feel that parents are preoccupied with the learning of maths and that they feel that teachers are too friendly with their students. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> From my perspective parents indicate that they do not agree with the inquiry model of learning that this school follows where teachers are positive communicators, collaborators and facilitators of learning.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Some parents think that learning is about teachers making students do maths and that in some classes they are not doing enough maths. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> Parents do not agree with the school pedagogical style of inquiry learning.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Parents should understand that teachers are not there to make students do their sums. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Parents should understand that teachers are there to facilitate their learning through various pedagogical strategies. <i>Background, remote</i> Learning should operate in a caring, cooperative environment where teachers are friendly and open.

Parent meanings about teaching conflicts with the cultural communication structures (Kaspersen, 2000) about learning in this school, as open, collaborative and caring and espoused through the International Baccalaureate, as discussed in section I of Chapter Five. The “stocks of knowledge” (Giddens, 1984, p. 29) about learning are contrastive between the school leader—whose ideas reflect the semantic meanings of the curriculum framework—and some parents, whose ideas might be “reproduced across time and space” (Giddens, 1984, p. 25). Power is

distributed unevenly—the process of schooling does not encompass a didactic teaching approach, and parents must bend to the signified and dominating structures of the school. This sharing of power, however, is reversed in the next two examples.

5.8.2 Mother tongue sessions: Signification, domination and legitimation

The programmed mother tongue sessions are an enabling device for the inclusion of cultural differences. Run by parents or teachers who have fluency or mother tongue in these languages—Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese and Hindi—in lunch times for EAL/D (English as an additional language/dialect) students, they offer opportunities for students from different language backgrounds to meet, talk and learn more about their cultural origins. A school leader explains:

The International Baccalaureate is very strong in mother tongue and understanding that cultural element. They very much promote the idea that learning isn't just really the language of instruction in English, and to honour the mother tongue in the cultures out there. There's not a single program of inquiry out there that doesn't look at the how we express ourselves through cultural values and beliefs, or who we are with regards to our individual cultural beliefs and values.

These expressed ideas align with statements within the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, in relation to the transdisciplinary theme of how we express ourselves: “An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values” and also the learner profile of Communicator: “They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language” (International-Baccalaureate, 2009, p. 5). Table 5.10 uncovers the meaning and power structures behind the last sentence of the statement by the school leader, above.

Table 5.10 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Signification and domination structures about mother tongue sessions

Actor: School leader, Date: 07/09/2017 Response to interview question about how cultural differences are catered for in the school
<p>‘There’s not a single program of inquiry out there that doesn’t look at the how we express ourselves through cultural values and beliefs, or who we are with regards to our individual cultural beliefs and values.’</p>
<p>Possible subjective claims</p> <p><i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I feel that it is important to honour and celebrate the cultural values and beliefs of our students.</p> <p><i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> I think it is important that programs of inquiry teach children about their own as well as others’ cultural beliefs and values through expression of cultural differences.</p>
<p>Possible objective claims</p> <p><i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> As part of the International Baccalaureate, programs of inquiry teach students about their own as well as other cultural beliefs and values.</p> <p><i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> The International Baccalaureate is a culturally inclusive curriculum that enables the expression of cultural differences.</p>
<p>Possible normative-evaluative claims</p> <p><i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Curriculum programs should aim to teach children about their cultural differences.</p> <p><i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Curriculum programs should investigate how we express ourselves and who we are with respect to our cultural differences.</p> <p><i>Background, remote</i> Learning about cultural beliefs and values are an important part of learning how to be in this world.</p>

As indicated in Table 5.10, the modes of discourse of the school leader about cultural diversity and learning suggest inclusivity, where children actively engage with how they express themselves through cultural values and beliefs, but also who they are, culturally. The “communication of meaning in interaction” (Giddens, 1979, p. 98) translates to an education program that celebrates, as well as calls forth, cultural diversity and differences as important signifiers of, and for, learning. Such signification is “grounded in the ‘spacing’ of social practices” (Giddens, 1979, p. 98) which plays out to be inclusive of cultural diversity across multiple systems and spaces—from the world system of curriculum framework to school leader endorsement to local lunch time action. Further, the language policy as an authoritative resource, generates command and control (Kaspersen, 2000) to enable students from different language backgrounds to meet, talk

and learn more about their cultural origins. Another element of this school—the home-school connection—works in a similar way, as discussed below.

5.8.3 The home-school connection

The school prides itself on its home-school connection. A school leader comments that it served to promote a close and purposeful cooperation between home and school, “to ensure the best possible educational opportunities are achieved by students”. Parents are encouraged to become involved “in their son or daughter’s academic, social and general development, and to communicate with the school on matters of interest or concern”. As part of this connection, student-led conferences—where parents are invited to conference with their child, and not with the teacher—to share the learnings and their work in recent classroom activity. The way the school manages these conferences enables cultural inclusivity, as a teacher describes:

We encourage parents who might not have English as their first language to interact with their child in their mother tongue. They don’t necessarily have to do it in English. I know some of the notices, especially for the mother tongue, were going home in different languages, as well.

Such management facilitates and legitimises the inclusion of languages other than English as the medium through which student-led conferences proceed. As an enabling structure this action by school staff then becomes a power sharing opportunity for parents to become more informed about their child’s learning through their own languages, rather than the languages of others. Through a transformative capacity (Giddens, 1984), such authoritative resources work to allow parents and children to generate command (Kaspersen, 2000) over the medium of communication at student-led conferences. The outcome might be that parents are better able to understand their child’s progress, thus affording parents and students dominion over interaction about learning (Giddens, 1984). This section has explored the ways in which cultural differences

are expressed and catered for outside the school. The next section moves to consider how cultural differences play out in the classroom.

5.9 Cultural differences in the classroom: What signifies, dominates and legitimises?

Although most prep classrooms at Southern College are diversely cultured, cultural differences are more than often not expressed as students go about their daily class activities, as discussed further in Chapter Six, section I. However, the cultural differences of children and their parents are called upon to furnish the content of the curriculum, as Units of Inquiry. The main thrust towards cultural differences in this school is through the International Baccalaureate curriculum which emphasises open mindedness and intercultural understandings and respect. This thrust is discussed below as well as some other elements that work to include cultural differences in the classroom.

5.9.1 Expressing cultural differences in the classroom

Cultural differences in the classroom are expressed through the food children bring to school, and through the cultural attitudes about education of some of the parents. Expression through habits and dispositions is minimal—teachers reported that teeth and noses, on the whole, were maintained, perhaps reflecting, “the type of school that we are and the socioeconomic [makeup]”, and the fact that the school has extensive and accessible health services. One prep teacher, who is Asian, remarked on the cleanliness of some of her Asian children, “it’s an Asian thing to be very clean ... one mum, she always hand-sanitises her [child] before she sits on the carpet. And [student] has a wet wipe in her lunch box if she has picky things [to eat]”.

Another teacher notes that her “Anglo-Saxon students are a lot more touchy-feely”. On culturally derived behaviours, one teacher commented on an eastern boy in the class, “if I see culture, I probably see it more in him ... he made comments about how if dad’s not at home, he’s in charge. But it’s definitely that cultural background, where the male controls everything”. This teacher’s comment is interesting in that she shortens cultural difference to “seeing culture”.

Perhaps she is saying that she was better able to recognise the “Other” than to recognise herself as a cultural being. Other studies (James & Shamma, 2013; Maloney & Saltmarsh, 2016) report that teachers sometimes have limited cultural self-awareness and that working with teachers to instil such awareness was noted as limited. Other than the instances cited above, the interpretive schemes with respect to behaviours, dispositions and habits are not in conflict and the symbolic order (Kaspersen, 2000) about these, is agreed upon by the teachers in prep.

Bella is particularly sensitive to parents when they come to her classroom. She remarked that it was interesting to watch cultural differences at these times—“some parents are very keen to get down on the floor and interact and play with their children. Or, are very encouraging in terms of that play-based learning. There are other parents who are more interested in seeing the books”. Seeing the books, she explained, meant that parents are looking for accuracy and correctness. “I have seen in the past, where a child, you know, they’re only five, so they’re reversing numbers. But, I have seen a parent go and get an eraser, and make their child rub their numbers out and write them in properly”. A pragmatic horizon, in Table 5.11 unpacks the claims in this statement.

Table 5.11 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Legitimation structures about work correction by parents

Actor: Teacher, Bella Date: 09/05/2018 Response to interview question about how you would see cultural differences in the school
'I have seen a parent go and get an eraser, and make their child rub their numbers out and write them in properly.'
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I feel that it is not constructive educationally for a parent to rub their young child's work out. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> I think that children who are five should be left to explore and learn from their mistakes.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Parents correct the work of their children when they see it as inaccurate. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> Parents don't want to lose face by seeing that their child is making mistakes.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Parents should not interfere with the process of learning that involves experimentation and making mistakes. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Young children should not be expected to be able to accurately write their numbers. <i>Background, remote</i> Interfering in this way could be harmful to children's development.

Bella refers to this parent behaviour as, “cultural expectations of having to have everything right”. The procedures for action (Giddens, 1976) about the accuracy and correctness of student writing contrasts between the social and moral norms of the teachers and the parents. While parents are focused on the right way to do things, the teacher is more interested in a developmental way of learning to write where children, as five-year olds, should be left alone to discover accuracy and correctness through experimentation. In this scene, legitimation structures work to constitute meaning about writing and each social actor, parents and teachers, attempts to regulate the social practice of children learning to write. The “moral constitution of interaction” (Giddens, 1976, p. 129) is split between the social and cultural norms of the parents and the teacher, the teacher has dominion over this social action, as time and place are on her side. Cultural differences are also expressed through the foods that children bring to school.

There is diversity of foods in prep children's lunchboxes—Asian children often have tin lunchboxes and tin thermoses that keep food warm, “they're obviously brought from Asia when

they come in [as immigrants]. They have the little Asian forks”, one teacher comments. Another teacher talks about the diversity in food that is not always acknowledged and celebrated by the students:

There’s quite a diversity in the lunchboxes. We do have some of the boys, the Indian boys, that bring in quite specific Indian chapatis and things like that that you don’t see in some of the other kids’ lunchboxes. Funnily enough, though, they’ve not brought it into the classroom and offered it, except for [student name], when her mum came in and shared their rituals and traditions that were part of Korea. She brought in some Korean snacks and we did get to sample those. But that’s the only time food has made it into the classroom, which is interesting.

The pragmatic horizon analysis, in Table 5.12, reveals the concern of the teacher about children not sharing about their food in class time. This concern, expressed as “interesting” must be contextualised an element of the mission statement for the International Baccalaureate as, “understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right” as well as “recognizing that others’ beliefs, viewpoints, religions and ideas may differ from one’s own” (Source: Southern College S3 Making the PYP Happen, p. 2 & 22). These statements work as an authoritative resource as a means of dominion (Giddens, 1984) over the activities of the teacher (and all other teachers at this school).

The modes of discourse inherent in the curriculum document are shared by the teacher in her social practice and illustrated in her communication pattern—subjectively she indicates that she values opportunities to share cultural items of food in her classroom and that she finds it interesting that students do not do this. The cognitive order (Giddens, 1976) is shared between this teacher and the structural properties of the school curriculum, but does not transcend to some of the parents and students in her class. The opportunity to continue this conversation was not forthcoming, but it does show the teacher’s willingness to be inclusive of cultural artefacts, like food, in the official part of her classroom, not just at eating breaks. This teacher, then, “[is]

able to generate outcomes through affecting the conduct of others” (Giddens, 1976, p. 129) through her communication and desire to share ideas about cultural foods in her classroom.

Table 5.12 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Signification structures about food

Actor: Teacher, Date: 05/09/2017
Response to interview question about whether you would see cultural differences in foods
‘Funnily enough, though, they’ve not brought it into the classroom... She brought in some Korean snacks and we did get to sample those. But that’s the only time food has made it into the classroom, which is interesting.’
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I value opportunities when children share their cultural foods in the classroom. I find it interesting that this does not happen more often. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> My classroom is open to other cultures and important learnings can occur when children share.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Only on one occasion have children shared their cultural foods in the classroom. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> Children eat a variety of cultural foods which can be shared in class time to promote intercultural understanding.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> It interesting that children do not want to share their cultural foods. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Sharing cultural foods is good for cultural learning. <i>Background, remote</i> Sharing cultural information in my class is good for student learning about other cultures.

On the whole, other than the foods that children bring to school, the expression of cultural differences is somewhat insignificant at Southern College. What is significant is how cultural differences are catered for, as explored in the next section.

5.10 Catering for cultural differences in the classroom

Cultural differences at Southern College are catered for in a variety of ways, mainly through the International Baccalaureate curriculum, but also through a number of social structures that include the shared cultural knowledges of parents and the ways that teachers include what children bring to school. The following discussion highlights how these elements work to share power around cultural diversity in the school.

5.10.1 Curriculum: A culturally inclusive and enabling resource

The structural properties of any curriculum, as authoritative resources, influence the expected social practice in classrooms. As discussed earlier, in this school the International Baccalaureate is that structuring resource that works to facilitate cultural inclusion, as well as learning about other cultures. For example, in one planned transdisciplinary theme, *Who We Are*—a four-week unit taught at the beginning of the school year—children adorned a box with items to personify and signify their social and cultural lives. Bella comments, “The memory boxes were a great chance for them” to express their cultural differences. In Bella’s classroom, Ha-yoon’s memory box contained a stethoscope, “part of Korean culture, where they choose their profession when they’re little babies...a nice opportunity for cultural learning to come in”. Bella’s statement is contextualised within the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile of being open-minded and reflective, and fostering intercultural understandings and respect (International-Baccalaureate, 2009). A pragmatic horizon analysis in Table 5.13 highlights the meaning units in her statement (Carspecken, 1996) with respect to Ha-yoon’s stethoscope, cultural inclusivity and cultural learning.

Table 5.13 Pragmatic horizon analysis: Signification structures about cultural artefacts

Actor: Teacher, Bella, Date: 09/05/2018 Response to interview question about how cultural differences is catered for in the classroom
‘...part of Korean culture, where they choose their profession when they’re little babies...a nice opportunity for cultural learning to come in.’
Possible subjective claims <i>Foregrounded, immediate</i> I value opportunities when children share their cultural artefacts and knowledges in the classroom. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> My classroom is open to other cultures and important learnings can occur when children share.
Possible objective claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> Ha-yoon shares important cultural symbols with the class through her Memory Box contents. <i>Highly backgrounded, remote, taken-for-granted</i> Cultural information is conveyed through Ha-yoon’s box to convey important information about her cultural identity.
Possible normative-evaluative claims <i>Quite foregrounded, quite immediate</i> It’s a great opportunity to learn about others. <i>Less foregrounded, less immediate</i> Ha-Yoon’s stethoscope is important to her. <i>Background, remote</i> Sharing cultural information in my class is good for student learning about others.

In this case the curriculum operates as an authoritative resource to structure and constitute particular classroom practices (Giddens, 1979). The analysis in Table 5.13 highlights that discursive patterns of the teacher are communicated in accordance with the learner profile, thus reinforcing the cognitive order (Giddens, 1984) implied through other discursive statements within the curriculum. The actions of Ha-yoon further reinforce the curriculum cognitive order and resonate with the communication patterns of the teacher, which then reinforces shared interpretive schemes (Giddens, 1979). Facilitated by the authority of the curriculum and signified by the teacher, children become powerful communicators who share and learn from the contents of each other’s memory boxes.

There were other memorable accounts of this sharing—one child displayed pictures of his mother and father in traditional Indian dress in his memory box. In another, a Chinese student brought in, “a lot of little items [like] little musical instruments or dolls that were dressed in traditional dresses”. And another child from Romania, “had brought in some of the handmade

clothes that had all the intricate bead work on it, so very much that sort of Romani, sort of fancy, fancy outfits, and the little shoes that were especially handmade [for] the first year of the child's life". In another classroom, an Indian boy had brought in an Indian flag, photos of Bollywood dancing and a sari, another child a Hungarian doll and another a prayer mat. The facility of curriculum worked through domination structures as an authoritative resource to transfer command, and thus power, with respect to cultural differences to students in the classroom (Giddens, 1984). The inclusion of cultural artefacts as signifiers of cultural identity of the children gave them opportunities to draw upon cultural symbols of their cultural lives as part of official learning time through "communication, power and legitimation" (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 61) structures.

5.10.2 Parents and cultural artefacts in the classroom: An enabling resource

All of the prep teachers said that they were highly likely to acknowledge cultural artefacts brought in by students. One teacher told me that, "anything that the kids bring in that we're able to then connect to the unit of inquiry or a literacy focus that we have at that time, or math, we all definitely incorporate it". The celebration of Chinese New Year saw one prep classroom decorated with a dedicated corner to display artefacts associated with this celebration. Children were encouraged to experience the chopsticks in this display—an opportunity for the teacher to incorporate a fine motor activity. She said that the "students love going to those areas to observe and manipulate those artefacts". Teachers in prep appeared to take great care to acknowledge and incorporate the cultural artefacts of others.

Utilising parents as important resources to support learning about other cultures is a fairly standard practice across the school:

I'd have parents come in and share their knowledge, because I don't know much about certain cultural celebrations, and they would obviously have first-hand information on why things are celebrated, and the background and the history of it all.

Another staff member talked about the important practice of enrolling parents as a useful resource in the school, "... being able to just open up to the parents and getting that community involved in their child's education. And the parents are very willing to come and share their culture. Very proud of their culture and wanting other people to understand where they've come from". Facilitated through the powerful resource of the curriculum, players—from teacher to parents to students—across the educational landscape at this school are encouraged to share knowledge as well as artefacts that signify and celebrate their cultural differences. Sanctioned, through curriculum and as part of official learning time, the procedures for action (Giddens, 1976) signal cultural inclusivity. This inclusivity is mobilised through allocative—artefacts—and authoritative—curriculum and human action—to enable power sharing with respect to cultural differences across the school community (Giddens, 1984). The outcome is that children, and their parents participate as cultural beings in important learning environments to facilitate and foster intercultural understandings and respect, a requirement of the International Baccalaureate (International-Baccalaureate, 2009).

5.11 Section II summary

This section has explored how cultural differences were expressed and catered for at Midtown School and Southern College. It has found, as reflected in the shaded section in Table 5.1 and Table 5.8, that cultural differences are a significant factor that flavour the ways education plays out in each school. While this analysis is not meant to be a comparison, it is important to note that cultural differences played out in significantly different ways at each school.

