'*Don't you perceive gender as different because of the chromosomes':* Examining the Impact of Gender Discourses on Early Childhood Pre-Service Teachers?

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Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative study located within the context of contemporary New Zealand early childhood education. It investigates the impact and implications on pedagogy resulting from the gender discourses held by pre-service early childhood teachers, each of whom had just begun the final semester of the 3rd year of their Bachelor of teaching early childhood education. Specifically, using data generated through focus groups, it investigates the participant's location and framing of gender, gender development and the participant's understandings of gender diversity. The research, which extensively used post-structural feminism and Foucault's notion of discourse as a theoretical framework, identified the participant's discourses around gender which were conflicting, uncontested and confused.

A series of influential discourses regarding gender were identified as potentially shaping pre-service teachers developing teacher subjectivity. I claim that the shaping of teacher subject, who are indifferent to gender, results, from a reduction of focus on gender in the early childhood sector in both professional practice and state policy. The increased dominance of the biological determinist discourse in lay society is keenly felt in these domains. The increased biologically determinist view inferring that gender difference is natural and therefore unchallengeable and the reduced focus on gender in professional and government fields decreases the importance placed on gender. As such, this thesis suggests that the importance placed on gender by the developing teacher subject may be inconsistent with the important role gender plays in the early years and may therefore inhibit pedagogy and practice.

This research has implications for policy and teacher education. The results identify early childhood teacher education as being in a unique position to attempt to mitigate such issues. Specifically this can be done by supporting the development of the reflexive skills needed for pre-

service teachers to consider and challenge the gender discourses that influence them.

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Chapter One

'Gender is a powerful ideological device, which produces, reproduces, and legitimates the choices and limits that are predicated on sex category. An understanding of how gender is produced in social situations will afford clarification of the interactional scaffolding of social structure and the social control processes that sustain it.

West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 147

1) Introduction

As a child born at the beginning of the 1970s I grew up believing girls could do anything, the child of a mother who had challenged the gender expectations placed on all her children. Upon leaving secondary school I fully expected to enter into any career, wear whatever clothes I wanted and be seen as an equal in personal relationships. After an upbringing unrestricted by gender it came as quite a surprise, upon my entry into the workforce in the late eighties, to be told that wearing make-up was part of the job because I dealt with the public. The indignity of being told to slap on a bit of "lippy" to be successful became a trigger that lead me to explore living as a feminist as did my subsequent firing from that job due to my refusal to don makeup to prove my femininity.

Decades later as I entered motherhood I wondered, as a feminist what my daughter would face as she grew. Like many mothers I learnt my child's gender early in the pregnancy and even in those early prenatal months noticed a startling trend. Gifts were overwhelmingly pink and conversation flowed about the sweetness and calmness of unborn girls. As an expectant mother I began to worry, was I lacking some maternal gene or possibly missing some crucial point. I loathed the colour pink and my

unborn child certainly didn't feel sweet or calm as she constantly woke in the middle of the night. Once born the push towards what Orenstein (2012) calls 'hyper-femininity' continued. From gifts to comments everything was pink. The maternity ward even had a colour coded pink tag, were they worried that sleep deprived mothers would forget the baby's gender? Over the following years I began to wonder if my experience of mothering as a feminist was different from non-feminist mothers?

Feminist mothering has no clear definition and feminists speak on mothering from a variety of perspectives and understandings (Kinser, 2010; O'Reilly, 2008). Gorden (1990, in O'Reilly, 2008) proposes a definition based on a series of characteristics held by feminist mothers, that feminist mothers challenge the myths of motherhood in their belief in women's rights to equal opportunities in private and public life, in bringing up children in a anti-sexist way and how many are politically active. As Stella grew I struggled to develop my mothering within a feminist framework. Feminism has alternately critiqued, embraced or simply been ambivalent to the motherhood role (Kinser, 2010). I identify as a feminist mother but by the time Stella was a young child I will admit to have fallen into patriarchal complacency, lured into a gender based parenting trap.

The Disney Princess Miniatures™ were just "super" cute and surely a couple of princesses couldn't hurt could they? Gradually though the Princesses, Barbie's and fairy wings began to pile up and Stella's room began to look like a pink dystopia ruled by Barbie and supported by a cadre of sparkling princesses. Despite nominally having a feminist mother I worried that Stella was, like most of today's little girls, growing up to see women as one dimensional characters. Where were the tree-climbing girl detectives and the strong female superheroes of my youth? Recognising this lack of multi-dimensional women characters motivated me to actively reintroduce all of Gordon's (1990, in O'Reilly, 2008) aspects of feminist mothering into our home.

My attempts to limit the sparkling pink princesses holding Stella in their grasp were tantamount to trial by tantrum rather than fire but we eventually stumbled our way through to a more balanced approach. Our freedom fighter against the tyranny of pink came in the form of "Patrick Archy". After an overheard adult conversation about Patriarchy, Stella, then aged four, decided that "Patrick Archy" must be the man who made the "bad" toys. This became the starting point of our family's exploration of feminism and consumerism at a pre-school level. The exploration continued to be a struggle as all around us other children and adults seemed to reinforce, through gifts, comments, expectations and questions, a hyper-feminised position for girls. A life composed of a narrow appearance focused view of what a girl should be that was distressingly far from the dungaree wearing girls can do anything ideas of my own youth.

As Stella and I both entered school, her Primary and myself University, I looked at all the girls around me from the new entrants to the tertiary. They were all clever, vivacious, resourceful and beautiful, every single one of them. I wondered did they recognize the pervasive push to be pretty, kind, and demure, in short to be the perfect princess. How was this discourse of hyper-femininity impacting the developing sense of self of these girls and young women? Did they even recognise the discourses shaping their identities? The responding research (Lyall, 2011), in which I investigated how feminist mothers dealt with what Orenstein (2011) described as '*princess culture'* uncovered a site of confusion for many feminist mothers, one in which the discourses shaping our girls identity appeared to be unchallenged.

I had assumed, wrongly, that the feminist mothers participating in my research would be exploring the notions of gender and the gender roles shaping their daughters. Instead I found predominantly unexplored and often contradictory notions of gender, along with a discourse of biological gender determinism unknowingly underpinning the participant's

experiences and understandings. To my horror the only participant I interviewed with a cognizant biologically determinist view turned out to be an early childhood teacher. I was baffled, had the notions of gender equity and the environmental view of gender development I thought to be embedded in the teacher education not impacted on her lay theories of gender development at all? Perhaps were the discourses not as integral to the teacher education process as I had thought?

Through reflection on my research, my own experiences as a supervisor in Playcentre, a parent run early childhood organisation[1], and my teacher education, I realised that the gender discourses I had developed were shaping not only who I was as a feminist mother but who I was as a teacher; my teacher subjectivity. It was reflexivity of my own pedagogical approach regarding gender that led me to my current study; do discourses of gender effect the pedagogy and practices of pre-service early childhood teachers? While I identified that my gender discourses did impact my pedagogy supporting a feminist and reflexive approach to teaching practice this resulted from a twenty year exploration of gender and feminist philosophy influencing and intertwining my teacher education. I wondered how, or even if, other pre-service teachers integrated gender discourses into their pedagogy? As my thesis title suggests, do pre-service teachers have or understand notions of gender? I set out to investigate which, if any, gender, discourse today's pre-service early educators were influenced by and how this impacts pedagogy.

1i) Gender

The notion of gender draws forth ideas of specific traits or norms, linked to biological sex characteristics, which produce dominant and normative

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[1] Playcentre is a nation-wide parent lead co-operative, affiliated to a regional Playcentre Association and National Federation (NZPF).

discourses, privileging some and marginalising others. I wondered how pre-service teacher's subjectivities were shaped by gender discourses and how this could impact pedagogy and practices in New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood centres? Of specific interest to me was how pre-service early childhood teachers might understand gender and gender development and what this might mean for their gender equity practices in early childhood education.

Gender, as a term relating to non-biological traits assumed to be feminised or masculinised, entered the common lexicon during the late 20th century (Gunn, 2008; Haig, 2004; Tarrant, 2006) although it can be seen in some historical accounts (Haig, 2004). According to Fausto-Sterling (2012) literature investigating the etymology of gender varies as to where and when the word re-emerged but it was certainly used in the field of anthropology by feminist academics such as Margaret Mead (Tarrant, 2006) and by feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir in the late 1940s and later by sexologist Dr John Money in the early 1950s (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). By the early 1960s the term had been taken up by researchers in numerous academic fields although this was seen most often in the social sciences including education (Haig, 2004).

By the 1970s, as a number of 2nd wave feminists strands began to challenge the traditional views of women, the term gender became increasingly common in academic and popular literature (Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Haig, 2004; Nicholson, 1994; Tarrant, 2006; Scott, 1986). For 2nd wave feminists the sex and gender distinction was crucial to an identified move towards gender equity through attempts to discredit the discourse of biological determinism that had historically been used to legitimise the oppression of women (Nicholson, 1994; Heilmann, 2011). The term "gender" became fully entrenched in the education sector during the decades of the 1970s and 1980s as a move towards gender equity in

education was taken up by many educators including in the field of early childhood education (Bradstreet, 2007; Gunn, 2008; Nuttall, 2005).

The developing notion of "gender" was not seen, in either the social sciences field or within the strands of the 2nd wave of the feminist movement, as an alternative to notions of "sex" but rather was seen to stand in conjunction with it (Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Lips, 1988; Nicholson, 1994; Tarrant, 2006). MacNaughton (2005), using post-structural analysis, has postulated that the way in which sex and gender have been identified only in conjunction has established the notions in a position of binary opposition. Binary opposition occurs when one element of the binary can only be meaningful when used in relation to the other (Mikkola, 2012; MacNaughton, 2005; Zaccai, 2012).

1ii) Gender Binaries

According to MacNaughton (2005) oppositional binaries, occurring as a result of human desire to categorise into hierarchal structures, embody power relationships as inevitably one partner of the binary holds more power, either implicitly or explicitly. The sex/gender binary is described by Lott (1997) as a powerful dynamic which operates throughout our private lives and the wider societal context as are the man/woman and male/female binaries. Post-structural feminist theory identifies that within the male/female and man/woman binaries in western society the masculine discourses, in the form of the patriarchy, have been and still is in the position of power (Bradstreet, 2007; Gunn, 2012; Hird, 2000; Lott, 1997). MacNaughton (2005) notes that binaries also serve to exclude and marginalise any individuals who do not align with either position in the binary. An example of this exclusion and marginalisation is seen in the positioning of the transgender & intersex community outside of the sex/gender binary. Fausto-Sterling (1993) identifies how these groups are

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considered "abnormal" and "other" as a result of being outside both the dominant discourse and the less powerful "other" of the normal gender/sex binary.

MacNaughton (2003) emphasizes the significance of gender binaries stating that binaries are seen throughout the early childhood sector. Manning (2010) proposes that employing analysis on the binaries seen in the early childhood sector can support the exploration of the boy/girl gender binary and support, what is described by Beasley (2005) as, disruption and resistance to unequal power relationships. An overview of literature considering gender within the early childhood education sector allowed for an identification of three main oppositional binaries concerning sex and gender. The binaries link together sex and gender, man and women (which refers to sex categories) and male and female (which refers to gender categories) although in early childhood literature the terms boy and girl are often used when referencing both gender and sex.

1iii) Thesis Rationale

Discourses of gender have had a long history of influence on early childhood education policy in New Zealand Aotearoa. From the biologically determinist beliefs of Truby King and the New Zealand Plunket society who steered education policy for the better half of the 20th century to the current conflicts between new neuro-determinism and environmental gender development gender has been influential. MacNaughton (2000) describes the early childhood environment as being a site fraught with misinformation, conflicts and contradictions around gender. Teacher education echoes this same conflict and confusion (Phillips, 1998; Weatherwax, 2010). It is where pre-service early childhood teacher's lay discourses of gender are challenged, adapted or strengthened as they

experience new understandings about gender. This in turn will or is likely to influence how individuals develop professional pedagogical theory and their teacher subjectivity.

1iv) Approaching the Field

I use a post-structural conceptual framework lens based around Michel Foucault's works, specifically; *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge* (1978), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), and *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Numerous post-structural feminists have also been influential throughout this work notably the works of; Glenda McNaughton and Chris Weedon and Judith Butler. These and other feminist writers have provided the historical, cultural and academic contexts on which the thesis is based.

These concepts have been guiding notions throughout the process of researching and writing this thesis. This thesis examines the conflict that occurs during the development of 3rd year pre-service teacher's gender discourses and assessing how pre-service teacher's pedagogical practices are influenced by these gender discourses. I do not propose that this thesis provides a definitive plan for addressing any inequity resulting from the way pre-service early childhood teacher's gender discourses intersect with teacher subjectivity. Rather, it illuminates some of the complex and conflicting discourses faced by pre-service teachers in regards to gender, specifically environmental and biologically determined gender development.

1v) Thesis Structure – Overview of the Chapters

This thesis has been structured into five chapters. This chapter first outlines my journey into a thesis that is underpinned by a feminist ideology. I describe how my feminist subjectivity leads me to the intersection of gender and education, specifically in the early childhood education sector.

Chapter two has been structured in two parts, methodology and methods. In keeping with concepts of qualitative research which place great importance in recognising and acknowledging how researcher subjectivities influence enquiry (Glesene, 2005) I have placed this chapter first before the literacy review. This positioning intended to better inform the reader of the conceptual framework used throughout the thesis which I believe has shaped how I, the author, comprehended and understood the literature I engaged with. The second part of the chapter outlined the practical and procedural aspects of this study. Outlining how I generated data using focus groups and the potential ethical and procedural dilemmas which may have arisen.

Chapter three explores the complex discourses of gender underpinning current notions of gender in the New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood education sector. An overview of literature surrounding three main gender development discourses; biological determinism, environmental development and new neuro-biological development is presented. This is followed by an exploration of both current and historical influences of gender on early childhood education policy in New Zealand Aotearoa. I explore the ways in which gender intersects with current early child education and within the teacher education process that underpin my investigation.

Chapter four presents my findings and any conclusion reached. Based on focus group interview data with 3rd year early education pre-service

teachers, this chapter explores the main questions of the thesis. Several discourses are revealed as those which the participants built their understandings of gender and its influence on their practice. I explore how the participant's understandings of gender have influenced their personal and professional early childhood teacher subjectivities and pedagogies. Specifically I have interrogated the ways that the participants understand gender and gender development followed by how they perceive gender intersecting with sexuality.

Chapter five reports on the way that these different discourses have intersected, conflicted and confirmed each other to create a position where gender had been marginalised within the teacher subjectivity of the participants. I conclude the thesis by outlining the limitations of this study and by discussing the potential for further research and work. In identifying how the discourse webs regarding gender are influencing pre-service teachers we can begin to challenge some of the notions facing gender equity in the early childhood sector.

The chapter that follows establishes the framework for my study positioning my investigation within feminist post structural methodologies and outlines the data generating methods used.

Chapter 2 - Methodology

2i) Introduction

This chapter explores the way in which this research project was designed to examine how early childhood pre-service educators discourses of gender impact teacher subjectivity and pedagogy. In order to address this I sought to develop a framework which would both align with my identity as a post-structural feminist and my developing subjectivity as a qualitative researcher. Harding (1987, in Sprague, 2005) described methodologies as the 'terrain where philosophy and action meet' a place where method and epistemology come together and are examined. This chapter endeavours to examine this terrain by introducing my assumptions underpinning the research. I present a conceptual framework that provides a theoretical prism for the research. Arising from this conceptualisation I then examine the processes and methods used to generate data and discuss potential ethical issues arising from the research.

Qualitative research, the gathering of descriptive accounts of the unique experiences and subjectivities of a particular group in order to investigate a specific phenomenon (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010; Mutch, 2005), recognises researcher subjectivity as central to research (Litchman, 2006). Well defined as I declare my own position in this regard, thus establishing a rationale for my approach to the research question; how do pre-service early childhood teachers discourses of gender influence pedagogy and teacher subjectivity?

2ii) Conceptual Frameworks: A Theoretical Journey

My understandings of how knowledge is created and society structured have developed throughout several years of academic study in the education sector and are underpinned by my exploration of feminism. For

the purposes of this study I needed to bring together these alternative approaches in order to address my thesis.

The term 'conceptual framework' is comprised of murky metaphors and journal articles across the research community providing contradicting statements. While there are numerous descriptions of conceptual frameworks the definitions given are often vague (Leshen & Trafford, 2007; Sinclair, 2007) and few writers provided what Jabareen (2009) describes as a '*qualitative systematic method'* to support the development of frame-works (Jabareen, 2009, p.50). Miles & Huberman (1994, in Leshen et al, 2007, p. 95) describe conceptual frameworks as '*the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationships among them*' but this description fails to explain how conceptual frameworks are used by researchers. Jabareen (2009) identified a list of common features in conceptual frameworks which describe how conceptual frame-works are used within research. Central to this is the notion that *'a conceptual framework is not merely a collection of concepts but, rather, a construct in which each concept plays an integral role'*, and that it not only '*provides not a causal/analytical setting but, rather, an interpretative approach to social reality*' (Jabareen, 2009, p. 51).

In order to explore the gender discourse of pre-service early childhood teachers I melded two macro theories, described by Mutch (2005, p. 59), as encompassing theories that 'explain how societies and social systems function'. This approach reflected on my academic understandings of gender, my personal subjectivities and was congruent with the research method I had chosen. Described by Hertz (1997) as the location of the self in research, I assessed my own fundamental subjectivities through a process of journaling and stream of consciousness writing, a freeform writing style defined by William James in the late 1800s (Myers, 2001). I identified that all of my interactions with and understandings of the society are to some extent influenced by a feminist view point. Yet feminist theory alone though did not allow me a sufficiently complex conceptual

framework to critically analysis my research question. The need for more than one theory to form conceptual frameworks echoes the work of Ennis (1999) who, when describing frameworks as 'powerful organisers of ideas that structure our thinking', stressed that these can be '*rarely approached in work with single, isolated variables*' (Ennis, 1999, p.133).

Despite feminist theories supporting my understanding of how women were positioned within the wider society I also needed to consider how the wider society, in which women are marginalised, functions. I found that the works of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) provided me with theories of post-structuralism as a route to this examination. Foucault's works are relevant for exploring issues related to gender and education, these topics being amongst several of particular interest to Foucault himself especially his explorations in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge* (1978) and *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Post-structuralism, when aligned with feminist theory and my personal subjectivities about wider society allowed me to frame, construct and communicate my research. *Figure 1* summarises the relationship between feminism, post-structuralism and my personal subjectivities – a combination that frames the research.

Cycle for own conceptual frame-work

Qualitative research

Personal

Subjectivities

Feminist
Post-Structuralism

Post-
structuralism
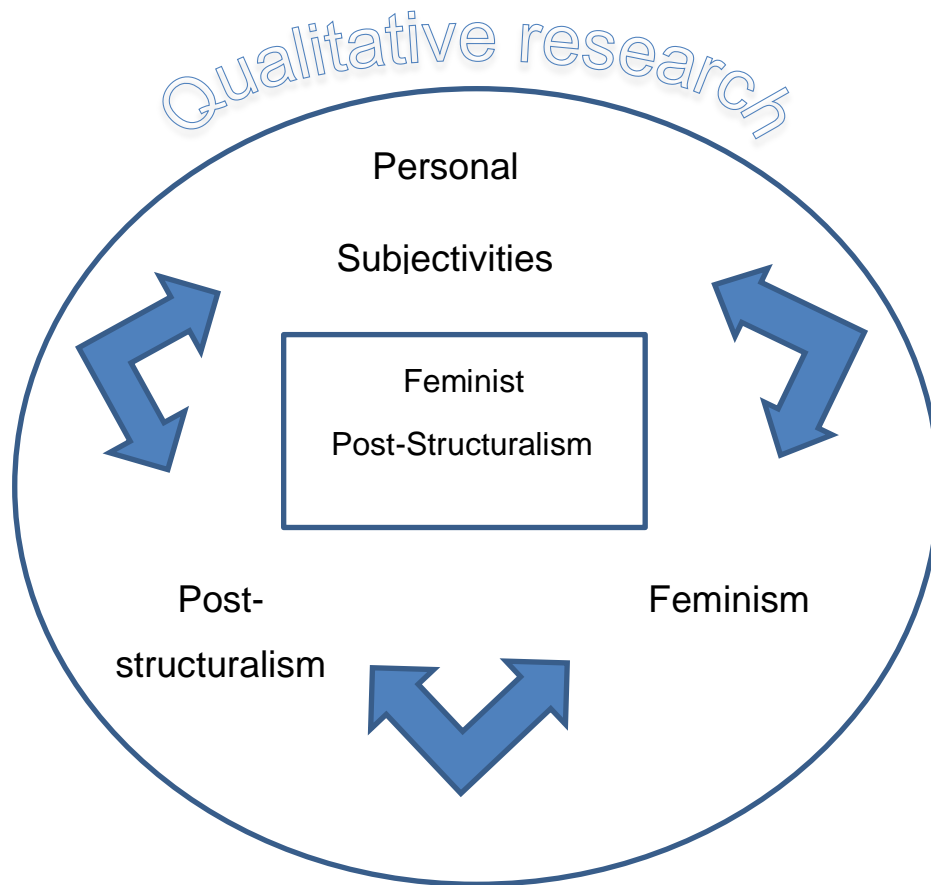
Feminism

Figure 1 – My conceptual Frame-work

In the section that follows I discuss the significance of each for my study.

2iii) Post-structural Feminism

Post-structural feminism assisted me to move beyond simply reflecting on the experiences of pre-services early childhood teachers education programmes relevant to gender issues, to an interrogation of the discourses and power relationships which frame teacher subjectivity.

2iv) Post-structuralism

Post-structuralism, which developed in response to the structuralist theories of the mid-20th century, is considered notoriously difficult to define (Cox, 2010). It is roughly described as a challenge to structuralist claims of a universal truth (Rowen & Shore, 2009) and instead assumes that there are many truths or realities (MacNaughton, 2005; Mutch, 2005). Notably the post-structural belief that there is no set 'truth' strongly aligns with some strands of feminist thought markedly, the 3rd feminist wave which identifies diverse narratives as equally valid, that there are multiple experiences and 'truths' for individuals and groups (Archer Mann & Huffman, 2005; Clegg, 2006; Kinser, 2004; Orr, 2001) further supporting the melding of two macro theories that form my conceptual framework.

Foucault's works have been frequently linked to the notion of post-structuralism, although Foucault resisted being defined as such (Cox, 2010; Davis, 1997; MacNaughton, 2005; Peters & Beasley, 2007). While the Foucauldian approach is considerably more complex than it first appears and needs explanation (Graham, 2011) his work and its transformative approach to understanding the hidden power structures of society provides a powerful approach for research (O'Neill, 2005; Neilson, 2005). Foucault, according to Graham (2005), actively challenged the notion that his work should be a used as a fixed research framework declaring that he took care 'not dictate how things should be' (Foucault, 1994, in Graham, 2005, p. 2). Rather Foucault referred to his work as providing a 'toolkit' for researchers to open and retrieve what they felt relevant (Graham, 2005; Graham, 2011; Hill, 2009; Powell, 2009).

In my research I have concentrated on picking out several of Foucault's 'tools', concepts which Foucault saw as the ways that power is expressed, managed and perpetrated. These provide a system for exploring the ways in which the pre-service early education teachers have developed teacher subjectivities through exploring the intersection of discourses of gender and education. Specifically I have used the Foucauldian concepts of;

discourse and power, Power/Knowledge, discipline, punishment, surveillance and Foucauldian ideas on subjectivity.

Foucault's notions of power were a radical deviation of the accepted theories of the time (Cox, 2010; MacNaughton, 2005; Weedon, 1987). In explaining how power is expressed in a manner which creates, manages and controls societies Foucault identified power not as an ontological force (Cox, 2010). Rather Foucault proposed that individuals or groups do not weld power in acts of domination but as a set of discourses, sets of ideas and values that are held in a time and place as 'truths' (O'Neill, 2005). Power, Foucault declared, was '*not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society*' (Foucault, 1978, p.93). Foucault saw discourses as being infused throughout society as power relations believing them to be '*deep rooted in the social nexus, not a supplementary structure over and above society whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of*' (Foucault, 1994, p.343, in Cox, 2010). Middleton (2010) uses a web metaphor to describe the way in which multiple discourses intersect to create a web like system of power relations. Foucault coined the term power/knowledge to acknowledge how power is developed and managed through discourses, legitimating certain knowledge's as 'regimes of truth' (Cox, 2010; MacNaughton, 2005). Proposing that power exists in the discourses that create us and as such each individual is subject, power and agency (Kendall & Wickham, 1999; MacNaughton, 2005). The power/knowledge and discourse concepts are specifically important to my research as by investigating the discourses to which my participants had been exposed to within their teacher education programmes I was able to identify the ways in which their teacher subjectivity might have been influenced.