5.12 Chapter summary

In summary, Chapter Five presented the findings and analysis for the first two research sub-questions: 1) In what ways do global flows of people and curriculum intersect with power-geometries in the social relations of each school and classroom, and 2) what do teachers and

school leaders say about how cultural differences are expressed and catered for in the schools and the classrooms?

Section I characterised the schools in a “throwntogetherness” where cultural differences were influenced through the power-geometries of global flows like people, curriculum and materials (Massey, 1999, 2005). It found that there was a relationship between global flows, power-geometries and social relations at each school site which manifested in some cultural ways suppressed, while others were afforded. This suppression and affordance was very much tied to a unique set of social relations at each site. Section II foregrounded how system relations, across five distinct social systems, influenced the way that cultural differences were catered for and expressed in the schools and the classrooms. In this analysis, the classroom was considered part of a wider system, in which certain positions about cultural differences transcended to classroom spaces to influence the interactions of cultural differences with classroom and school social action. The cultural beliefs of teachers and parents, that came from other realms of the social system, often meant that classroom social action was influenced by views about culture extraneous to the classroom.

These findings have implications for the way that the social action within schools and classrooms is examined, but also for the what, in particular, influences classroom social action. Each section above iterated the contextualised nature of schools and their classrooms as part of the wider global world and also within more closely situated systems. Global flows, through the mobility of people, ideas, educational documents and teaching resources, changed the way that each classroom operated. The next chapter—Chapter Six—explores more closely the social action in each lower primary classroom to explore the interplay of cultural differences and sociomateriality. This chapter will also include discussion regarding the entire suite of findings with respect to the overarching research question about the positioning of cultural differences.

6 The sociomateriality of cultural differences and discussion

Chapter Five provided analyses to answer the two first research sub-questions. The significance of the first two analyses is that they uncovered how cultural differences intermingled across the social relations in each school to manifest in unwanted, wanting and privileged ways. Global flows of people and curriculum, through power-geometries, shaped up the social relations to privilege the cultural positionings and knowledges and understandings of some groups over others. Importantly, it was found that the social system that enveloped each school reproduced and reinforced a particular set of cultural differences at the expense of others. The aim of Chapter Six is to answer the third, and last, research sub-question about the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality in each classroom. A further aim is to provide a theoretical discussion with respect to the findings for the overall research question: How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two nations in the context of globalisation? Chapter Six is then divided into two sections as indicated below.

Section I in this chapter builds on from previous analyses—Chapter Five, sections I and II—to examine the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality. The concept of sociomateriality, as discussed in detail in Chapter Two and Three, binds humans and non-humans together in meaning making and holds that materials critically shape human action (Fenwick et al., 2011). The following analysis provides illustrations and clarifications through a selection of classroom sociomaterial action, as agency, a concept explored by both Giddens (1984)—the capability, rather than intention to do things and regulated through the mobilisation of rules and resources—and Fenwick (2012)—where human desire and interest are only possible through networked assemblages of human and non-human. Sociomateriality liberates “agency from its conceptual confines as a human-generated force” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 114) and so moves tangentially with Giddens’ (1984) concept of agency, as part of structuration theory, which ties

social action to “structural conditions that make the activities possible” (Evans, 1987, pp. 276-277).

A number of classroom vignettes that capture the sociomaterial nature of the observed social action are used to illustrate how culturally diverse students mediate meaning through material objects in their respective classes. As discussed earlier, power-geometries through global flows, operate to position social agents in particular ways (Massey, 1999), and these are enacted in the classroom where children are positioned through their interaction with materials. Section I answers the third research sub-question:

How do cultural differences interplay with sociomateriality in classroom book reading and learning centres in each classroom?

The classroom vignettes and instances of observation, as caught by field notes, and for this analysis revolve around book reading and learning centres. Divided into two parts below, each illustrates how children interface with material objects to make meaning in each respective classroom. The first part considers book reading in each school and classroom and will explore how cultural differences interplay with the selection of, and practice with, books. The second part attends to the interplay of cultural differences and sociomateriality in learning centre activities and traces and analyses two vignettes, one from each classroom. In this part discourse analysis (Gee, 2011) is used to contextualise observed social action in other mediating texts. In both parts, Midtown School will be followed by Southern College.

6.1 Part I—The interplay of cultural differences and sociomateriality in book reading

Among the material resources that inhabit most classrooms, books are considered vital opportunities for teachers to teach and children to learn about the world around them, but also to become competent literate bodies (Luke, 1992). In both of the observed classrooms, books matter—they are prominent in the classroom spaces, they are revered by teachers and children alike and they are materially entwined in the social action of each class. A closer observation,

however, reveals that the selection of books and book activity is marked in some aspects of each classroom. The following analysis explores these aspects with respect to the nature of books in each classroom and the sociomaterial practices in which the social actors—teachers and students—participate around books. This material resource is contextualised by and “tied to a broader, complex of political economy” (Luke, 1992, p. 116) that influences which books are included in classroom book reading. Further, it is also understood that teacher practice around books is situated through previous experience of pedagogical approaches and access to children’s literature, as well as located in local contexts that might call for different approaches (Bradfield, 2017).

6.1.1 Book practices at each school

Over the research period, and as one would expect in a lower primary classroom, there were many instances of students and teachers engaging with books. In Bella’s classroom, at Southern College, books are not only seen but heard often. Book corner was well resourced with an alluring, current and prolific array of quality children’s books surrounded by an inviting environment to encourage reading. Favourites like those of Julia Donaldson and Aaron Blabey adorn the shelves as do picture books with social messages, like those of Shaun Tan and Emily Gravatt and old, old favourites like *Rosie’s Walk*, by Pat Hutchings and *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendek. Of course, books with pigs—*Piggy Book*, by Anthony Browne, *Who Sank the Boat*, by Pamela Allen, *Pig the Pug*, by Aaron Blabey, *Old Pig*, by Margaret Wilde and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*, by Jon Scieszka sit proudly prominent on the shelves.

Children were busy with books throughout much of their school day. They read books in both formal and informal ways—as part of reading time from their book boxes, as reading buddies in literacy sessions, in free time where they may choose a book from book corner, and in the morning before school starts. They also read books as part of choosing activities, selecting their favourite books. I saw children go book shopping where they choose the books to fill their

book folders for the week and read books as part of teacher-student reading. Book week, held annually, hosts a myriad of book-focused activities like a book character parade, meeting an author and a book hunt. Over the eight weeks of research gathering I saw children sitting quietly in corners reading their favourite book—even stroking books. I was impressed when they willingly and without prompting tidied book corner, drew their favourite page from a book, or shared books with other students. I saw them listening with unfocused gaze, as if in raptures, focused intently on book illustrations. During snack time, Bella—all of the prep teachers do this—reads to the students, after they have come in from 30 minutes of outside play. They all sit quietly on a mat and eat their food in a trance-like state, almost in slow motion, ferrying food to their mouths with their hands but not taking their eyes off Bella and the book; nobody talks, and each pays close attention to the story reading.

The place of books in Susan’s classroom, at Midtown School in Dubai, mimics that of Bella’s classroom, where book corner is inviting and prioritised during choice time activities and children interact with books regularly throughout the day. Like Bella, Susan reads a variety of books for a variety of educational reasons to her students—to inform, to learn, to entertain and to focus. Many teachers, including Susan, spoke passionately about the lack of appropriate books for their early readers. “I do find that I don’t necessarily have access to the quality of books that I would like,” says Susan (Source: Susan interview 08/11/2017). Jane has similar views, “I think we need a lot more...They tend to be quite old and traditional, and I think there could be a wider range, and definitely to celebrate the different cultures” (Source: Jane interview 20/12/2017). This lack is exacerbated by a limited supply of children’s books that deal with the place of the United Arab Emirates and the prevalence of books that come from England. In Susan’s room, book corner is often worse for the wear with books strewn over the carpet or shelved with the pages bent and covers turned back. Susan recounts, “... with book corner, we [have come] a long way with tidying the books, they don’t have an issue with the books on the floor and walking over [them], so we have to talk about the book having feelings.”

The social actions of children and their teachers are critically shaped through the materiality of books—what, when and how they read—where each adopts certain behaviours and utilisations of these important resources (Fenwick et al., 2011). In many aspects, cultural differences do not appear to matter in each classroom—children are equally enthusiastic about reading books and being read to, and teachers display similar practices and understandings about the importance of books in the classroom. However, what is noticeable in each classroom is the way that cultural differences interplay with the selection of books which in turn influences the sociomateriality around books. In each case, discussed below, the social conditions and power-geometries that envelop each classroom influence the way that cultural differences interplays with the sociomateriality around books. This interaction is explored in Midtown School first, followed by Southern College.

6.1.1.1 Books: Cultural differences and sociomateriality at Midtown School

As discussed in Chapter Five Section II, many of the books available for children at this school do not always meet their needs. There are very few Arabic books available and books that reflect the local area where children live are limited in the library. Also, many of the books, as indicated previously, are British curriculum oriented, like “Beth, Chip and Kipper” (Source: Sarah interview 12/11/1017) and do not resonate with the cultural lives of the children in the hot, dry cosmopolitan city of Dubai. This is further compounded by the lack of quality books, as Susan laments, “I don’t have that extensive library necessarily, which has the learning behind it that I would like” (Source: Susan interview 08/11/2017).

Book reading at Midtown School is caught up in power-geometries (Massey, 1999) that work to delimit the availability of books as a quality and appropriate learning resource in classrooms. Global flows, as British materials, manifest in classrooms as foreigners—characters in schoolbooks in English schools, like Beth, Chip and Kipper, do not resonate with the lives of children who are mostly from eastern countries. The construction of social relations (Massey,

1991a) and social knowledge through books, then mimics distant places, rather than those close to students. This is further exacerbated by the lack of books that might form more appropriate connections with children—about their lives in Dubai and about their Arabic or eastern roots. Children are placed in “very distinct ways in relation to” (Massey, 1991a, p. 25) the nature and availability of books at this school—their social action around books limits social outcomes with respect to learning about the world through literature to “*actively* configure practice and knowing” (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84). As discussed previously, geography matters—where one is in the world influences how social relations are realised (Massey & Jess, 1995). The availability and selection of books is further problematised by the inclusion and the exclusion of the pig.

A local factor that influences the nature of books at Midtown School is the social and cultural sanction concerning the pig. “We have to be careful what we put in the library. We’re not allowed any stories with pigs in them” (Source: Margaret interview 26/10/2017). The pig is a highly contentious word and material concept within the United Arab Emirates, as well as in many other Islamic countries. Many staff members speak about sanctions against the pig—“pigs are censored, you know, that’s offensive to Muslims to talk about pigs” (Source: Neville interview 18/12/2017), “I remember going through a book with some people of the ministry, and I said isn’t that a cute little pig. Pity, we can’t have that in our library” (Source: Robert interview 29/11/2017), and “when I was setting up the class [for learning about] “P for Pig”, I saw a pig tail and Ms Susan came running to me and said, “No, no, no, no pigs inside the class” (Source: Bindhu interview 27/11/2017). The Holy Koran forbids the consumption of pork deeming it an impure and unhealthy meat due to the pig’s eating and living habits and its cloven feet. Books with pigs in them are avoided or when there is a pig—like in *Who Sank the Boat*, by Pamela Allen—exclusions like covering up the pig with white paper or ripping the page out of the book are carried out to mask the offending animal.

Western literature represents a global flow into this country and this school. This flow is accompanied by ideas and concepts—the inclusion of the pig in a children’s story book—that

are not in keeping with local understandings about the pig. The fight over the pig represents a “fight about spatialised power” (Callard, 2004, p. 303), where time-space compression brings together concepts and ideas from one place to another. Unseen power relations, with equally unseen origins, perpetrate to create a culture of fear amongst western teachers as to the expression and visibility of the pig. The processes of globalisation, then, characterise the spaces of the classroom with fragmentation and disruption (Massey, 1991a)—its global sense of place “open, porous and hybrid” (Massey, 1999, p. 41), and representative of many different cultural ideas and bodies, including literature that might be viewed as quality but is tampered with through a spatialised power struggle.

This practice of masking or avoiding the pig is further complicated by two other statements. The first is a conversation with an Islamic cultural official who worked at the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding, an education centre that hosts cultural activities and talks aimed at educating others about Emirate and Islamic culture. He said that Muslims believe that the pig is not to be eaten, but that they don’t believe it doesn’t exist and that he hoped that the practice of covering it up in schools was not happening.

The second statement, below, was made by Susan, when she referred to the fear culture amongst teachers about the pig:

I think it’s fear. I think it is definitely fear driven. People don’t want to do the wrong thing, people are quite aware that they are living in a Muslim country where the rules are very strict, and I think here people play by the rules more than they would do in their own country because they don’t want to get into trouble (Source: Susan interview 28/11/2017).

These two statements add to the conundrum about the pig and the way power-geometries play out to position different groups of people and individuals in particular ways with respect to global flows (Massey, 1991a). On the one hand a local Islamic official denies the practice of masking the pig in learning about the world and on the other a teacher comments on the culture of fear of western teachers living and working in an Islamic country. Place, for the original

Emiratis before the oil and gas boom, once characterised by “homogenous and coherent communities” (Massey, 1991a, p. 24), and in a sense pig-less, is now a place of the diversity and hybridity of others (Massey & Jess, 1995). Such diversity morphs it to become a new place, with a local “uniqueness” full of “internal conflicts” (Massey, 1991a, p. 29) where concerns about things like pigs surface. This diversity and hybridity translates to fearful teachers not really knowing if they can do or say particular things. This fear of the unknown bubbles down to the classroom practice as the following vignette explores.

6.1.1.2 Cultural differences and sociomateriality: The missing pig in *Who Sank the Boat?*

This vignette recorded children interacting in a role play with the book *Who Sank the Boat*, a story about a cow, a donkey, a sheep, a pig, and a tiny little mouse who decide to go out in a boat for a row. Susan used this story to illustrate Archimedes’ principle, which the children were studying in science as float and sink.

As part of choice time, children reconstructed and role played the story using props and visuals. The material resources for this activity consisted of animal placards—one for each animal in the story—but there was no animal placard for the pig. The children hung these placards around their necks to show which animal they were in the role play. There was a pointer for the narrator, an upside-down table to serve as the boat and a piece of material stretched across the whiteboard where all the story prompts, as word prompts and pictures from the story, were pinned to remind children of the story plot. There was no trace of the pig, a crucial character in this story, represented anywhere. Later Susan told me that she successfully photoshopped the pig, represented in 15 images and three words, out!

Susan’s social action around the book contrasts to those of the children in the scene above. It is her intent and desire, cultivated out of fear and ambiguity, to mask the pig from the children—her human action is critically shaped (Fenwick et al., 2011) by a material that houses the offending pig in images and words. Her action, to photoshop the pig out of the story,

displays an explicit embodied dimension of practice (Fenwick, 2012) that elicited from an implicit dimension of practice that fears the airing of the pig. The children, on the other hand, are ignorant of the agency of the teacher and play the scene out oblivious to the pig's exclusion. Worth further mention is that this book is an excellent opportunity to teach young children about a highly complex scientific law about buoyancy and displacement, Archimedes Principle. Exorcising the pig from the book, as word and image, fundamentally interferes with the accuracy of the scientific principle's portrayal.

Thus, "sociomaterializing processes configure educational actors, subjectivities, knowledge and activities" (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 2) in this classroom to satisfy a social sanction that lies somewhere illusive outside the classroom. The material world of the classroom is then embedded in knowledge creation and meaning making and teachers, as agents, and children, as unknowing participants, manipulate, take up and enact the social sanction about the pig. Power-geometries (Massey, 1991a), outside the classroom, manifest to limit the representations of cultural differences with respect to certain books to appease those whose culture finds the pig abhorrent; it is omitted or photoshopped out. This analysis shows how power-geometries operate to marginalise and privilege some cultural differences. The next analysis shows how power-geometries work to position cultural differences as part of sociomateriality and book reading in Bella's classroom.

6.1.1.3 Books: Cultural differences and sociomateriality at Southern College

The place of the book at Southern College is revered. As pointed out previously books in Bella's classroom are transcendent—they are everywhere, purposeful, strategic, entertaining, knowledge bearers and cultural fonts of knowledge. They are on classroom floors, shelves and tables and in boxes and on stands, they overfill the library, they are on parade and used for dress-up ideas, they are prizes and prize stimuluses (book hunts) and they appear at lunch break. Teachers, and the school, embrace books as a crucial learning material—they exploit them for many different

purposes on numerous occasions throughout every school day. Books signify culture but are at the same time cultural signifiers—not only do they carry cultural information, they also act as signs of cultural ways.

Discussed in Chapter Five section I, the International Baccalaureate purports to be an inclusive curriculum—its aim to educate students to live and work in a global world of interconnectivity where intercultural understandings and cultural respect are nurtured, and to “promote open mindedness towards cultural beliefs and values” (Source Anna interview: 07/09.2017). This is operationalised through the learner profiles of open mindedness and caring, as discussed in Chapter Five, and the transdisciplinary themes of “Who we are” and “How we express ourselves”. It thus, signifies culture and cultural differences as an important referent in teaching and learning. Further, the International Baccalaureate is understood to be a transferable curriculum—it is not “based on a particular culture, so the idea is that your units of inquiry, your lines of inquiry, everything can relate to where you are in a particular space” (Source: Anna interview 07/09/2017).

Through this curriculum, as a global flow used in over 150 countries and developed in Geneva, Switzerland, power-geometries (Massey, 1991a) operate to enable teachers and students to embrace the otherness of culture. Teachers and school leaders imbue this notion towards other cultures and the transferability of the curriculum through the way books are selected and used at school. The library is well equipped with books that embrace cultural references as well as books that embrace the different mother tongues of the school population. This attitude towards books that nurtures an open-mindedness with regards to culture, prevails in the classroom and often results in teachers helping students to draw conclusions about the comparative nature of cultures, for example, “Who are we” and “Where are we?” In prep children bring in books to read and these are more than often read and discussed, “when students bring in books ... we often try to make a comparison between what do we do, where do we live? Where do these people [in the book] live? (Source: Bella interview: 10/08/2017).

The above quote, by Bella, focuses an understanding of how materials, like books, are used in the classroom to address and embrace cultural differences. The book and the social action of the teacher forge in a dynamic relationship (Mills & Exley, 2014) to enable an open exploration of cultural differences. Bella's action is "critically shaped through the material" of the book "in entanglements" of the social and the material (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 1) to secure particular outcomes with respect to learning about the cultures of others. Facilitating comparison amongst her students, where questions like, "what do *we* do, where do *we* live? Where do *these* people [in the book] live?" sparks an inquiry into differences. Powerful entities and linkages, transported through the culturally inclusive priority of the International Baccalaureate curriculum, as power-geometries (Massey, 1991a), plays a role in influencing the nature of social action to afford and enhance learnings about intercultural understandings and respect (Fenwick et al., 2012). In this classroom, materials are considered forceful in "*actively* configure[ing] practice and knowing" about cultural diversity (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84).

This section has explored two instances of how power-geometries, through global flows like curriculum and teaching resources, interplay with the sociomaterial relations around the book in each classroom, each with a different outcome with respect to the way that cultural differences are addressed and embraced. Each analysis highlights that the nature and inclusion of books are tied to broader and complex political economies and in each case reviewed above, linked to different and perhaps far removed places that transport ideas and materials across the educational landscape (Luke, 1992; Massey, 1991a). The next section looks at the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality through a number of vignettes as part of learning centres in each class. It uses the concept of agency, following Fenwick (2012) and Giddens (1984), as discussed previously in detail in Chapter Three, to examine this interplay.

6.1.2 Social practice in learning centres: Sociomateriality, agency and cultural differences

Learning centres are an important part of many lower primary classrooms and across the world their nature differs. In foundation classrooms at Midtown School, all classes offer activities, as learning centres, that are based on choice—the Knowledge and Human Development Authority of Dubai expects foundation teachers to provide choice time that is not “teacher led or directed”, but rather, “child led, child-initiated learning” (Source: Susan interview 19/11/18). At Southern College, learning centres are usually tightly structured and controlled as rotational activities that include literacy, maths and science learning. Once a week in Bella’s classroom, an activity called “choosing” is offered—similar to the choice activities in Susan’s class, where children are able to choose an activity that is more informal in nature to the rotations described above, but dissimilar in that there is a time limit on this choice, and students must move to other activities when a bell is rung.

The following analysis explores these two different scenarios of learning centre social action in each classroom. Culture, as discussed in Chapter Three literature review, is considered a meaning making process and cultural ways—values, norms, practices, interaction patterns, perspectives and language—are formed through a process of social interaction with others that belong to cultural groups (Adams & Kirova, 2013b; McCurdy et al., 2005). Seeing culture as a process then calls into focus positions of power, for example, the intersection of cultural ways and the dominant culture of places, and some cultural practices are more privileged (Anderson-Levitt, 2012; Massey, 1999). In this section, the sociomaterial practices of culturally different children are examined—first at Midtown School, where five culturally diverse girls play at the play dough table, followed by Southern College, where a small group of children from different cultural backgrounds play in home corner as part of choosing time.

6.1.2.1 Midtown School

In Susan's classroom, learning centres, called choice activity or continuous provision, are characterised by choice and free flow, as Susan comments, "I have quite a free flow approach in that children can go wherever they want and they move when they have had enough" (Source: Susan interview 19/11/18). Choice time makes up three hours and forty minutes across the week and occurs on four of the days as five sessions. Activities like manipulating play dough, playing at small world—a table-based activity where children create communities that involve human activities like shopping and transport—running a travel agency, and role play in home corner, are planned to excite and encourage children to participate and learn.

Children in this classroom experience and express meaning through the social construction of their cultures, both in the classroom as well as in their homes and respective community places (Masemann, 2003; Swidler, 1986). While it is not possible to attribute cultural ways to this multicultural group in the time available—and in fact, wrong to do, as cultural ways are not fixed, but are fluid and shifting with place and time (Appadurai, 1996)—it was observed that some children were more productive in negotiating the sociomaterial aspects of the classroom than others. As part of data collection, the movements of all children were observed, however, the actions of a small group of girls has been selected to exemplify contrastive cases of the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality. The analysis highlights that different agents form different sociomaterial relations with the learning materials in Susan's classroom.

As mentioned above, this social vignette is contextualised by other texts. One text, the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (Department of Education, 2017), the overarching document that signifies and names the nature of teaching and learning in foundation classrooms at Midtown School, is analysed below to set the scene with respect to what is required as an active learner in Susan's classroom.

Contextualising texts for classroom social action: Early years framework for learning The *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (Department of Education, 2017) sets the standards

for learning and development for children aged birth to five who attend school in England.

While there are other statements in the framework that state the nature of education, two statements are useful to illustrate what counts for learning and development as part of education. Of the four guiding principles to be found on page six of the framework, the third is appropriate here:

children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs, and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers (p. 6)

Further, the framework requires that learning and development:

must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others (p. 6)

What follows is a brief discursive analysis of these two statements in order to contextualise the social action of the two vignettes that follow, but also to illustrate how discourses operate outside the classroom to influence the social action within.

The prominent discourse in the text above is the discourse of learning and development—each of the sentences serves to name the conditions for learning and development in lower primary classrooms. Both of the texts contain several authoritative phrases—“children learn and develop well”, learning and development “must be implemented” and “Play is essential”—the first and last exist as declarative statements, while the second is an imperative statement. Existence of these statements in this text work to authoritatively structure how learning will occur, that is, through enabling environments and play, that must be implemented. Further, each text works in different ways to assert what counts for learning, for example, “children learn and develop well ...” and indicate what teachers are obliged to do, for example, “must be implemented through ...”.

The use of the modal auxiliary “must”, a high modality word in the statement, “must be implemented”, signals a high degree of certainty about learning and development in this context, as does the use of “essential” with respect to play. Authority about how young children learn and develop is then structured through particular grammatical choices—declarative and imperative statements, and words of high modality. The above analysis contextualises the nature of learning in this foundation classroom. Play is signaled as important in the framework, is play as essential in learning and that learning environments should enable play.

From the above analysis, it can be shown how the two Early Years Foundation Stage statements influence the nature of education in the play dough vignette below. As a learning and development event, the play dough activity has been set up by a practitioner, Susan, the teacher, as an enabling environment—freshly made, pink play dough, a variety of tools for manipulating the dough, and tables and chairs invitingly group-oriented to encourage student sharing. To satisfy the understanding of learning and development, discussed above, each student would be expected to manipulate the play dough into purposeful items, while engaging in varying degrees of meaningful conversations with peers, matched to their language, cognitive and social needs. As teacher at the table they interact with me—after seven weeks of close classroom participation, familiar and respectful relationships have been built. They share statements about their creations (e.g., Isabella’s “See it looks like this”) and their play-acting for particular purposes (e.g., Isabella and Siama make spaghetti and Isabella and Ebony make plasters to put on hurt body parts). These statements illustrate their ability to socially engage and think through action and language. Further, the play within the activity is planned, and although adult-led from the side, encourages child-initiated activity. The girls are exploring the way play dough can be manipulated. and through play and language, what can be said about their actions. The learning and development in this activity is governed by these essential elements of the early years statements. With this curriculum context in mind, the next section explores how a culturally diverse group of girls interact in a sociomaterial assemblage at the play dough table.

6.1.2.2 Vignette 1: Sociomaterial action at the play dough table

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, a sociomaterial approach acknowledges the primacy of matter as part of social action (Coole & Frost, 2010)—this matter an ever present collection of early years learning resources like play dough, paints, toy trains and dress ups. The point is that for the children in Susan’s classroom, these materials function as more than tools for learning and each child’s social action is critically shaped through interaction with those materials (Fenwick et al., 2011). Given that the members of Susan’s classroom are culturally diverse, and have access to a range of cultural behaviours and understandings, in this analysis the interactions of child and materials are viewed to be influenced with their cultural differences (Gopinath, 2008).

In an earlier conversation Susan commented on how Isabella, from Scotland, the only western girl in the classroom, operated with a different skill set to the majority of the class. The first day Isabella arrived in Susan’s classroom she immediately went to the playdough table to make some sausages. She then asked Susan if she could go to the home corner to get a pan in which to cook her sausages. Observations of Isabella, on previous occasions, revealed how she seamlessly and effortlessly moved from one activity to the next leaving a trail of products and accomplishments wherever she went. Throughout the data collection Safiya was observed as an active agent, often visiting five stations in one session and with a strong desire to frequent the literacy station, while Ebony was equally active across the stations and showed preferences for home corner, small world and play dough—all stations that required the manipulation of material things. The following is a short summary of the observed event where Isabella is at the play dough table with four other girls—Saima, Safiya, Ebony and Dana—all from different cultural backgrounds. Note that a full excerpt of the play dough event, which took 20-minutes, can be found in Appendix C. The forthcoming analysis examines the sociomaterial action of Isabella, Safiya and Ebony, culturally different beings in Susan’s classroom. Saima and Dana were not included as they left the activity on several occasions.

As I join the girls, all five are manipulating playdough. Isabella constantly talks to describe her actions—sometimes to herself, sometimes to the other girls at the table as well as me, where she maintains eye contact with those to whom she is speaking. Throughout the observation time Isabella makes a multitude of things from the play dough including pancakes, magic play dough, items of jewellery and makeup and a plaster for a sore finger. Saima, next to Isabella, is talkative around her activity and makes spaghetti, a cake, and a candle for her cake. Ebony, Dana and Safiya are working quietly on their own, with some interaction and as I watch them, they make a variety of items, including some that I do not recognise and, at times, some that are copies of what Isabella and Saima make. Although the utterances of Ebony are minimal, Safiya speaks on five occasions—she asks Isabella and Saima for pieces of equipment, she laughs with me about a comment I make, she volunteers information about her creations, and she repeats words that Isabella says with reference to her play dough creations.

Table 6.1 collates the utterances, sociomaterial action and material things as products that Isabella makes while Table 6.2 collates the utterances, sociomaterial action, and material things as products that Safiya and Ebony make during this 20-minute vignette. These tables function to contrast each girl's sociomaterial action at the table.

Table 6.1 The discursive and sociomaterial action of Isabella at the play dough table

Utterances	Sociomaterial action	Material products
I'm just going to put this here and then make some spaghetti. See it's coming out like that.	pushes her play dough through the spaghetti maker	spaghetti
See it looks like this.	shows it to Saima who is also making spaghetti	
Here's a pancake	makes a pancake on the A for apple mat	pancake
Here like this	cuts it up with a cutter and offers me a slice	
I am making magical play dough, biggedy, boggedy, biggedy boo.	uses play dough tub to shake up and make magical playdough and tells me	magical play dough
I am making the play dough sparkle.	continues the shake up	sparkling play dough
Six, nine, six, nine,	shows me how 6 and 9 can interchange depending on what way you hold it	
It's a real plaster.	starts making something long and flat and I see that she has a sore finger. She tells me she is making a plaster for it. Isabella shows me and puts it on her finger.	plaster
You will need a plaster	takes my hand and pretends to put a needle into it and hurt me, then she makes a plaster, puts it on my hand	
I am wiping away the blood.	gives me an injection with a play dough tool and then makes a paper towel with play dough to wipe away the blood	paper towel
I am going to make some make up.	makes something and then rubs it on her cheeks	blusher
Is this enough?	shows me her cheeks to inquire about quantity	
Is this enough?	goes through the same steps for eye shadow and asks me again - then makes mascara and also lipstick and goes through the same steps—making it out of play dough, putting it on and then asking me each time.	eye shadow, mascara, lipstick
	Isabella is now making glittery popcorn and is using the play dough tub as a pan—she tells me this.	pan
Pop, pop, pop!	puts little pieces of play dough in the pan	popcorn
I am going to play the drums.	turns her pan into a drum and beats it rhythmically	drum

Table 6.2 The discursive and sociomaterial action of Safiya and Ebony at the play dough table

Utterances	Sociomaterial action	Material products
Safiya		
	makes eye contact with Saima, gestures to signals with her hands that she wants the spaghetti tool	
	Saima negotiates with Safiya to have it later	
	continues with own construction and works quietly on her own massaging a pile of play dough	play dough mass
I am making magic play dough.	is looking at Isabella (making magical play dough in a tub), copies her and carries out the same actions without tub and on the table	magical play dough
	after watching Isabella, makes a <u>plaster</u> , shows me	plaster
It is a palace.	is manipulating a big pile of play dough, I ask her what she is making	palace
I'm making a cake. (Laughs and nods)	turns her palace into a cake to copy Saima (who is back). (She tells me what she is doing. I say it looks more like zatar fataya (an Arabic savoury bread). She laughs and agrees).	cake
A candle.	puts a candle in the middle of her cake (to copy Saima). She cuts pieces and offers me some.	candle cake pieces
Pop, pop, pop!	joins in with Isabella who is making popcorn but only speaks and does not copy action	
Ebony		
	is working quietly on the other side of the table looking down	play dough mass
Speaks but her limited English language proficiency means that she can only approximate phrases and often resorts to Arabic	comes to me to give me something that she is making and tries to explain what it is	
	goes back to her seat and continues with her play dough	
	after watching Isabella giving injections, gets out of her seat and comes to me to give me an injection with appropriately fashioned play dough	needle
	watches Isabella making make up but doesn't copy	
	starts making popcorn and offers it to me	popcorn

An initial investigation of Table 6.1 derives the following. Isabella initiates 18 utterances of which two are directed towards others—her utterances suggest a competency of language use and an ability to articulate ideas about her actions. She produces 13 products in 20 minutes. Isabella displays a dynamic relationship between the social—her interactions, bodily arrangements and spoken language—with the materials as furniture, play dough and utensils, as well as created objects (Mills & Exley, 2014), further explored below. An investigation of Table 6.2 reveals that Safiya initiates three utterances and responds to Isabella on two occasions, her language sufficiently developed to enable her to convey meaning about her activity. She makes

six different items, one of which is not shaped as anything that I was able to recognise. On the other hand, Ebony, makes one attempt to talk—she has been observed as a very quiet girl who rarely speaks in the classroom, but outside in the playground talks freely with her friends, usually in Arabic. Ebony produces four different items, two of which are difficult for me to interpret. What follows is an analysis of the sociomaterial action of all three girls—Isabella, Safiya and Ebony.

Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 not only collate the utterances, sociomaterial actions and materials produced by each girl, but also serve to unite them in a sociomateriality. Meaning is “critically shaped through the material” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 1) through a dynamic relationship that recursively weds the social to the material (Mills & Exley, 2014). Each girl makes meaning by calling upon social—speech (this is less so for Ebony) and action—as well as material entities (Mills & Comber, 2015). Their human action is critically shaped through interaction with play dough utensils, the play dough itself and the products that each girl makes. The embodied dimension of practice—the social action embodied by the materials with which one interacts—in which each girl participates is discussed below (Fenwick, 2012).

Isabella’s embodied dimension of practice is highly imaginative and skilled, producing a multitude of materials that “function as heuristics for learning” (Mills, 2015, p. 114), where she “learn[s] to explore” ... “think about problems [and] relate to others” (Department of Education, 2017, p. 6). She expresses her capability as learner to turn rudimentary materials—unformed play dough and utensils—into other imagined materials, like sparkling play dough, lipstick and popcorn. She couples this production with discursive overlays to name, for herself and others, her sociomaterial actions—“I am making magical play dough, biggedy, boggedy, biggedy boo” and “I am going to make some make-up... is that enough”? The making of each product, as an entanglement between the social and the material (Fenwick et al., 2011), drives the social interaction between her and me, as well as others at the table. With these assemblages of

materials particular meaning is made, with a different set of materials different meanings would be made.

The embodied dimension of practice of Safiya is also skilled as she manipulates play dough to fashion a range of different products—play dough mass, magical play dough, plaster, palace, cake and a candle. While she is imaginative in her production to make items that others are not making, she does copy Isabella—magical play dough, plaster—and Siana—cake and candle. She shows that she easily relates to others—and in fact negotiates with Siana to get the spaghetti tool—and can explore a learning opportunity to create and imagine (Department of Education, 2017, p. 6). What is significant is that she mostly produces products that others are making and does not lead the activity at the table, as does Isabella, with her constant chatter and her reinvention of the play dough. Safiya's entanglements between the social and the material (Fenwick et al., 2011) are defined by a fair degree of mimicking what other girls at the table are doing. Further, her discursive contributions match the action in which she participates, however, as with the copied actions above, she is more likely to mimic others—"I am making magical play dough", and "Pop, pop, pop!"

Ebony's exhibits a less competent sociomaterial action than the other girls where she quietly works on her own, massaging a pile of play dough into sometimes unrecognisable items. She speaks less and when she does speak it is hard to understand her as she has limited English proficiency, and at times speaks quietly with her head down. Still, she participates in the play at the table and makes meaning with material items to give injections and make glittery popcorn, material instigations of Isabella. There is an understanding that the materials through which she interacts imbue meaning and "function as heuristics for [her] learning" in ways that might differ from those of Safiya and Isabella (Mills, 2015, p. 114).

The play dough event can be considered one that involves "more-than-human" (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84). Isabella, Safiya and Ebony, as cultural beings with access to particular sets of knowledges, acculturated through social interaction in the classroom, their homes and the

communities in which they participate, interact with and through the play dough materials to represent and express cultural knowledges that also serve to generate particular behaviours (Spradley, 1979). The three girls call upon their cultural background to make sense of and act around the materials with which they work. At the same time the materials act on them so that the material assemblages in which their social and cultural action is tempered “associate, move, and enact what may appear to be distinct objects, subjects, and events” (Edwards & Fenwick, 2015, p. 1401). Such distinctiveness is portrayed by the sociomaterial action of each girl as well as the products and utterances each contributes.

These sociomaterial assemblages of things exercise force on all humans at the table and cannot be considered separately (Fenwick, 2010, 2012; Fenwick et al., 2011). Isabella acts, but importantly, she manipulates her non-human environment such that her meaning making is inseparable from the materials with which she interacts. For example, she fashions items, gives injections, and changes the social action by making plasters and wiping up blood. Together, Isabella and materials, assemble to make meaning reflective of the social worlds in which she participates—going to the doctor, wearing jewellery and make up, eating spaghetti, playing music and imagining magical attributes of materials—all part of her sociomaterial acculturation. Her social worlds are reflective of the western orientation of her culture, and she easily transports these lived experiences to the western ideology of education in the classroom and the play dough table (Gopinath, 2008). Isabella’s agency is then expressed through a material web of “human and non-human assemblages” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71), where she capably mobilises a range of resources, as authoritative—human—and allocative—materials—affording her dominion over people and materials (Giddens, 1984), as will be further discussed below as part of the agency Isabella displays.