In further elucidation on power/knowledge Foucault proposed that through a system of surveillance, classification, and normalisation, described as discursive practices, whole societies would effectively create and enforce discourses, producing systems of inclusion and exclusion (Middleton,

1998). When a discourse becomes dominant Foucault proposes that it gains a sense of legitimacy. As a result, individuals or groups whose subjectivities are most closely aligned with the dominant discourse benefit. Such benefits derive from these individuals or groups becoming the representation of "normal" (Nielson, 2005; O'Neill, 2005). Nielson (2005) proposes that this contrasts with individuals or groups who do not align with the most powerful discourses and who will become subjugated and positioned as abnormal. The issues of resistance is important to my research as pre-service teachers when developing their teacher subjectivity may resist discourses as well as adapt and/or integrate them. As new discourses are introduced, conflicting and jostling for dominance, older discourses don't vanish but rather become over written, absorbed or adapted into the new. The new discourse is like a palimpsest; this metaphor describes new discourses being overwritten on older discourses which in turn bleed through into the new (Davis, 2010). A palimpsest, a manuscript on which the original text has been rubbed out and overwritten, is a useful metaphor for understanding the complexity of developing discourses in which old discourses are '*as previous 'inscriptions'' 'erased and overwritten, yet remain as traces within present consciousne*ss' (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1989, p. 176).

Foucault believed that through the creation of the subjugated and abnormal, from those aligned with less dominant discourses, a place of resistance is created (Weedon, 1987). Foucault held that where there is power there will be resistance, that the creation of resistance was crucial to the creation of power (Cox, 2010; Nielson, 2005; Weedon, 1987). According to O'Neill (2005) resisting dominant discourses can be difficult as dominant discourses are enshrined into the political and social structure of society. Foucault described such political and social structures as "apparatus" (Weedon, 1987). Apparatuses are organisations and social systems enmeshed in the dominant discourse and described by Foucault as a '*thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative*

measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions' (Foucault, 1980, p. 194-195 in Cox, 2010, p.36).

Systems of education are apparatus, where students are 'taught' what it is to be a 'normal' student. This is no less true when human beings are receiving messages about gender and what it is to be male or female. Foucault explores this notion from a sexualised position in his text *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge* (1987). For the participants in this research the education system as an apparatus is crucial as they are being shaped by discursive practices to be 'normal' students while concurrently the apparatus is providing them with the discourses with which they also shape themselves to be teachers, to create their teacher subjectivity. Concurrently these participants are enmeshed in the discourses which shape gender and sexuality influencing their sense of self as a gendered subject.

Discursive practices are identified as supporting and strengthening dominant discourses, through the systems of apparatuses and are often unnoticeable actions that can create, support, or extend the dominant discourse (Cox, 2010; O'Neill, 2005). Most relevant to this research are the practices of discipline, punishment and surveillance. According to Middleton (1998) discipline is a mechanism of power that regulates an individual's behaviour in social settings, Foucault used the term 'disciplinary society' when he discussed a number of 'apparatus' such as prisons, asylums and schools which exert disciplinary power over society. In apparatus, disciplinary power is enforced through a complex system of classification, punishment and surveillance which functions with discipline to bring individuals into line with the power/knowledge of the dominant discourses (Middleton, 1998). Within the participant's teacher education this can be seen in the systems of surveillance, assessment and punishment through which students are moulded into early childhood teachers. This is especially important in the practice-based aspect of the teacher education process in which the systems of surveillance, assessment and punishment are also supported by a powerful system of

observation as the pre-service teachers observe and identify what they perceive to be the 'teacher' role, while they are in turn observed and assessed by their teachers.

Education services including in the early childhood sector, as apparatus, exert disciplinary power through discursive practices over students. The participants as pre-service teachers face timetables, for example, which regulate student's activities while they face classification, surveillance and punishment in the form of assessment to further normalize their student behaviours. Punishment is a uniquely powerful tool for teachers, it can affect change both through being welded directly at erring students but also when the punished students observe the lives of the normalised. At an early childhood level such disciplinary power is still apparent as early childhood teachers, even when operating within play based pedagogy, use both management of activities, surveillance and punishment to normalise children's behaviour. For the participants these discursive practices were strongly evident in their teacher education process (See 4viii) Gender discourses and Practicum).

2v) Subjectivity

Although subjectivity is a debated concept by Foucauldian feminist scholars (Weatherwax, 2011) for the purposes of this research I have drawn on the work of Weedon (1987) who was shaped by Foucault. Weedon (1987, p. 32 in Chang, 2009) identifies subjectivity as '*the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself, and her ways of understanding her relation to the world,*' that is a way of connecting the individual's experience with social discourse.

In his early work Foucault proposed that individuals are '*made subjects'*, that is, docile bodies created by discourse (Davis, 1997, p. 273). This

resulted in criticism of Foucault suggesting that he trivialised or disregarded the idea of subjectivity and agency altogether (Yates & Hiles, 2010). According to Weedon (1987) his proposition was considered problematic by feminists although in later years though, Foucault returned his focus to subjectivity. Foucault stated in 1983, the year before his death, that:

> '*his real quarry was not an investigation of power but rather the history of the ways in which human beings are constituted as subjects, a process that involved power relations as an integral aspect of the production of discourses involving truths*' (Peters & Beasly, 2007, p. 6)

It is here that my conceptual framework is positioned.

Foucault's work began to support the notion that individuals are integral in the shaping of discourses that shape them and therefore also have the potential to resist discourses (Peters et al, 2007). For post-structural feminists the idea of subjectivity, based on Foucault's later work, has been reframed and is viewed as a complex site where the self is formed and reforming by the individual who is a site of multiple conflicting discourses (Phillips, 1998). According to Phillips (1998) pre-service teachers face multiple and complex discourses as their teacher subjectivity relevant to gender is forming and reforming radically as they moved through the teacher education process.

I entered the field with the proposition, drawing in Foucault slated interpretation, that it is likely that gender can influence the 'teacher' self in a number of ways. The teacher subject is shaped both by the gender discourses found in wider society and the myriad of gender discourses found within the professional early childhood education sector. The impact of early childhood teaching being an overwhelmingly gendered profession must also be recognised (Cammack & Phillips, 2002; Farquhar, 2008; May, 2001; May 2005). According to Farquhar (2006) early childhood teacher educators in New Zealand Aotearoa are overwhelmingly female. That early childhood teaching as a feminine profession is intimately linking to

caring as a supposedly feminine characteristic (Farquhar, 2006) and may heavily impact the teacher subject, regardless of the gender of the teacher.

2vi) Feminism

The second of the macro theories comprising my conceptual framework is that of feminism. As I have argued Foucault's concepts of power, discourse and discursive practice provide a strong conceptual basis for investigation by locating it within feminist discourse despite feminist ideology being relatively unexplored by Foucault (Deveaux, 1994). On this basis I contend that Foucault's notions of power/knowledge, subjectivity and sexuality provide new ways for feminists to explore the ways in which women's lives are shaped, a proposition shared by McLaren (2009) and Weedon (1987). Mclaren (2009) identified four ways in which they believe that Foucault's works and feminist theory intersects; i) both see the body as a site or power, ii) both view power as local, iii) both view male as privileged and iv) both emphasise the power of discourse.

According to Allen (2011) any definition of feminism is controversial as there is a no clear universal feminist ideal. As such Allen (2011) proposes a set of criteria common to divergent feminist theories, that '*feminist theory is devoted to the tasks of critiquing women's subordination, analyzing the intersections between sexism and other forms of subordination such as racism, heterosexism, and class oppression, and envisioning the possibilities for both individual and collective resistance to such subordination'*. A number of systems have been used to categorize feminists with the most common being the 'waves' metaphor (Coleman, 2009; Nicholson, 2010; Van Der Tuin, 2011). Each wave, describing a chronological group of feminists, is composed of sub-groups aligned to philosophically diverse beliefs (Tong, 1993). Clegg (2006) proposes that each chronological shift represent complex shifts in feminist theorising and theoretical emphasis. Despite criticism of the wave metaphor; that it fails to

account for the complexity of feminist theory, that feminism is continually evolving and that it portrays groups in conflict rather than acknowledging intergenerational co-operation, the metaphor does provide a useful identifier of different streams of feminism (Coleman, 2009; Crawford, 2010; Gibbard-Cook, 2011; Kinser, 2004; Van Der Tuin, 2011).

According to Coleman (2009) 3rd wave feminism is composed of multiple strands which evolved during the late 1980s (Coleman, 2009; Gibbard-Cook, 2011). Contrasting from the second wave, which fractured due to a perceived tendency to homogenise the experiences of all women to that of the white middle-class liberal feminist (Jenainati & Groves, 2010; Gibbard-Cook, 2011), the 3rd wave is loosely based around embracing multiple diversities. In acknowledging that women are not a homogenous group but rather divergent groups who may not share subjectivities or lived experiences (Coleman, 2009) it is contended that all subgroups will be deemed to be of equal value. A number of issues are especially important in the 3rd wave struggle against patriarchy; the nature of power-relations; subjectivity and agency as it affects social justice; and in particular how dominant discourses especially the media and neo-liberal agenda have been internalised into the consciousness of today's society (Gibbard-Cook, 2011; Curry-Stevens, Lee, Datta, Hill & Edwards, 2008). I discuss each of the waves in the chapter that follows (See 3ii) Gender Discourses in Education).

I self-classify as a 3rd wave feminist, not simply as a result of the decade in which I began exploring feminist theory, but rather resulting from the 3rd wave's embracing of diversity and the multiple ways in which society can be perceived and understood. More specifically I identify as a post-structural feminist due my personal belief that there are multiple narratives and truths in society. Arising from this belief I propose that power is not held as an ontological force but rather is diffused in society through discourses and discursive practices.

Waller (2005) has identified that within the 3rd wave feminist movement research methods are varied and diverse although all are grounded in a common feminist perspective. In exploring diverse feminist research methodologies Waller (2005) outlines a set of commonly held principles which recognise that; attention is paid to marginalised communities, investigation occurs of power relationships during the research process, objectivity is rejected, life experiences are considered as valid data and that research is explicitly orientated to provoke change for marginalised communities and, like post-structural research, embraces the notion of researcher subjectivity as central. I believe my research, investigating how gender issues impacts teacher subjectivity in training early childhood teachers, aligns with the principles guiding feminist research.

2vii) Bringing Foucauldian Post-structuralism and Feminism Together

Intense debate has occurred in feminist academia over Foucault's writings in spite of his limited discussion on women's issues or feminism (Coleman, 2009; Weedon, 1987). Many feminist theorists propose that Foucault's ideas on the nature of power can further feminist understanding of women's marginalization and have used his notion of discourse to critically analyse the patriarchy (Macleod & Derrheim, 2002). Several of the most prominent post-structural feminist writers have also drawn on Foucault's notion of discursive practices to analyse the normative practices of gender on individual women's lives (Allen, 2011; Butler, 1990; Cox, 2010; MacNaughton, 2005; Weedon, 1984).

Despite some criticisms post-structuralism is considered amongst the forefronts of influences on 3rd wave feminism (Allen, 2011, Coleman, 2009) with many feminist writers proposing that post-structuralism provides a valuable scaffold for feminist practice (Gavey, 1989). Feminist post-structuralism is described Weedon (1987, in Gavey, 1989, p.460) as '*a*

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mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change'. That is that post-structural feminist thinkers seek to understand and challenge gender based inequality by exploring concepts of power, power relationships and knowledge using post-structural theory.

Like many post-structural feminist writers I have combined elements from Foucault's "toolbox" with feminist ideology to investigate my research to examine how discourses on gender are experienced by pre-service teachers in their education programmes. This approach allows for a strong engagement with issues of gender and sexuality within the gendered profession of early childhood education.

Methods

2viii) Focus Group Methods

I utilized focus groups to generate data in order to explore how pre-service early childhood teacher's gender discourses may influence pedagogy and subjectivity. Through the focus group I did not endeavor to discover 'truths' but, instead explored narratives in a group context, to disclose the multiple, often conflicting subjectivities and the discourses that shaped them. Focus groups are particularly fitting for post-structural feminist work both recognizing the importance of lived experiences as unique and valid (Jowett & O'Toole, 2006) and supporting the voice of the marginalized (White, 2003). Jowett et al (2006) has identified that focus groups can, but do not always, align with feminist research practices depending on design, function and motive.

Focus groups have been in use for several decades. The earliest published description found in a 1926 work by Bogardus (Lichtman, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Wilkinson, 1999). While most commonly used in communication, marketing and media studies, there has been an increasing use of focus groups in other forms of qualitative research (Morgan, 1997; Wilkinson, 1999). The use of focus groups in feminist research has become increasingly popular (Jowett et al, 2006) supported by numerous researchers such as Wilkinson (1999) who identifies three main ways in which feminist research can support data generation. Focus groups, Wilkinson (1999) proposes, address issues of artificiality, decontextualization and most importantly for research with a feminist lens exploitation by providing a more naturalist form of communication within a social context importantly supporting the group members to be research subjects rather than mere participants.

Focus groups design varies but can be broadly defined as a group discussion exploring a specific set of issues (McLachlan, 2005; Wilkinson,

1998) led by a mediator (Packer-Muti, 2010). According to Morgan (1997) focus groups as a method are most often found in combination with or supplementary to other methods such as one-on-one interviews or surveys but can used as a self-contained method. Focus groups can be structured or semi-structured depending on the purpose and nature of the group (Lichtman, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Mutch, 2005). Regardless of design, the practice is to create a relaxed atmosphere in which discussion can be held in a free and comfortable manner (Jowett & et al, 2006; McLachlan, 2005) generating openness and feeling of belonging (Jowett & et al, 2006; Wilkinson, 1999).

McLachlan (2005) purports that the focus group structure allows for the collection of sensitive topics as participants may feel that they are supported by the group environment (McLachlan, 2005). Focus group structure may also provide a better method for Māori or other cultural groups for whom group discussion may be more natural or culturally safe (kulavuz-Onal, 2011) potentially resulting from focus groups providing a uniquely collective experience amongst qualitative research methods delivering an environment which may better provide a culturally supportive atmosphere. Focus groups also allow for the participants to support each other if topics discussed become difficult or emotionally challenging (White, 2003). This was especially important for the thesis as discussions around issues of gender are likely to be intertwined with discourses of sexuality (Gunn, 2008) and may be contentious or difficult for some participants.

According to McLachlan (2005) feminist post-structuralism focus group structures allow for the reduction of researcher/participant power imbalance by redistributing at least some of the power away from the focus group facilitator and moving the power balance to the group. Wilkinson (1999) proposes that the more naturalist social context of focus groups shifts power between the researchers and the participants. Focus groups are also designed to provide an environment which would be

familiar to the participants. As pre-service teachers the participants had recent experiences in working in professional group settings and as early childhood professional were familiar with work in group settings (Nuttall, 2004).

Focus groups do have weaknesses which were considered in terms of this research. According to Morgan (1997) focus groups are unlikely to be successful when the participants are not equal or fully participating and can be limited by participants with agendas which differ from the researcher. Morgan (1997) also describes the potential either for group polarization or conformity, this may occur if group members cannot freely express what they feel are unpopular opinions. Each of these issues is generally arbitrated by the moderator therefore moderator skill can be a limitation. Facilitators style and skill can greatly impact both the ability of a group to develop the positive environment needed for open discussion and on the group resolving any issues created by a group dynamic (Jowett et al, 2006; Packer-Muti, 2010).

2ix) Research Design

Focus group procedures have become well recorded over the last two decades (Morgan, 1997) and generally follow a specific set of guidelines which include; selection of the participants, composition of groups, the location of groups and recording and transcribing. These guidelines were reflected in how my focus groups were planned and carried out (See Appendix 3 – Sample focus group script). After considering the benefits and limitations I felt the best method for my research was stand-alone focus groups which I would facilitate in a semi-structured format to allow for some group management while still creating a forum where the group could take some control of the discussion (Morgan, 1989; Mutch, 2005).

An important feature of focus groups is that they allow for the researcher to gather data on group interactions (Del Rio-Roberts, 2011). According to White (2003) focus groups allow for the analysis of communication and exchanges both verbal and non-verbal if collected using audio and digital recordings. The use of video allowed me as the researcher to concentrate on evaluating the interactions between the participants and considering the data is as Warr states (2005, p. 203, cited in Gunn, 2008, p. 49) *'jointly created, contested and reworked with the processes of the group'*. This format was chosen to ensure that the group discussion remained relevant to the research; while still allowing for the group to diverge from the structured questions which was in keeping with the data collected to be used with inductive analysis.

Focus group questions (see Appendix 3) were designed to explore how the participants' discourses of gender may impact their pedagogy and subjectivity. Despite my intention to engage in analysis using inductive methods I do not consider this research to be entirely inductive. The questions on which my analysis and coding is based were indirectly affected by research subjectivities. For example it was my subjectivities, bias and expectations that shaped the research questions. In retrospect my assumptions around the participants knowledge base about gender issues, which shaped the development of the research questions, may have led some participant's to initially perceive the focus groups as a form of testing rather than discussions (See 2x) Researcher Reflexivity).

Moderator style was an important part of my researcher subjectivity and attempt to create a power dynamic in which the participants and researcher were more equal. I attempted, by using a non-interventionist moderator style, to gain a position as a group member rather than leader. Packer-Muti (2010) described two main styles of moderator interventionist and non-interventionist. The interventionist moderator applies tight control over the group, calling on specific participants and limiting discussions

while the non-interventionist is more likely to allow free flowing discussions using prompting questions only to foster conversations (Packer-Muti, 2010).

2x) Selection of the Participants

Participants for this research were recruited from a third year degree cohort of pre-service early childhood teachers attending one of the two campuses of a New Zealand Aotearoa university[2]. The two campuses, linked to the same university, were in different cities, the central campus (Campus A) and its cohort (Campus B). Initial contact on both campus A and B occurred when I visited the potential participant's classes to introduce myself and my research. This contact was facilitated through the university lecturers who, to an extent acted as "gatekeepers". People Lodico et al (2010) describes as acting in official or unofficial roles that can control access to potential participants. In each case I was welcomed and introduced, in a positive manner, to the students by the lecturer who stayed during my introduction. It is likely that being introduced to and supported by the gate keepers may have worked to legitimize my position as a researcher with the students but equally this may have positioned me as more aligned to staff than as a fellow student. This positioning may have been significant as it may have influenced the power balance between the participants and researcher. Potential participants were invited to fill out the consent form as an indication of a desire to participate which was then returned through internal mail. All subsequent communication occurred either via email or phone dependent on each participant's personal choice of communication.

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[2] This is a three year degree course leading to teacher registration to be followed by a 2 year in-service registration programme.

2xi) Group Composition and Focus Group Locations

Invitations were issued to all potential participants at campus A and B. Although focus groups generally consist of 4 to 12 people, with the ideal number of participants being 6 to 8 (Lichtmen, 2006; Morgan, 1997; Secor, 2009) the number of respondents meant that each of the focus groups consisted of a lower number of participants. In order to provide focus groups which would not be too large for the participants and to ensure all respondents were able to attend two focus groups were run on campus A.

Finding willing participants was unexpectedly difficult despite the flexible participant criteria. Several contributing factors for the lower than expected response may have occurred as a result of; the time pressures on students; a heavy workload due to the participants being in their final year of their bachelor of early childhood teaching; lack of perceived incentives; an unappealing initial approach; a lack of interest in gender issues or a perception that the topic was too confronting or challenging for the potential participants.

2xia) Locale

To allow for easy access and to encourage participation all focus groups were held on the campus. Through the gate keepers I was provided with class timetables in order to schedule times for the focus groups which would not clash with any classes and which would be likely to be suitable for the participants. The participants on campus A were eventually provided with two options to ensure suitable times for all could be found while a single time was set for campus B due to a smaller number of participant responses from Campus B only one time was set.

While the providing of two focus groups on campus A divided the potential participant group and led to smaller than desirable group size in some cases, this was required in order to provide times suitable to each of the participants, these groups are described as group 1 and group 2. This group, described as group 3, consisted of only 2 participants. Although a larger number of potential participants had indicated interest in contributing only two attended. Although a focus group of only two participants does not meet the general guide-lines for a focus group I decided to continue. While I believe that having only two participants would likely have influenced the generation of data, by changing the group context or influencing the social interaction, I felt by careful moderation the data was still suitable to incorporate in the study.

McLachlan (2005) proposes that focus group rooms should be comfortable, familiar and provide a location that allows for circular seating but also takes into account physical practicalities, such as suitability for audio and visual recording. With location choice vital in the creation of a relaxed group atmosphere (Morgan, 1997) much thought went into the choice of room location. Each focus group took place in a meeting room within the respective faculty building. While the meeting rooms were similar in form and function to class rooms they did not hold the same power connotations. I was concerned that holding the focus groups in a classroom would support the participants to position me as teacher not group member. To this end I intentionally positioned the furniture in each room, (See Appendix 4 - room diagrams) to create a welcoming environment which would position me as a group member. Each focus group took place using the same focus group script (see Appendix 3) running for approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours.

2xib) Audio and Digital Recording

Each of the focus groups was recorded using audio recording and digital visual recording. Dual recordings of the focus groups allowed me as the researcher to be more "present" during the focus group as I was not distracted by recording or note taking. By not taking notes I had the added advantage of further positioning myself as one of the group. The recording devises were explained to each focus group at the beginning of the session to support participants comfort around the devices. Once they were turned on they were not switched off until the participants had left the room allowing for all reflections to be included as meta-data.

At the beginning of each focus group I stressed the confidentially of both the audio and digital recordings, that they would be heard or seen only by myself, to help encourage a comfortable environment. The audio recorder was placed in the center of the table while the digital recording equipment was mounted on a tripod and positioned in a location which was able to capture the expressions and body language of each participant (See Appendix 4, 5, 6 - focus room diagrams). This positioning was only possible by sacrificing digital footage of my own expressions as I was forced to sit with my back to the camera. To address any potential lack of data that may have resulted I kept a reflexive journal of my responses and emotions during the data collection process which were completed after each focus group. These journal responses were added to the meta-data. I chose to complete the transcription of the audio and video recordings myself. I used the video recordings as the basis of the transcripts which were then corroborated with audio and video recordings. The transcripts allowed for the participant's body language and facial expressions to be incorporated into the data. Appendix 7 – Sample Transcription Page.

2xii) Participants

The only specific requirement for the participants was to be a 3rd year student in the Bachelor of Teaching Early Childhood Education attending either Campus A or B. While each of the participants met this criterion other characteristics varied. The participants were all volunteers in the research who were not reimbursed for their time or any transport costs. *Table 1.* summarizes the participants and the focus group in which they participated; their pseudonym, age, gender and how they defined their cultural background. The data generated from each of the focus groups was incorporated into a single data set for the purpose of the analysis.

Profile of the Participants

Focus Group	Name	Age	Gender	Cultural Background
Focus group one	Jasmine	18-25	Female	NZ European
	Kristy	18-25	Female	NZ European/Māori
	Niki	18-25	Female	NZ European
	Heather	34+	Female	NZ European
Focus group two	Zoe	18-25	Female	NZ European
	Sam	18-25	Male	NZ European

	Shelly	18-25	Female	Māori
	Anna	34+	Female	NZ European
	Dianne	18-25	Female	South African/ European
Focus group three	Beatrice	26-33	Female	NZ European
	Sharna	26-33	Female	Māori

Table 1.   *Profile of the Participants*

2xiii) Researcher Reflexivity

In keeping with a qualitative approach to research the role played by the researcher in generating the data is important to the research process (Mutch, 2005). Several strategies were used to reduce the researcher influence on the generation of focus groups in order to minimize the participant/researcher power balance and researcher influence over the participants; focus group organization (See 2ixa) Group composition, 2ixb) Locale, 2ixc) Audio and Video Recording, 2xiib) Risk Minimization and moderator style. While these actions went some way towards reducing researcher influence undoubtedly some would have occurred due to my role in shaping the topics under discussion.