In contrast, the sociomaterial assemblages that Safiya and Ebony, and particularly Ebony, act within are more than likely to imitate ones that are initiated by others, in this case Isabella and Siama. Through materials, these two girls make meaning by co-opting the social

imaginations that are provided at the table. It can be assumed that their social worlds might not yield rich opportunities to develop their imaginations through purposeful play (Department of Education, 2017). As discussed in Chapter Five, section II, Susan talked about the lack of play skills in many of her students—“It’s play skills ... a lot of them are socialised with adults. They don’t have as much, as many play dates ... they might leave here at twelve, they might only get home at three, and they might be at home with the maid ... and not see their parents until late (Source: Susan interview, 22/11/17).

Safiya and Ebony’s human action, critically shaped through the materials, is then limited to the social worlds in which they are nurtured (Fenwick et al., 2011). Even though, each girl is competent within her own sphere of sociomaterial interaction, in contrast to Isabella, their contributions are less confident. Each girl, at the play dough table, displays different levels of competency to act in this class activity, in this particular envelope of space, in this particular time orientation, as discussed more fully below (Massey, 1991a, 1999). For the purposes of contrastive analysis, Isabella and Ebony will be discussed as it was felt that the contrasts in the sociomateriality and agency of these two were useful to show how cultural differences might influence social action in the classroom.

Further, it is noted here that the researcher (me)—western, white and fluent in the English language—also constitutes the materiality at hand at the play dough table and that this may have significance in terms of the social and material action of each girl. It may be that Isabella, also western and fluent in the English language, feels comfortable with assuming an interactive relationship with me, and that this aspect of interaction was less afforded to the other girls whose English language skills were less developed (they may have other well-developed first languages). As pointed out above, Isabella does not always direct her talk towards me, sometimes to herself and sometimes towards others at the table. However, over the course of the data gathering, I had developed close relationships with all of the children in Susan’s classroom and as

this event occurred towards the end of the research period, hoped that each girl was at ease with me to act unhindered by my presence.

Sociomaterial action in the classroom: Isabella at the playdough table The agency of Isabella and Ebony, as they interact in the play dough activity can be viewed through two theoretical lenses—sociomateriality and structuration, as discussed in Chapter Three. A sociomaterial approach “liberate[s] agency from its conceptual confines as a human-generated force” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 114). Agency is considered as a “distributed *effect* produced in material webs of human and non-human assemblages”, and therefore only possible through these networks of assemblages “whereby human desire and interests... become linked with things” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71). Individual objects do not have agency, but sociomaterial assemblages of things exercise force on humans and cannot be considered separately (Fenwick, 2010, 2012; Fenwick et al., 2011). According to Giddens (1984), agency is a processual concept where agents, who are knowledgeable about their activities, continually participate in routinised acts (Evans, 1987) in a continuous flow of conduct. Agency refers to the capability, rather than intention to do things, and is therefore, concerned with events that are perpetrated by the individual (Giddens, 1976) and notions of power—agents have the power to either intervene or alternatively refrain from intervention (Kaspersen, 2000). These two concepts will be used together to consider the agency of Isabella and Ebony in the play dough vignette.

Isabella expresses her “human desires and interests” of her everyday lived experience through a “material web of human and non-human assemblages” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71) that links her social actions with things. Her social actions are embodied in the materials she uses and produces, like popcorn, pans and sparkling play dough. Isabella’s agency is realised through these networks of assemblages, as a “distributed *effect* ... [to] become linked with things” (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71). She manipulates materials in imaginative and creative ways, displaying a high level of competency with respect to what is required as part of the learning activity. The sociomaterial assemblages of things that Isabella brings forth through her social action with materials then

exercises force on herself—her propensity for continual creativity and reinvention of the play dough—as well as others at the table as she interacts, and also models her playful interactions. These sociomaterial assemblages cannot be considered separately, and are part of the agency of Isabella (Fenwick, 2010, 2012; Fenwick et al., 2011).

As a competent manipulator of things, in this activity, Isabella possesses a power that is realised through production of 13 very different and imaginative products which she accompanies with appropriate commentary. She appears to have complete control over her activities as she weaves in and out of imaginary scenarios. The materials she produces are forceful in Isabella's "*actively* configure[ing] practice and knowing" (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84) in this learning activity. In this case, the materials act on Isabella to afford her particular social outcomes (Fenwick et al., 2012) in her ability to participate as required in this activity, as outlined in the early years framework, and so enhance her learning about the world in this classroom.

Taking a view of agency from a Giddens' perspective unearths further useful findings for this research, contextualised in global flows and cultural differences. According to structuration theory (Giddens, 1984), the social action in the play dough event is governed by a virtual order which encompasses structures made up of rules and resources. Isabella mobilises two types of resources, allocative and authoritative. She manipulates materials with a skill that affords her "dominion over material facilities", like the materials at the play dough table, to enable her a transformative capacity to "generate control of *objects*" (Thompson, 1989, p. 61). These materials then become the "media through which power is exercised" (Giddens, 1984, p. xxi)—she gains power as master manipulator at the table, her mastery over practice as well as things. Further, Isabella is a knowledgeable agent who exploits certain authoritative resources—she understands how to organise both the space and her body in the activity to generate command over others by utilising utensils and play dough, and modelling sociomaterial action that produces highly creative items for play (Thompson, 1989). For example, as a knowledgeable agent, Isabella possesses different types of knowledge—conscious, known as discursive consciousness, and

non-conscious, referred to as practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984)—which she calls upon to express her agency through her social actions. Her discursive consciousness is displayed in the left-hand column of Table 6.1 labelled “utterances” and will be discussed first.

The nature of her discourse is that she initiates 18 utterances which are directed towards others, including me, but also to herself. As discussed earlier, it may be the case that her talk is encouraged and supported by my presence as participant-observer. Her utterances consist of mostly declarative statements, where she informs the table participants about her products and her actions, and four questions where she genuinely seeks my opinion. A couple of her statements are marked—“I am making magical play dough, biggedy, boggedy, biggedy, boo” and “Pop, pop, pop”—suggesting a lyrical and rhythmical approach to and command over language in use where she shows alliteration and experimentation with words and sounds. Isabella’s discursive consciousness brings awareness to what she says about her social relations at the play dough table “including especially the conditions of [her] own actions” (Giddens, 1984, p. 374). For example, “I’m just going to put this here and then make some spaghetti, see it’s coming out like that” and “You will need a plaster” are conditioned by the material world in which her action is taking place, but also ontologically, as an imagined world in which she operates to produce a multiplicity of things. Her discursive consciousness, through her utterances “articulate [her] ‘know how’ propositionally” (Pearson, 1995, p. 73); her discursive patterns throughout the scene display her mastery of language, but also provides commentary for the material activity in which she participates.

Isabella’s non-conscious knowledge, her practical consciousness, is displayed in the second column of Table 6.1 labelled “sociomaterial action”. The tacit knowledge Isabella displays through her sociomaterial actions is “important for the maintenance and reproduction” of her social action in this event (Kaspersen, 2000, p. 36). She shows a wealth of knowledge about life situations—all culturally learned and observed through her previous cultural experiences—but also what to do with play dough. For example, she “takes my hand and pretends to put a needle

into it and hurt me, then she makes me a plaster and puts it on my hand and gives me an injection with a play dough tool, and then makes a paper towel with play dough to wipe away the blood”. She knows how to use the utensils at the table when she “pushes her play dough through the spaghetti maker” and, after announcing that she is going to play the drums, “turns her pan into a drum and beats it rhythmically”. Through this knowledge Isabella shows what she knows about her social relations—she interacts with others in a continuous chatter of commentary—and the conditions in which she operates—learning centres that require an active participation of creativity and problem solving (Giddens, 1984).

Sociomaterial action in the classroom: Ebony at the playdough table The examination and illumination of the power that Isabella holds at the play dough table—her mastery over practice as well as things, her control of objects and domination over material and cognitive resources (Thompson, 1989), where material entities create certain affordances for her to interact with things (Fenwick et al., 2011)—is not matched by the sociomaterial action of Ebony at the table. Throughout the 20-minute activity, Ebony struggled to make sense of the dough to form it into items that were recognisable by me. It was the case that when others watched Isabella making recognisable items others, including Ebony, copied, but no one copied any of the things made by Ebony. She worked diligently, with her head down and appeared to be intent on massaging her play dough like one would knead dough to make bread—back and forward, and over and over. Unlike Isabella, her manipulations were uncreative and unimaginative, but rather functional in nature, her agency as “human desire and interest” realised in an entanglement of materials that conveyed little to the others at the table (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71).

Ebony was able to produce four different items—a mass of play dough, an unrecognisable item (she knew what she had made but was unable to articulate its meaning), a needle to give an injection, and some popcorn. She showed confidence in manipulating the needle to give injections, but only after watching Isabella do the same action. While it is unclear, and it is most likely that Ebony has had an injection at a medical practice, she does not initiate such action. The

control she has over her play dough then appears to come from Isabella on two occasions—the needle and the popcorn—which aids her imaginative processes to delve into a world of play, perhaps different from what she has experienced elsewhere in her social life. Ebony “*actively* configure[s] practice and knowing” (Fenwick, 2015, p. 84) through the conduit and knowledge of Isabella, which is useful as a role modelling learning experience for Ebony. The materials then act on Ebony, her lack of experience with or her inability to call forth experiences in her social life left untouched and underutilised.

If her agency is considered through a structuration approach (Giddens, 1984) Ebony’s social action is governed by a virtual order encompassed by structures made up of rules and resources. Ebony mobilises allocative resources and “generate[s] control of *objects*” (Thompson, 1989, p. 61) when she manipulates the dough into some form of object, but also when she co-opts the ideas of others to make items that support her interaction at the table. In this way, she gains power to interact with others, but only at the initiation of Isabella. This begs the question about what Ebony might do if there were no initiators like Isabella, or perhaps Susan, at the table, to model and enthuse others with play making and the dough. Her access to authoritative resources, like bringing in knowledge from elsewhere to furnish her social action at the table, appears limited—she has less ability to generate command over others (Thompson, 1989). It can be said, then, that she is a less competent agent than Isabella in this activity, in this time and in this space—a space that is predominantly western in character that relies on social actors equipped with the skills of play, imagination, and creativity, as espoused by the early years framework from England.

According to Giddens (1984), agents act with two types of knowledge, as discussed previously in the case of Isabella above, and named as discursive consciousness, and practical consciousness. Although Isabella’s discursive consciousness—what she is able to articulate about her social relations and her “know-how (Pearson, 1995) is evident in her discourse in her 18 initiated utterances. The discursive consciousness of Ebony is less so in this event and her

limited discourse suggests that the “know-how” of Isabella is not as evident. As discussed earlier, Ebony is a quiet girl whose interactions with others in the classroom are limited. She does, however, like to work with Dana, and was observed across the data collection period to converse with her. As well, she is actively discursive during “outside time” where she often speaks Arabic with her friends. At “whole class time” she rarely speaks and shows reluctance to answer questions that Susan asks. In this event, the “know how” that might live somewhere in her cognition is not articulated (Pearson, 1995). She does, however, display a practical consciousness, as identified in the second column of Table 6.2.

Ebony’s sociomaterial actions reflect a perseverance to shape the dough but also to take on what others are doing. Although the wealth of knowledge that Isabella displays is not evident in this scene, she willingly adopts the sociomaterial practices of others to manipulate materials to make meanings about injections and popcorn. Perhaps she does not as yet have the finessed knowledge of Isabella to manipulate the play dough utensils—she mostly uses her hands rather than the tools—she does show initiative by getting out of her seat to give injections and mimic the making of popcorn, perhaps adding to her tacit knowledge. In this way, perhaps Ebony is being enculturated into the western learning environment, as prescribed by the early years curriculum framework from England.

Cultural differences, know-how and sociomateriality in the classroom What might be gleaned from the above analysis? Isabella displays a confident manner as she goes about her play—she is a knowledgeable agent who, through her discursive and practical consciousness, articulates the “know how” of this learning activity through her wealth of cultural knowledge that is aligned to the western culture of the classroom learning environment. The conceptual tools at her disposal—her language and the language systems she draws upon, as well as her knowledge of systems that afford social action with classroom materiality—position her as powerful social agent (Edwards, 2010). She creates and imitates numerous imagined situations through production and exploration of different items that are then accompanied with relevant speech

and social action. Isabella exhibits a strong partnership with others, and in particular the researcher at the table, through her social and bodily actions and her language, and also with the other girls at the table. She shows that she considers problems as she creates the medical situation of my bleeding and needing a wipe to mop up the blood. Also capable of transformation of various items, she turns magical play dough into sparkling play dough—as well she can spatially translate objects like the numbers 6 and 9, and through her sociomaterial action, displays practical understanding of this mathematical concept. She fits confidently into the learning and development discourse of the early years framework, as discussed above. In this learning centre activity, Isabella holds and displays power through her capability as a knowledgeable agent (Giddens, 1984) who can express her desires and interests (Fenwick, 2012) through material things at the table.

On the other hand, Ebony, in this activity, is portrayed as a less competent agent who enacts her agency through sociomaterial processes with less “know how” and less ability or opportunity to transport her cultural knowledges to the table. She has limited access to the conceptual tools that Isabella draws upon—her language contributions are limited, and she appears to have less practical knowledge from which to draw upon, including what to do with her play dough. Although it is expected that she will gain many skills of the English language, classroom participation and expected play, interaction, problem solving and creativity skills over the course of her year in Susan’s classroom, at this stage she has less power than Isabella to manipulate and control the sociomaterial environment in this play dough event.

For Isabella, the play dough event is an enabling environment where she explores, thinks, and relates to others in powerful ways. She is a powerful operator in this activity where she has command over the social as well as the material, as she is in most other activities in this classroom. For Ebony, the play dough event provides an enabling, but foreign—as a western dominated learning activity—environment for her to learn to operate in a way that is unfamiliar to her cultural ways. Thus, each girl is afforded or restricted to act through materials in a learning

environment that is western (and a language that may not be their home language). An explanation is tempered by the situatedness of place and the notion that placed social relations are no longer confined, but rather open. Such openness beckons “topologies of power” tied up in western educational flows, where “different ‘places’ will stand in contrasting relations to the global” to shape different sets of social relations (Massey, 2005, p. 101). As discussed in detail in Chapter Five, geography matters. The social relations in Susan’s classroom are woven out of many foreign flows, of people and of curriculum, of educational ideas, as well as physical flows like play dough and utensils (Massey, 1991a). The complex ideas will be further discussed as part of section II discussion in this chapter. In the meantime, this section now explores a vignette to analyse the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality at Southern College.

6.1.2.3 Southern College

This section analyses one instance—chosen as indicative from a plethora of others—of sociomateriality at Southern College in Bella’s classroom to consider if there is interplay of cultural differences and sociomateriality. This scene typifies the way that children relate with materials and each other in home corner, and in most of the observed activities over the research period. As discussed earlier, learning centres in Bella’s classroom comprise a different nature to those in Susan’s. The vignette, depicted in the image in Figure 6.1, was part of a learning centre activity, where the children were free to choose an activity, like block corner, puzzles, writing, reading or dramatic play and occurred roughly once a week. This freedom comes with rules—they must rotate to another activity when the bell rings, and there is a designated number of participants that must be followed at each activity, for example, block corner, where all the boys want to be, must have no more than five people. Choosing activities in Bella’s classroom departs from choice time in Susan’s classroom in that choosing time is tightly controlled with rules and regulations—children are not free to move across activities at their will. The purpose of this analysis mimics the one above, at the play dough table, to illuminate how a culturally diverse

group of children negotiate materials as part of play in learning centre activity, and as above, views the social action through two theoretical lenses—sociomateriality and structuration, as discussed in Chapter Three. The following field notes describe the vignette.



Figure 6.1 Parth, Ha-yoon and Lisa the cat play in home corner

Parth, Ha-yoon and Lisa, all with different cultural backgrounds and from different ethnicities are playing in home corner with dress ups, over a 15-minute time frame. Parth and Ha-yoon are dressed up in props from the dress-up box. At one stage Parth has on an old shirt (he is the Dad the girls tell me) and Ha-yoon has a skirt on and various bags around her waist and shoulders. Then the roles change as Ha-yoon tells me that she is his sister. Parth and Ha-yoon are chatting to each other and playing purposefully with different clothing props—they are laughing and putting on various pieces of clothing including bags, belts, gloves, skirts and shirts. While I watch, Ha-yoon pulls on some shocking blue gloves that are elbow length, and Parth puts on a belt and slings a bag over his shoulder. The naughty cat (Lisa) is meowing and scrambling around the floor, sometimes under the table and sometimes around Parth and Ha-Yoon's feet. She also steals food from the box and hides it. It appears to be a harmonious social scene with each child initiating, but also responding to the social action of the others.

A sociomaterial analysis on the vignette above reveals the following. Social norms in this class mean that children play together regardless of gender and cultural background—it is acceptable and normalised for boys to dress up as and play with girls, and for girls to play with boys, and for children from different backgrounds to play together. The materials in this scene—the clothing and apparel props of bags, belts, gloves, skirts and shirts, as well as the floor—interact with the social actions of the three children to help them make particular meanings through their play.

Parth and Ha-yoon's dynamic relationship with items of clothing and apparel express who they are in this scene—a dad/brother and a daughter/sister (Mills & Exley, 2014). They each call upon a combination of social and material entities to make meaning about who they are through the play (Mills & Comber, 2015). The materials of clothing with which they interact critically shape their action (Fenwick et al., 2011) and also their relationship to each other, as sister, father, brother, daughter and cat. Lisa, the cat, similarly uses materials to help her to become the cat. Rather than props, it is the floor and the feet of others, as well as her bodily movements, that grounds her meaning making, she knows that cats are often on floors. This might play out differently in Susan's classroom, where children are not used to having animals in their house and a minority of people keep pets—it's too hot and culturally inappropriate. Further, Lisa's embodied dimension of practice (Fenwick, 2012), as a cat on the material floor, enables her to behave like a cat, scrambling around and scratching at the feet of Parth and Ha-Yoon. It is the materiality of the floor and the softness of the carpet on which she can wriggle around, that critically shapes her action (Fenwick et al., 2011).