Journaling was used post focus groups to support researcher reflexivity during data analysis. While the journal entries were initially used to support my reflection and reflexive thought about the focus groups the journal entries also provided an extra element for the meta data. I found this process especially useful around the issue of participants making what appeared to be homophobic statements. For example when one participant in Focus group 2, Shelly stated:

> *'I still get questions about my brother today, whether he's gay, it's real embarrassing. He drinks with me and that but he's my little brother but you know it's the way he talks and things like that'* (FG2. L269)

I was particularly troubled. Despite the lack of challenge arising from the other participants I felt strongly that challenging the statement was not within the scope of my role as a non-interventionist moderator. I was able to initially use the journaling process to express my concern without changing the dynamic of the focus group and later used the information to access my response to the participant and review the extent to which my response might have impacted on the data generation. By using reflexivity I was able to recognise that despite my internal response to this issue I didn't allow my response to impact the group in any obvious manner. The structures in place enabled me to deal with personal affront without revealing this to the participants.

Reflection noted in my research journal after the conclusion of the focus groups led me to believe this may have only been partially successful. While this approach appeared successful for focus group one, my analysis of group two led me to believe it may have been less successful for this group. For example at the end of the focus group two some members asked for definitions and explanations around the topic suggesting that they consider me to be an expert. Analysis of group three identified a group power dynamic different from both group one and two. While the participants appeared to identify the mediator as an expert rather than

group member the reduced number of participants in this group (See 2xi) Participants) significantly shaped the dynamic by a reduction in peer pressure and by reducing the potential for a classroom like atmosphere that may have occurred in the larger focus groups.

2xiv) Ethical Considerations of the Research Process

Ethical consent was granted by the University of Waikato Faculty of Education Ethics committee before any field work was carried out. Three main ethical considerations were taken into account during the research, i) informed consent, ii) confidentiality and iii) risk minimization.

2xiva) Informed Consent

The informed consent process began concurrent to participant recruitment. At each meeting issues of ethical consent were discussed and the consent forms (see Appendix 2) were subsequently signed and returned before the focus groups were held. To ensure that confidentiality was consistent across the research process and the written report pseudonyms were selected by the participants. If participants used any identifying names or locations these too were changed in the written material.

2xivb) Risk Minimization

Risk minimization for participants, so that they will not be harmed in the research process, is a complex issue. Watts (2006) claims that harm can range from physical harm to emotional distress or participant exploitation. In this research it was possible for emotional triggers to occur around issues related to gender inequality in the lives of the participants. In such a

case participants would have been refereed to professional help. Accountability to participants that the research process will reduce the potential for harm is central to the ideology of feminist research (Waller, 2005) and was also central to my decision to employ focus groups as a method. While it is acknowledged that it would be impossible to completely reduce researcher/participant power imbalance (Sprague, 2005) a number of steps were taken to tackle this issue. Some movement in power from the researcher to the participant occurs naturally in focus groups due to the virtue of there being more participants that researchers (Wilkinson, 1999) but not all power imbalances can be addressed this way.

Sprague (2005) identified three main ways that the researcher has more power than participants; the researcher controls the structure of the focus group, the researcher is in a position of power over the participants as the moderator of the focus group and finally the researcher has control over the interpretations of the research data. Sprague (2005) identifies only one area in which the participant holds more power than the researcher and that is in the choice to participate in the research at all. This research attempts to reduce researcher/participant power imbalance has already been addressed. Firstly the focus group location (See 2ixb) Locale), the semi-structured focus group structure and the role of moderator was not that of expert but that of co-constructor (See 2viii) Research Design.

Finally I incorporated a method described by Huisman (2008) as participatory methodologies by encouraging participants to continue their participation in the research. An effort was made to fully engage the participants into the research process by including what is described by Newkirk (1996, in Kirsch, 2005) as co-interpretation. Co-interpretation was included in this research when participants were asked to read transcripts and comment on their participation in the focus groups. This allowed for each participant to further explain any comments and to give them another opportunity to share information. Each participant was also invited to

instigate dialogue with the researcher if they wished to allow follow up on focus group dialogue or embellish on any points they had made. Both of these methods did allow for some further feedback to the research. Two participants followed up with written information and one with a one-on-one discussion about some issues which arose in the interview. The information generated during the ongoing participation was incorporated into the research meta-data with the information included in the coding processes.

2xv) Trustworthiness

All researchers, regardless of topic, methodologies or ontological perspective, endeavor to provide trustworthy research (Mutch, 2005). Traditionally this has been assessed using objectivity, validity and reliability but while these methods are considered suitable for quantitative research, qualitative research requires a different approach (Mathison, 1998; Searle, 1999; Thurmond, 2001). One approach which has become increasingly popular in the last two decades (Mathison, 1998; Thurmond, 2001) is triangulation. According to Thurmond (2001) triangulation is a strategy which uses multiple methods, for example different methical approaches, theoretical perspectives or analytical methods to cross-check analysis of research data allowing researchers to be more confident of any conclusions drawn and to create trustworthy research (Bowen, 2005; Jick, 1979; Searle, 1999; Thurmond, 2001).

While traditionally researchers have used triangulation to identify convergences of data, where data sources agree, to reveal factualness about the phenomena being studied, Mathison (1998) proposes that triangulation can also be used to identify inconsistencies and contradictions. Both can be important in the analysis and examination of discourses. Trustworthiness by using triangulation was an integral aspect

of the analysis and discussion for this study. Throughout this research trustworthiness was ensured by comparing the results and analysis of the focus groups data with literature and further corroborated through the use multiple theoretical perspectives in conceptual framework. Through the process of triangulation I was able to be confidant of the trustworthiness of the research and any conclusions drawn.

2xvi) Discourse Analysis

Aligned to the post-structuralist feminist approach discourse analysis took precedence as a means of interpreting focus group data. Specifically discourse analysis in this research has been untaken using a Foucauldian understanding. Although the nature of Foucauldian discourse analysis is complex (Garrity, 2010) it recognizes that language is always situated in discourse language and can therefore be a vehicle for analysis (Garvey, 1989). According to Graham (2005, p. 3) discourse analysis '*draws inferences from structural and linguistic features in texts and discourse analysis informed by the work of Foucault'* so as such all texts and conversations including personal researcher notes, focus group transcripts and analytic memos were included in analysis.

Discourse analysis was initiated as soon as I transcribed the focus groups data, (See 2ixc) Audio and Digital Recording). Essentially this became the first "reading" of the data. Subsequent readings of the data, both re-readings of the written transcripts and repeated watching of the digital recordings, allowed for further analysis of the data using thematic analysis. My initial reading of the data was used to identify preliminary themes around which the data could be organised. Once a series of themes had been identified, a thematic analysis was carried out. I see thematic analysis as a method suitable for carrying out a discourse analysis.

2xvii) Thematic Analysis

A thematic approach to analysis was employed in order to draw out the central or recurrent themes from qualitative data (Mutch, 2005). Boyatzis (1998) describes thematic analysis as a subset of other methods of analysis primarily discourse analysis, alternatively Braun & Clarke (2006) propose that thematic analysis should be considered an independent analysis method. Differing from discourse analysis, thematic analysis can used in either inductive or deductive approach (Braun et al, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998). The coding for this research was essentially inductive, that is it was derived from the data. However since I had created the research questions based on my subjectivity approach to the topic elements of the coding were also considered deductively (See 2x) Researcher Reflexivity).

Despite differing definitions there is agreement that thematic analysis is a process in which data is encoded through the identification of themes (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun et al, 2006). Themes are identified in the form of codes, stemming from patterns identified in the data such as repetitions, frequently identified activities, metaphors, analogies, feelings, commonly used or misused vocabulary or missing data (Braun et al, 2006; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). According to Ryan et al (2003) themes can be divergent, broad or specific, theoretical or descriptive with good codes described by Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006) as those capturing a rich description of the phenomenon. Coding may also be based on data from the focus groups and on meta-data, which is data about the data collection and coding (Gibbs, 2012). In the case of this research codes were based on both the main data set based on the focus groups and meta-data, which is data that reflects on the collection of the main data set (Gibbs, 2012) (See 2x) Researcher Reflexivity). Braun et al (2006) outlines six stages of thematic analysis each of which was followed during this research. *Figure 2* describes each stage of my thematic analysis, based on the stages developed by Braun et al (2006).

My Analysis during the Stages of the Thematic Data Analysis

Stage 1.
Familiarisation of the data though transcription

Stage 2.
Data given 42 initial descriptive codes based on repetition of feelings, vocabulary and activities (See appendix 7 – Second stage codes)

Stage 3.
Codes were refined and arranged into a thematic map. At this stage several codes were discarded if they yielded less information and three main thematic groups were created.

Stage 4.
The code groups were refined and cross-checked against the data as a whole through triangulation with the conceptual framework, the whole data set and the wider literature. (See appendix 8 – Third/Fourth stage code groups)

Stage 5.
Code groups were named and rich descriptive analysis was created while being continually refined reassessed against the overall data set and the research questions

Stage 6.
This stage was carried out during the production of the report as the codes were investigated, defined and discussed in relation to current literature and the overall data

Figure 2.   Stages of Thematic Analysis

2xvii) Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter I have described both the process of the data collection and data analysis of this research that arose out of the theoretical underpinnings that framed my research. I have discussed the problems which may challenge a researcher in developing a theoretical framework and then applying this throughout their research, a step described by Leshen et al (2007) as complex but necessary. I also outlined the processes by which this research was carried out and how I approached the collection and analysis of the data in order to enable the identification of the numerous discourses of gender that impact on and interact with pre-service early education teachers in New Zealand Aotearoa.

In chapter three I explore literature surrounding the intersection between gender and early childhood education in order to scrutinise the heterogeneous gender discourses to which the participating early childhood pre-teachers may be exposed. I examine literature about notions of gender and how discourses of gender have impacted New Zealand Aotearoa education policy over the last century. Finally I explore the intersection between teacher education, gender discourses and the notion of teacher subjectivity in regards to gender as a means of interrogating the landscape in which my research takes place.

Chapter 3 – Examining Gender Discourses in Early Childhood Education

This chapter explores the intersection between several gender discourses and early childhood education using Foucault's notions of discourse to discuss the ways in which power/knowledge regimes of truth have been identified as impacting on pedagogy and teacher subjectivity. The central question guiding the exploration was how discourses of gender have influenced policy, practice and pedagogy especially in relation the developing teacher subjectivity in regards to gender in early childhood teacher education? Understandably this context (and its past) provides a means of entering into post-structural feminist methodology as the central orientation for my research. Consistent with this approach I critically reviewed the language associated with gender and in particular identify two main discourses relating to gender development in early childhood education. Following this I explored how gender is reflected historical education and in recent government policies and publications within the early childhood education sector in order to investigate the current status of notions of gender in the contemporary New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood education context.

3i) Sources

Three main types of literature have been considered. Firstly the chapter surveys academic literature which is normally referenced and will often be peer reviewed (Gunn, 2008). Secondly popular literature is scrutinised, including writings from multiple media sources such as books and on-line media, this literature though is unlikely to have been referenced or peer reviewed. Popular literature is useful in revealing lay theories - what Molden & Dweke (2006, p. 193) describe as fundamental assumptions *about the nature of the self and the social world*. Finally I review secondary sources such as policy, curriculum, and management documents published under the auspices of the New Zealand Ministry of

Education, these include documents related to curriculum, assessment and policy. Foucault identified secondary research sources such as government documents, along with academic texts, journals and guides, as the '*Library… [or]…documentary fields' from which professionals construct their discourses'* (Foucault, 1969, in Gunn, 2008). Taken together they illuminate contemporary discourses surrounding gender and assess how these impact approaches in contemporary early childhood education and appropriate pre-service teacher beliefs about gender.

3ii) Gender Discourses in Education

An approach to gender through the route of discourse analysis is becoming increasingly prominent in educational literature (Alton-Lee & Pratt, 2000) as, according to MacNaughton (2005), this approach supports an investigation into power relationships and the discursive practices that inform them. Furthermore, as it is discourses that underpin identity formation and re-formation, it supports explorations of subjectivity (Taguchi, 2005; Young-Blood, 2001). As explained in the previous chapter this emphasis underpins my research agenda.

Throughout this chapter a number of discourses relating to gender and education are identified as central to the historical and current influences on policy. Through the literature I examine central gender developmental discourses and the waves of feminism with which they have been identified. *Table 2* (p. 45) summaries the ways in which these gender discourses have aligned with the differing waves of the feminist movements (See 2v) Feminism) and the most dominant early childhood pedagogical approaches. Each of these discourses is identified as fundamental to the ways in which gender and the early childhood sector intersect and how pre-teachers subjectivities around gender are likely to have been influenced according to the literature at my disposal. Each are examined in the sections that follow.

Chronological eras of gender development discourses, feminist waves and Central theoretical influences on early childhood education

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Gender development discourses	Biological determinism (O'Neill, 2005)											
							Environmental discourses (O'Neill, 2005)					
											Neuro- determinism (Eliot, 2010)	
Feminist waves	1st Feminist Wave (Phillips, 2003)											
							2nd Feminist Wave (Tong, 1993)					
										3rd Feminist Wave (Archer-Mann et al, 2005)		
Central theoretical influences	Play-based Learning (White et al, 2007) & Stage based learning (May, 2011; Smith, 1998)											
					Ecological and Socio-Cultural theory (Smith, 1998)							
									Neo-Liberal (Te One, 2013) & Post-Structuralism (MacNaughton, 2000)			

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Table 2.   Chronological eras of gender development discourses, feminist waves and central theoretical influences on early childhood education

3iii) Gender Development Discourses

As outlined in *table 2* (p. 45) three main discourses have been shown as influencing education policy; the biologically determined discourse, the environmental discourse and neuro-determinism. The significance of gender development issues in early childhood education is considerable; during the early years children are developing gender discourses that will affect their understanding of themselves and others and of the relationships they form throughout their lives (Ebbeck, 1998). Children will invariably go through a process outlined by Ebbeck (1998) during which they generally learn that there are two available categories of people, male and female, and that they are a member of one group, later children develop more understanding of their own gender identity and around the ages of five to seven years the concept of gender consistency (Ebbeck, 1998). The dispositions teachers form of gender development will guide their pedagogy and the relationships they form with students who are developing concepts of their own gender and gender concepts.

According to Gunn (2008) gender and sexuality are irrevocably bound together in discourse. Together they create powerful discursive practices which are infused throughout the education sector predominantly that of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity, described by Gunn (2008, p. 280) as 'the concept that heterosexual sexuality is an institutionalized norm and a superior', and is according to Kelly (2012) and Gunn (2012), privileged in the contemporary early childhood environment. Sedgwick (1994, in Gunn, 2008, p. 9). Highlights the intertwining of these discourses:

> '*It is difficult to separate gender and sexuality as distinct elements of one's personhood, particularly in light of the tradition of viewing gender and sexuality as "continuous and collapsible categories"*

3iv) Biological Determinism

According to Olssen (1981) the biological determinist discourse played a fundamental role in the development of educational policy in New Zealand Aotearoa until the 1960s. This discourse proposes that there are natural unalterably different aptitudes and propensities displayed by males and females which result from biological sex characteristics (Alton-Lee & Pratt, 2000; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Pinker, 2002; Walker, 2010), a concept also described as gender essentialism (Alton-Lee et al, 2000). Research has described essentialist thinking regarding gender as having malevolent consequences in education; supporting social stereotyping, contributing to prejudice, exacerbating perceived differences, promoting perceived group attributes and supporting inequalities (Demoulin, Leyens & Yzerbyt, 2006; Rhodes, Leslie & Tworek, 2012). According to Gelman (2004), those who perceive gender to be biologically determined will view the traits and characteristics they equate to specific genders as inevitable and inflexible. Further, Epstien (1997, cites in Smith, 1998, p.152) argues that gender essentialism which has been used politically to '*justify unequal treatment and even aggressive and subordinating behaviour*' within the education sector. Historically this discourse gained legitimacy through language and discursive practices in the education and health sector becoming a regime of truth (O'Neill, 2005). According to Faust-sterling (2012) the regime of truth backing was based on numerous physical traits; physical shape and size especially relative brain sizes, reproductive organs, hormones and genetics (Lewontin, 1992).

According to Olssen (1981) the foundations of the 20th century biological determinist discourses, also described as social Darwinism or Eugenics, perceived of moral and social superiority as resulting from biologically determined and inheritable characteristics (Bricknell, 2009; Stace, 2008). Power primarily rested with male Aryans in the upper and middle classes as gender and class discourses combined with the racial views of the biological determinists positioned women and the working classes as both physically and intellectually subordinate (O'Neill, 2006; Stace, 2008;

Wilson, 2002). The biological determinist discourse was legitimised to a position of discourse dominance through the support of what Foucault identified as "biopower" (Fausto-Sterling, 1993). A series of discourses, an often blurred mix of medical/scientific and religious dogma, discourses that were interwoven during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century supported the biological determinist movement to form the dominant political and moral cornerstones for the control and regulation of society (Bricknell, 2009, Parkinson, 1991 & Olssen, 1981).

Biopower described the scientific technology which appeared late in the 18th century that was used to manage society through a process of discursive practices and disciplinary power (Fausto-Sterling, 1993). Biopower became a powerful discursive practice especially when combined with other powerful ideologies and beliefs which positioned women as "lesser than" men (Bricknell, 2009). The heyday of the biopower backed by the biological determinist movement occurred concurrently to the 1st wave of the feminist movement (See *table 2*, p. 45). Rather than challenge the biologically determinist ideology of gender the dominant strand of the 1st wave of feminism, liberal feminism, instead used the discourse of biological determinism and it's positioning of women as biologically different to men to support their calls for women's political and economic rights (Phillips, 2003).

Similarly biological determinism had a strong influence on the early childhood education sector (See *table 2*, p. 45). The major central theoretical influences in the early childhood sector that is play based learning (White et al, 2007) and stage-based learning (Smith, 1998) were strongly influenced by biologically determinist ideology. Play based learning, championed by Froebel (Wolfe, 2002), was the central influence of the New Zealand Aotearoa Kindergarten movement the flagship of the early childhood sector (Duncan, 2007). Heavily influencing the sector Froebel proposed that play and natural environments were crucial to children's natural learning (McLachlan, 2011; Walker & France, 2007). Stage based learning, emphasised in the works of theorists such as Piaget

(1962) remained influential until the 1970s (Smith, 1998), although there remains a lingering and sustaining presence according to Fleer (2013). Smith (1998, p. 5) identifies Piaget's stage based development as being '*biologically determined and constantly present'*.

3v) Environmental Discourses

The second of the main gender development discourses, environmental gender development, differs from biological determinism by assuming that gender norms or traits are wrought by environmental influences (O'Neill, 2006). Drawing on Leaper & Bigler's (2004) criteria the term "environmental discourses" describes a group of developmental discourses all of which propose that gender develops resulting from external environmental factors. Initial research into environmental gender developmental discourses was inspired by the early 2nd wave feminist (See *table 2*, p. 45) exploration of gender (Tarrent, 2006). One of the most influential writers was French feminist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir. In her ground breaking book *The Second Sex* (1949), using her own experiences and subjectivities (Marshall, 2005), Beauvoir investigates how 'women' became the 'other and lesser' to man within a societal context (Beauvoir, 1949). According to Mikkola (2012) Beauvoir's most famous line, that "One is not born but becomes a woman" (Beauvoir*, 1949,* p. 267), motivated 2nd wave feminist investigations into gender.

Environmental gender discourses have continued to evolve since their initial exploration began in the mid-20th century and remains influential in early childhood education policy. Broadly these discourses can be placed into two main categories based on assumptions of how gender is developed. The first category includes discourses which propose that gender is internalized and imposed or reinforced while the second

category theories gender as predominantly constructed by the subject (Maccoby, 2000; Risemen and Myers, 2005).

Associated environmental theories falling into the first of the environmental gender devolvement discourses include; social learning theory, cognitive-developmental theory, and gender schema theory. Social learning theory proposed that gender, like all human behaviour, is learnt through a process of rewards, punishment and observations that are imposed or reinforced (Alton-Lee et al, 2000; Smith, 1998). Cognitive developmental theory envisages that gender is internalised as is developed in stages as children categorise and then internalise observed gender traits to create gender consistency (Alton-Lee et al, 2000; Smith, 1998). Gender schema theory combines elements of the previous two theories proposing that gender is imposed and reinforced, then internalised (Alton-Lee et al, 2000; Smith, 1998).

The latter approach to environmental gender development categories recognises that gender is constructed by the subject. This notion emerged in the 1980s with the introduction of the socio-cultural historical theories of Russian social-constructionist Lev Vygotsky (Smith, 1998) to western academic thinking. Vygotsky emphasised the role children play in the active construction of their own development (Vygotsky, 1978). While like Piaget (See 3iv) Biological Determinism) play was identified as crucial to development, Vygotsky saw play as leading learning in social context for the very young (Smith, 1998).

The role of the subject in the construction of gender is similarly highlighted in the ecological theories of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1997) where, like Vygotsky, emphasis is placed on the importance of individual's experiences within social contexts. Despite criticism centred around what Alton-lee et al (2000, p. 35) describes as the '*failure to address adequately the disjunctions, contradictions and complexities of gendered experience*'

and '*for their failure to address the issue of power in gendered practices*'; these theories have had a substantial influence on early childhood education in New Zealand Aotearoa (Fleer, 2003; Farquhar & White, 2013; White, 2008) and, with other psychological and developmental theories (Fleer, 2013), influenced how gender development is perceived within the early childhood sector.

3vi) Neuro-biological Determinism

Influential in the resurgence of the biological determinist discourse have been the development of new sciences and technologies in the fields of genetics and neuroscience (Browne, 2004; Eliot. 2010; Fine, 2011). Like Foucault's Bio-power, so important to the biological determinist movement in the early 20th century (See 3iv) Biological Determinism), these new technologies are changing the way in which society is viewed, managed and disciplined. Similar to the 20th century biological determinist discourse the current neuro-biological determinant view supports the notion that males and females are different at a biological genetic level, shaping the potential for both genders (Barnett & Rivers, 2005; Eliot, 2010). This discourse supports the notion that females are more empathic and emotional and males more logical and rational or as researcher Simon Baron-Cohen claims that male brains are 'systematizing' while female brains are 'empathizing' (Barnett et al, 2005). In short, gender difference is biologically hard wired.

According to Eliot (2010) a significant volume of popular literature espousing a biologically determinist view claims that connections have been found between personality, aptitude and gender based on scientific study. Critics such as Eliot (2010, p.36) assert that such literature has in fact had '*no genuine neuroscientific justification*' but rather is being used to support the dominant patriarchal discourse in a similar fashion to the biological determinist view of the first half of the 20th century. In contrast much academic literature acknowledges that science has not yet found

any conclusive proof for personality or aptitude difference based on gender differentiation and that further study is required before conclusions can be drawn (Browne, 2004; Eliot, 2010; Fine, 2010).

Neuroscientist Lise Eliot (2010) has identified a number of "myths" around biological determinism in education based on the new and little understood discoveries in neuroscience, described by Cordelia Fine (2008) as "neurosexism". Eliot (2010) points out that the perceived achievement gaps in education purported to be as a result of biological factors are not consistent across age, ethnicity and nationality suggesting that 'environmental factors are important in shaping gender gaps' (Eliot, 2010, p. 33). The science of neurology has in fact found that in the area of brain difference there is more '*overlap between average males' and females' brains than between the average brains of each gender*' (Eliot, 2010, p. 32). Despite this criticism neuro-determinism is developing an influence within early childhood education pedagogy (Browne, 2004).

3vii) Post-structural Criticism of Historical Gender Development Theories

Unlike biologically determinist, neuro-determinist and the historical environmental developmental gender theories post-structural gender theories do not consider gender fixed but continually developing throughout life (MacNaughton, 2000). This occurs as individuals adapt their own gender discourses while integrating and making sense of often complex or contradictory gender messages, messages which they may take up or resist (Alton-Lee et al, 2000; Gunn, 2012). MacNaughton (2000) claims post-structural gender development theory has not yet found much purchase in the early education although field post-structural theory, as a form of analysis, has become increasing dominant (Gordon-Burns, Gunn, Purdue & Surtees, 2012; Gunn, 2012).

One of the most influential post-structural queer theorists Judith Butler proposes the notion of gender performativity as alternative theory concerning gender development. Articulated in her ground breaking book 'Gender Trouble' (1990) Butler proposed that '*the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all*' (Butler, 1990, in Girder Ray, 2009, p. 16) that is, that gender is constructed through discursive actions which form the discourse of the very gender they are constructing. Gender, Butler claims, is not something you *are* but something you *do* continually throughout your life.

Furthermore Butler proposes that gender is not only the expression of the identity but the identity itself, that the 'gendered body' is performative, suggesting that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality *(*Butler, 1990, in Salin, 2002). Essentially Butler proposed that gender is not the act performed by the subject but is the act that establishes the subject (Salin, 2002) an idea that is echoed in Foucault's notion that the '*systems of power produce the subjects they subsequently come to represent*' (Brady & Schirato, 2011) and provides a place for resistance to gender as Butler in Butler & Reddy (2004, p. 117) recognises:

> '*there are norms into which we are born - gendered, racial, national - that decide what kind of subject we can be, but in being those subjects, in occupying and inhabiting those deciding norms, in incorporating and performing them, we make use of local options to rearticulate them in order to revise their power*'

Notions of gender as performativity constructed may be especially relevant with-in the early education sector as children often "play" with notions of gender during the pre-school years (MacNaughton, 2000).

Criticism of environmental gender development has arisen from those still attached to the biological gender determinist discourse. Despite the overwhelming support over the last three decades, especially in social sciences and the educational fields, theories based on environmental

gender development are still questioned by essentialist writers (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Martin & Ruble, 2004). Criticisms of environmental discourses of gender, predominantly from writers who align with biological detriments discourses, claim that the environmental gender development discourse has developed as a political retort by feminists rather than a scientifically based one (Pinker, 2002). Pinker (2002) also highlights the claim that environmental discourses fail to account for the biological differences of sex characteristics. Such criticisms, often defended by new scientific discourses, the new bio-powers, have risen alongside the resurgence of the biologically determinist discourse (O'Neill, 2006; Orenstein, 2010; Walker, 2011).

3viii) Gender Discourses in Early Childhood Education

Academic research on gender became increasingly popular during the last three decades of the 20th century resulting in a large reserve of literature (Haig, 2004). However it should be noted that the volume of gender based research has seen a considerable drop in the first decade of the 21st century. Investigation of the use of the words sex and gender in both academic and popular literature exposes the ambiguous definitions that are sometimes evident (Fausto-Sterling, 2012, Hird, 2000; Lips, 1988; Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2011). Muehlenhard et al (2011) found, in a critical analysis of research into gender, that some researchers do not always make clear how they have defined sex or gender and that some academic research does use the two terms interchangeably (Haig, 2004; Muehlenhard et al., 2011). Mikkola (2012) through identified that unclear or contradictory use of the terms is considerably more common in popular literature than in academic literature (Mikkola, 2012).

Despite these criticisms, the majority of writings within the social science field, especially within the education sector, sociology and psychology,

show a commonality in the way the two discourses are used. Overwhelmingly such literature describes gender as socially constructed and sex as biologically determined (Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Muehlenhard et al, 2011; O'Neill, 2005; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Further a number of terms are employed to describe the ways in which an individual's gender subjectivity is developed. For example gender identity refers to the gender to which an individual self-categorises while gender role describes the actions, affectations and expectations attached to each gender (Knowles & Lander, 2011; Smith, 1998). Knowles et al (2011) research also employs the term gender assignment. This being the gender assigned at birth based on sex characteristics but which may not be the self-categorised gender identity of the individual.

Gender in society is often used, especially in the field of psychology and sociology, to describe the raft of differences between the binary characteristics of masculine and feminine found throughout society (Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Lorber, 1994). Lorber (1994, p. 1) proposed that such differences are often omnipresent and unexamined, that '*gender is so much the routine ground of everyday activities that questioning it's taken-for assumptions and presuppositions is like wondering about whether the sun will come up*'. Gender is, along with race and class, described as a central organizing principle of society creating a profound and constant influence over people's lives (Berkowitz, Manohar & Tinker, 2010; Lott, 1997; Lorber, 1994; Orenstein, 2011). Drewery & Bird (2004), Fausto-Sterling (2010) and Lorber, (1994) conclude that contemporary society is overwhelmingly gendered at every level.

Several critiques of the notion of gender have arisen from within divergent stands within the 2nd wave and 3rd waves of the feminist movement. The challenge to the gender discourse has been especially vocal from within the post-structural feminism (MacNaughton, 2005; Weedon, 1987). Critiques centre on the binary nature of the sex/gender discourse (See 1ii)

Gender Binaries) citing the failure of gender to account for the diverse and flexible nature of individual's biological and physiological sex/gender identification due to the binary nature. As a result the transgender, gender divergent and intersex communities are excluded from the binary (Fausto-Sterling, 1993; Fausto-Sterling, 2010; O'Neill, 2005). Also censured by critics such as Gunn (2003) and MacNaughton (2005) is the hierarchical nature of the binary resulting in the gender discourse positioning feminine as 'less than' or 'other', reinforcing the position of masculine as superior.

Another criticism of the notion of gender results from the way in which gender roles are inextricably linked to the biological sex of the individual. That argument, voiced here by 2nd wave radical feminist Andera Dworkin (2005), proposes that:

> *'even in social science research where theories of gender originated, dangerous and static associations between women and femininity and men and masculinity are often assumed, eroding much of the diversity that exists within and among these categories'* (Dworkin, 2005, in Johnson & Repta, 2011, p. 18).

Described as a "coat rack view" of gender this view postulates that bodies are the racks upon which genders are worn (Nicholson, 1994, p. 10). The marginalization of those whose gender expression is flexible or does not equate to their birth assigned gender would support the power of the discursive practice described by Dworkin (Mikkola, 2011; Nicholson, 1994).

Post structural 3rd wave feminist and queer scholar Judith Butler also challenges the use of the notion of gender claiming the sex/gender separation is non-existent (Mikkola, 2012). Butler argues that, as bodies are gendered from the moment of birth, sex is only seen through the lens of gender, as such, Butler advocates that both sex and gender is a social construct (Salih, 2002). Debates continue over the use of the language related to the sex/gender binary (Beasly, 2005). Post-structural feminist

theory proposes that reflexive questioning of the gender/sex binary through a post-structural lens will underscore the need to dismantle the binary, to make way for a new approach to think about gender, power and gender and identity (MacNaughton, 2000). MacNaughton (2000) proposes that this is crucial to the provision of gender equity in early childhood. A number of post-structural educationalists have suggested that for early childhood teachers challenging gender issues post-structural theory would provide a way to resist or explore gender categories and power relationships (Gunn, 2008; MacNaughton, 2000; MacNaughton, 2005). *Figure 3* displays the linking binaries identified by Gunn (2008) and MacNaughton (2001) including the category boy and girl which (See 1ii) Gender) are often used when referencing both gender and sex in childhood.
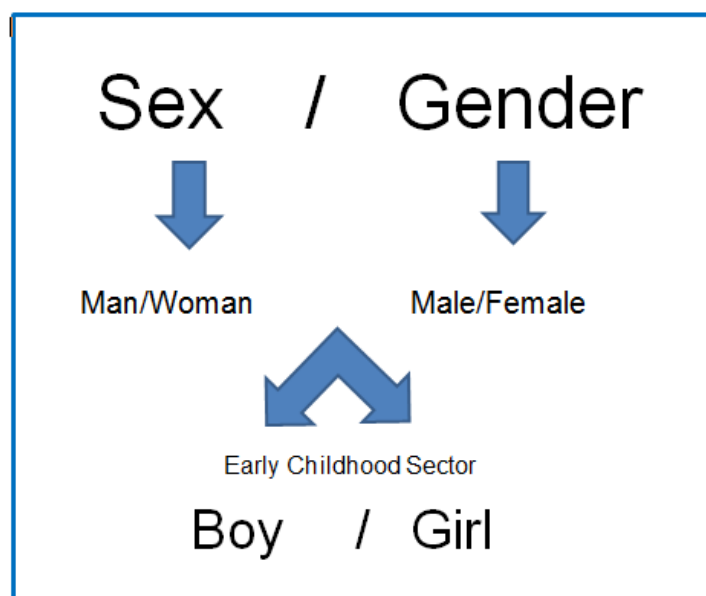
Figure 3.   *Oppositional Binaries Pairs*

3ix) Influence of Gender Development Discourses on New Zealand Aotearoa Early Childhood Education Policy

Despite being positioned in binary opposition the two main historical gender development discourses; biological determinism and environmental gender development; were positioned as the dominant discourse across different academic fields and historical timeframes. During the time period in which it was dominant (See *table 2*, p. 45) each discourse had a major influence in the education sector.

3ixa) Biological Determinism and Education Policy

According to O'neill (2006) the discourse of gender as biologically determined had dominance over educational practice for many years. Olssen (1981) places the foundations of the 20th century biological determinist discourses as being central to the dominant political power of the decade (See 3iv) Biological Determinism). The dominant biological determinist discourse, while influencing all elements of society was especially influential on the education field (Fry, 1985).

In New Zealand Aotearoa the most influential figure, whose views on biological determinism influenced education policy for the better part of the 20th century was Sir Truby King, founder of the NZ Plunket society (Bradstreet, 2007; Olssen, 1981). King proposed that the provision of identical educations for boys and girls was a '*preposterous farce'* which would lead to '*evil*' and social decay (Truby King, in Olssen, 1981, p. 4). King who was medically trained and a proponent of biopower technologies believed that girls required an education very different from boys (Bradstreet, 2007; Fry, 1985; Olssen, 1981; Stace, 2008). Girls, King believed, would be damaged physically and emotionally from excessive education, especially educations in the fields of maths and science, rendering them unfit for motherhood (Fry, 1985; Olssen, 1981). Resultantly King advocated that '*it was necessary for the health of*

humanity to retard the education of girls and to keep them in the adolescent state nature intended for them' (Fry, 1985, p. 82). The ensuing support for the pervasive dominant biological determinist discourse shaped education policies for several decades (Bradstreet, 2007; Fry, 1985: Olssen, 1981; Stace, 2008). While most of Kings influence on curriculum was seen in compulsory schooling his impact on the treatment of the early years was also profound (Olseen, 1981; Fry, 1985).

The biologically determinist discourses influence on early childhood education in the early part of the 20th century, especially through the guidance of King and the New Zealand Plunket Society, was comprehensive (Fry, 1985). Transpiring concurrently to the push to differentiate curriculum based on gender in primary and post primary education was King's work with infants and young children. According to Olssen (1981) King's ideas, infused with biologically determinist ideology, became the dominant discourse for early childhood care for the first half of the 20th century, an era which saw the development of formal pre-school education (May, 2005). Although King promoted quality childcare it was clear that he viewed womens ultimate role as that of the 'exclusive profession' of motherhood (Olssen, 1981, p. 21).

During the hay-day of the biologically determinist movement, research interest in or resistance to the dominant gender discourses with-in the education sector was absent (Alton-Lee et al, 2000). According to Alton-Lee et al (2000) no significant challenges were made within the education sector to the accepted gender developmental discourse, biological determinism, during the decades from the 1930s to the late 1950s. This 'truth' was evidenced by the strongly gendered primary and secondary school curriculums and policies of the Department of Education in which the discourse had become completely legitimised as a 'regime of truth' (Bradstreet, 2007; Fry, 1985; Middleton, 1988).

Student kindergarten teachers, during this time, would have certainly encountered this 'truth' during their own education and teacher training throughout this time, as according to Middleton (1988), a series of discursive practices, both overt and hidden, reinforced the dominant discourses of gender within the education sector. With no government assistance for kindergarten teacher education only girls from wealthy families could afford to train (Hughes, 1989; May, 2001; May, 2005) resulting in a certain 'class' of kindergarten teacher being trained and practicing. A teacher that was no challenge to the gendered wider society, what Joyce Barnes described (in Hughes, 1989, p. 46) as a 'nice girl for a nice job'. Allen (2009) proposed that the purpose of early childhood education at this time was to ensure the maintenance of the gender differences and the imbalanced power relationships which resulted.

The ideology of King and the biologically determinist movement continued to influence education throughout most of the 20th century, long after the biological determinist movement itself had fallen out of favour. By the late 1970s the increasing interest in gender issues along with the increasing popularity of environmental discourses of child development led to a further waning in popularity of the biological determinist movement which had already been reduced by the impact of the Second World War and the extreme biologically determinist approach of the Nazi movement (Pinker, 2002; O'Neill, 2005; Stace, 2008). Recently there has been an effusion of biological determinist research (See 3v) Neuro-biological determinism), occurring primarily in popular literature (Alton-Lee et al, 2000; Eliot, 2010; Fine, 2010; Herlburt & Ling, 2007; Pinker, 2002; Walker, 2010). Despite the disputed validity of the research (Eliot, 2010; Fine, 2010; Orenstein, 2011) the biological determinist discourse, in the regenerated form of neuro-determinism, has re-gained a significant increase in support in the popular media strengthening the legitimacy of the discourse and supporting a developing regime of truth which is beginning to challenge the education sectors dominant discourses (O'Neill, 2005).

3ixb) Environmental Discourses of Gender and Education Policy

Environmental discourses of gender began gaining traction in the education sector from the late 1960s as notions of gender began to challenge the dominant biologically determinist discourse. From the late 1960s thorough to the early 1980s there was a progressive interest in issues concerning gender and human rights in education (Bradstreet, 2007; Gunn, 2012; May, 2001 Nuttall, 2005; Walker & France, 2007). New understandings about gender development emerged following what Gunn (2012, p. 56) describes as *'new ideas about social learning'*. It was not until the late 1980s that Gunn (2012) proposes these changes became widely known (See *table 2*, p. 45). In the compulsory education sector the 1987 *Curriculum Review*, endorsed the creation of a non-sexist curricula based on equity or equality and the 1988 *Picot Report* replaced the term equality with 'equity'. According to Bradstreet (2007) the term was not well defined. Policy changes designed to foster this notion of 'equity' continued until the early 1990s when the requirement for gender equity was removed from school charters and the Girl's and Women's Section of the Ministry of Education was disestablished (Bradstreet, 2007). Bradstreet (2007) points out that gender-inclusiveness or gender equity continued to be mentioned in the rolling curriculum reviews of the 1990s.

Simultaneously changes were occurring in the early childhood sector. According to May (2001) after decades of the biologically determinist influencing education policy relating to gender the 1970s saw early childhood teachers beginning to experiment with new pedagogies and programs based on gender equity. Gender issues were raised to the forefront for the first time since the early days of King and the biologically determinist movement although now was underpinned by the increasingly dominant environmental gender development discourse (Bradstreet, 2007). The increasing importance of gender issues was further endorsed when kindergarten training was absorbed into Schools of Education (May, 2001; Tarr, 2006) where, according to May (2001), environmental development

discourses and gender research was more accessible to early childhood pre-service teachers.

Change based on new and radical ideas about gender and equity continued in the early childhood sector into the 1980s through to the 1990s (Duhn, 2010; May, 2001; Te One, 2003). According to Simon-Kumar (2011) the focus seen on gender issues in the early childhood sector had all but disappeared as the century came to a close. The waning of a focus on gender issues began in the late 1980s and continued through the 1990s when only minimum development occurred in gender policy in the education sector (Allen, 2009). Archer Mann et al. (2005) propose that the declining focus on gender resulted from the fragmentation of the 2nd wave of feminism.

Other theorists identify the introduction of the neo-liberal agenda to educational policy as integral to the change in focus (Duhn, 2010; May, 2001; Te One, 2013). According to Te One (2013) neoliberalism entered the educational lexicon after the election of the New Zealand Aotearoa 4th Labour Government in 1994. This supported a shift in to a neo-liberal focus on individual responsibility and minimal collective social support (Olssen & Peters, 2005). What followed over the next decade was a raft of radical changes in early childhood education sector (May, 2001; Olssen & Morris-Matthew, 1997; Te One, 2013).

The *Education to be More* (Department of Education, 1988) report, more commonly called the *Meade Report* (May, 2001) outlined a new direction for the sector. While much of the report was centred on the regulation and provision of early childhood services it also outlined what May (2002, p. 6) called a '*significant philosophical statement on equity issues and outlined the benefits of early childhood for children, their families, their communities and society*'. According to May (2002) the report placed

strong emphasis on creating a strong and diverse values basis in the early childhood sector encouraging the implementation of Treaty of Waitangi[3] and the supporting of minority cultures. The *Meade report* (1988) also specifically cited the need for gender equity and the '*improved social and economic status for women*'.

The resulting government policy document *Before Five* (DOE, 1988), did not act on all the recommendations from the Meade report due to what May (2002, p.7) described as '*a lack of political courage and a philosophical shift in the role of government*' but the recognition of the need for a bi-cultural approach embracing diversity and equitable access was retained in the government approach to the early childhood although specific references to gender were not. A strong bi-cultural approach has become one of the central conceptual influences of the New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood sector, becoming an underpinning principle of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum (Fleer, 2013).

Changes in the sector continued with the partial implementation of the *Meade report* through the *Before five* reforms (May, 2002). The early childhood sector continued to be influenced by the increasing dominant neo-liberal discourse (Duhn, 2010; Te One, 2013) but according to Fleer (2003) the neo-liberal discourse was tempered by the influence of a complex collection of other discourses although the socio-cultural discourse was gaining dominance among discourses influential in early childhood education (Farquhar et al, 2013). Attention paid to gender issues within the education sector continued to be reduced (Simon-Kumar, 2011) as the focus placed on individualism, a central tenant of both the socio-cultural and neo-liberal discourses increased. Codd (2005) believes that neoliberalism's focus on managerialism and individual responsibility reduced teacher agency and the ability to experiment with new pedagogies while teachers were also faced with what Cornwall, Gideon &

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[3] The Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840 between Māori and the colonizing English, is considered the founding document of New Zealand and is enshrined through a series of principles in education policy (Richie, 2013)

Wilson (2008) describe as '*the gender blindness of neoclassical economics and the markedly negative effects of neoliberal policies on women*' (Cornwell et al, 2008, p. 1). The importance early childhood teachers and teacher educators placed on gender further reduced with the fragmentation of the 2nd wave of feminism and the resulting reduction of gender issues in the public eye.

According to Simon-Kumar (2011) interest paid to gender issues all but vanished from policy, pedagogy and teacher education programmes throughout the following two decades. While a focus on cultural issue has become entrenched in early childhood education government policy[4], a point I return to in the next section, gender issues have continued to recede from the public eye (Simon-Kumar, 2011).

3ixc) Neuro-Determinism and Education Policy

While the neuro-determinist discourse is increasingly dominant in popular literature, at first glance, does not appear to have found obvious traction in the early childhood education sector although some writers debate this. According to Gunn (2012a) much of the current focus on boys failure or success in the education sector is infused with the biologically determinist view that essentialises gender characteristics as influential in learning styles. Further Gunn (2012) argues that this debate constructs rather than removes barriers reducing gender justice in education seeing this as the result of the reaffirmation the biologically determinist gender discourse.

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[4] For example the bicultural approach infused into the early childhood curriculum (May, 2002; Ritchie, 2013), *Te Whāriki* (MOE, 1996).

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3x) Impact in the Sector

The treatment of gender in the education sector has been extensively studied in the last four decades (Bayne, 2009) although the impetus on this research has slowed over the last decade. Numerous studies (see Bayne, 2009 for a comprehensive list) have, according to Tatar et al (2001), reported that teacher's responses to students are influenced by their discourses on gender development and that teacher attitudes often reflect societal attitudes, perceptions and expectations or the gender norms infused in lay theory. Gender norms can be considered discursive practices of the dominant discourses and are the assumed standardized roles, aptitudes and abilities linked to specific genders (Faggot, Leinbach & O'Boyle, 1992). Paul (1998) proposes that as discursive practices, norms are so infused within society and often so deeply internalized that they are often unrecognisable from "truths".

Several theorists agree that gender norms are pervasive in all aspects of children lives including educational settings and teacher responses to students (Cahill & Adams, 1998, Erden, 2009; Sandberg & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005; Smith & Hung, 2008; Tatar et al, 2001). Despite this agreement there is limited literature investigating how early childhood teacher's gender discourses impact pedagogical practice. The small volume of literature existing in the early childhood education sector corresponds with the larger volume of research carried out in the compulsory school sector (Gosselin, 2007; MacNaughton, 2000) in suggesting that the gender discourses of teachers can be indicative of their pedagogical approach to students (Cahill & Adams, 1998; Gosselin, 2007; Zaman, 2008). Teacher's gender based responses to students seem especially clear around issues of praise and work expectations as a result of teachers gendered beliefs on student's aptitudes and abilities (Cahill et al, 1998, Erden, 2009; Tatar et al, 2001). Yet, according to MacNaughton (2000) many early childhood teachers actually fail to even recognise the significance of gender in their own and their student's lives

and can cause them to be complicit in the gender norming of their students.

MacNaughton (2000) in her own research, which explores the notion of creating a gender focus in the Australian early childhood education sector, cites numerous issues faced by a group of early childhood teachers who wished to incorporate gender as a focus in their pedagogy. MacNaughton (2000) reported her participant teachers were challenged by co-workers who considered gender biologically determined therefore unchangeable. The teachers also reported that they were hampered in establishing an equity based programme for a number of reasons; co-workers were resistant to the incorporation of a gender focus, the age at which gender became an issue for children was questioned, that the gender issues of boys and girls were often pitted in binary opposition and potential negative reactions of parents. MacNaughton's (2000) research stresses how far gender issues have become removed from the daily routine in the early childhood sector and the difficulties facing teachers who challenge the status quo accordingly.

A keynote of MacNaughton's (2000) research was what she perceived as the immovable nature of the early childhood sector pedagogy. MacNaughton (2000, p. 46) proposed that teachers faced what she described as '*one speak'* relating to pedagogy, '*one speak'* describing the notion of some discourses being unquestionable align to what Foucault would describe as a 'regime of truth' (See 2iii) Post-Structuralism). Teachers participating in MacNaughton's (2000) research spoke of great difficulties in challenging or attempting to adapt the current pedagogical practices in the education sector. The New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood sector, according to Fleer (2003), provides provision for pedagogical debate within the sector resulting from the framework style curriculum and the complex and sometimes conflicting influential theoretical discourses (Refer to *table 2*, p. 45 for a summary of the central

theoretical influences). *Te Whāriki* acts as a *'living document'* by providing a base for an evolving practice (MOE, 1996, p. 27).

3xii) Government Influences

Considering the waning of interest and focus in gender issues (Simon-Kumar (2011) it was not surprising that few documents have been published by government bodies specifically relating to policy and gender in early childhood education. Nor could I locate any comprehensive government reviews specific to gender issues in early childhood. The last comprehensive government review of gender and education, by Alton-Lee et al (2000) was concerned only with the compulsory education sector.

Due to the lack of specific literature published by the government on policy and gender in early childhood education I attempted to garner information from other documents such as curriculum and policy documents. Since curricula, including the New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood framework *Te Whāriki* (MOE, 1996), are generally developed by groups with differing interests, intents, and social and historical contexts (Cubitt, 2006; O'Neill, 2005) no curriculum will be politically neutral but rather are value laden expressions of a desired future, most likely that of the dominant group (McGee, 1995; McGee, 2001; O'Neill, 2005). This concept is supported by Nuttall & Edwards (2007, p. 5 in Alvestad, Duncan & Berge, 2009) who state that '*curriculum frameworks also represent highly localised, textual responses to time and place, particularly to the dominant discourses of educational provision at the time the frameworks were written'*.