Thus non-humans—the floor, the clothing and apparel, and body parts—“act on and with humans” (Fenwick et al., 2011, p. 84) through sociomaterial assemblages to help the children enact their social scene and take on different subjectivities, as animals and humans. The old shirt with which Parth adorns himself turns him into a father, whereas, perhaps the gloves on Ha-Yoon signify something feminine and she becomes either sister or daughter and floor and feet

shape the behaviours of the scrambling and meowing cat. Each child's "human desire and interests... become linked with things" (Fenwick, 2012, p. 71), their agency expressed through sustained play and interaction with each other, and their human action critically shaped through interaction with the play materials (Fenwick et al., 2011).

What is notable here, and in the light of the play dough analysis, is that each of these diversely cultured children enact their agency through a continuous flow of conduct that illuminates their capabilities as knowledgeable agents in this particular, and characterised as western, home corner play (Giddens, 1984). There is no hesitancy, no lack of confidence and their desires and interests are enacted through the material things at their disposal—bags, belts and gloves, and the material carpeted floor (Fenwick, 2012). Each child manipulates their material environment according to their desires to play as father/brother, sister/daughter and cat. Observation of these three children over the data collection period revealed that each is an active and participatory member of this class, who play and act with equal productivity in learning centre activities, as well as more formal activities in literacy and science. In home corner, each of these social actors has the "know how" to sustain an interactive and uninterrupted flow of activity where they interact with materials and each other to keep the momentum of play through social action around materials and social roles of humans and animals (Giddens, 1984; Pearson, 1995).

It can be assumed that the capabilities they enact as knowledgeable agents of play are influenced by social experiences in perhaps, previous schooling as kindergarten, and their homes and communities. It is further acknowledged that this group of children have been at school for over half of the year and are heading for their last term of school, which means they have had time to develop those skills needed for enacting social action to make meaning through materials, in home corner. As was discussed in the play dough event, the social experiences that guide each child's sociomaterial action is closely aligned to place—where these children are in the world and the social worlds they inhabit flags a place's particularity "constructed out of a

particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus” in the physical environment of the classroom of Bella (Massey, 1991a, p. 28).

The classroom physical environment, with various items that entice play (dress ups and plastic food) shapes the kind of play in which they engage. The social action of the children—how close they are in body proximity, their embodied actions and adornments and the roles they assume in their play—is tempered by what is going on in other elements that are situated in place (Massey, 1991a; Scollon & Scollon, 2003). They are enticed to dress up and also touch each other as cultural norms allow—their social actions, indexed to the elements of place that characterise this particular place of this classroom home corner (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). The children, from three different ethnic backgrounds, appear at ease and familiar in this western educational environment of play. In this place in this time—a prep classroom in an international school in Australia, a country flavoured by a multicultural other where whiteness is normed—children appear to play with disregard to their cultural backgrounds and instead participate with a familiarity and easiness in response to this western approach to early childhood.

6.1.3 Section I summary

This section has explored the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality in the two classrooms of this study. It has highlighted, through vignettes at each site, how cultural differences manifest in social and material interactions in each classroom in book reading and learning centre activities. The analysis about the interplay of cultural differences and the sociomateriality of books found that although both teachers, as westerners and western trained, heralded books as vitally important resources that were used often for a multitude of purposes, the materiality of books was taken up in different ways in each classroom. In Susan’s classroom, some books came with inappropriate messages, creating fear amongst teachers and missed opportunities for learning by children. In Bella’s classroom books with different messages were

openly embraced to address the otherness of the global world and for children to learn of its diversity.

The sociomaterial analysis of learning centre action in each classroom examined social actors who enacted their agency around materials in contrastive ways. Isabella, Safiya and Ebony from Susan's classroom and Parth, Ha-Yoon and Lisa for Bella's classroom showed contrasting "know-how" with respect to the manipulation of their material environments. Importantly, each classroom environment was painted as western in nature, one that emphasised the sociomaterial practices of play, and analysis showed that this western backdrop worked to shape each actor's embodied dimension of practice in privileged and marginalised ways. However, the western nature of each classroom sat in two very different world regions and so, a gathering of different sets of social relations that "meet and weave together" to influence social practice (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). This research now turns to a full discussion of the findings as documented in Chapter Five and the first section of Chapter Six and answers the overarching research question.

6.2 Section II—Discussion: How cultural differences are positioned in two early years classes

So far, through answering the three research sub-questions, this critical ethnography has found that each school and classroom was caught up in a globalising phenomenon where: global flows, of people and curriculum, influenced the social relations in each school and classroom through power-geometries that positioned workers and students in powerful and less powerful ways; the social system that enveloped each school privileged and marginalised cultural differences through dominating structures; and within each classroom cultural differences of children appeared to have different relationships with sociomaterial action. Most of these findings focussed each school and classroom as contrastive cases where cultural differences were positioned in dissimilar ways.

The purpose of this section is to attend to the overarching research question—How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms of two different nations in the

context of globalisation? Rather than focusing on what is different at each school, as found in previous analyses, this discussion turns the lens to note what is similar with respect to the positioning of cultural differences. It focuses on the powerful force of globalisation, as an interconnectivity phenomenon, that is influential in the positioning of cultural differences.

6.2.1 Global interconnectivity in the thrown together places of schools

As established in Chapter Two, globalisation plays an increasingly pervasive and profound role in many aspects of modern life, including those in schools (Giddens, 2003; Held & McGrew, 1999; Luke & Luke, 2013). The context of globalisation is at the heart of this research, its “complicated, fluid and dynamic interconnectedness” (Tomlinson, 2007, p. 149) is one of the driving forces of a massive reshaping in places like classrooms (Massey & Jess, 1995). The point about globalisation is that, through sociocultural and political processes (Connell, 2007; Rizvi, 2007), it is a connector and a spatialising concept (Massey, 1991a). Across spaces it brings together ideas, information, capital, materials and people to link human activity across once fortified boundaries (Held & McGrew, 1999; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a). Such linkages change our “social institutions, cultural practices and, even our sense of identity and belongingness” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p. 161).

In education globalisation processes are synonymous with increasing flows, among other things, of people and materials—many schools and classrooms now understood to be “made out of multiple trajectories” (Anderson, 2008, p. 7). Although each school in this study is geographically disconnected, each is influenced by a global interconnectedness which links each, through flows, to elsewhere places, materials and ideas. In the case of people flows, classrooms were described as global meeting places where a gathering of bodies were thrown together to weave a particular “constellation[s] of social relations” regarding culture (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). In the case of curriculum, an overarching western interpretation and representation of knowledge influenced what was taught and how.

The classrooms of this study are considered to be part of this global interconnectedness—linked through a likeness that brings people from many different nations together—each populated by a wide range of cultural diversity, and not in any way representative of “homogenous and coherent communities” (Massey, 1991a, p. 24). Further, the classrooms of this study shared a sense of “extroversion” with visible people links to the wider world, seen through the habits and dispositions of culturally diverse teachers and students, as well as their languages, customs and cultural celebrations, and materials, like curriculum and teaching resources, that travel across time-space (Massey, 1991a, 1999). Teachers and curriculum were western, but many students and their parents were not—in both classrooms there was a mix of West and East.

A commonality, then, shared across these two research sites is that they are both globalised, both connected to elsewhere, both extrovertly constituted. As extroverted meeting places, a sense of otherness was created where other narratives and ways of being came together to disrupt any comprehension of homogeneity, existing, instead, as a sphere of “coexisting *heterogeneity*” (Massey, 2005, p. 9). Such a heterogeneous coexistence is illustrated by the foods that were eaten at each school.

Given the high proportion of children from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, recess time was a prominent cultural marker with respect to food. In both classrooms, evidence of Indian, Arabic and Asian foods—like chapattis, Arabic breads, dried seaweed, Korean snacks and rice balls—as well as different eating styles—fingers, chopsticks and knives and forks—and different containers in which food was transported—the tin lunchboxes and thermoses to keep the food of Asian children warm—expressed their culture in incidental ways. More so, at each school teachers talked about the interest young children had in each other’s foods—where they drew upon important cultural symbols in non-threatening environments and shared coherent meaning making about their cultural knowledges (Giddens, 1984).

Food was a cultural signifier across the school community as well as within the classrooms. Noted that Midtown School cafeteria served a cultural mix of food—westernised coffee, shawarma rolls and falafel sandwiches—whereas the school canteen at Southern College provided tasty vegetarian curries as well as food that was halal. Learning assistants at Midtown School indulged in a range of cultural foods in the common room in their breaks. Also noted as part of observation was that food played a significant role in cultural celebrations, whether they were inside or outside the official learning time in each school. Through food, cultural differences were positioned in positive ways—its presence, through global interchange and mixing, focused a sense of the other.

However, as the analysis confirmed, in many cases this otherness, this heterogeneous coexistence, did not always prevail and cultural differences in each school and classroom were both privileged and marginalised by the western nature of the social system of education. Within the analysis, in both settings, there was evidence of subtle ways where western ideas about education were reproduced. These worked towards a homogeneity rather than a coexistence of heterogeneity of culture, as observed through the foods of children. This reproduction ultimately served to reinforce dominant white cultural forms of schooling. These ideas are discussed below with reference to the way they positioned cultural differences in each school and classroom.

6.2.2 Dominating western education in geographically isolated places

Throughout this research, there has been much cited evidence of global interconnectivity in each school and classroom and people flows in each were characterised by a heterogeneity. However, some flows, mentioned above as western educational entities like curriculum and teachers, worked in opposing ways to discount differences and instead reinforce sameness. This western dominance can be traced through the following three conduits: curriculum, the predominance of white teachers, and school material resources like books, playdough and dress ups. In each case

it is shown how a western standpoint positioned cultural differences in similar ways in each school.

6.2.2.1 Western curriculum—white knowledge and practices in the classroom

Despite the extent of cultural diversity at both schools, each adopted a western curriculum—the *National Curriculum in England* and the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* at Midtown School, the *International Baccalaureate* at Southern College. For example, curriculum that prioritises white hegemonic literature works to privilege and universalise particular cultural norms as white. Making visible the “inevitable multiplicity of backgrounds and cultural experience among students and instructors alike” (Naga & McGill, 2018, p. 71) is imperative. The International Baccalaureate and the Early Years framework are a content-free curriculum—they are both a framework for relevant and site-appropriate content—whereas the content of the National Curriculum in England is orientated towards life and knowledge in England and developed for students who live there. However, the content-free nature of the former frameworks does not mean that there are free from western educational perspectives. This deems all three curricula as western focused. These are discussed below with reference to previous analysis and how each position cultural differences.

Adoption of the National Curriculum in England at Midtown School effectively marginalised the cultural understandings and knowledges of most of the children at this school, particularly in Susan’s classroom where there are only two westerners (herself and Isabella). An inwardly English perspective, through the teaching of historical facts and characters—the Great Fire of London and Queen Victoria—as well as the geographical features of the English countryside—for example, cliff, forest, hill, mountain, river, soil, valley, vegetation and season—ignores the fact that most of the students in this school originate from somewhere else, if not Dubai, where other perspectives, other sets of historical and geographical knowledges about the world exists. In this way these students are “effectively imprisoned by” the global flow of

curriculum that, through time-space compression, is tied to a place elsewhere—such a place has little resonance with the places from which these students have come (Massey, 1991a, p. 25).

In this way the cultural differences of the majority of the students at this school, and in Susan's classroom, do not count in official learning and are ignored or marginalised—positioned as outside, unimportant and less powerful in making meaning about student lives (Anderson-Levitt, 2012). The National Curriculum in England is not multi-focused, nor does it embrace the otherness that characterises Midtown School. It serves to privilege one country's cultural understandings and knowledges so that other temporalities and cultural stories are ignored (Massey, 2005). Ideas, endemic to one culture, are spread to the cultures of others, but in this knowledge translocation one set of cultural knowledges and understandings dominate (Carney, 2009). Although students were constituted of a rich plurality, this richness was not often given space in the classroom (Ghiso & Campano, 2013). However, not only is knowledge at stake here, the way that teachers teach, and students learn is also implicated.

As pointed out earlier, the curriculum frameworks—the Early Years Foundation Stage and the International Baccalaureate—prioritise teaching and learning that aligns with western practices in education. Western notions posit learning as an active process that relies on interactivity “between students, as learning is constructed together in social activity” (Lall, 2011, p. 224). The Early Years Foundation Stage posits child-centred learning that is based on play, exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically; the International Baccalaureate locates teaching and learning within a child-centred approach that embraces student inquiry, action and reflection to achieve intercultural understanding and a global engagement. In the previous analyses in Chapter Five and Six, this reliance on the western child-centred approach was shown to be misaligned to the skills and knowledge sets of some students and their parents in both schools. This child-centered approach, which prioritises children as active in the learning process, is rooted in western liberalising arguments of Rousseau and Locke in 18th Century and later progressed by the ideas, of Bourdieu, Montessori, Piaget and Vygotsky (Lall, 2011). The

transportation of pedagogical reforms to shift local teaching practices, from teacher- to child-centred, has spread globally across the developing world and occurred in many schools where education is considered in need of modernising (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b; Tabulawa, 1997; Yao, 2014).

Enactment of a child-centered approach of the Early Years framework, based on play, exploration and creativity, was observed in learning centre activities in Susan's classroom. Of interest is that teachers commented that parents chose the school for its play-based approach—"rather than sit down"—but then "expect[ed] test results every week". For many of the children in Susan's class home life meant that they socialised mostly with adults, spent a lot of time travelling to and from school and perhaps arrived home from school to be cared for by a maid who may also come from a cultural background that has a non-westernised view of childhood. The students' social lives outside the classroom meant that opportunities to engage in play might not be forthcoming. More so, it was observed in the play dough event and elsewhere (e.g., teacher comments) that many of the children in Susan's classroom did not have the skills to engage in a play-based child-centred education and that some spent time roaming across many learning centre stations producing and perhaps learning very little.

As well, the child-centred approach of the International Baccalaureate prioritises a pedagogy that nurtures students as inquirers, active, compassionate and lifelong learners, students who understand that differences are to be respected and celebrated. Such an approach requires teaching and learning that relies on teachers who negotiate with and guide students in their learning, and students who work in groups to solve problems, have choice about learning projects, take control of their learning and work away from the constant eye of the teacher. While the children in Bella's classroom showed little resistance to this pedagogical approach, some parents at this school and in her class did.

Bella talked about the way some of her parents interacted with their children—some keen to get down on the floor, others, and often Asian, more focused on "seeing the books". Steven,

the principal, also commented on parents who did not agree with the pedagogical approach of the school, who felt that teachers were too friendly with the children, that they should be making students do their sums, that there was not enough maths and, with regards to homework, parents demanded less free choice. These interactions reflect cultural differences about the conduct of education across different cultures, and that not all parents are comfortable with a western approach that is centred on choice and the child.

Further, the content free nature of the International Baccalaureate does not mean that it is knowledge devoid—it means that, as a framework of learning, it has the ability to adopt knowledges and understandings according to place. Teaching and learning content would be different at a school in Brisbane that might teach local historical knowledge about Indigenous art and agricultural practices or the early settling of convicts in Moreton Bay; in Dubai content might include local customs, the incredible feat of building the Burj Khalifa—one of the tallest buildings in the world— and geographical qualities of the middle eastern desert. The point about this transportable curriculum is that it is located in place—where one is in the world is synonymous with what is learned. Therefore, children in culturally diverse classrooms, children who have come from elsewhere with their own set of cultural knowledges and understandings, will be engaged in content and knowledge contextualised and reflective of the local places in which their schools are situated. This reinforces that the classrooms of this study are characterised by a global sense of place (Massey, 1991a).

In this way, the cultural differences of children from a non-western background are positioned in marginalised ways and instead they must learn to operate in and through a western dominance of knowledge, play, creativity and choice. Other studies have reported on the consequences a child-centered approach, concentrating on how parents saw these western approaches as disrespectful to elders (Lall, 2011), and how teachers resisted such innovation (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014b; Tabulawa, 1997). What is of significance in this research is how

children, and sometimes their parents, responded to a curriculum that focuses on the active child, rather than the transmission of facts.

Western curriculum usually equates to reliance on English as the medium of instruction and in the case of each school, English was the official language taught. Many studies have explored the dominance of the English language in culturally diverse schools where politically and ideologically driven monolingualism ignores home languages, bilingualism and the influence of language on learning (Coronel & Gómez-Hurtado, 2015; Dakin, 2017; Oranje & Feryok, 2013). For example, the practice of knowing, “operationalised through language, *the* mode of knowledge exchange” elides the “cultural work that is required of interculturality” (Reid et al., 2016, p. 48). While there was diversity of language use in both schools—in Dubai, Arabic and Islamic Studies are taught in Arabic and, at Southern College, the mother-tongue program offered students the opportunity to learn about and converse in their first languages—foundational subjects like English, maths and science, were taught in English. In both classrooms, regardless of the language backgrounds and English proficiencies, English was the instructional medium through which teaching and learning was conducted. All children negotiated the official part of their school day through English—a particular struggle for children in Susan’s classroom where the majority were first language speakers of mostly Arabic, as well as Hindi and Urdu.

This officialness was punctuated by observed instances in both schools where children spoke other languages in outside time, sometimes in unsupervised play activities, and when their parents came to collect them at the end of the day. Significant then, is that all official teaching, and the majority of the school day, was spent using English regardless of the language backgrounds of the children. More significant is that at Midtown School where children whose first language was not English, and some had little proficiency or experience of English, the teaching of English was normalised. Any understanding of students as English second or third language speakers was not acknowledged by the school. In this way, many children had to adapt

to the western and white language ways of each school—and in most cases their home literacy practices unacknowledged, under-represented or unimportant (Van de Kleut, 2011). A similar influence was noted through the employment of western teachers.

6.2.2.2 Western teachers, white ways in the classroom

As discussed previously, teachers in both schools who taught in the early years classes were western, but many of their students (and parents) were not—an increasing trend noted in many studies (Grieshaber & Miller, 2010; Sleeter, 2005; Tomlinson, 2007). For example, in Susan's classroom the overwhelming majority came from the East while eight (out of 19) of the students in Bella's class had eastern cultural backgrounds—a diversity influenced by people translocation. This translocation brings cultural values, norms and practices to places where they must be interpreted by members in each of the classrooms who actively draw on their own cultural knowledges to make meaning (Anderson-Levitt, 2012). The significance of a western teacher workforce, and in this case trained in western teaching institutions, is that, no matter where they are placed in the world, they cannot help but bring a westernised package to education, for example, teaching practices and behavioural expectations and norms.

Teaching and learning, then, are enacted through a western perspective. In both schools this western lens was widely accepted as normal and reproduced in everyday accountabilities of others, and as well as their parents, were dominated by a hegemonic whiteness (Hughey, 2012). In both schools this western standpoint worked to position cultural differences in similar ways.