A policy of inclusion can be clearly seen through the language use in the more noteworthy government published "documentary fields" in early childhood (Gunn, 2003). These include *Quality in Action: Te Mahi Whai Hua* (1998), *Pathways to the Future: Ngā Huarahi Arataki: A 10 year strategic plan for early childhood education* (2002), *An Agenda for*

Amazing Children: Final Report of the ECE Taskforce (2011), the *Kei Tua o te Pae* series of booklets and *Te whatu pokeka: Kaupapa Māori Assessment for Learning* (2004-2005). While inclusive education in New Zealand Aotearoa can be understood as the removal of physical, social or conceptual barriers to education (Gordon-Burns, Gunn, Purdue & Surtees, 2012) much of the current literature centring on inclusion is predominantly orientated towards special needs (Kane, 2005; Moffat, 2011) or culture and ethnicity (Simon-Kumar, 2011). According to Carpenter and Lee (2010, p. 105), in their study of the hidden curriculum of heteronormativity, students '*indicated that diversity was invariably interpreted to mean ethnic diversity'*. Similar research in an English setting by Skelton (2007, p. 682) in her work exploring the intersection of diversity and gender in the English education sector asserts that gender has been assimilated into a group of diversities which are to be embraced but not confronted, that gender issues are:

> *'subsumed within an overall list of 'diversities' (ethnic minorities, disabilities, sexualities, gender identities)' and that student teachers are taught to 'recognise and be sensitive to as well as tolerate, rather than challenge'*

A comparison to this lack of focus on issues relating to gender and gender equity can be seen in the emphasis on gender placed in the early childhood curriculum of Sweden (Bayne, 2009; Pramling Samuelsson & Sheridan, 2004). Gender equity is legislated for and mandatory in preschools (Taguchi, 2005) and is, according to Nilsson (2007), directly addressed in the Swedish early childhood curriculum; given a privileged position. Over the last decade this focus has materialised in the form of government funded programmes designed to educate early childhood professionals on gender equity and research gender equity pedagogy (Sandberg & Ärlemalm-Hagsér, 2011). The last decade in Sweden has seen a continuing focus on gender equity through incorporation of the discourse into curriculum, a focus on professional development and on research on gender equity concepts and programmes (Sandberg et al, 2011).

In New Zealand Aotearoa provision is made for inclusive and equitable early childhood education including that of issues relating to gender which is described by Gordon-Burns et al (2012) as being entrenched in government policy and law. Many writers suggest that the provision for inclusive and equitable practice often remains at the level of rhetoric and hard to achieve (Gordon-Burns et al, 2012; Gunn, 2003). Furthermore it has been identified that there are still children whose identities are not represented and whose rights are not being met including those rights associated with gender (Gordon-Burns et al, 2012; Gunn, 2003). Despite the recognition of this potential lack of representation and inclusion in the sector and in government policy there is at present only a small volume of New Zealand Aotearoa specific research scrutinising gender inclusion and/or equity in early childhood education, (See *Explaining and addressing gender difference in the New Zealand compulsory school sector* by Alton-Lee et al, 2000) although there is a growing body of international research looking at the issue, see MacNaughton (2000) and Browne (2004).

Currently the research focus on gender issues both in New Zealand Aotearoa and internationally is based not on the inclusion of all children but rather is predominantly centred on the education of boys (Bradstreet, 2007; Gunn, 2012a; Keddie and Mills, 2009; MacNaughton, 2000; May, 2011; O'Neill, 2006). Both Bradstreet (2007) and Gunn (2012a) propose that much of this research specifically addresses a concern that boys are being out performed by girls. Despite some theorists, such as Gunn (2012a), debating the efficacy of the argument that boys are failing in the current education system the debate remains a concern in the public forum. Alternately Keddie et al (2009) challenge the 'boy crisis' as 'not an issue of genuine educational in/equity, but by cultures of performativity and anti-feminism' (Keddie et al, 2009, p. 205).

3xiii) Te Whāriki

Te Whāriki (1996) is undoubtedly the underpinning framework of the early childhood education sector in New Zealand Aotearoa. Published in 1996 it is applicable to all of the seven main types of licensed early childhood services in New Zealand Aotearoa (Dalli, 2010). *Te Whāriki* (1996) incorporates a bi-cultural framework (Alvestad et al, 2009; Burns, Gunn, Purdue & Surtees, 2012; Gunn, 2003; May, 2001; MoE, 1996) and what White, O'Malley, Toso, Rocket, Stover & Ellis (2007, p. 94) describe as *'multiple and sometimes conflicting cultural and theoretical frameworks'*. *Te Whāriki* (1996) was developed with input from a diverse collection of individuals and groups including; the commercial early childhood sector; Māori representatives, early childhood professionals and specific interest groups[5] (May, 2001; MoE, 1996). Alvestad & Duncan (2006, pp. 36-37) propose that for the New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood sector *Te Whāriki* is *'nearly sacrosanct'*. Indeed a recent Ministry consultation with the sector revealed the on-going popularity of this document for New Zealand Aotearoa early education teachers (MOE, 2011).

Despite the key considerations given to gender in the decades previous to the development of Te Whāriki, gender issues are not given prominence in the document. Although the document does emphasize that early childhood services need to make a commitment to *'ensuring that learning opportunities are not restricted by gender, locality, or economic constraints'* (MOE, 1996, p17). While issues of cultural diversity and racism are directly addressed, that the *'early childhood curriculum contributes towards countering racism and other forms of prejudice'* (MOE, 1996, p. 18), gender equality or sexism is not specifically mentioned or defined, it may be intended that this is to be considered another *'form of prejudice'* but this is not clear. Specific reference to gender inclusion appears in only one place in the curriculum section, Contribution goal 1. This aspirational goal calls for children to *'experience an environment where there are equitable*

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[5] For further discussion on the development and structure of *Te Whāriki* see
May, 2001; May, 2005; Education Review Office, 1995; Nuttall, 2003; Nuttall 2013; and Smith, 1996.

opportunities for learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity, or background' (MOE, 1996, p 64). The Te Whāriki aspirational statements aim for an equity based approach in early childhood; that non-traditional gender pursuits are provided and to encourage non-traditional roles in play from boys and girls (MOE, 1996, p. 67).

Objectives for the assessment of contribution goal 1; that children make '*positive judgments on their own gender and the opposite gender'* and '*feel positive about their own gender and ethnicity, about the opposite gender, and about other ethnic groups'* does give some further clarification about including gender equity in centres (MOE, 1996, p.66). Yet *Te Whāriki*, as a framework document rather than a prescriptive plan provides little specific guidance to support practitioners to meet the inspirational goal with regards to gender. Only two specific ideas are mentioned; i) that centres provide picture books which represent non-traditional gender roles and ii) to engage in non-sexist language when discussing vocational possibilities (MOE, 1996).

The role picture books and non-gendered language play in supporting young children to develop their understanding of diversity and inclusiveness has been recently explored by Kelly (2012). Kelly (2012, p. 289) in her exploration of the ways a teaching team exposed children to discourses of 'otherness' using non-hetronormative picture books, found that such encounters were filtered through the discourses of the teachers. Again teacher's practice is shown to arise out of their discourses and suggests that the framework does little to support the exploration of these discourses.

3xiv) Gender Discourses and Teacher Education

For pre-service teachers the training years are a complex mix of practical, theoretical and philosophical education. Students must endeavour to retain information and create their teacher subjectivities while adapting

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and/or challenging the discourses they bring with them to teacher education (Greenwalt, 208). There are multiple providers delivering early childhood teaching qualifications in New Zealand Aotearoa from universities and polytechnics to private providers (McLachlan, 2011). Currently there is no nation-wide teacher education curriculum (Carpenter et al, 2010). Instead teacher education is rigorously monitored by two statutory bodies; the New Zealand Teachers Council (NZTC) who administer a specific set of standards, applicable to teachers at all educational levels including early childhood, primary and post primary (Carpenter et al, 2010; Kane, 2005; Tarr, 2006) and the New Zealand Standards Authority (NZSA) who provide evaluation criteria for all providers (Norsworthy, 2008). The New Zealand Teachers Council *Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand* (2007) was developed in consultation with a variety of training providers and the New Zealand Qualification Agency (NZTC, 2007). The overall purpose of the standards is to prescribe what a graduate teacher should know, understand, be able to do and what desirable teaching dispositions are sought (NZTC, 2007). It is expected by the NZTC that education providers ensure these standards are met by their graduates (NZTC, 2007).

While none of the standards specifically refer to gender, two standards indicate what graduating teachers might likely be expected to know about gender in relation to inclusiveness and awareness of social factors. The standards also indicate a strong commitment to inclusiveness within curriculum section, student teacher relationships and the understanding of education within the wider contexts of society (Carpenter et al, 2010) and have a strong emphasis on reflective practice. To ensure meeting the *NZTC: Graduating Teacher Standards* (2007) for early childhood teachers education providers should have multiple aims; to educate pre-service teachers to understand and deal with gender from social, cultural and psychological levels, to incorporate gender equity into pedagogy, and to supply the skills needed to critically evaluate their own gender discourses (Erden, 2009; Sultana & Sohaimi bin Lazim, 2011). Such aspirations are

closely aligned to subjective examination of reflexivity and reflection, the pivotal element of *NZTC: Graduating Teacher Standards* (2007).

3xv) Teacher Subjectivity

Greenwalt (2008, p. 387) when discussing teacher subjectivity explains that this process does not just happen, that:

> '*One does not, of course, simply reach a point in one's professional life where the title of teacher can be definitively claimed*' rather teacher subjectivity develops '*through hard work, determination, rigorous training, practical experience and, perhaps most importantly, reflection*'.

During teacher education pre-services teacher's subjectivity undergoes a period of radical development. Teacher subjectivity develops and evolves profoundly as new discourses clash and conflict with old as new subject positions are taken up (Blunden, 2005; Phillips, 1998) as the students move from the position of students to teachers (Weatherwax, 2010). Teacher education becomes, according to Phillips (2010), a place where pre-service teachers are '*negotiating expectations and ideals, beliefs and values; while enacting a dream, fiction, and expectation of who a teacher is*' (Phillips, 2010, p. 635). Despite the conflicting nature of the developing teacher subject, it is accepted that graduating early childhood teachers will have a set of specific teacher characteristics and dispositions as part of their teacher subjectivity.

While courses which explore gender issues have likely been incorporated into most teacher education programmes, Cushman (2011) and Erdun (2009) claim that there is a wide variation in the quality, depth and pedagogical practices of such courses. Zittleman & Sadker's (2003) studies exploring the representation of women and gender equity within commonly used in American teacher education text books found the texts gendered and that the historical contribution to the education from women

was marginalised. According to Zittleman & Sadker's (2002) research the texts do little to prepare students for teaching in a gender inclusive environment. Furthermore research by Tatar & Emmanuel (2001) suggests that the relative importance gender issues are afforded in teacher education may impact the importance teachers later place on gender in daily practice.

Evidence is emerging though that teachers' can disrupt gender norming (Gunn, 2008; MacNaughton, 2000; Skelton, Carrington, Francis, Hutchings, Read & Hall, 2009). According to Alloway (1995) early childhood is a time of tremendous development which provides a unique context for engaging in gender equity education. MacNaughton (2000) also cites the early childhood sector as a crucial time engaging in gender equity education. According to Erden (2009) and Skelton (2007) the intersection between gender and early childhood education is a relatively under researched area but a common argument has arisen in the research available that some form of specific gender or equity education within teacher education better prepares pre-service teachers for the challenges of gender diverse teaching (Cushman, 2012; Erden, 2009; Gunn, 2012; MacNaughton, 2000, Skelton, 2007). There are no specific requirements for teacher educators in New Zealand Aotearoa to address gender equity in their programs despite the focus on inclusiveness in the NZTC Graduating Teacher Standards (2007) (See 3ii) Gender Discourses in Education).

MacNaughton (2000; 2005) has suggested that the incorporation of gender equity is best done using a post-structural lens proposing that early childhood teachers need to explore and critique gender discourses and gendered power relationships. Furthermore MacNaughton (1997) suggests that by changing the 'gaze' of the teachers to identify gendered power relationships, teachers will be more likely to identify and redress issues of power imbalance and marginalisation. The anti-bias approach for example, promoted by numerous educationalists including Gunn (2012)

and MacNaughton (2000), has become increasingly dominant in the New Zealand Aotearoa and Australian sector. According to Blaise & Taylor (2012) queer theory provides an alternative manner for exploring and challenging issues of gender equity, although queer theory is also underpinned by post-structuralism. While MacNaughton (2000) promotes the post structural discourse there are multiple approaches to gender equity promoted within the education sector or what Spencer, Porche & Tolman (2003, p. 1779) call 'gender equitable practices' underpinned by different theoretical approaches. These approaches can also be identified and applied in different levels of the education sector. For example Koch & Irby (2002) identified different approaches as suitable at an administrative or curriculum level or in classroom practice.

There is a dearth of post-structural analysis exploring New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood teacher education in relation to gender. On this basis I argue that a post-structural feminist interrogation of teachers subjectivity would provide a way of understanding the impact (and existence) of these discourses and their interplay in pedagogical practice.

3xvi) Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the literature intersection of gender and early childhood education. It has included an overview of the notion of gender and an exploration of the main discourses of gender development and how these have affected education policy in New Zealand Aotearoa over the last century. I explored the relationship between gender and early childhood teacher education and early years pedagogy – past and present with an emphasis on New Zealand Aotearoa.

In chapter 4 I explore the discourses around gender and gender development of the 3rd year early childhood pre-service teachers involved

in this research and investigate how these discourse webs might impact on the participant's pedagogy and experiences as developing teacher subjects. The chapter concludes with a discussion investigating how the gender discourse webs might challenge the participant's teaching pedagogy and practice.

Chapter Four Results and Discussion

4i) Introduction

In the previous chapter I explored how discourses of gender development influence educational practices, from pedagogy to government policy to teacher education. Pre-service teachers arriving to teacher education come with already established lay theories and discourses about gender differences and development. I wondered if the participants had challenged their lay discourses, were they still in a state of conflict, reading from a muddy and over-written palimpsest or had the dominant education sector discourses, shown in *Table 2.* (p. 45), over written their lay discourses?

In this chapter I draw specifically on feminist post-structural theory concerning subjectivity and Foucault's notion of power and discourse to explore pre-service teacher discourses of gender. As discussed in chapter 3, different competing and contradictory gender discourses shape the educational sector in New Zealand Aotearoa and are likely to influence the gender discourses of early childhood teachers. Teacher education plays a central role, as an apparatus using discursive practices, to shape policy, pedagogy and teacher subjectivities (see 3vii) and the influence of Gender Development Discourses on New Zealand Aotearoa Early Childhood Education Policy. This research explores how gender discourses may have impacted the participants notions of gender, gender development and impacted their pedagogy and practice. To do this I examine the participants' recounted gender experiences and perceptions of the focus groups – three groups of pre-service teachers in their final year of study in a three year degree programme.

This chapter explores the participant's discourses around gender in several ways. Firstly I investigate how the participant's understood their own experiences of gender using reflection and reflective practices.

Secondly I explore the participant's location and framing of gender, their degrees of gender bias and models of gender diversity. Finally, this is followed by an evaluation of the potential impacts of the pedagogy and practice from the participant's gender discourses.

Rather than identifying established or fixed gender discourses this research recognized gender discourses that were fluctuating, often conflicted, surprisingly vague or discomforting to the participants. Reflecting the inductive aspect of analysis this research I applied to areas of conflict, discomfort and confusion formed the central part of my analysis chapter. I investigate the ways that teacher subjectivity related to gender develops for these teacher trainees through the teacher education process according to their responses.

4ii) Reflection and Reflexivity

Throughout the focus groups it was clear that the students were well versed in the rhetoric of 'reflective practice' as a method of examining pedagogy. Yet few references were made, or were evident, about the importance of their own subjectivities in shaping pedagogy, or of associated reflexive strategies that would enable the students to examine the impact of their beliefs on their practices. Increasingly reflexivity, which '*acknowledges that all knowledge bears the impress of the social relations entailed in its production*' (Bondi, 2009, p. 328), is also recognized as a skill necessary for teachers. Henry & Bruland (2010, p. 308) describe reflexivity as '*a dialogical practice of teaching, reflexivity may emerge from personal, "reflex" moments in the classroom that can ground a dialogue linking tacit knowing and explicit knowledge*'. Reflexivity can provided a clear road into discourses of gender, according to Bondi (2009, p. 334), supporting students '*to acknowledge and validate difference and diversity in relation to gender and other facets of identity, thereby seeking to unsettle or undo entrenched normative assumptions and habits of gender*'.

Teacher agency, the capacity for independent social change (Biesta & Tedder, 2006), relies on teachers gaining a deep understanding about their pedagogy and the wider context of their practice and to challenge or resist gender norms and unequal power relationships (MacNaughton, 2000; MacNaughton, 2003), a capacity supported through reflexivity. Although according to Norsworthy (2008) the quality of teaching around reflective practice in teacher education varies, the majority of participants identified reflection as a necessary and beneficial part of pedagogy. Their comments on the importance of reflection appeared to reveal that they had a good understanding of the significance of reflective practice to pedagogy. For example Jasmine who commented that '*you need to be reflective, yourself and the team*' (FG1. L736). Participants also identified reflection as a continual process, for example, Sharna described reflection as on-going, '*you are always reflecting on your practice, you know, what is actually happening*' (FG3. L448).

Killen (2006) describes three main types of teaching reflections each of which was described by the participants. Technicist reflection concerning classroom practices such as classroom order and meeting predetermined targets. Practical reflection, primarily linked to meeting goals and the principles of practice, was the most common form of reflection participants referred to in the discussions, for example when Sharna comments that:

> '*So it's by being reflective you can, if you've got that strong in your practice, then you actually tend to make notes about things at the end of the day so you have got something at the end of the day you will go 'what happened today, oh yeah that's right'* (FG3. L445).

Reflexivity differs from reflection, according to Matthews & Jessel (1998, p. 234) as it is the '*focus on the self and one's assumptions that distinguishes reflexivity from descriptions of reflection*'. This includes what Matthews et al (1998, p. 233) describes as:

> '*experiences that relate to one's own self, beliefs, values, attitudes, assumptions, fears—those experiences that relate more centrally to*

> *the self than those which are relatively peripheral and relate to external things'.*

Quirke (2000, p. 299-230, cited in MOE, 2006) though proposes reflexivity as also a process suitable for initial examination in groups. Some participants also discussed the importance of critical interrogation of practice such as Jasmine when she described reflection as being both for '*yourself and the team'* (FG1. L736) but discussed this in terms of reflection not reflexivity.

An example of individual reflexivity can be seen in Shelly's examination of her experiences and influences and their impact on her pedagogy:

> '*I think I have been able to reflect on my own beliefs from childhood and adapted it a bit. I don't see things all the ways that I used to as my parents did my family and parents do. … My past experiences have helped shape that for me and now I can look at gender'* (FG2. L552)

Foucault similarly positioned the notion of reflexivity as 'an exercise of thought, of thought's reflection on itself, of looking at oneself' (Foucault, 2005, p. 460). For Foucault, reflexivity supports the subject to explore the relationship between themselves and the truth as it is defined by discourse (Geerinck, Masschelein & Simons, 2010) a method by which discourses can be explored and potentially challenged.

While Norsworthy (2008) states that few self-reflexive tasks were '*embedded in an institutional, on-campus context which was organised and structured in terms of time and courses to develop reflexivity, rather than the completion of reflection';* some participants were clearly engaging in a reflexive investigation of their personal subjectivities and teaching pedagogy. For example Beatrice who described reflexivity although she used language relating to reflection:

> '*Reflecting, Reflective practice, yeah, just taking time to think about if you are thinking "yeah oh no that's not normal" then don't, you know, pass on that attitude to the children; you have to think to yourself 'that's how they are'.* (FG3. L375)

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According to Bondi (2009a, p. 334) reflexivity '*offers a way of thinking about gender and gender theory today*'; providing access into the notions of gender embedded within subjective discourses through assisting the critical analysis of discourses that shape gender and pedagogy. There was no evidence that the participants had any conception of the role that reflexivity plays in accessing the discourses of gender that shape their subjectivity. Further, little evidence was seen of the participant's understanding of how these subjective gender discourses shape pedagogical practice. It is clear that reflexivity is an increasingly important teacher tool so, why was it evidenced so infrequently during the focus groups?

4iii) Degrees of Gender Bias

I have already established post-structuralism suggests discourses are shaped by experiences, attitudes and values (Cox, 2010; MacNaughton, 2005; Neilson, 2005). New information is internalised, it is filtered through and adapted by historically held discourses (See (2iii) Post-Structuralism). Reflections of past experiences can therefore be regarded as an insight into how a subject has and is constructed through historical context, events, discourses and beliefs (Akai, 2011). Resultantly the way participant's evaluate the influences of their own gendered childhoods may indicate how they understand gender discourses and by association how gendering occurs, the breadth of gender norms in society and the nature of gender norms. Participants, when asked to reflect on their early gendering experiences, displayed differing understandings of how they had been influenced by gender norms. The participants fell into two main categories i) those who felt there was little gendering in their childhood and ii) those who described gender roles and norms as more influential on their development. These positions clearly impacted on their views and practices about teaching.

Over half of the participants felt that gender norms were not particularly influential in their childhood, identifying parental influence as central to any gender norming. Jasmine, for example, felt that, since she was raised by a single parent, that '*all of the gender stuff we are looking at university, how there are separate roles and stuff, that didn't apply to me*' (FG1. L76). Dianne described her parents as having non-traditional gender roles, '*my upbringing was quite different, my mum doesn't cook she would probably burn a salad so dad does all the cooking*' (FG2. L96), and believed that this resulted in her being only minimally affected by gender norming. It is likely though that Dianne's unique experiences growing up in South Africa will have also influenced her experiences of gender norming, an example of this can be see when she stated that '*in South Africa we have a maid who does all the cleaning and stuff so mum wasn't really the typical housewife*' (FG2. L97). Sam discussed gender norming as a bias that could be avoided. Sam shared an example of what he considered to be a bias '*when my youngest brother was born I was four and my sister was two and she* [Sam's Mother] *went out and brought us dolls and bottles and stuff so that we wouldn't be set in those gender stereotypes*'(FG2. L356) which appeared to demonstrate that Sam was aligning what he described as bias with gender norms. He cited his mother as playing a central role in counteracting influences of gender norms, explaining that '*I know I didn't grow up with any bias so I didn't really notice anything, my mother tried very hard to keep us away from biases*' (FG2. L355).

Other participants appeared to have difficulty in recognizing the breadth of the gender norms which may have influenced their early years. Sharna, for example, explained that she didn't '*really remember* [seeing] *the gender roles of a girl and a boy when I was a young child. Just, I knew I liked make-up and Barbies™ and that kind of stuff, I don't know why*' (FG3. L113). Similarly, Beatrice and Zoe, whose narrative described growing up in environments where gender norms and stereotypes were common, both felt as Zoe describes here that their upbringing was '*not too gendered*' (FG2. L92). Zoe for example explained that her younger sister was:

'rough and tumble as she loved being out with Dad and the tractors and stuff and like everybody says, she was meant to be a boy, like she's just got all those guy characteristics yeah but it was not too gendered really' (FG2. L92).

There may have been a host of reasons for these responses to apparently identify a narrow view of gender norms and the gendering process. This could have resulted from inexperience in reflection, or it may suggest that these participants had limited experiences exploring gender norms and the gendering processes in their early experiences or a reluctance to explore what MacNaughton (2000) considers a contentious area.

The remaining participant's described their historical gender influences in more complex multifaceted terms. The participant's identified a much broader range of gender norms as influential including; parents, early childhood and school experiences, toy choice, clothing, the media and the lay discourses of the wider society. Heather, for example, recited a narrative from her past as central to her childhood gendering which included gender norming resulting from parental roles, toy choice and early childhood education as well as wider societal discourses. She explained, with great passion, a family experience in the:

'early seventies when he [brother] *was at kindergarten and there was a meeting that my Mum went to and a lot of the parents were upset that my brother played with dolls and they actually called a meeting'* (FG1. L104)

Heather's narrative displays a multifaceted understanding of the complexity of gendering influences and an understanding that there are always multiple sources of gender norms in society.

The complexity of this second group of participants responses may have reflected a wider range of experiences exploring gender issues, potentially

related to the age of the respondents. It is interesting to note that Heather and Anna, the two participants who appeared to have the most complex understanding of gender were the only participants in the 35+ age group. While no causation can be made due to the small number of participants it may be relevant that these older participants were young students in the education sector during a time Bradstreet (2007) described the decades of the 2nd wave of feminism when gender equality was a central focus in education. Inversely, the alternate group, who showed less understanding of the complexity of gender and gender norming, would have experienced their earlier education during a time in which the focus in gender equity was declining or had declined, the decades of the 3rd wave feminism (See *table 2, p. 45*). Their response may also be related to experiences with reflexivity, a skill that was keenly tested in the focus group experience.

4iv) Reflecting on Gender Development Discourses

In alignment with the literature (see chapter 3) I expected the research data to show that the participants, as 3rd year students, would be fully aligned with the environmental gender development discourse the dominant discourse within the education sector. Discourses of development as environmentally influenced are embedded in the sector (*See table 2, p. 45*), which I expected to translate to discourses of gender development. Instead, using discourse analysis, the participant's perceptions of gender development appeared to be overwhelmingly unresolved, contradictory and in flux. From a post-structural perspective gender development discourses are more than simply beliefs and understandings but rather defined by their relations of power (Grundy & Hatton, 1995), power which influences many aspects of education from government policy to teacher. When discussing the participant's gender development discourses, inconsistency and confusion became apparent in their dialogues. While initial participant dialogues indicated an alignment to environmental gender discourses later statements identified the

biologically determined gender discourses as more frequently underpinning the participant's beliefs, conflicting with their initial comments. As these excerpts show all members of this group initially indicated a belief in environmental gender development when asked directly how gender was formed:

Researcher *How do you believe gender develops?*

Kristy *Socially definitely and expectations and environments*

Jasmine *I think the media has a big role in that too and like you can walk into a shop and see that the boys clothes are segregated from the girls clothes and they have their own colours like girls clothes tend to be pinks purples and whites and the boys are black and brown and sensible and what's on TV too, between the cartoons you might see boys playing with transformers™ and girls playing with Barbies™*

Heather *Its how your conditioned to fit into that mould or not fit into that mould* (FG1. L130)

While the participant's cited environmental developmental discourse clearly and consistent with the education sector, when directly asked how they believed gender developed, analysis of later dialogue identified biologically determined discourse as also being a pronounced influence. In the following excerpt the biologically determinist view is used to refute and resist the environmental gender developmental discourses, the dominant discourse in the education sector:

Kristy *I don't see how, how you are made up biologically can determine whether you like pink or blue or that you like playing with, I think it is you yourself and your personality traits first of all then social*

Heather *Biologically though you have hormones like if you have got more oestrogen if you are a girl*

Kristy *Yeah that is true*

Heather *Or testosterone if you are a boy so biologically I think there are differences there.* (FG1. L191)

Similar discord occurred between the discourses claimed by some the participants when directly asked their views compared to discourse used in conversational dialogue. This discourse was repeated in all three focus group discussions. The most prevalent point of conflict raised in discussion was around the role that hormones play in child development and how this impacts developing sex and genders. Participants varied greatly in their level of understanding about the physiological impact of hormones on the body. While some students showed an understanding of the role of biology in the physical development of the body, for example Heather who understood that '*you have hormones, like if you have got more oestrogen you are a girl*' (FG1. L194) and '*testosterone if you are a boy*' (FG1. L197)*,* other students appeared to have less knowledge in this area. Beatrice for example who felt that '*it's really not until they get to puberty until the biology would kick in*' (FG3. L422) or Anna who felt it was more to do with your '*your DNA, chronological stuff, I don't know? Don't you perceive gender as different because of the chromosomes?*' (FG2. L128)

Beatrice later discussed her belief that hormones contribute to gender in the form of the physical, emotional and intellectual traits in children:

> '*there is testosterone in boys,…, there are so many studies done, girls are more placid, girls are more, they tend to be wanting that quiet activity they will happily sit and read a book or sit for puzzles play games in the family area and then you have boys and they tend to want to, they have that inclination to want to do those more active roles.*' (GF3. L562)

Beatrice saw a link between the physiological state caused by hormones and broad stereotyped views of gender role and gender based play. She continued, again linking children's biological traits to play:

> '*Boys need to run around and burn off that energy and express that testosterone that's there and have that rough and tumble play,*

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there is a need for it and providing for that need is just as important as providing the need if they want to have a quiet activity inside'. (FG3. L554)

This linking of stereotypical views of the gender roles of children and biologically determinist views of gender development surfaced again and again throughout the discussion despite most of the participant's declaring when directly asked, that gender is primarily determined by environmental influences. The following are only a small sample of the biologically determinist comments from the participants such as Niki who believed that *'feelings and stuff are biological, like how you maybe deal with things',* (FG1. L220) and Dianne who stated that she was '*still one to believe that boys, like the stereotype are the ones that you need to get outside, to get them to run off the excess energy not like girls who don't'* (FG2. L580) or Sam who felt that *'There are differences you are gonna have like the average boy will run more than the average girl'* (FG2. L590).

This kind of essentialist biologically determinist discourse has recently undergone resurgence in lay theory, quickly becoming increasingly popular in wider society (Orenstein, 2011; Walker, 2010). According to Eliot (2010) the argument is still not often seen in the education sector although this is slowly changing. The conflicts seen in public or lay debate around gender discourse were replicated throughout the discussions. While overall the participants initially appeared to have internalised the discourse most dominant in the education sector, their thinking, when identified using discourse analysis could be identified as biologically determinist with only a sometimes thin veneer of environmentally developmental thinking.

Contrasting beliefs around biologically determinist discourses and the resulting assumptions of student's traits and expectations resulted in disagreements between participants. Some argued vehemently against

biological determinism while other's recognized the discourse as a regime of truth. Interestingly, each of the participants who argued against the biologically determinist view at some point during the focus group used biologically determinist language or concepts themselves. This observation led me to believe that the biologically determinist discourse was so deeply engrained that the participants were often unknowingly influenced by it in the absence of reflective and reflexive skills. The following excerpts highlight this phenomenon after Dianne's provocation to the group declaring her belief in stereotypical gender roles (See FG2. L580):

Zoe	*Yeah I do know what you are talking about*
Dianne	*So I do think that is true as a stereotype boys do have much more energy than girls and are more likely to be the ones running around always on the move*
Shelly	*Yeah but should you base that on gender?*
Zoe	*Yeah, see, I don't agree.*
Shelly	*I don't either.*
Sam	*But I think girls and boys are different. There are differences you are still gonna have, like the average boy will run more than the average girl.*
Shelly	*Not necessarily*
Sam	*But that's what I mean by average.* [Sarcastic inflection] *You go out and you measure how far boys run you would see it*
Zoe	*Are the boys expected to do it though?*
Shelly	*Yeah but is that because you are encouraging it? Are the boys encouraged to go outside and run while the girls are being encouraged to sit inside and do art?*
	(FG2. L584)

Sam was firmly committed to the view that gender is biologically determined and became quite defensive during the discussion, using a

raised voice and sarcasm to silence others in the discussion. Despite his vehemence on the issue of gender development in this part of the discussion, Sam initially remained silent on the issue. Sam's initial silence could reflect a chosen strategy. Foucault (1984) described silence as '*as integral part of strategies that underlie and permeate discourses*' (Foucault, 1984, p. 310 in Ortlipp, 2003). Silence can be seen as in an expression of repression, resistance, as an effect of power relationships or as a form of safety (Ortlipp, 2003).

Taking into account Sam's later vehement defence of biological determinism, that boys are '*runners*' while girls are '*quiet*', a number of possible reasons could be identified as influencing Sam's initial silence. Sam may have understood that the biologically determinist view was not dominant in the education sector and therefore less popular and as such the initial silence may be seen as a form of safety. This could infer that Sam may have fully understood the dominance of the environmental gender developmental theory in the education sectors and disagreed. It could reflect Sam's resistance to new discourses based on the strength of his lay discourse or the agitation during the discussion could reflect discomfort at discussing a discourse not yet fully developed. I would consider it most likely, considering Sam's inability to use terms relating to gender in ways in keeping within the education sector, for example 'I see a difference between gender and sexuality but not between sex and gender', that Sam may have initially been uncomfortable in discussing a discourse which was not completely understood.

It is also possible that Sam's position as the only male in the group may have influenced his silence. According to Farquhar (2008) the low numbers of males involved in teacher education potentially isolates male students from male support although despite this earlier research by Farquhar (1997) few male pre-services teachers reported difficulty on the basis of their gender during their training.

A second student also used a strategy of silence in their discussions. Beatrice, who supported gender stereotypes as '*useful*' in identity formation stated '*how do they know what a girl does unless they see what a girl does?*' (FG3. L599). Beatrice presented with the most fervently biologically determinist views on gender development, did not appear to feel comfortable discussing her beliefs in the focus group format. Instead Beatrice discussed issues with me privately following the interview where she revealed her views on gender development. Like Sam, Beatrice's silence during the focus group may be a reflection of her attempt to keep herself safe while ensuring her views were still heard. Although Beatrice's initial difficulty in using the language of gender consistent with the dominant use in the education sector may reflect a discomfort over discussing a discourse not completely understood or in revealing her views that were seen as discordant with either her peers or the sector itself.

4v) Participants Location and Framing of Gender

Participants used language relating to gender issues in a surprisingly varied way. The way in which the participant's defined sex and gender indicated that some participants struggled to incorporate the language in a way that is consistent with the early childhood education sector and their teacher education programme. Just over half of the participant's defined the concepts of sex and gender in-line with the dominant discourses of the education sector while the remaining participants defined the terms in a number of different ways that appeared confused, often using language which seemed to conflict with their earlier statements. As the following discussions show, some participants used the term "gender" in ways in keeping with the dominant use in the education sector:

> **Kristy**   G*ender is defined by the individual themselves; the sex is what physiologically they are*
>
> **Niki**   *I would agree with that as well. Like the gender is the*

stereotypic stereotypical idea of…

Jasmine   *Like what you "should"* [participant used air quotes] *be*

Niki   *Yeah, what you should be like*

Jasmine   *Yeah, it's socially contrived whereas biologically you are that sex* (FG1. L118)

Other participants did not use the terms consistent with dominant education sector use and often varying greatly in their definitions. As the following discussion reveals:

Sam   *I see a difference between gender and sexuality but not between gender and sex*

Shelly *Yeah from what I've been brought up in and what I've been taught throughout uni sex, is you know, the difference between male and female and gender is pretty much the same*

Anna   *Gender is to do with, it's more to do with your DNA chronological stuff. I don't know, don't you perceive gender as different because of the chromosomes?*

Dianne *Yeah I always thought gender was the word people used if they didn't want to use sex on questionnaires and stuff. They would ask for gender instead of sex, I didn't really think of it as different.*

Zoe   *I have no idea. I was just thinking, cause we did have a discussion in class between whether we found gender and sex different and one of them was, I think it might have been that gender was what you did more than your actual sex and your sex was what you technically were but I can't remember if that was actually right or not but we were having a discussion about it. It was a very interesting question.*

(FG2. L124)

Within this discussion a number of the participants used the term gender in a way inverse to the dominant education sector use while some

participant's identified the gender and sex terms as interchangeable, referring to the same concept, or, used the terms although the final participant Zoe disagreed with the group defining the terms in a way which aligned with the dominant usage in the education sector. Interestingly Zoe was the only participant who mentioned discussions during classes about these terms.

Similarly, participants in another discussion also disagreed over definitions of sex and gender. When Sharna proposed, consistent with the education sector, that sex was the '*medical terminology of what you are'* while gender was '*how you feel'* (FG3. L128) Beatrice disagreed stating that:

Beatrice	*I think it goes the other way around. I think your sex is like sex and I think gender is, I think, boy or girl it's how you are made up*
Researcher	*Physically?*
Beatrice	*Yeah physically you are a boy or a girl and that is your gender*　　　　　　(FG3. L129)

Beatrice's confusion over the term continued throughout the focus group and she later contradicted this initial definition claiming that the terms sex and gender '*seemed all the same'.* Although Beatrice's later claim of sex and gender as 'the same' does not take into account the binary nature of the notion of sex and gender (See 1ii) Gender Binaries) most participants did position sex and gender within a binary, regardless of their definition.

4vi) Models of Gender Diversity

Discourse analysis of the participant's use of language throughout the focus groups relating to individuals outside of the male/female and man/women binary, specifically those related to intersexuality and transgender, also varied a great deal. Data around this topic was derived from the data, rather than questions potentially highlighting the decreasing

marginalisation of the communities (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). Although the claim is contested, Fausto-Sterling (2012) proposes that the transgender and intersex community could make up 10% of society. Several participants used historic language while others were unfamiliar with the terms. Beatrice and Sharna had difficulty in defining what intersex was; while Sharna was not familiar with the term Beatrice did appear to have some understanding of the concept:

Sharna "*what is it [Intersex] then? What does it mean?*"

Beatrice "*You know I'm not sure. Maybe it is referring to the person who cheated on Valerie Adams sports day thing?*"[6]   (FG3. L17)

While Beatrice could not fully explain her views she did show some understanding of the concept of intersexuality. During the discussions on intersexuality both of these participants appeared somewhat uncomfortable, both quietly laughing while Sharna appeared to blush potentially reflecting there unease with the topic.

Heather and Jasmine appeared to understand the concept of intersexuality but used historic language when referring to intersex individuals, describing them as '*hermaphrodites*' (FG1. L214). While this term is still in some limited usage in recent popular literature, overall the language is considered historical and outdated (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). Heather and Jasmine's use of the term to refer to intersex individuals as 'when you are both' may indicate that they have had only limited exposure to the more recent usage of the terms which reflects the multiple ways, according to Fausto-Sterling (2012), in which intersex characteristics can manifest in individuals. Kristy's use of the term intersex was uncertain,

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[6] While Beatrice was referring to Valerie Adams, New Zealand Shot Putter, who initially missed out on a commonwealth gold medal due to a competitor taking sports enhancing drugs (Taylor, 2012) this may have been a reference to South African athlete Caster Semenya, who was required to undergo genetic testing to determine if she was intersex after the 2009 Athletics World Championships (McCann, 2012).

'*that* [sex characteristics] *determines what biologically you are either a male or a female or trans*' (FG1, L213) as while she appeared to understand the concept of intersexuality, connecting it to the physical sex characteristics, used language related to transgender.

That several of the participants used language relating to gender, transgender and intersexuality in ways that was not consistent with the dominant use in the education sector, while others did not know the term at all, may result from an array of reasons. This may reveal that some participant's had experienced only limited exposure to discourses concerning transgender or intersex individuals. It is not clear from the data if the participant's experienced any discussions concerning transgender or intersexuality during their teacher education. Beatrice, the only participant who commented on where her information on transgender & intersex originated, mentioned other sources only; '*like I've read things and I've seen things on the news and you know on 20/20* [TV news program] *and things like that*' (FG3. L148).

4vii) Gender in the Teacher Education Programme

Similarly, little information was mined from the data about how the participant's gained knowledge around discourses of gender. Within the teacher education programme the participant's did participate in compulsory papers covering human development and inclusive practice, although these papers were not mentioned by the participants when they reflected on their knowledge of gender, transgender or intersexuality. A number of participants did refer to class discussions about gender and gender roles. For example in one focus group participants mentioned three separate occasions when gender was explored during their teacher education:

Niki	*We talked about play and gender way back, I can't remember exactly, but I remember it*
Heather	*That was* [course title] *wasn't it?*
Niki	*Yeah they talked about those norms*
Kristy	*And about ideas of norms* (FG1. L492)

and

Kristy	*When does testosterone and oestrogen start to develop in children*?
Heather	*We had this in one of our lectures didn't we*? (FG1, L)

Along with these two instances participants in all three focus groups also discussed a single assessment during their first year. This particular assessment, which had occurred during their 1st year of study, was mentioned by several participants across each focus group and by all but one participant, in a positive way. The assessment, which was carried out during the participant's 1st practicum experience, was included within a paper investigating play:

Sharna	*Especially after doing that, what was it the different gender assignment, that different gender one*
Beatrice	*The stereotyping one …*
Sharna	*I think it was good that in the first year we did that gender assignment so we had an assignment on gender equity, yeah so it really made us aware*
	(FG3. L201)

Jasmine also explained that she considered the assignment beneficial:

'*I remember doing an assignment where we had to take three areas of play and check every couple of seconds to see how many girls and boys there were in each area and before doing that I thought the centre I was in was pretty gender neutral and everyone played everywhere but when I did it there was always more boys playing in*

the blocks and girls in the art area and it was like 'Bing maybe this
is happening' you have to look deeper aye'. (FG2. L503)

Beatrice was the only participant who spoke of that specific assignment in less than beneficial terms when she explained that '*during that assignment and at other times*' she felt that:

'*I think there is quality and value in letting boys be boys and letting girls be girls and that be OK. … Like we can't get stuck on 'Oh we are going to make it equal and make sure that the girls want to do it and the boys want to do it and if they don't want to that's OK, if the girls take on those stereotypical roles and the boys do then that's OK as well*'
(FG3. L599)

Although the assignment was the educational experience concerning gender that was mentioned most frequently by the participants, it was certainly not the only instance where the participant's explored issues relating to equity and inclusion. The level of importance the participants placed on this particular assignment may have occurred for multiple reasons but the location of the assignment within the context of the participant's practicum may have created a powerful impact as the assignment required evidence to be collected and reflected upon by the participants.

Skelton (2007) claims the attention paid to gender within the teacher training process is likely to infer to education students the relative importance of gender in daily life and pedagogy; while Youngblood-Jackson (2001) proposes that during teacher education the self becomes the site of conflict where discourses compete for dominance. Teacher educators who are in the position to privilege some discourses over others have the power to shape discourses (Youngblood-Jackson, 2001). Skelton's (2007) English study proposes that the focus paid to gender in teacher education programmes may reflect the importance paid to gender by graduating teachers. While no causation can be made on the

participant's educational focus on gender, that the participant's only identified one assignment as central to their gender education may be potentially concerning. Assessing this using Skelton's (2007) study as a lens, this could possibly consign the participant's to be unconcerned or indifferent to gender issues.

4viii) Discourse of Sexuality and Play

A third topic which raised impassioned debate along with a confused response to gender development discourses was around the issue of gender divergent play and especially the potential link between gender divergent play and homosexual or transgender identities. As discussed in the chapter one, notions of gender and sexuality are intertwined in discourse infusing hetronormativity throughout the early childhood education sector (Gunn, 2008; Gunn, 2011).

Participants throughout each of the discussions around this topic, made it very clear that they supported children playing in gender divergent ways as acceptable behaviour. Some participant's described gender divergent play as natural and acceptable such as Heather, who believed that '*we should all find this acceptable behaviour for boys to dress up and experiment with trying on princess dresses and crowns that's all very natural and alright*' (FG1. L328). Some students, although agreeing that gender divergent play is acceptable in an early childhood environment, appeared uncomfortable with this discussion. This led me to wonder if some participant's discomfort at a perceived potential negative reaction to expressing an alternative view to gender divergent play may have outweighed their ability to feel safe to talk freely.

Several participants appeared uncomfortable throughout the discussion on gender divergent play which also touched on the potential sexualities of young children. Their discomfort was evidenced primarily by their body

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language. One participant displayed agitated hand gestures while several engaged in what appeared to be nervous laughter. In two cases participant's physically removed themselves from the group setting by shifting their chairs slightly out of the group circle. Some participants, while they were at pains to stress that they had no problem with gender divergent play or non-heterosexual identities, also resisted further elaboration on the topic by changing the topic.

That the debate made some participants uncomfortable may indicate several things. According to Kelly (2012, p. 288):

> '*discussing sexuality or sexual identify is difficult for many people, including teachers, particular when the sexuality/sexual identity in question relates to 'otherness' as opposed to the pervasive discourse and dominant culture of heterosexuality*'

'*Other*' used here and throughout this research, is used to describe what Kelly (2012, p. 289) identifies as a feminist or queer term relating to the '*discursive process by which the dominate group with a valued identity and norms constructs an out-group based on differences, faults and a devaluing*' creating an "us" and "other". It may also be that participants did not feel comfortable expressing views that did not fit into the dominant discourse of the early childhood education sector, a commonly seen and potentially a pervasive public discourse which positions pre-school children as being sexually neutral. Robinson (2008, p. 118) identifies this as '*the notion of childhood innocence'*. The participants discomfort could reflect the strength of the public discourse on gender divergent play which positions gender divergence as 'other' (Gunn, 2008) and concurs with Kelly's (2012, p. 289) identification that '*Teachers grapple with situations related to gender and sexuality on a daily basis*' but that silence on these issues still occurs.

It may also be that that the discussion around these topics was relativity new to participants. While several New Zealand Aotearoa researchers have claimed that issues of sexuality and hetronormativity are generally absent from the teacher education programmes in New Zealand Aotearoa

(Carpenter et al, 2010; Gunn, 2008; Gunn, 2011; Surtees, 2008) it is clear from the data that the participants did have some educational experiences discussing alternative sexualities in the early childhood environment. For example Heather recalled learning about alternate family units '*and how it's not just mum dad and two children, that there can be lesbian parents, gay parents, step families, step parents, blended families*' (FG1. L489) and although it was not discussed, the participant's teacher education programme also included, within a compulsory class 3rd year class, a lecture on childhood sexualities.

Participant dispute over the notion that gender divergent play will always or is likely to signify later homosexual or transgender identities in children were impassioned. While some participant's presupposed such links as probable, other participant's argued vehemently that such a link should not be assumed. When Beatrice argued that she could tell a child was going to '*grow-up to be gay*' (FG3. L173) based on his gender divergent play, Sharna became quite agitated, expressed through facial expressions and body language, before she rebutted the claim:

> **Beatrice**   *There was this little boy and he had a fairy party* [on a TV show] *and he was putting on mascara and I was sitting there thinking hum I am pretty sure he is going to grow-up to be gay and you could see that that's how he was identifying…*
>
> **Researcher** *OK you look like you want to say something (to Sharna whose facial expressions have become agitated)*
>
> **Sharna**   *Yeah I would see that quite differently. He might be, just be one of those children who are always a performer and you don't necessarily need to be gay to be like that.*   (FG3. L170)

In another instance of discussion around gender divergent play Shelly claimed that:

'Yeah well if you see a gay person today more than 20 years old more than likely at four years old they were doing that same kind of thing. Dressing up and into that kind of thing, maybe not but, it's been installed since they were born that sort of thing. They sort of pick up girly things and ways of acting, ways of talking and different ways of speaking. I still get questions about my brother today, whether he's gay, it's real embarrassing'.   (FG2. L266)

In this case Shelly's view was challenged by Zoe, who argued that this kind of reflective interrogation was unreliable:

'just, yeah well if you see a gay person you kind of look back and you link it cause now you know 'oh that explains it' but it's not if they were never to be gay their childhood would just have been normal'.

(FG2. L289)

In each case these exchanges occurred around experiences of boys dressing in what are considered girls' clothing. That tension is significantly more likely to occur from the cross-gender play of boys than from gender divergent play of girls has been long established by educationalists from Bell (1981) to Gunn (2008). A number of participants across each of the focus groups, Niki, Heather, Jasmine, Sharna and Zoe, argued passionately against the inevitability of gender divergent play as being a likely predicator of sexuality. All, however agreed that they had seen evidence of this discourse from both teachers and parents during their practicums and considered the perception widespread but were not clear on any alternative view point. This conflict reflects a wider debate around discourses considering childhood gender non-conformity and same-sex sexuality as is articulated by American Gottschalk (2003) and Zucker's (2005) response to Gottschelk's work.

According to Gunn (2008) the heteronormative discourse which, as previously stated, is intertwined with concepts of gender is specifically underpinned by biologically determinist gender development discourse. The essentialist biological discourse, that expects males and females to express their gender in a normative binary manner based on their assigned birth gender, links with an expectation of heterosexual attraction to create a system underpinned by the expectation of heterosexuality and heteronormativity (Gunn, 2008). This essentialist view of gender leads to any children, or adults for that matter, who disrupt the gender normed behaviour to be suspect in terms of their sexuality, especially in the case of boys in gender divergent play (Gunn, 2008).

Those who saw gender divergent play as evidence of homosexual or transgender tendencies especially for boys also appeared to be identifying homosexuality predominantly in terms public stereotypes which link homosexuality to gender divergent characteristics. Shelly for example claimed:

> '*They sort of pick up girly things and ways of acting, ways of talking and different ways of speaking*' (FG2. L267) or Beatrice who stated that '*he was putting on mascara and I was sitting there thinking hum I am pretty sure he is going to grow-up to be gay*' (FG3. L170).