It was evident, from the teacher interviews and intense classroom observations, that, as expected, Susan and Bella modelled a western approach to classroom behaviours, one that was predicated on an active learning, rights and responsibilities, adherence to classroom rules, as well as expected norms and codes like orderly lining up for outside time. What children were expected to do in learning centre activities, the treatment and interaction with books—revered and precious—as well as literacy practices, and how children were meant to adhere to school and

classroom rules was contextualised within a western notion of what counts for education. These expectations were extended to parents, and both teachers spoke of unacceptable behaviours in parents that, in some ways, were deemed immoral and in need of correcting. Teacher comments about parents wanting to see the books, giving more homework, physically erasing student writing, wanting to have everything right and opposition to the friendliness of teachers were not practices that were synonymous with each school's social structures, steeped in a western overlay and reinforced through each school's social systems (Giddens, 1984).

In Chapter Five, section II, teachers from both schools talked about how some of the children in their classes exhibited unacceptable behaviours. This unacceptability must be located in their own western perspective of behavioural rights and wrongs and seen as “a drive to impose similarity, uniformity and standard behaviour for the sake of cohesion” (Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto, 2018, p. 511). For example, at Midtown School, teachers noted improper habits and dispositions as screaming, taking tantrums, the way language was used, not cleaning up, not able to keep their hands and feet to themselves and to not take turns, and inappropriate toilet behaviours (see Table 5.1). At Southern College, when cultural behaviours were different to those of the teacher, cultural practices at home were similarly cited (see Table 5.8). But in Bella's classroom cultural behaviours were more marked in parents than they were in Susan's classroom. Teachers tended to link these improprieties to children's home life, and so implicated that cultural backgrounds were not aligned to the behaviours expected at the school (see Table 5.4).

In this way, western forms became the dominant and pursued ideals and children (and their parents) who were eastern, were remade as western in the everyday interactions in their respective classrooms (Hughey, 2012). Children who were not western responded to these dominant practices learned to function at school in western and white ways (Mills & Dreamson, 2015). This was particularly the case in Susan's classroom, where the divergence of children's epistemological and ontological cultural histories—which meant that they maintained close

relationships with their cultural heritages, very much influenced by the labour apartheid practiced in Dubai (James & Shamma, 2013)—was in great contrast (Mills & Dreamson, 2015). At Southern College, although students were less likely to display different cultural practices in their regular classroom interactions, perhaps due to earlier cultural assimilation in previous learning institutions like kindergarten and community groups, their parents did.

The discussion above is contextualised with the processes of globalisation, where each school, through a people mobility, was transmogrified with a sense of the global—meeting places, thrown together through global forces that bring people of differences together (Massey, 2005) and “constructed on a far larger scale” with connections to elsewhere, like England and Geneva (Massey, 1991a, p. 28). A globalised sense of place recognises that the human activity in each school and classroom is stretched across time and space—and has connections to other places—but also that place, as globalised, is continually being constructed through a wider set of social relations (Giddens, 2003; Massey, 1991a, 2005). Such a place then supports the “juxtaposition of other narratives” as dynamic and evolving (Massey, 1999, p. 41) and the cultural conflicts that played out in each school. As globalising processes, people flows expand and link activity across diverse boundaries where activity is marked with rapidity and disjuncture to the social order (Held, 1999; Rizvi, 2004; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a). The schools, as places, are “constructed out of interconnections” with both local and global that render them unique in a number of ways (Massey & Jess, 1995, p. 227). What binds these two school together is that, even though they are constituted as culturally diverse, the flows of teachers, coupled with a western curriculum, means that cultural differences are marginalised, and children, and their parents, are expected to act within a western ideal of education. Further, the pervasion of western classroom resources added to this domination by the West.

6.2.2.3 Western resources—white things in the classroom

It was observed that the classrooms of Susan and Bella were materially similar in many ways—books adorned shelves and were regulars in classroom activity, learning resources like play dough, toy sets of trains, people, animal and plant replicas, dress up clothing and play food blended to characterise the learning space exciting and stimulating for children. As discussed earlier, cultural differences did not appear to matter with respect to the way children and their teachers interacted with books—children enthusiastic about reading and being read to, teachers displaying similar understandings and practices about the importance of books in the school day. What was marked, and similar in both classrooms, was that the majority of books were western, they had western origins and portray western topics and ideas.

Although there was an observed limitation of suitable books in foundation classrooms at Midtown School, where the availability of books that were Arabic, or that might resonate with the everyday lives of children in the desert and city-scapes of Dubai, books, as global flows, mostly came from England to complement the English curriculum. The construction of social relations (Massey, 1991a), and social knowledge through books, then mimics distant places, rather than those close to students. In Chapter Six, section I analysis, it was seen that the western book—*Who Sank the Boat?*—survived, with adaptation, despite its inclusion of the offensive pig. At Southern College, Bella spoke about how she would take opportunities to include the books that children brought in that promoted their cultural heritages. However, books, as part of official literacy times, were more than often western. In both classrooms, much, if not most, of the school literature used for teaching and learning prioritised white hegemonic literature which acted as a deterrent for sharing ideas about differences and an impetus for reproducing western white cultural structures (Naga & McGill, 2018).

Teaching and learning materials in the classroom were also painted in this western image of how things should be. While there was provision of cultural pencils and multicultural dolls at Midtown School and the library at Southern College housed literature with a culturally diverse

range of topics, observation documented children mostly engaging with western-styled materials. In Susan's classroom the play dough vignette saw children utilising tools and materials like play dough and spaghetti makers, while children in Bella's classroom dressed up in western clothing and played with western plastic food. Learning resources, like the inclusion of items like thimbles and jacks to signify "t" and "j" in literary activities, were not always targeted towards different cultures and, as one teacher commented, often very Anglo.

The mimicking activities of the non-western girls in the play dough vignette, and thus copying Isabella's social practices, illustrated how each child adopted western everyday practices—making spaghetti and birthday cakes with candles, turning their play dough into magical things—illustrates the reproduction of western practices, that, in turn, reproduces a western system of education. The social activities of agents occurred within a system of structures, as rules, communication patterns and resources—as structural properties they were integral to the formation of institutional practices in the school society (Giddens, 1979).

6.2.2.4 Coexisting heterogeneity in the classroom

The discussion above, including the three previous analysis in Chapter Five and Six, illuminates the similar and dissimilar ways in which cultural differences were positioned in each school. Ultimately, through the global flows of people, classrooms were characterised by a coexisting heterogeneity—meeting places where a mix of East and West gathered together to learn and to teach (Massey, 2005). Although the global mobilities of people influenced the social dynamics in each school, many cultural ways prevailed, and were seen in foods different cultures ate, customs and dispositions, as well as some behaviours (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a; Tomlinson, 2007). However, other global flows of western teachers and materials, like curriculum and learning resources, trended towards an homogenisation of culture, rather than a heterogeneity, where western values about education supplanted those from the East through the power-geometries of time-space compression (Massey, 1999). It was seen that in each school the processes of

globalisation “modulate[d] material and territorial place, space, cultures, identities and relationships” to change the nature of local sites (Singh et al., 2005, p. 9).

These findings reinforce the conundrum that beleaguers the globalisation debate regarding the binary of cultural homogeneity and cultural heterogeneity and discussed in the literature and Chapter Two (Appadurai, 1996). Through a people trajectory globalisation processes render local communities and places a heterogeneous mix; however, other global forces worked to socially structure a cultural homogenisation—both heterogeneity and homogeneity combined, happening in the same place simultaneously, to socially construct a particular constellation of social relations (Massey, 1991a; Tomlinson, 2007; Waters, 2013), and fostering that “particular ‘here and now’” (Anderson, 2008, p. 7). Further, the binaries of East and West were alive in both schools as the trajectories of western and eastern people combine in local places, but in this case, where the ideas, understandings and knowledges were bound in a western and white hegemony (Hughey, 2012). East meets West, but educational western knowledges and cultural practices dominated the everyday *durée* of daily classroom life (Giddens, 1984). The sharing of the “rich and complex plurality” that inhabits many classrooms is diminished (Ghisso & Campano, 2013, p. 255). Rather than strive for an inclusive classroom environment, western educational perspectives nurture exclusivity at the expense of inclusivity (Gough, 2014). As echoed by many, “inclusive education is still a project and not a reality in many educational settings” (Álvarez Valdivia & González Montoto, 2018, p. 511).

But the forces of globalisation do not operate unwittingly, beyond anyone’s control. Classrooms are vulnerable to forces beyond their boundaries. Rather, they are systematically contrived and constructed “out of the intersections and interactions of concrete social relations and social processes in a situation of copresence” (Massey, 1991b, p. 277). It is the intent of states and nations to encourage people mobilities for many reasons, including economic and humanitarian ones. Once landed, people come together in places like classrooms to form a heterogeneous malaise. It is the intent of each school’s management to adopt a particular

curriculum to guide the nature of teaching and learning in each classroom. These intents surfaced in classrooms to make them simultaneously heterogeneous but homogenising places—a global mixity dominated by a less global and western perspective. Although there was much evidence that cultural differences were catered for and expressed, it was also evident that the forces of globalisation, as western curriculum flows, English as the language of instruction, western teachers and learning resources, flattened out and rendered cultural diversity invisible in much of the school day (Luke, 2011; Stromquist & Monkman, 2014a). Underlying structures persisted in both sites and both settings ultimately served to reproduce dominant white cultural forms of schooling and knowledge.

These structures functioned as power-geometries to position the cultural other as marginal, to foreground a western and white cultural form in teaching and learning regardless of cultural diversity. In each classroom children and their parents were “placed in very distinct ways in relation to” the dominance and spatial power of western educational practices (Callard, 2004; Massey, 1991a, p. 25). Further, social structures worked to reproduce these western and white ways, through facilities and resources like curriculum and learning materials (Giddens, 1984), and children were forced to make meaning with the material classroom in a play-based, creative and exploratory way (Fenwick, 2012).

6.2.3 Overall conclusions for this research

This research has examined the way cultural differences were positioned in two lower primary classrooms in different countries through an analysis of the nature and structure of place (Giddens, 1984; Massey, 1991a), and the interactions of humans and non-human things within that place (Fenwick et al., 2011; Giddens, 1976). A number of conclusions that can be drawn from this study as outlined below.

The schools and classrooms of this research must be seen, and studied, as globalised—they represent meeting places, their social relations manifested through a distinct

throwntogetherness of local and wider social relations—they are inherently unique and localised in nature, and at the same time, they are constructed out of an interconnectedness to the global world (Massey, 1991a, 2005; Massey & Jess, 1995). Such “throwntogetherness” is a consequence of the global world in which schools and classrooms are situated, where global flows, both human and non-human, disrupt their social order (Appadurai, 1990; Massey, 1999). This disruption is brought on by power-geometries that work in local places to marginalise and privilege cultural differences (Massey, 1999). The nature of this disruption, as examined in the analysis, is influenced by the “uniqueness” of place and the nature of global flows which manifest in unequal sharing of power relations with respect to cultural differences (Massey, 1991a; Massey & Jess, 1995). In this way, global flows politicise the knowledge and action of the local classroom places, as westernised, which influences the way culture differences are positioned. Children are positioned in a heterogeneity, for example the foods they eat, but are homogenised through a western educational perspective of curriculum and teaching resources. In this way, local-global connections are recursively dynamic, each constructing each other, social relations built from both global and local perspectives stretched across time and space (Massey, 2005).

The social action in schools and classrooms is structured through the system of social relations, and in the case of this study these constituted five systems—world, state, school, classroom and local community. This social system, then, operates through wide parameters that span across distant reaches of time and space as part of the globalising phenomenon (Giddens, 1976, 1984; Giddens, 2003). The social action of individuals, and in this study culturally diverse social agents as teachers and students, is interrelated to the wider system of social relations that mediates and controls local action (Edwards, 2016). Within each school’s social system, dominant societal structures, as signification, domination and legitimation, produced different tensions around cultural differences, that either enabled or constrained the visibility of this differences (Giddens, 1984). The process of structuration, and the duality of structure as a

recursive meaning making process, mediated the social relations of teachers and students with respect to how cultural differences were catered for and expressed in each school (Giddens, 1976, 1984).

Classrooms are places where teachers and students interact with material things to make meaning, to learn and to socially interact with others. Classroom matter and social action are intertwined in sociomaterial assemblages in which materials act on teachers and students to afford or limit social outcomes (Coole & Frost, 2010; Fenwick, 2010; Fenwick et al., 2012). In each classroom, and in the vignettes examined, culture played a pivotal role in the way social beings interacted socially with material things, however through analysis it was found that those material things exerted force on the social action of teachers as well as children. The way children interacted through their agency with the material world of the classroom, as part of learning, was tied to their cultural ways (Fenwick, 2012; Giddens, 1984). Further, materials, like books, must not be considered neutral as they carry, but also elicit, powerful messages about culture, and in the case examined in Susan's classroom, a western notion of literature that included pigs. In the analysed classroom vignettes materials posed as powerful medium through which cultural meanings were made visible.

While there were many findings that contrasted how cultural differences were positioned in each place, there were also similarities. Despite the cultural diversity represented within, the social practices in both schools and classrooms were dominated by a western ideal of education, in the form of curriculum, teachers, English as the instructional medium, and learning resources. Thus, educational activity was built to nurture an exclusivity through a western perspective that foregrounded a child-centered approach based on play, creativity, inquiry and exploration, a perspective that was not always shared across the experience of the school community (Gough, 2014). White hegemony prevailed in much of the school day despite the cultural diversity that existed in each classroom (Hughey, 2012).

This chapter has provided robust findings for the third research sub-question and has provided a theoretical discussion with respect to the overarching research question. It has further provided a summary of the research findings for all of the research questions. The next chapter—Chapter Seven—is the concluding chapter for this research. The discussion in this chapter will contextualise the findings in the literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two and discuss limitations, implications, recommendation and arguments of significance before making a conclusive thesis statement.

7 Conclusion

This research was guided by the overarching research question: How are cultural differences positioned in the lower primary classrooms in two nations in the context of globalisation?

Answering this question enabled an investigation of how cultural differences in two classrooms in two schools in different countries interplayed with the structural, social, and material relations that constituted each. Moreover, this research attended to the power relations that were manifested through each classroom through the lens of cultural differences. Social actors engaged with the classroom as a place constituted as globalised (Massey, 1991a), structured (Giddens, 1984), constituted of a diversity of cultural others (Bhabha, 1994) and richly imbued with material resources for learning (Fenwick, 2015).

Power was problematised through the theoretical concepts of power-geometries (Massey, 1991a), and the structural dimensions of domination, signification and legitimation (Giddens, 1984) where analysis pointed to the ways in which power was co-opted to privilege and marginalise the positioning of people, as workers, teachers and students, with respect to their cultural backgrounds. The labour apartheid of the United Arab Emirates (James & Shammass, 2013), the domination of certain cultural celebrations over others at Midtown school, and the legitimation of aspects of the “other” at Southern College, were examples of the ways in which power and cultural differences interacted to render inequality in cultural expression as well as the way it was catered for. Further, an analysis of the classroom as a sociomaterial place highlighted the fact that some children had unequal access to materials, and therefore, learning opportunities, in Susan’s classroom. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise the findings in the literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two, and to discuss the limitations of this research, implications for practice and recommendations, and last, arguments of significance.

7.1 Findings and the literature

Chapter Two reviewed the literature across three intersecting phenomena—globalisation, culture, and sociomateriality. As part of the review it was concluded that the global trajectories study was unique in the field in that it is the only study to date to consider how changes, brought on by global flows, intersect with cultural differences to influence the nature of social and material action within two lower primary classrooms. A return to a selection of the literature is useful to discuss findings of this research.

The debates and discourses of globalisation were extensively discussed in Chapter Two. Some of the findings of this study add to the conundrum of globalisation. All of the binaries that were discussed previously are considered alive in the findings of this research. Globalisation was indeed experienced in the schools and the classrooms of study as coming from above but manifesting below. The unstoppable forces of curriculum rendering knowledge as western (Luke & Luke, 2013; Singh et al., 2005) as opposed to the “globalized localism”, where teachers at both schools changes classrooms practice to include the cultures of their students (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2012), illustrates that the binary of above/below is commensurate with a two-way local-global dynamic (Robertson & Khondker, 1998).

The good/bad debate also was couched in eastern students learning other, perhaps more participatory ways to be in the classroom, as opposed to cultural differences ignored through the import of foreign curriculum. In each classroom responses to global flows were not universal (Luke & Luke, 2013). Rather, they were dependent on the geographies of social relations in each place (Massey, 1991a, 1999). What is of significance is the homogeneity/heterogeneity debate in social action in each classroom. Again, these binaries were alive in the findings of this study, for example, in each classroom western curriculum tended towards a sameness where knowledge homogenised what one learnt. Whereas food, cultural customs and certain cultural dispositions tended towards a visibility of cultural diversity, and so heterogeneity. Rather there appeared a

recursive relationship between local and global in which the local had some sense of retaliation (Massey, 2005).

An important contribution that this research makes to the field is that it transcends a number of recurring world phenomena through studying globalisation, culture and sociomateriality. As discussed in the literature about culture, this study rejects an essentialised view of culture, and instead defers to one more complex as indicated in the analysis of the interplay of cultural differences in classroom social and material action (Keddie & Niesche 2012). The analysis treats cultural differences as an active agent in meaning making in each classroom, and therefore, coupled with and constituted by geographies of place and system structuration (Giddens, 1984; Massey, 1991a).

Within the sociomaterial literature, and discussed earlier, this research occupies a niche place. It contextualises sociomaterial action in each classroom within a backdrop of globalisation and cultural differences to examine how culturally diverse children respond to their material surrounds. That material things were performative and “indeterminate entanglements” in activities like book reading and learning centres was central to this study’s findings (Fenwick, 2012, p. 70). As in others, this study found that materials were not merely tools, but worked to critically shape the action of teachers and children in their affective encounters with materials (Fenwick et al., 2011; Johannesen et al., 2012; Lamprou, 2017; Orlikowski, 2007). Adding cultural differences and place to the mix of sociomateriality then shifts the emphasis of examining classroom action into the realm of the spatial. The next section attends to the limitations of this study.

7.2 Limitations of this research

There are a number of limitations of this study that need to be acknowledged. These limitations fall into the area of methodological approach, point-in-time study and data selection. These will be briefly discussed below.