This link may indicate the strength of the public discourse around sexuality and the stereotypes around homosexual men being identified as 'other' to heterosexual men. Heather identified this discourse as part of her reflection on how heteronormativity can lead to reduction children's of agency to choose gender divergent play:

> '*maybe when you think about it deeply that might be where you get that if you let a boy do girlish things they will be gay or if you let girls do boys things they are going to be lesbian maybe that's where the gender and the different words or connotations are confused and that's where the fear comes into it*'.   (FG1. L808)

The automatic linking of children, both girls and boys, engaging in gender divergent play to a transgender or non-heterosexual identity also supports such children to be 'othered' as abnormal according to Gunn (2008). Anna for example stated that '*I for one, always though they were born with it. It's going to come out later on in life cause they were born gay, its genetics'* (FG2. L293) and in doing so emphasised gender divergent play as having a biologically determined cause. Using this rationale it could be argued that such children do not 'choose' to play outside of gender norms but rather it is a biological imperative, gender binaries are therefore preserved, there are not choices.

Inversely, not considering that children who engage in gender divergent play may be revealing of an alternative gender identity or sexuality, is also problematic. It is the assumptive nature of the participant's claims that is the issue, not whether children are or aren't homosexual or heterosexual. Kelly (2012) asserts teachers are consistently grappling with these issues and must question, reflect and reflexively interrogate how they as teachers chose to privilege discourses. Such practices were not evident from all of the pre-service teachers in the focus groups.

4ix) Gender Discourses and Practicum

Practicum, in-service training, is an integral part of the teacher education process (Korth & Baum, 2011; Haigh & Ward, 2004; McNay, 2003; Ortlipp, 2006; Ortlipp, 2010; Ssentamu-Namubiru, 2010) and a place where many new discourses are made available to pre-service teachers (Loizou, 2011). According to Loizou (2011) practicum will provide '*the foundations to build a teacher identity' as they act within the centre to observe, negotiate and internalize the discourses of the early childhood sector'* (Loizou, 2011, p. 373). The participant's teacher education programme included yearly practicums, totalling fifteen weeks over the course of the degree (Kane,

2005). Each year the practicums, which happen across a range of early childhood settings, occurred over an increasing time period ended with a 7 week block in their final year (Kane, 2005). The participant's final block had been completed 5 weeks before the focus groups commenced.

Practicum, as the site where practice and theory intersect (Wilson & I'Anson, 2006), is considered by many pre-service teachers to be the time they learn the practical matter of teaching (McNay, 2003; Saunders, 2005). In McNay's (2003) research pre-service teachers described practicum as *'the most worthwhile part of my programme'* and *'where I really learned to teach'* (McNay, 2003, p. 72).

The education happening during practicum occurs as pre-service teachers engage with multiple discourses and are another location where identities and teacher subjectivities are developed through a process of conflict and negotiation (McNay, 2003; Santoro, 1997; Santoro, 2010). The take up of discourses as pre-service teachers observe them in action during practicum maybe more likely to occur if the new discourses align with subject positions already adapted and are shown as more consistent with what the individual considers to be a legitimate part of the teacher subject. Research has found that pre-service teachers make only intermittent connections between practice developed during practicum and theory (Wilson et al, 2006).

Practicum can be a location of conflict for some pre-service teachers. Associate teachers hold a powerful position during the practicum as pre-service teachers expect, during this time, to learn about the "real" practice of teaching, all while knowing they are being observed and assessed (Haigh et al, 2004; McNay, 2003; Santoro, 1997) and failure to meet that assessment can mean dismissal from the programme (Kane, 2005). From a Foucauldian perspective the discourses made available by the associate

teachers would be legitimised and privileged over others due to the associate teacher being authorised and endorsed by the education provider (Santoro, 1997) and/or by the learner's expectation or practicum as the place to learn 'teaching'.

Associate teachers are often unconsciously providing the subject positions for pre-service teachers to take-up or potentially resist. The participants described experiencing two major and two minor discourses concerning gender during practicum. The two major discourses of practice identified through participant dialogues were i) teachers being gender reactive and ii) teachers being gender blind, while the two minor discourses of practice were iii) teachers enforcing gender norms and iv) teachers using an active gender equity approach. How the participant's perceive gender issues as being addressed in the early childhood sector, as evidenced during practicum, clearly shaped their developing 'teacher' subject.

The most frequent teacher pedagogical gender practice identified by the participants was that of teachers being gender reactive. This consisted of teacher's challenging gender exclusionary play by discussing the gender norm and through teacher's reacting to support children who chose to carry out gender divergent play. Zoe, for example, described teacher's responses in her second and third practicums to children's gender divergent play '*it was well kind of encouraged 'yeah you can do that' and it wasn't seen as different anyway*' (FG2. L518). Similar to this, was Dianne, who experienced a situation where *'if the boys wanted to wear the dresses and skirts they were most welcome'* (FG2. L447) but only if the child initiated the play first.

Heather also described a more complex situation when she experienced teachers responding to gender inequity:

'*Yeah, where I was on prac they had a special Tuesdays as a special girl's day to have the bikes cause the boys always made a bee line for the bikes and the girl's never got a look in, so, on a Tuesday girls could ride to make it fair that girls could have a go'*. (FG1. L257)

MacNaughton (1997a), who researched teacher strategies used in an attempt to improve gender equity, identified this tactic as separatism. Teachers using this tactic attempt to support marginalised groups by creating limited space for their use, in this case one day each week for girls to use the bikes. When the group discussed this situation a number of problems were noted though:

Heather	'*On my prac they did a lot of obstacle courses and they had like a BMX track and some girls did get involved but really the boys were a dominant force in that are they would set it up, they would get the bikes and they would be all playing together without the girls'*
Researcher	'*You mentioned earlier about the bikes at that centre for that activity doing a girl's only day'*
Heather	'*Yeah they had to introduce it so that the girls got a turn'*
Researcher	'*So I wonder how you think that went from the children's perspectives. I guess it is making some assumptions but what do you think the children got out of the girls only having one day a week?'*
Heather	'*I do think they realised the boys dominated which is why they had they girls only day. So they knew there was a reason for it but it was very much child initiated but that was a rule and the boys knew and if one boy got to get on a bike the other boys would tell him "no it's the girl's day today". It was definitely in place before I got there and the children all know the rules it was to give the girls a turn and it just seemed to be a*

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natural part of their weekly routine. It's not like the girls didn't get on the bikes other times but it needed teacher intervention but the teachers said to me it was tricky as it wasn't child initiated so if the boys got the bikes first then they get the bikes and we shouldn't really be saying "give the girls a turn" as the girls know on Tuesday it's their day to get the bikes but then I suppose the girls were almost lulled into that acceptance that on the other days the boys were pretty much going to get the bikes anyway.

(FG1. L602)

Reflection of the response allowed Heather to identify that outside of the 'girl only' time they were still unlikely to access the equipment or play area and that the system may have actually perpetrated continually unequal use of the bikes. By looking at the power relationships that developed, through a post-structural lens, it can be seen that the teacher's attempts to respond to the inequality actually failed to support the girls. The girls, relegated to only one day for bike play, may be learning that boys get first choice on some activities and the centre system and the teachers facilitated that.

MacNaughton's (1997a) research identified three main ways that boy spaces excluded the girls; through denying or challenging the girl's access or by allowing access only on the boy's terms, each of these could be responsible for the exclusion of the girls from the bike area as they teacher's had inadvertently facilitated the boy's continual control the bike area. Heather in fact, eventually reflected that the girl's ended up excluded from an even larger geographical part of the centre:

'really it's tricky 'cause it didn't really just dominate in the bikes … 'cause they had the bikes they could set up in the nature play area, and they created this wonderful BMX track but it made it all a boys area'. (FG1. L634)

Heather's description of this event highlights the complexity of gender equity approaches which are acted out within the myriad of often competing or potentially conflicting gender equity approaches. Despite the potential issues resulting from the teachers reactions in Heather's narrative, which may have resulted in boys play being privileged over girls through increased and preferential access, this discourse appeared to be considered "best practice" by the participants. This was supported through discourse analysis which identified the language used to describe this discourse was overwhelmingly positive for example '*welcome*', '*natural*' and '*supportive*' and that the participants were throughout this section of the discussions open and confident in their dialogues.

The second most frequent teacher gender discourse identified by the participants was of teacher's being gender blind and considering gender as a non-issue in centres. MacNaughton (2000) found this to be a common problem in the early childhood sector too. In the present study Dianne perceived that on her practicum centre staff didn't address gender issues, **'***I don't know? There wasn't anything that pops up that was encouraging it but there was nothing discouraging it either*' (FG2. L521) as did Kristy, '*I'm just trying to think of a specific thing but I can't really think of a specific thing*' (FG1. L306). Two reasons were given for teachers not perceiving or addressing gender issues; lack of knowledge and centre culture. Niki for example felt a lack of knowledge might be to blame:

> '*cause they've probably never heard of gender equality or equity or whatever. They might not know about all the opportunities for genders as they have been in field for so long it might be completely new information for them. They probably haven't even thought they are doing it*'. (FG1. L739)

Some participants proposed that centre culture may result in some gender issues not being addressed and considered how this might occur. Jasmine identified that she believed that children:

> '*come with those things* [gender norms] *and if the teachers in the centre don't pick up on them and try to help out a bit, try to show them, it just keeps going, becomes the centre norm*' (FG1. L251)

while Kristy also noted that attitudes '*just kind of carry that along and as more and more children come along its just kind of how it is, and that sticks*' (FG1. L247)

Although the participant recognised only two reasons why gender issues may be not considered important in some centres, it may also be that the silence on gender issues identified in centres occurred as a result of what Ellsworth (1992) calls '*a conscious or unconscious assessment of power relations and the safety of the situation*' (Ellsworth, 1992, p. 105 in Ortlipp, 2006). That is, that gender issues, like issues of sexuality, may be considered too complex or too problematic to be considered (Curran, Chiarolli & Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2009; Gunn, 2008, Kelly, 2012). Whatever the reason for the silence on gender, obliviousness or reticence, the quiet or silence conveys an unnerving message that gender is not important in the early childhood sector.

Yet participants did not take this silent discourse up whole heartedly. Jasmine highlighted how they could resist this discourse:

> '*when you are a newbie going into the field you don't feel like you can start challenging people's ideas especially when they have been in the field for like ten years or whatever maybe you can like, subtly show it*' (FG1. L710)

as did Niki, who felt that while she must be *'be respectful of other teacher's views'* she could also:

> '*try and help them challenge their views as well with what they believe, as in if it's the gender norms trying to get them to see that it*

doesn't have to be that way. It's possibly going to be very difficult though because its people usually have their mind set'. (FG1. L683)

From a Foucauldian perspective the strength of centre culture to normalise the discourses of teachers, through a process of discursive practices, highlights the difficulties participants perceive in being able to take up some aspects of pedagogy which they have identified as beneficial in an early childhood sector.

Identified much less frequently was the discourse of teachers who enforced gendered roles. Sharna for example reported that '*Some teachers have very old school beliefs like 'Oh girls are princesses you don't put on a superhero costume or anything'* (FG3. L248). The participants recognised these teachers as *'old school'* (Sharna), considering the public acceptance of the essentialised notion of gender norms as biologically connected and inflexible as out dated pedagogy. Niki, who also experienced the discourse of gender enforcement, reflected on the pressure this puts on newer teachers and pre-service teachers:

'*What we are learning here is actually very different from what's out in the field, I feel anyway. Like there are some things that trickled, that are out there but some of the stuff and like I feel that there are some teachers that are new at my work that sort of go back to the old way. Like, you know, when they are out there, cause it's like your one person in a group of four or five other people, it's easier to just take a step back and buy into those norms cause you've got no show of beating it'.* (FG2. 719)

Here Niki has again identified the conflicts some participant's perceive in taking up some discourses which through their early childhood education they have identified as beneficial and transferring this to their working lives in the early childhood sector.

No participants appeared to pick up this discourse as preferable, despite discourse analysis identifying they often supported a discourse of biological determinism themselves. The language used, 'old school' or 'old way', evidences the way in which this discourse is seen as an outmoded philosophy, which should be refuted. Kristy for example who perceived that:

> '*gender stereotypes have been engrained in me as to what a girl or boy should be and then just trying to be well, why do I feel that way and then really trying to break it down in my teaching practice and in my interactions with children'*. (FG1. L704)

The ease at which the participants refuted this discourse, despite recognition for some participants who acknowledged that this might be difficult in practice, may have been the result of the dominant discourses enshrined in teacher education. This includes the well-established beliefs and practices of play based learning (See *table 2, p. 45*) and the principles of diversity and inclusion. It was also notable that several participants, while considering this discourse as outmoded did not reflect on their own gender discourses as espoused in the interview itself. A possible reason for this may be that their own gender discourses are in a state of conflict as they explore cross practice/theory clashes and discourse divides between their university training and the early childhood service practice observed in practicum.

Least common was the post-structural discourse in which teachers acted proactively around gender, challenging gender norms, expectations and inequalities, what could be identified as being reminiscent of the anti-bias approach. The anti-bias approach discussed here is referring to an increasingly dominant international approach with a post-structural theoretical foundation (Kieff & Wellhousen, 2010). According to Gunn (2003) this approach provides an education '*in which children and teachers are both challenged to counter oppression and asked to examine its personal consequences'* (Gunn, 2003, p. 131). The difference between

inclusive and anti-bias curricula is seen in the intentions element of activism in anti-bias education (Gunn, 2003; Keddie & Mills, 2009). There are other approaches, with differing theoretical underpinnings, which could also support similar aims to the anti-bias approach but Gunn (2003, p. 130) emphasises that *Te Whāriki* with 'it's very core, a theme to empower' provides a strong framework for teaching using an activist based approach. The participant's explored the notion of anti-bias curricula during the week preceding the focus groups.

This discourse was only described once and it was immediately challenged as outside of the "norm". When Jasmine described observing a teacher engaging in anti-sexist language with children she identified this action as something to be questioned:

> '*like instead of saying police man or women she was saying police officer and being gender neutral and I wondered if that was because she was a lesbian in that she was trying to challenge the gender norms'.* (FG1. L517)

In questioning the teacher's sexuality by linking her pro-active gender neutral stance to being lesbian, a marginalised sexuality in a hetero-normative society, this participant aligned the discourse as 'other'. This is despite the use of non-sexist language regarding vocations being one of the only three sources of explicit direction for teachers concerning gender in *Te Whāriki* (1996), that '*In talking with toddlers, adults do not link occupations to gender, for example, by assuming that doctors are men or that nurses are women*' (*Te Whāriki*, 1996, p. 67). Jasmine's narrative was not refuted by other participants rather her story appeared to provoke amusement as the other participants laughed in response (Although it must be conceded that the laughter could have been the result of discomfort).

Despite the participants not appearing to observe or take up the discourse of teaching which actively challenges gender equality, the data did reveal that some participant's did engage in challenging gender norms, - actions

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which could be described as anti-bias. Several participants described ways in which they were resisting gender norming and gendered centre cultures although it should be noted that the participant's did not describe their actions as following a gender equity approach. Foucault, who proposed that power is impossible without the possibility of resistance, identified that resistance is most likely to form in the places that power is practiced (Cox, 2010). In the case of these specific narratives power appeared to be produced at and as a result was located at practicum. Resistance was acted upon in ways the participant felt they could resist gender norming while still navigating their position as students under assessment.

While some narratives described what may have appeared to be small moments of resistance, for example Niki, who identified reducing norming through '*remembering not to like just hand the blue felt to the boys or the pink to the girls or to use language like good girl good boy without even realising it*' (FG1. L497) others described more complex experiences where for example children's gendered views were challenged with open questioning or the participant's used their own body and their geographical location in the centre in relation to the students. For example, Heather identified the way in which a teachers' location within the centre can resist gender normalisation:

> 'It's *important for us as a teacher as children are going to be drawn to us and we can provide the opportunities by, if it's messy play or muddy play or whatever, giving girls the opportunity. Just being aware that girls are here and trying to encourage them to get into it'*.
>
> (FG1. L499)

As did Jasmine who felt that locating herself in the carpentry area made it more available to girls '*Yeah I think I saw a lot more girls doing carpentry but that could be cause carpentry was my favourite thing to do at kindy'*.

> (FG1. L588)

In another narrative Kristy identified how open ended questioning can resist gender norming:

> '*they* [the boys] *were like 'yeah cars are only for boys only boys can be race-car drivers' and I asked 'why was that?' and they didn't have an answer, it was just all these things like 'girls are rubbish drivers', and 'girls can't drive cars' and 'girls can't play with cars' and then the little girl said 'I've got cars at home' and the boys were 'well you're not allowed to play with them here' and I said "actually girls are professional race-car drivers" and I tried to give them the information'*. (FG1. L262).

In this case Kristy felt the questioning was not successful '*It was just really interesting how adamant they were that 'nah, girls aren't race-car drivers'* (FG1. L268). Despite these difficulties Kristy's attempt at resistance was evident.

4x) Gender, Subjectivity and Teacher Agency

Teacher agency has profound impact on how teachers perceive their own ability to incorporate a gender equity approach in their pedagogy (MacNaughton, 2000, p. 39). Emirbayer & Mische (1998, p.963, in Biesta & Tedder, 206, p. 10) suggest that human agency be seen as:

> '*temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past, (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects with the contingencies of the moment)*'.

Agency for teachers as an aspect of teacher subjectivity manifests in how individual teachers view themselves as subjects capable of change and action within the education sector.

Discourse analysis highlighted some confusion over how participants saw the role of teacher agency, specifically, in terms of supporting children's play around issues relating to gender. This analysis illuminated the contested intersection between teacher agency and gendered play. These narratives identified through discourse analysis specifically involved teacher's role in supporting play that was gender divergent or play shaped by gender norms. Unfortunately the data does not allow for any conclusions to be drawn on the participant's understanding of play as play was not a focus of the discussions, but the participant's many unsolicited discussions of play did allow for indications of the participant's views of play to be identified. These views appeared to belay the complex nature of play.

Play, described by Brown & Patte (2013, p. 3) as '*easy to recognise but hard to define*' is complex (White et al, 2007) and is perceived in multiple ways within the sector, such as the notions of rhetorics of play used by Sutton-Smith (1997). Sutton-Smith's (1998, p. 10) rhetoric 'play as power', best aligns with a post-structural perspective. Play as power incorporates ideas about power and relationships which is supported by Woods (2011) who proposes that play nearly always involves tensions, competing forces and is the place where children learn about freedom, develop agency, self-control and power, in this sense play can be considered as laden with the values of the wider society. From a Foucauldian perspective play can be identified as a location of acceptance and resistance of discourses and discursive practices as roles, expectations and understandings are "played" with. Seen in his light it is therefore hardly surprising that the participant's discussions of gender and sexuality in the New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood education sector led them to many discussions about play (See *table 2* for the central role of play based learning in the New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood sector).

The participants did not mention any discursive practices as impinging on play choice. Anna, when discussing play, for example, stated: '*I think they*

should be able to express themselves in any way shape or form their play and creativity is' (FG2. L383). Her statement reflects a consideration that there was no difference between play based on gender norms or divergent play in availability or expectations. Beatrice also proposed, when discussing gender divergent play, that it wasn't an important issue:

> '*such an issue in early childhood as it used to be. It's such an inclusive area of education and it's so accepting and it's so much based on the individual interests of the children that is not so evident'.* (FG3. L651)

Assuming the more complex definition of play suggested by MacNaughton (2000), that play forms gendered power relations, may have a startling impact on how play and associated child agency are observed and understood. In assuming the children are automatically able to freely co-construct their own curriculum with no teacher support or challenge discounts the possibility that children are affected by the discursive positioning around them. For example when Jasmine appeared to assume that the girls were not excluded from the area, in ways that the teachers might or could not observe:

> '*there was mostly boys at the centre but they were happy to play with the girl's if the girl's wanted to join in with their play but you know if the girl's didn't want to they didn't really need to go over to that area'* (FG1. L272)

The participants also described situations in which they noted that student's acted to normalise the actions of others based on gender, for example Kristy who noted that:

> '*There is also that persecution thing between children where I have had a group of boys who were like 'you can't wear pink' and it was their little thing and if anybody had on something pink or something*

perceived as girly it would be no go because it wasn't OK with their friends' (FG1. L180).

Participant's appeared not to consider that the value laden nature of gender norms could impinge on student's agency and ability to freely choose gender divergent play or that without teacher's proactively encouraging gender diverse play that students might see such play as unavailable to them. Gunn (2012, p. 130) in describing how a post-structural lens can support teachers to approach gender in an inclusive way proposes that:

> '*drawing children's attention to the legitimacy of difference, we may help them explore what it means to not expect everyone to be the same kind of boy or girl'*

According to Brown & Patte (2013) the ways that teachers can become involved in children's play is controversial. Despite this, teacher participation can support development of social, intellectual and physical skills while on the other hand intervention can diminish children's agency, disrupt the play and development that may already be occurring (Brown & Patte, 2013; Wood, 2010) (PC). Stover, White, Rockel & Toso (2010) identify four positions from which teacher's interact within play situations.

These positions, which differ based on the level of agency taken, of either teacher and/or student, are not identified as equal in the sector but rather some positions are privileged. Teacher's agency to challenge inequitable gender practices or to provide equitable programmes may also be affected by how these positions are taken up. Participants in the current study identified all of these positions as pedagogy they had observed or engaged in and privileged these positions quite differently shown in *figure 4.*
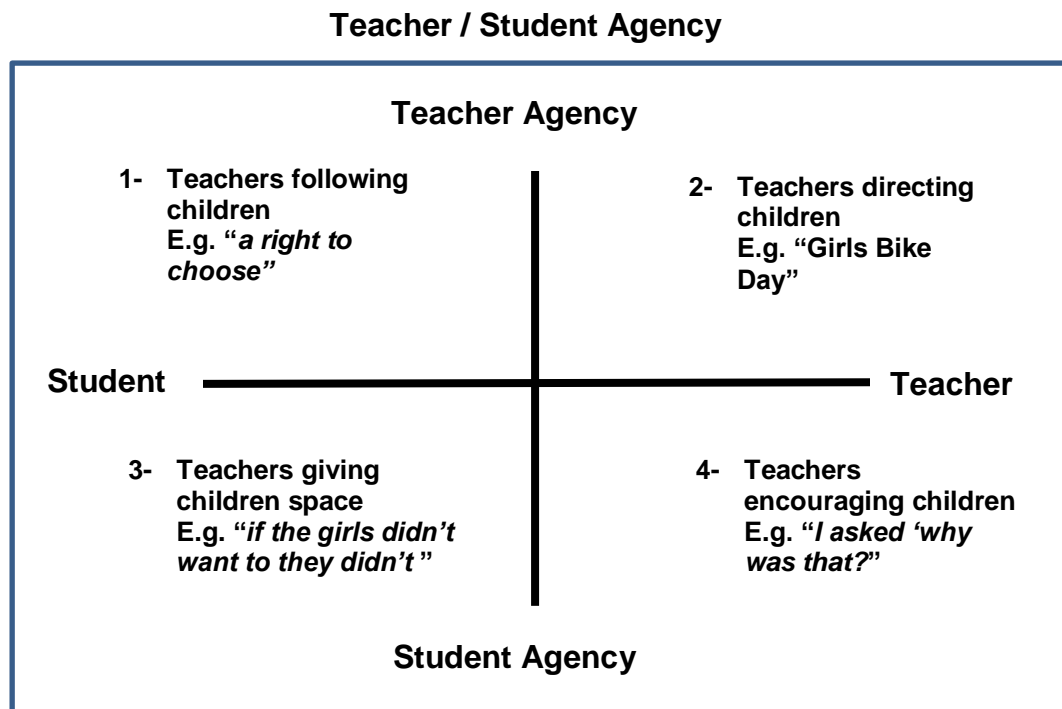
Teacher / Student Agency

Teacher Agency

1- **Teachers following children**
E.g. *"a right to choose"*

2- **Teachers directing children**
E.g. "Girls Bike Day"

Student ──────────────── **Teacher**

3- **Teachers giving children space**
E.g. *"if the girls didn't want to they didn't "*

4- **Teachers encouraging children**
E.g. *"I asked 'why was that?"*

Student Agency

Figure 4. Teacher/Student Agency Chart   Adapted from Stover et al (2012)

Position 1. locates teachers as following children. This position was privileged by the participants who saw it as the dominant pedagogy, for example, Heather emphasized teacher's role as '*follow children*', that children should:

> '*have a right to choose to do whatever activities they want to do so if it's boys that want to play with trucks then that is their choice but I definitely think if a boy wants to play in the family play with the tea sets and things in the more girl like activities then they should be encouraged to do that'.* (FG1. L233)

Beatrice also described this position stating that:

> '*There is such a focus now on the children's interests and what the children want to do that you only focus on that and it's not so much that "you can't play in that corner" cause you're a girl or a boy but it's just that that is what they are interested in doing so they are encouraged to do it'.* (FG3. L239)

This position may not provide teachers the agency to challenge gender norms or inequitable gender practices. Surtees (2008) research into child sexuality and early childhood pedagogy proposed that teachers adopting this position may relegate from the curriculum activities not referenced in children's interests.