There are general problems to be aware of regarding case studies in educational research. Although the strength of this research, as a critical ethnography, lies in rich description of a real life and researcher-experienced classroom context (Carspecken, 1996; Simons, 2009), this research took meanings from the specific to the general to examine how cultural differences played out in the social action of two classrooms only. Therefore, caution should be exercised when making generalisations about the findings of this research to other sites where geographical location might render sites that are different in nature (LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992). Further research might focus on a broader selection of schools that are the same, but also in other geographical locations which might yield a different global sense of place (Massey, 1991a). Also extending the study to include primary school classes, perhaps longitudinally caught, would be useful in understanding how cultural differences play out in other school places.

This study is considered a point-in-time study in which data was gathered over a period of eight weeks at each school. It is therefore not an historical study, but one located in a particular instance of time—two distinct envelopes of space-time in two particular world regions and a narrow snapshot in time (Massey, 1991a). Other phenomenon about cultural differences might emerge with a study with prolonged—or one that involves intermittent—time periods for investigation. Further, the constricted time spent overseas in the United Arab Emirates, making observations and gathering data while on a research scholarship, was a limitation on the long-term perspectives of the findings of this research.

Although the data array was rich and thick (Carspecken, 1996), the socially constructed nature of data collection means that the very inclusion of this data means that other data were excluded, and therefore ignored (Alford, 2015). As the researcher, I was mindful of the possibilities of some data being absent and endeavoured to collect a wide variety of data to ensure that different perspectives about cultural differences were gathered, for example, observations and interviews. As well as observational data and collection of documents, the voices and social actions of students and teachers supplemented the data corpus. For future

research, including parent voices about their experiences of cultural differences, as well as student work related to cultural activities, could provide another lens through which to study cultural differences, thus enriching the case study process.

7.3 Implications for practice and recommendations

The implications for practice and recommendations are two-fold—for classroom practice and future research. Practical implications and recommendations include those that are able to be taken up within the school and classroom system—they are pragmatic and aimed at teacher and school leader action with respect to cultural inclusivity. Research implications and recommendations are included here to signal important future theoretical studies of cultural diversity in classrooms. Each will be discussed below.

The findings of this study make a number of contributions to how cultural differences play out in school and classroom contexts in two distinct geographical locations. In Susan's classroom, in many instances, cultural differences were neutralised, their expression constrained, and they were catered for in limited ways; rather children conformed to foreign cultural norms. In Bella's classroom, cultural differences were relevant and celebrated, and children had rich opportunities to learn about their own as well as other cultures. Therefore, recommendations from this research apply to the work of school leaders, as overall caretakers of schools, and the work of teachers, as crucial interlocutors of social justice in the classroom.

Schools, as established in previous analyses, are places of power (Massey, 1999). As powerful places, they have facility over resources that can provide access to inclusivity about cultural differences (Giddens, 1976). While school leaders may not be able to change the set curriculum, they can develop programs and adopt policies that might lead to greater cultural inclusivity. Programs like a widening of cultural celebrations as part of official learning time, and not just an add-on where children dress up and taste cultural foods, outside the classroom for a day, can build honour and respect about cultural differences across the school community.

Policies where parent knowledge about cultural aspects are shared in classrooms so that children cognitively engage with cultural similarities and differences in the pursuit of mutual understanding are implied. Global flows are an inevitable way of life in many schools, where an increasing flow of diverse people, materials and ideas from elsewhere take up residence in local classrooms. Providing environments that afford opportunities for making cultural differences part of the official learning time seems worthwhile in the increasing cultural diversity in which we are all situated.

Classrooms, as part of the social systems in which school are located, must be recognised as important spaces where cultural differences can be catered for and expressed. Curriculum constraints can signify a paucity in cultural expression of children, particularly if adopted curriculum is foreign. In lower primary education, where the priorities of play, creative thinking and problem solving are often prominent, teachers have opportunities to develop learning experiences that are playful around cultural differences. For example, learning centres can be manipulated over extended periods of time, so that children learn about cultural aspects like food, languages and cultural celebrations. Parents can be part of this learning providing cultural knowledges and understandings to supplement those of the teacher, as was the case at Southern College class cultural celebrations. Providing learning opportunities that are more inclusive of culture means that children have greater access to communication and learning about themselves as embodied cultural beings, but also about others whose cultural backgrounds might exist in contrast.

Further, greater reliance on and awareness of the material world of the classroom and the role it plays in meaning making (Fenwick, 2015) is useful when considering cultural differences. Greater awareness amongst teachers about how different cultural backgrounds view and have had experience with the material world with respect to young children is important. Children from cultural backgrounds, where play with materials is limited, might need explicit modelling about how to use learning resources in the classroom.

To add to these practical classroom implications, there are a number of research implications and recommendations generated from this work. Chapter Three documented the lack of currency in educational research of both the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) and Massey's (Massey, 1991a, 2005) theory of power and place—both macrosociological theories that make the “link between environmental factors and economic and political conditions for action” (Carspecken, 1996, p. 203). Further, the emerging field of studies that deploys a sociomaterial approach to social inquiry that examines “the constitutive entanglement of the social and the material” (Orlikowski, 2007, p. 1440) in education was also noted (Fenwick et al., 2011). Mobilisation of these theories enabled an examination of the complex and multi-layered social worlds by which classrooms are constituted—their social relations constructed through externalities of geography, economics and politics as well as social systems that work to reproduce dominant structures, but also internal action where children interface with their material surrounds.

Further, this research has raised implications for future research with respect to systems level analysis of cultural diversity. As was illustrated through analysis, cultural differences were both marginalised and privileged through the social system in which each school and classroom was bounded and did not necessarily originate from internal classroom social action, but rather were perpetrated through contextualising levels of educational systems. Being aware of the origin and also how social practice is produced and reproduced through the system could be helpful in identifying the ways in which cultural differences are positioned despite the attempts of teachers to be culturally inclusive (Giddens, 1984).

This research has used each of the theories above in justifiable and reliable ways to tease out the way cultural differences were positioned in the social relations of each school and classroom site—from a place, system and interactional perspective. Given that culturally diverse countries, like Australia and the United Arab Emirates, mirror a plethora of others, where population is sourced through many other nations (Hage, 2002; Morgan, 2018), further social

inquiry about cultural diversity in schools is warranted—particularly within current global unrest about race, white supremacy and fanatical Islam. In this thesis structuration and place theories were indispensable in understanding the recursive links between social systems and social relations in each classroom (Carspecken, 1996). It is recommended that further social research about cultural diversity must avail of macro sociological theories to problematise and understand the role social structure and environmental and global factors influence the everyday lifeworlds of social agents, like culturally diverse members of classrooms. As well, further exploration about sociomaterial entanglements in classrooms is useful in emphasising the centrality of materials in classroom communication.

7.4 Arguments of significance

The arguments of significance that frame this research are discussed below. The first arguments are aligned to the findings of each research sub-question, while the latter signifies importance in the timing of this research, the paucity in research to date, about how cultural differences are positioned in schools and classrooms and the contribution this research makes to critical social theories that challenge cultural divisions and social hierarchies across social systems.

Globalisation is a significant, persistent, ubiquitous and ever-increasing influence in the life of many schools, its massive reshaping of social relations and profound impact of local lives described elsewhere, as well as in this research (Giddens, 2003; Luke & Luke, 2013; Massey & Jess, 1995; Zajda, 2012). The analysis from the first research sub-question uncovered how globalisation, through power-geometries, positioned social agents in each school and classroom in ways that celebrated their cultural differences and ways that did not. The findings of this study contribute to the literature about the intersection of globalisation and education (McPherson & Saltmarsh, 2017; Morgan, 2018; Tabulawa, 1997) to signal the importance of analysis that unmasks how global forces interplay with the close social relations within each site—how borrowed curriculum positions students in positive and negative ways; how cultural differences

are thwarted or facilitated through global flows and how people, as workers in schools, fare in this globalisation of school social relations (Massey, 1991a).

Further, as documented in Chapter Two literature review, global flows inundate schools in the form of people, curriculum, policies and learning materials (Gardinier, 2012; Quaynor, 2015; Yao, 2014). Such flows of the global will continue as education becomes more politicised, commodified and cultures more translocated (Anderson-Levitt, 2012; Luke & Luke, 2013). Understanding how global flows position schools socially, with respect to cultural differences, is important if education subscribes to a fair and just society. Studying how power-geometries work to marginalise and privilege the cultural significance of others in the process of education is then crucial in the pursuit of a global world that is characterised by intercultural understanding, tolerance and respect. Place theories (Anderson, 2008; Massey, 1991a), as used in this research, provide a powerful facility for examining the social relations in culturally diverse classrooms.

The analysis of data for research sub-question two found that the way cultural differences interacted in each school and classroom was influenced by the social system in which it operated—its affordance and denial tied up in the system that produced and reproduced social and cultural actions (Giddens, 1976, 1984). Dominant societal structural elements, like allocation of resources and communication and legitimation structures, interplayed with the agentic capacity of cultural differences in each school and classroom in prominent ways to influence social and cultural outcomes. Utilising the theoretical framework of structuration (Giddens, 1984)—a theory not widely used in education (Edwards, 2016)—capacitated findings that illustrated how classrooms can never be viewed as isolated entities in that they are always a part of a wider social system that imposes dominion over their social actions. Space, by no means an “empty dimension along which societal groupings become structured” must be considered for “its involvement in the constitution of systems of interaction” (Giddens, 1984, p. 368). This research makes a case for the importance of examining system constitution to effectively

comment on the educational issue of cultural inclusivity, and how it privileges or marginalises in the social system in which it is situated.

The third research sub-question explored the interplay between cultural differences and sociomateriality, where materials acted as powerful mediums through which meaning about culture was made (Fenwick et al., 2011). As discussed in Chapter Two, literature review, the theory of sociomateriality is an emerging field of inquiry, deeply steeped in the theories of Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky, and entirely appropriate in the lower primary, materially-rich world (Fenwick et al., 2011). Adopting a sociomaterial approach to analysis illuminated underlying tensions about the use of materials across cultural platforms, with significant messages about how culture interacts with sociomaterial assemblages of classroom action (Fenwick, 2012). These messages—that materials are not culturally neutral and that children from non-western backgrounds sometimes lack experience with the “know how” of a western classroom sociomateriality—are significant. They highlight an understanding that not all cultures see materials in the same light and that support for children to avail learning materials that promote highly productive social learning is a worthwhile project.

This research is timely, given the current world unrest around differences that plagues our media, political systems and everyday social lives, with mixed messages about boats, walls and Islam—our world is a place where “greater regulation and domestic surveillance of the citizenry” together with “increased xenophobic security on borders” abounds (McCarthy, Crichlow, et al., 2005, p. xvii). It’s a world where prejudice and discrimination are “no longer confined to race, color, or nationality, but extends also to religion” (Rizvi, 2005, p. 171). Boundaries are “enormously important in the modern world”—where one lives is deeply rooted in the nature of education, health, life opportunities and rights and liberties (Buchanan & Moore, 2003, p. 1).

Further, the current Australian socio-political climate “is located within discourses of fear and anxiety in relation to multiculturalism, Islam, terrorism and other cultural issues”, like the status of refugees (Joseph, 2008, pp. 29-30). This unrest is echoed in many countries across the

world where global insecurity around climate, vast movements of dispossessed refugees and worldwide depletion of bio-diversity. It is also tempered by a failing of the democratic system of government in much of the western world, and electors, losing faith in politicians' ability to secure safe economic and social futures, scramble to elect conservative politicians to provide protectionist and isolating policies of domination over and exclusion of others. Studies, like this one, that seek to understand how globalisation influences the nature of education in local places are needed in this globalised, pluralistic, unjust and uneasy world to better understand how education can contribute effectively to a future that is more stable, peaceful and productive for all.

Further significance of this research lies in its contribution to the overall research paradigm about how culture manifests in schools and how cultural differences are positioned and so, responds to the paucity of research, noted in Chapter Two. This research adds to that literature to extend academic understandings about how schools cater for and allow expression of cultural differences, especially in lower primary education, as part of their regular teaching and learning activities, and not as an add-on where cultural knowledges are superficially acknowledged.

Last, the application, in this research, of critical sociological theories to explain the causes of structural domination and inequality in contexts of continual and intensified cultural diversity in schools, allowed the analysis to be grounded in an emancipatory approach (Hardcastle et al., 2006). This approach also afforded a problematising of how the social action in classrooms was influenced by prejudiced contexts (Levinson, 2011), but also contexts that are beyond the control of classrooms and sometimes schools. Such application mapped, through the three research sub-questions, complex systems relations to avail findings that uncovered how power-geometries positioned social cultural relations, how the social system worked to reproduce social inequality, and how cultural differences were positioned with regards to the materiality of each classroom (Carspecken, 1996; Fenwick et al., 2011; Giddens, 1984; Massey, 1991a).

This research has made both a methodological and theoretical contribution to knowledge by synthesising three theoretical frameworks—place, structuration and sociomateriality—to examine classroom social action. Combining Massey’s (Massey, 1991a) with theories about the new materialism (Fenwick, 2015) goes some way to attending to the real conditions that pervade classrooms, both external and internal. Classrooms cannot be considered as separate entities but rather operate in a global mix of people and things, where power is generated in regular social action. Further, this research is an example of the useful application of structuration and place theory to study culturally diverse classrooms which contributes to the use of critical social theories in educational inquiry, and as illustrated through the application of each theory, provides an impetus for more studies that utilise critical inquiry to challenge cultural divisions and hierarchies.

This research, then, contributes in worthwhile ways to the field of educational studies that utilise social critical theories, like structuration and theories of place, to look for ways of improving the social outcomes of children, particularly in culturally diverse classrooms, a growing phenomenon in Australia, the United Arab Emirates, and the world beyond. In a world awash with cultural differences, where “more than a billion people are shaped by the experience of migration” (Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010, p. 535) multiple ways of being, doing and knowing are what constitutes society as well as classrooms. Learning to live together, “the gradual discovery and a deeper understanding of others, and providing experience in working together towards common objectives” with respect for each other’s differences, seems like a peaceful and productive way forward (Power, 2014, p. 98). Understanding that classrooms are powerful places where global flows propagate differences with ideas elsewhere and that such propagation can leave the cultural identities of some students repressed is crucial if cultural differences are to be respected, nurtured and celebrated.

8 References

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9 Appendices

Appendix A: Sample of Information Letters and Consent Forms

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Copy for Researcher

TITLE OF PROJECT: Globalisation and cultural differences

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Professor Kathy Mills

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Lesley Friend

STATEMENT OF STUDENT CONSENT

I am happy for Ms Friend to watch me at school.



I am happy for Ms Friend to take pictures of my work and sometimes record my voice.



I know that if I am worried, I can talk to a grown-up about this.



MY NAME: _____

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:



SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LETTER
(Classroom student)

PROJECT TITLE: Globalisation and cultural differences
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Kathy Mills
STUDENT RESEARCHER: Lesley Friend
STUDENT'S DEGREE: PhD

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Your child is invited to participate in the research project described below.

What is the project about?

The research project investigates cultural differences in two classrooms, one in Australia and the other in the United Arab Emirates. It aims to find out about the nature of cultural differences in each classroom. As part of globalisation, classrooms, in Australia and the United Arab Emirates, are becoming increasingly populated by teachers and students from many nations. This study hopes to report on ways that classrooms are responding to cultural differences in different places in the world.

Who is undertaking the project?

This project is being conducted by Lesley Friend, a student, and will form the basis for the degree of PhD at the Australian Catholic University under the supervision of Professor Kathy Mills. Lesley has a strong background in researching in schools and has worked as a primary teacher in Australia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as a lecturer at Brisbane universities in early childhood education and literacy. Kathy has qualifications and experience in education and has a PhD in the field. Kathy is an experienced researcher of many years and has supervised PhD students to completion. She also has relevant experience researching in schools, especially with projects that involve young children.

Are there any risks associated with participating in this project?

Participating in the research carries some risks. For example, I recognise a risk of potential discomfort or embarrassment to your child as I observe him or her in class over a period of 6 weeks. I understand that your child might feel uncomfortable with my presence but I hope to work alongside the classroom teacher to build a relationship with the students so that students might feel comfortable with me. You also may be concerned that the information I collect from your child is identifiable. Please be assured that all collected data from class observations and digital recordings, interviews and casual conversations will be de-identified for any future publications and that although stored data will be identifiable by me, such identification will not be released to other parties. Other than name and class details, no personal details will be collected from students. I will ensure that all data is securely stored, as per the university data management guidelines. Research data will be retained in a non-identifiable format for other purposes including further analysis and publication.

What will your child be asked to do?

Participation will involve the following:

Classroom observation—I will observe your child's classroom over a period of about 6 weeks. This will involve possible daily visits at times that are suitable to the classroom teacher. As part of this observation I will be taking field notes throughout the day.

Recordings—I will be recording some class events through a visual recorder (only still images) and also an audio recorder. I will always negotiate with the classroom teacher and your child to ensure that these recordings are suitable. At the end of some observations I may talk to your child to clarify classroom events. There will be no digital recording of children's faces.

How much time will the project take?

Your child's participation in this project will mean that they are observed over the research period as part of their everyday classroom activities while at school. There will be no extra time involved and all discussions I have with students will occur during class time and as part of their learning experiences.

What are the benefits of the research project?

The research contributes to the knowledge and understanding about how cultural differences plays out in classrooms. The professional body of education benefits because more knowledge about this matter is distributed. There is no immediate and direct benefit to participants. The researcher may benefit as she adds to her research expertise.

Can my child withdraw from the study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your child is not under any obligation to participate. If you (and your child) agree for him or her to participate, he or she can withdraw from the study at any time without adverse consequences. Any data collected from your child will be withdrawn at your request; however, data is unable to be withdrawn if it has been de-identified for publication purposes.

Will anyone else know the results of the project?

This study will be published as a PhD thesis, as several journal articles and a book. The data gathered will be used to contribute to understandings about cultural differences in classrooms and schools. Confidentiality of identity will be maintained through privacy and secure storage of the data. Your child will not be personally identified in publications. As this is an important area of research, data will be held according to university guidelines for 10 years.

Will I be able to find out the results of the project?

As a parent/guardian of your child in this project, you will be able to read a summary of this research, at the end of the research period. You are also welcome to read other research publications of this research.

Who do I contact if I have questions about the project?

If you have any questions or require further information about the project please contact one of the researchers listed below.

Chief investigator:	Professor Kathy Mills	Tel: +61 4 1228 5545	Kathy.Mills@acu.edu.au
Student investigator:	Lesley Friend	Tel: +61 [REDACTED]	lesley.friend@myacu.edu.au
Head of Primary School	Andrew Gordon	Tel: +61 7 3826 3333	agordon@jpc.qld.edu.au

What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

The study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University (Ethics Registered Number 2017-102H). If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of the project, you may write to the Manager of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research).

Manager, Ethics
c/o Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research)
Australian Catholic University
North Sydney Campus
PO Box 968
NORTH SYDNEY, NSW 2059
Ph.: +61 2 9739 2519
Fax: +61 2 9739 2870
Email: resethics.manager@acu.edu.au

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. You will be informed of the outcome.

What should I tell my child about this research?

The following statement can be read to your child to help them understand their role as participant in this research.

You are being asked by a grown-up called Ms Friend to watch how you learn at school. She is a student like you and studies at a university that helps teachers learn. She will be working with your teacher and may at times teach you. She might ask you about your school work and she might take pictures of some of the great things you write and draw. She will sometimes record what you say and do. She will always ask you if that

is alright before she does any of these things. You can talk to the teacher is you change your mind about helping Ms Friend, but you will still do your usual school work.

I want my child to participate! How do I sign them up?
Please sign the accompanying consent form and return to your classroom teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Signed:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Lesley Friend.

Lesley Friend

Appendix B: Observation Recording Sheets

Date: 21/09/2017

Class: KG2 (RS2)

Time of day:

After lunch

Background to lesson: The children have listened to a story, Mrs Wishy Washy, and are now seated at tables in groups drawing responses to the story on large sheets of white paper, stacked in the middle of the table for easy access. Children are quietly working on their own and are allowed to talk to each other as they draw. The teacher is moving amongst the students, talking with them about their responses, offering encouragement and occasional instruction. Nasser is drawing the animals from the story and is discarding unwanted drawings on the floor.

Target participants in this session: Nasser, teacher

Line	Activity	Noted speech	Coding	Associated images
1.	Teacher reads story, glosses over fact that there is a pig in the story.	S: is that pig dirty? T: all the animals are and they need a bath S: but pigs are dirty	CD T#S SMA	I (1). Teacher holding up page for display, pig image obscured by hand
2.	Teachers ignores last comment	T: (ignores)	T#S	I (2) Children pointing at the pig
3.	Children at the table drawing		S#S	
4.	Nasser discarding used paper on the floor		SMA	
5.	Nasser is addressed by the teacher	T: Nasser, can you please put your papers in the bin?	T#S	I (3) Nasser drawing and throwing paper on the floor
6.	Nasser continues drawing and doesn't respond to the teacher request	N: (ignores)	T#S SMA	

Table B. Field note conventions

Sign	Convention	Indication
1.	Number and full stop	Line number
...	Three full stops	Pause in verbatim speech
I (1)	Capital I and number enclosed in brackets	Matching still image available
CD	Capital C followed by a capital D	Cultural differences marker
T	Capital T	Teacher speech or action
S	Capital S	Student speech or action
S#S	Capital S, hash sign followed by capital S	Student - student interaction
T#S	Capital T, hash sign followed by capital S	Teacher - student interaction
SMA	Capital S, capital M, capital A	Sociomaterial action

Appendix C: Interview Schedules

C1 Interview questions Southern College: <i>Teachers and teacher assistant</i>	
Construct: Cultural differences and social and cultural beliefs	
1.	Can you describe yourself as a cultural being? (cultural origins, beliefs, customs and understandings).
2.	What role do you play in delivering education to your class/school? Does culture play out in these roles being enacted? If so in what ways?
3.	Is it important to teach students about other cultures? Why and give some examples.
4.	In what ways does the IB curriculum framework help students to learn about the cultures of others?
5.	In your experience, in what ways does an IB school cater for cultural differences?
6.	Are there any cultural differences obvious in the way you and your students go about their day? If so, can you give some examples?
Cultural differences and 'other' (teacher, students from other cultures)	
7.	How are cultural differences expressed in the classroom?
8.	What opportunities exist in the classroom to support students to access information and understandings about other cultures, including their own?
Cultural differences and curriculum materials	
9.	In what ways are cultural differences dealt with in curriculum materials (daily and unit plans, school plans)?
Cultural differences and teaching resources	
10.	In what ways are cultural differences dealt with in teaching resources used as part of instruction?
Cultural differences and classroom wall displays	
11.	Are cultural differences reflected in classroom displays? If so, in what ways? E.g. wall displays, static displays, children's work, science/maths table
Cultural differences and literature	
12.	In what ways are cultural differences reflected in the literature that is used in the classroom/library?
Cultural differences and cultural artefacts	
13.	Do students bring cultural artefacts to school? If so, how are they incorporated into learning in the classroom? Are they used in teaching, for example, history?
14.	How are cultural differences represented in the foods that children bring to school?
15.	What opportunities do children have to share and learn about food objects of their and others' cultures?
16.	What opportunities do children have to share and learn about clothing objects of their and others' cultures?
17.	What opportunities do children have to share and learn about adornment objects of their and others' cultures? (hair styles, special jewellery, head dresses and other bodily adornments)
Cultural differences and the arts	
18.	Are the arts incorporated into the curriculum? In what ways do the arts, taught, reflect knowledge about different cultures?
Cultural differences and dispositions	
19.	In what ways are cultural differences evident in the way students express their culture through habits and dispositions?
20.	Do children display different cultural behaviours around hygiene – dental, nose blowing and toilet customs? Can you talk about some that you've noticed?
21.	In the classroom, do you see evidence of religion and culture connected? In what ways and can you give an example?
Cultural differences and gesture (eye contact, bodily movements, touch, silence)	
22.	In what ways are cultural differences evident in the way students use gestures, including silence?
23.	Are there any other ways that cultural differences are aired in the classroom? For example, bodily gestures, eye contact, ways of speaking.
C2 Midtown School Interview questions: <i>School leaders</i>	
Cultural differences and school/education	
1.	Can you describe yourself as a cultural being? (cultural origins, beliefs, customs, understandings)
2.	What roles do you play in delivering education your classroom? It is culturally derived?

3. How many nationalities are represented in your class and what cultures are represented? What about your teacher aide? 4. In what ways does the school/classroom cater for these cultural differences? 5. Why do you think parents choose to send their children to Midtown School? 6. Do you think that the overarching aims of a GEMS (UAE) education meet the needs of children in your class? Explain.
Cultural differences and ‘other’
7. In what ways are cultural differences expressed in your classroom? 8. Do students have the opportunity to learn about other cultures? If so in what ways? (curriculum, teaching materials, special events, etc.)
Cultural differences and educational interaction
9. Are cultural differences dealt with in policy documents and curriculum materials? If yes, can you give an example? 10. Are cultural differences dealt with in teaching resources? If yes, can you give an example? 11. Do you see evidence of cultural differences reflected in displays in your classroom? If yes, can you give some examples? 12. Are cultural differences reflected in school literature e.g., library? Examples? 13. Are the arts incorporated into the curriculum and do they reflect knowledge about different cultures? In what ways?
Cultural differences and cultural artefacts
14. Do students bring/wear cultural artefacts like clothing and jewellery, and also food, as well as (hair styles, special jewellery, head dresses and other bodily adornments) to school? If so, are they incorporated into learning in your classroom and can you give an example?
Cultural differences and dispositions
15. In what ways are cultural differences evident in the habits and dispositions of students in your classroom? 16. Do children display different cultural behaviours around hygiene – dental, nose blowing and toilet customs? Can you talk about some that you’ve noticed? 17. Do you see cultural differences in the way language is used in your classroom? Examples? Is there anything else you would like to tell me about how cultural differences play out in the classroom at your school?

C3 Interview questions: Midtown School <i>Admin – Robert and Neville</i>
Cultural differences and school/education
1. Can you describe yourself as a cultural being? (cultural origins, beliefs, customs, understandings) 2. What role do you play in delivering education to your school? 3. Please describe your school in terms of its student/teacher demographics: nationalities/cultures? 4. In what ways does your school cater for these cultural differences amongst staff, students and their parents? 5. What is the dominant pedagogical approach at this school? Is there another? 6. What are the overarching aims of a GEMS (UAE) education? Given the student/teacher population, how realistic are they? 7. Why do you think parents choose to send their children to Midtown School?
Cultural differences and ‘other’
8. In what ways are cultural differences expressed in the school? E.g., habits and dispositions, (including language) of students, parents and teachers across the school community? 9. Do students have the opportunity to learn about other cultures? If so in what ways? (curriculum, teaching materials, special events, etc.) 10. Have you experienced any incidences of cultural tension, like racism, at this school? If so, can you give an example? 11. Comment on western management and eastern ways – oversupply of unskilled labour to service school needs, e.g., idle cleaners waiting to clean the toilet?
Cultural differences and educational interaction

<p>12. Are cultural differences dealt with in policy documents and curriculum materials? Examples?</p> <p>13. What cultural entities have a say in the running of this school?</p> <p>14. Is there any tension between the UAE 2021 education vision and GEMS agenda? E.g., how do national day themes relate to the official curriculum; size of the FS classroom and EYFS play agenda?</p> <p>15. What about the KDHA agenda? E.g., EYFS bands and actual student achievement?</p> <p>16. Are all cultures at this school treated similarly? If no can you give an example?</p> <p>17. Is there any tension between cultural beliefs and the school curriculum? E.g., gender, pigs (books), religion (Jesus and Christmas), teaching of the arts?</p>
Cultural differences and cultural artefacts
<p>18. Do students bring/wear cultural artefacts like clothing and jewellery (hair styles, special jewellery, head dresses and other bodily adornments) and also food to school? If so, are they incorporated into learning in the classroom and can you give an example?</p> <p>19. Within the school community are cultures represented by artefacts e.g., flags. How do these displays play out in the school cultural environment?</p> <p>Is there anything else you would like to tell me about how cultural differences play out in your school?</p>

C4 Midtown School Interview questions: <i>Teachers</i>
Construct: Cultural differences and social and cultural beliefs
<p>1. Can you describe yourself as a cultural being? (cultural origins, beliefs, customs and understandings).</p> <p>2. What role do you play in delivering education to your class/school? Does culture play out in these roles being enacted? If so in what ways?</p> <p>3. Is it important to teach students about other cultures? Why and give some examples.</p> <p>4. In what ways does the IB curriculum framework help students to learn about the cultures of others?</p> <p>5. In your experience, in what ways does an IB school cater for cultural differences?</p> <p>6. Are there any cultural differences obvious in the way you and your students go about their day? If so, can you give some examples?</p>
Cultural differences and 'other' (teacher, students from other cultures)
<p>7. How are cultural differences expressed in the classroom?</p> <p>8. What opportunities exist in the classroom to support students to access information and understandings about other cultures, including their own?</p>
Cultural differences and curriculum materials
<p>9. In what ways are cultural differences dealt with in curriculum materials (daily and unit plans, school plans)?</p>
Cultural differences and teaching resources
<p>10. In what ways is cultural differences dealt with in teaching resources used as part of instruction?</p>
Cultural differences and classroom displays
<p>11. Are cultural differences reflected in classroom displays? If so, in what ways? E.g. wall displays, static displays, children's work, science/maths table</p>
Cultural differences and literature
<p>12. In what ways is cultural differences reflected in the literature that is used in the classroom/library?</p>
Cultural differences and cultural artefacts
<p>13. Do students bring cultural artefacts to school? If so, how are they incorporated into learning in the classroom? Are they used in teaching, for example, history?</p> <p>14. How are cultural differences represented in the foods children bring to school?</p> <p>15. What opportunities do children have to share and learn about food objects of their and others' cultures?</p> <p>16. What opportunities do children have to share and learn about clothing objects of their and others' cultures?</p> <p>17. What opportunities do children have to share and learn about adornment objects of their and others' cultures? (hair styles, special jewellery, head dresses and other bodily adornments)</p>
Cultural differences and the arts
<p>18. Are the arts incorporated into the curriculum? In what ways do the arts, taught, reflect knowledge about different cultures?</p>
Cultural differences and dispositions

19. In what ways are cultural differences evident in the way students express their culture through habits and dispositions?
20. Do children display different cultural behaviours around hygiene – dental, nose blowing and toilet customs and perhaps use of language? Can you talk about some that you've noticed?
21. In the classroom, do you see evidence of religion and culture connected? In what ways and can you give an example?
Cultural differences and gesture (eye contact, bodily movements, touch, silence)
22. In what ways are cultural differences evident in the way students use gestures, including silence?
23. Are there any other ways that cultural differences are aired in the classroom? For example, bodily gestures, eye contact, ways of speaking.

C5 Interview questions: Midtown School <i>teacher assistant</i>
Cultural differences and school/education
1. Can you describe yourself as a cultural being? (cultural origins, beliefs, customs, understandings)
2. What roles do you play in delivering education to your classroom? It is culturally derived?
3. In what ways does the classroom cater for these cultural differences?
4. Why do you think parents choose to send their children to Midtown School?
5. Do you think that the overarching aims of a GEMS (UAE) education meet the needs of children in your class? Explain.
Cultural differences and 'other'
6. In what ways are cultural differences expressed in your classroom?
7. Do students have the opportunity to learn about other cultures? If so in what ways? (curriculum, teaching materials, special events, etc.)
Cultural differences and educational interaction
8. Are cultural differences dealt with in teaching resources? If yes, can you give an example?
9. Do you see evidence of cultural differences reflected in displays in your classroom? If yes, can you give some examples?
10. Are cultural differences reflected in school literature e.g., library? Examples?
11. Are the arts incorporated into the curriculum and do they reflect knowledge about different cultures? In what ways?
Cultural differences and cultural artefacts
12. Do students bring/wear cultural artefacts like clothing and jewellery (hair styles, special jewellery, head dresses and other bodily adornments) and also food to school? If so, are they incorporated into learning in your classroom and can you give an example?
Cultural differences and dispositions
13. In what ways are cultural differences evident in the habits and dispositions of students in your classroom?
14. Do children display different cultural behaviours around hygiene – dental, nose blowing and toilet customs? Can you talk about some that you've noticed?
15. Do you see cultural differences in the way language is used in your classroom? Examples?
Is there anything else you would like to tell me about how cultural differences play out in the classroom at your school?

Appendix D:

Isabella at the Play Dough Table

I sit down at the table with Isabella, Saima, Safiya, Ebony and Dana. Isabella is on a little chair on my left and I watch her manipulate the play dough, constantly talking... not just about anything, she is describing what she is doing, “I’m just going to put this here and then make some spaghetti, see its coming out like that.” As she pushes her play dough through the spaghetti maker, she is directing her talk to the others at the table with, “See it looks like this.” Saima is next to her and she is doing the same thing. I can’t hear what Saima is saying but she is chatting away, sometimes to Isabella, sometimes to the others at the table. Safiya demands that Saima give her the spaghetti maker that Saima had just got from Isabella and I see Saima successfully negotiate with Safiya so that she can have it after her. Safiya is a bit whiney, she often is, but after a while accepts this and goes back to her own construction. Ebony, Dana and Safiya are working quietly on their own not really saying much, with minimal interaction. They do not seem to be making anything in particular and when I ask them they tell me something, but I can’t understand, there is too much noise. Isabella gets the A for apple mat and starts to make an *a* on her mat. She says to me, “Here’s a pancake,” and she gets a cutter and starts cutting it up saying, “Here like this,” and then gives me a piece to eat. Then she gets the tub that the play dough is kept in and puts some of the play dough in it. She shakes it up and says to me, “I am making magical play dough, biggedy, boggedy, biggedy boo.” Safiya is looking at her and copies her saying, “I am making magic play dough” and carries out the same sort of actions without the tub. Ebony is still working quietly on the other side of the table and doesn’t notice what Isabella is doing, even though she is really loud. At this stage Dana leaves and also Saima slips off to another activity. Now Isabella says, “I am making the play dough sparkle.” Ebony gives me something that she is making and tries to explain what it is but it’s hard to hear what she is saying—it’s a noisy time and her English is limited. Isabella has moved to something else at the

table and has a number for cutting out play dough. She shows me how 6 and 9 can interchange depending on what way you hold it. She manipulates the number in front of me saying, “Six, nine, six, nine,” depending on which way up the number is. Then she starts making something long and flat and I see that she has a sore finger. She tells me she is making a plaster for it. Isabella shows me and puts it on her finger and says, “It’s a real plaster.” Ebony is still doing her own thing but now Safiya, who has been watching Isabella, is also making a plaster and showing it to me. She now takes my hand and pretends to put a needle into it and hurt me. She says, “You will need a plaster,” and she makes me one and puts it on my hand. She gives me an injection with a play dough tool and then makes a paper towel with play dough and tells me, “I am wiping away the blood.” Ebony gets out of her seat and comes to me to give me an injection also—she has obviously been watching Isabella and me. Safiya still has a big pile of play dough in front of her—in fact she has most of the play dough—and I ask her what she is making. She tells me, “It is a palace.” She isn’t talking much throughout the activity but responds to me if I ask her something. Occasionally she talks to Isabella. I am getting a few more injections from Isabella and each time she makes a paper towel and wipes away the blood. She tells me what she is doing each time—I feel like I am in a confident nurse’s hands! Isabella then says, “I am going to make some make up.” She makes something and then rubs it on her cheeks and says to me, “Is this enough?” She goes through the same steps for eye shadow and asks me again, “Is this enough?” I say that I think she needs a little bit more on the right eye and she puts more on. She then makes mascara and also lipstick and goes through the same steps—making it out of play dough, putting it on and then asking me each time. Ebony watches but doesn’t copy and then Saima is back and making cakes. Safiya turns her castle into a cake and tells me that. Then I say it looks more like zatar fataya (an Arabic savoury bread). She laughs and agrees. Isabella is now making glittery popcorn and is using the play dough tub as a pan—she tells me this. Ebony starts making popcorn and offering it to me also. Isabella is putting little pieces of play dough in the

pan and says, “Pop, pop, pop!” Safiya joins in and also says, “Pop, pop, pop!” And then suddenly Isabella announces that she is going to play the drums, turns her pan into a drum and beats it rhythmically. Saima makes a candle for her cake and asks Isabella to blow it out. Safiya then says she has a candle and puts one in the middle of her cake. She cuts pieces from her cake and offers me some. Ebony is still in the corner, talking occasionally, but doesn’t interact with others to a great degree. Isabella then leaves for another choice activity.