Position 2. Saw teachers as directing children. This position was not privileged and appeared infrequently in the data. While Heather's bike narrative example was an example of this the teacher's position was recognized as problematic by Heather:

> '*It's not like the girls didn't get on the bikes other times but it needed teacher intervention but the teachers said to me it was tricky as it wasn't child initiated so if the boys got the bikes first then they get the bikes and we shouldn't really be saying give the girls a turn as the girls know on Tuesday it is their day to get the bikes'*. (FG1. L618)

While this position provides scope for teachers to challenge gender equity the reduction of agency reduced the positions popularity as participant's appeared to consider it not in keeping with sector practice.

Position 3. Identified teachers as giving children space. This position places the onus on children directing own their own interests. Sharna for example appeared to believe that by providing a co-constructed curriculum children were all automatically equitable:

> '*there was mostly boys at the centre but they were happy to play with the girls if the girls wanted to join in with their play but you know if the girls didn't want to they didn't really need to go over to that area'*. (FG3. L272)

Like position 1. this is privileged by the participant's. Position 3, in which children self-direct play, did not appear to take into account the value laden nature of play. Although participant's acknowledged peer influence

around gender and gender norming, for example Heather who noted that '*the other teacher said "maybe the girls had said to the boys that's what we so what are you doing with the cups and saucers and the tea pot"'* (FG1. L428) and Shelly who commented that '*You hear comments from children. I think that is the biggest thing influencing them'* (FG2. L433). The participants' did not appear to reflect on how this may impact children's agency and ability to self-direct play.

Position 4. Teacher's encouraging children was not identified as a specific pedagogical position by the participants but rather was revealed in the participant's discourse concerning pedagogical practices around gender experiences during their practicum experience. When the participant's described ways in which they challenged gender norming in centres they identified reducing norming through encouraging but not directing children. Niki for example suggested teacher's need to:

> '*remembering not to, like, just hand the blue felt to the boys or the pink to the girls or to use language like good girl good boy without even realising it'* (FG1. L497)

Kristy identified another method of encouraging children describing using open ended questions to resist gender norming '*I asked 'why was that?' and they didn't have an answer it was just all these things like 'girls are rubbish drivers'* (FG1. L263). Despite this position being identified through discourse analysis as used by the participants, it was not directly identified as a pedagogical approach nor was it privileged, rather, it appeared to be unacknowledged as a specific practice.

From the current research it appears that none of the participants assumed that some play for some children might be problematic but rather appeared to consider that all play was accessible. It may be that this reason influenced the positions of teacher agency they appeared to be privileging. If the participant's perceived play using a more complex

approach it may be likely that they would perceive more of the teacher agency positions suitable for teachers and develop the ability to move around the positions dependant on the children's best interests as Stover et al (2012) suggests.

When considering gender play teachers may need to move more fluidly and assertively and often simultaneously between positions to address the way on which the values, roles and expectations of gender impact of student's developing discourses of gender. The participants appeared to make no connection between shifting teacher positions and gender or that gender issues may call for specific pedagogical responses. In fact it appeared that, despite using all of the different teaching positions at various times, the participant's had made little connection to the relationship between gender and pedagogy at all. This may be for a number of reasons: the biologically determined gender discourse identified as underpinning many of the participants' discourses (See 4iii) Discourses of gender development) may have supported the privileging uptake of certain positions. The biologically determined gender discourse, which supports the notion of natural inclinations determined by gender, may support gendered play as acts that are natural or normal for children, thus discouraging teachers from recognising, challenging or resisting gender norming as part of their role.

MacNaughton (2000) challenges early childhood educators to explore the narratives which are being created in children's play, to investigate who is involved in the play and who is not, who is leading and who is following and especially to '*understand how much of their* [children's] *play world is fundamentally about gender relations* (MacNaughton, 2000, p. 122). While it is clear that some participants are reflecting on these issues, their capacity to act on their observations are clearly challenged by their own subjectivity in tandem with the complex gender domains they locate and the focus they put on gender issues.

4xi) Chapter Summary

Throughout this chapter numerous gender discourses held by the participants were explored. Despite the variety of gender discourses identified, across each of the focus groups and considering the varied characteristics of the participants, a premise clearly emerged; the participant's gender discourses appeared conflicting, uncontested and confused. The uncontested nature of the discourses identified may reflect the ways in which teacher's gender discourses are established and influenced both in their professional learning and from their personal lives.

Initially, this chapter explored the concept of reflection and reflexivity as it related to gender. Despite the participant's recognition that reflection is a crucial pedagogical tool, it was apparent that the participant's had not engaged in associated acts of reflexivity concerning notions of gender. Nor had participants connected reflection and reflexivity with the skills needed to critically evaluate gender discourses, either their own or the discourses influencing the wider society. Crucially the participant's inexperience or perhaps resistance to reflexively considering gender meant that they appeared not to have considered the gender influences on their own subjectivity nor on their teacher subjectivity. This is crucial to the central research question, how might the gender discourses of pre-service teachers influence their pedagogy? As this research suggests that without the knowledge on gender, the tools to critically reflect or reflexively interrogate gender pre-service teachers any influences will go unseen and uncontested. According to Browne (2004), in her exploration of gender and the English early childhood education environment, the sector appears to be failing to provide teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher educators with the critical information on gender issues to fully critique these lay theories. The findings of this study suggest that there is some similarity for these New Zealand pre-service teachers.

Throughout this chapter the research has identified four main areas where pre-service early childhood education teacher's gender discourses are

influenced. Throughout the teacher education programs these discourses merge and conflict, struggling for dominance and privilege in the pre-service teachers developing teacher subjectivity. Discourses from four main areas; i) Public or lay gender discourses, ii) Educational gender discourses, iii) Government gender discourses and iv) Professional gender discourses as is shown in *Figure 5*.

Development of the teacher subject
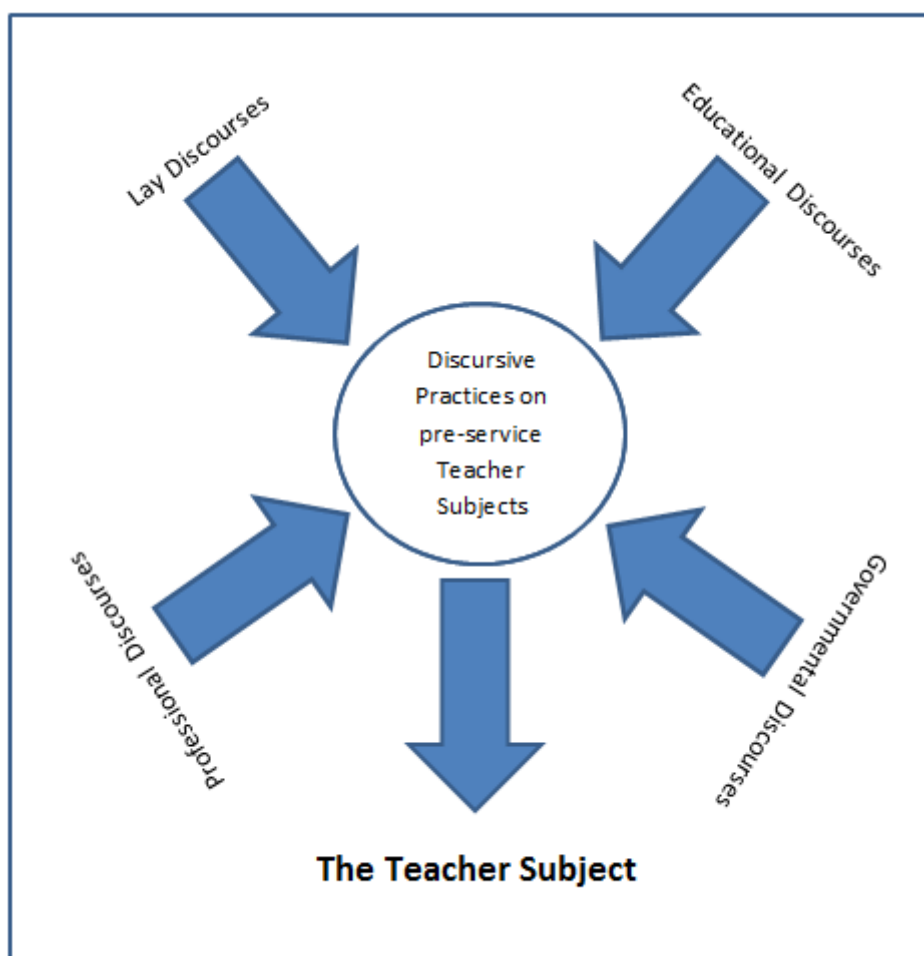

Figure 5.   Development of the teacher subject

Each of these areas of influence impacts the developing teacher subject regarding gender, both inside the teacher education program and in wider society. These influences become the strands of Foucault's web of gender discourse, intertwining to support discourses of gender which are marginalised and uncontested.

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Influences, which have resulted in the marginalisation of gender from the participants teacher subjectivity, were identified multiple times throughout the results. For example participant's developing teacher subjectivity regarding gender would have been influenced both by professional discourses concerning gender (See 4ix) Gender Discourses and Practicum) and educational discourses. These discourses appeared to shape the participants perception of teacher agency regarding gender as primarily limited to positions that reduce teacher's ability to challenge gender norming and gender inequity.

The persuasive web of gender discourses can also be identified as influential in participant gender development discourses. The participant's gender discourses were revealed as uncontested, conflicting and often not consistent with the dominant usage in the early childhood education sector. These discourses may be a reflection of what Simon-Kumar (2011) describes as a reduced focus on gender in education policy and professional practice (See 3ixbi) Environmental discourses of Gender Education Policy) and the increasing dominance of biological determinist in lay theory (O'Neill, 2005; Orenstein, 2011; Walker, 2010) (See 3vi) Neuro-biological determinism).

These influences were also identified in the participant's gender knowledge. Through analysing the participant's reflections of their childhood gendering and their gender knowledge I explored how the participant's understood gender, gender development and the breath of gender norms. Several participants used language concerning sex and gender in a way inconsistent with usage in the early childhood education sector. This may suggest that the educational, governmental and professional gender discourses which shaped participants practice and pedagogy did not privilege gender as important to early childhood teaching. Rather the reduction of focus on gender in these areas may actually infer that gender issues are not central or perhaps no longer central to early

childhood education, a notion supported by Skelton's (2007) research in the English education system.

The participant's location and framing of gender development revealed the participant's discourses were incomplete and often conflicting. Although most of the participants initially identified gender development consistent with the dominant discourse identified as prevalent in the early childhood sector (See *table 2, p. 45*), discourse analysis identified this as only a surface adherence. The participant's underpinning gender development discourses were identified as more consistent with the biologically determinist discourse. Again this is likely a result of a complex web of intertwining influences. The participant's had not connected reflection and reflexivity with the skills needed to critically evaluate the gender discourses that were central to their experiences of gender as pre-service teachers. Both the increasingly dominant lay discourses of gender as biologically determined and the unintentional marginalisation of gender discourses in the early childhood education sector means these discourses may continue unfixed and unchallenged. Furthermore the increasingly influential biologically determined discourse (See 3vi) neuro-biological determinism) coupled with the reduced focus on gender in the early childhood education sector may result in discomfort and resistance to the notion of increasing the importance placed on gender.

In summary this chapter suggests that the four main influences identified; lay, professional, educational, governmental, over participant's developing gender discourses disadvantage gender issues in the developing teacher subjectivity of pre-service teachers. Furthermore, teacher subjectivity in regards to gender of pre-service teachers appears to be inconsistent with the actual importance that gender plays in the lives of young children. This finding presents a challenge to the early childhood sector who work with children during a time period considered, by Cahill & Adams (1998) and

Drewey & Bird (2004), as crucial to the development of both the gender identity and gender roles of young children.

Chapter 5 explores the implications of this study as was outlined in the previous chapters, that the gender discourses of the participants were conflicting, uncontested and often confused, for the wider early childhood education sector. Specifically, it reviews the research question, reflects on the limitations of the study, overviews some implications for policy, teachers and teacher education and examines some potential future research.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

My thesis attempts to reconcile a discomfort I have long felt about the way that gender issues were being addressed in the early childhood education sector. To investigate this I used data generated from a series of focus groups where pre-service teacher's discussed gender, gender development and their teacher education program. Fieldwork was considered through an overview of pertinent literature exploring the intersection of gender and education in a close reading of current policy documents that frame the early childhood education sector in New Zealand Aotearoa. In this chapter I provide a synthesis of these different facets of my study, examining possible limitations of the research and present some potential implications for the sector.

5i) Revisiting the Context for this Thesis

I began this thesis by recounting the series of experiences which guided me into this study. Through my exploration of mothering, hyper-femininity and biological determinism and in particular the beliefs of one early childhood teacher, I was led to question the strength of the environmental view of gender development embedded in early childhood teacher education programs. How had this teacher developed her biologically determinist view about children gender? This enquiry led me to ask the question: **how do pre-service early childhood education teacher's gender discourses impact pedagogy and the developing teacher subject?**

5ii) Summary of the Findings

Throughout this thesis I have attempted to envisage what Foucault might have identified as crucial to the forming gender discourses of the pre-service teachers in my study. I believe he would have identified the nature

of the participant's gender discourses as conflicting, uncontested and confused as central. As it was Foucault's contention that discourses identify '*assumptions, values, and worldview as they are embodied in communal practice*' (Dunlap 1997, p. 48) what do discourses held in such disarray reveal? Analysing the ways that the participant's discourses around gender converged as their teacher subjectivity developed identifies a web of influential discourses around gender that illuminate this apparent development.

The conceptual approach taken in this study, which combined feminism and post-structural thought, supported my attempt to identify the understandings, concepts and power/knowledge that make up the gender discourses of pre-service early childhood teachers. Naively in retrospect, I expected that by analysing data derived from a series of focus groups, I would be able to identify unambiguous gender discourses and to further extrapolate how this would impact pedagogy. Instead I encountered discourses that were uncontested and in flux, with the dominate gender development discourse, held by a number of the participants, outside of the dominant education sector discourses around gender at this time. It was these conflicts, confusion and differences from the education sector which formed the basis of my analysis and exploration.

As pre-service teachers complete their teacher qualifications they are exposed to new gender discourses which compete with already internalised discourses. This exposure provides teacher educators with a unique opportunity to challenge pre-service teachers to reflexively interrogate ideas about gender as discourses around gender which are in flux, in conflict which or marginalise gender in ways that may not support the professionalism of graduating early childhood teachers. Considering, Kelly's (2012) assertion regarding the frequency with which teacher's face issues relating to gender and sexuality, this finding presents troubling implications for the early childhood education sector as a whole.

Pre-service teachers entering teacher education arrive with already established lay theories and discourses about gender differences and development which according to O'Neill (2006) is most likely the most common lay discourse around gender biologically determinism. This is in contrast with the environmental development discourse which is dominant in the education sector. A discourse analysis of the participant's dialogue found that, regardless of the environmental gender development discourse the participants professed to hold, they were still strongly influenced by underlying biologically determinist discourses. Their engagement with alternative discourses (that is, those favoured by the professionals) that produced a veneer of adherence primarily as a result of the strength of the lay discourse of biological determinism.

Once engaged in early childhood teacher education pre-service teachers are exposed to multiple messages about gender. For example from the requirements needed to meet the accreditation obligations set by the NZTC Graduating Teacher standards (2007) and from the discourses they observe during practicum. The truths associated with these discourses often send conflicting messages and are often themselves discordant, confusing and potentially trivialising of gender.

A close reading of government early childhood education policy documents and associated texts revealed the emergence of a pattern, one in which gender issues are marginalised (Simon-Kumar, 2011) a situation echoed in the findings of the study. The reduction in focus of gender issues in the New Zealand Aotearoa education sector, resulting from the introduction of the neo-liberal individualism (Te One, 2003) and the breakup of the 2nd wave of the feminist movement (Archer-Mann, 2005), was seen from the late 1980s (Simon-Kumar, 2011). An exploration of the current early childhood government policy documents or "documentary fields" (See 3ix) Government Influences) saw little reference to gender. Foucault (1984, 1984, p. 310 in Ortlipp, 2003) who identifies silence as a powerful strategy underlying and infiltrating discourse would identify the

missing discourse as still having the influence. The lack of focus on gender in education literature and government policy in itself may insinuate that gender is not important in early childhood education. International literature exploring this this issue claimed that the attention paid to gender within the teacher training process is likely to infer to education students the relative importance of gender in daily life and pedagogy (Skelton, 2007).

While it could be assumed that the reduced focus on gender issues in both documentation, policy and student dialogue has resulted in a gradual marginalisation of gender from teacher education programs (a notion supported by this research). This cannot be confirmed due to the dearth of literature exploring gender issues in New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood teacher education. The current research on the on gender and education in the New Zealand Aotearoa appears to predominantly focus not on gender and inclusion or diversity but rather the on the education of boys. A focus which Gunn (2012) proposes is replaying past debates, privileging one gender above the other and potentially constructing gender barriers.

These findings are less surprising when considered against the literature and policy framework for the early childhood education sector in New Zealand. Rather than being an area of individual concern, gender issues have instead been subsumed into the discourses of inclusion and diversity which current literature identifies as being predominantly orientated towards either special needs (Kane, 2005; Moffat, 2011) or ethnicity and culture (Simon-Kumar, 2011). So, while inclusion and diversity are privileged notions in the early childhood sector it is not clear how this relates to gender nor if gender inclusion policies support the potential for early childhood teachers to challenge gender norms. While the data for this research identified that the participant's considered gender equity an important aspect of the teacher role they may not have the gender knowledge and experiences needed to foster this in professional practice.

In identifying the discourses influential in producing and shaping the developing teacher subject suppositions can be made about why the participant's focus on gender, gender knowledge, and discourses of gender development appear to be in flux and uncontested. The participant's adherence to the lay discourse of gender development, biological determinism, rather than the dominant discourse of the education sector, and their confusion and conflict around notions of gender in general may or actually do have an inhibiting impact on the developing teacher subject. It is possible that the teacher subjectivity developing during teacher education will have little interest in gender issues. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to present a solution to this issue, the relegation of gender issues in teacher education, the results suggest that some alternative response is needed. In light of the emphasis on reflection and reflexivity I propose that teacher subjectivity is central to this development.

5iii) Limitations of the Study

By studying gender in the present day context of NZ early childhood education I have been able to question some taken-for-granted assumptions that have helped form, and continue to form, understandings of gender in early childhood teacher education in New Zealand Aotearoa. While this study has focused on gender in the early childhood education sector and in particular teacher education it has not attempted to cover all aspects around the intersection of gender and early childhood teacher education.

Important to the New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood sector is the bicultural approach (Ritchie, 2013). The New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood sector has embraced the nation's unique bicultural heritage incorporating the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the discourse of inclusion into policies, practice and pedagogy (Fleer, 2003; May, 2001). This discourse is clearly demonstrated in government policy (Simon-

Kumar, 2011) and is privileged in teacher education programs. Despite considering this an important aspect of research in the New Zealand Aotearoa early education sector this thesis has not addressed gender issues in relation to the bicultural approach. Notions of gender in Te Kanga Māori are complex and multifaceted and research in this area requires a level of knowledge about Ti Kanga Māori and culturally competent research methods beyond my capability. To include this within the scope of this thesis would therefore be ethically unsound. Instead this work could support future research exploring the intersection between gender, early childhood education and bicultural practice.

A second limitation to the study was also identified, the limited breadth of the participants. As a result of the data generation being limited to only one education provider it is difficult to make strong conclusions that can address the early childhood education sector as a whole. There are multiple providers delivering early childhood teaching qualifications in New Zealand (McLachlan, 2011) and no nation-wide teacher education curriculum (Carpenter et al, 2010), therefore it cannot be confirmed that the conclusions drawn in this research are transferable to the whole of the sector. In order to confirm the conclusions are relevant to the sector as a whole a wider study would be required, incorporating participants from multiple providers and perhaps an analysis of the programmes themselves?

5iv) Implications for Practice

This study has illustrated how gender issues have slipped from focus in the early childhood sector. Analysis suggests that there are several reasons for this slippage through the reduced emphasis on gender in government policy documents, the subsuming of gender into notions of inclusions and diversity and the reduction of gender specific teacher education. The project draws attention to the ways many intersecting and historically derived gender discourses have converged to marginalise

gender within the modern early childhood education sector and within early childhood teacher education. My study supports the existing literature on the significance of examining the intersection of gender and early childhood education as an area that has lacked recent attention. Providing the impetus for further research investigating other issues; the wider implications of the reduced focus on gender in early childhood education and the influence on early childhood teachers of the resurgence of the biologically determinist discourse.

It was never my intention to cite failures in the understandings of the participants nor to identify failures in their education programme but rather to highlight the impact of the web of discourses around gender to which they are exposed. However, I believe that there are implications for teacher educators and early education curricula that arise from these findings. Despite the complexity of the gender issues that intersect with early childhood education, the inclusion of a multifaceted approach which increases the focus on gender within teacher education programs would support pre-service teachers to more closely meet their professional obligations and expectations in regards to gender and to fully meet the standards set by the New Zealand Teachers Council *Graduating Teacher Standards: Aotearoa New Zealand* (2007).

While the data generated from the focus groups does not allow for any conclusions to be drawn about the strengths or weaknesses of the participants program of study or its relevant to gender, the data suggests that the incorporation of more gender knowledge and gender equity pedagogy into early childhood teacher education programs would be beneficial. This would provide pre-service teachers more experiences to engage with the gender discourses dominant in the education sector. However, as this study highlights, personal engagement with discourses requires more that the transmission of this knowledge. Pre-service teacher subjectivities decide whether or not gender is significant or contestable.

The inclusion of a stronger focus on gender education into teacher education programs is supported by Erden (2009) and Zaman (2008), who propose that gender should be an important element in the teacher subjectivities that develop during teacher education.

The need for a strong focus on reflexivity in teacher education programs is also indicated to provide what Bondi (2009a, p. 336) calls a way of '*reinscribing as well as undoing normative versions of gender*'. Reflexivity, a key focus in the NZTC: Graduating teachers Standards (2007), will assist pre-service teachers to better develop their gender discourses through the process of self-reflexivity. For pre-service teachers to critique both the position of gender in the early childhood education sector and their own gender discourses reflexivity appears crucial. According to Farquhar et al (2013, p. 9) teacher's knowledge of the self is central to pedagogical practice stressing teachers must '*consider their own position as players in a dialogical process of learning that implicates them as such as the learner'.* The importance of teacher's subjectivity relating to gender in regards to pedagogical practice is supported by what Bondi (2009a, p. 336) states is:

> '*a commitment to acknowledge and validate difference and diversity in relation to gender and other facets of identity, thereby seeking to unsettle or undo entrenched normative assumptions and habits of gender'.*

Inspiration for this can be seen in the growing body of research exploring the integration of gender equity approaches in the early childhood education sector. There a numerous pedagogical approaches to supporting gender equity in early childhood teacher education including anti-bias programs which have shown a great potential for participant benefits increasing understanding around gender and equity (Gunn, 2003), approaches based on reflexivity (Edern, 2008) and/or using post-structural thought to deconstruct and problematize dominant gender discourses (Lee Thomas, Sumsion & Roberts, 2005). While this study does not suggest a specific gender equity approach, it does claim that the inclusion or

expansion of an active approach to gender equity is crucial for the teacher education curricula.

5v) Concluding Comments

As I finish this thesis I am hopeful that discourses of gender will once again develop a stronger focus in the New Zealand Aotearoa early childhood education sector. However I recognize that their inclusion is not merely a case of more information but instead a personal and profession dialogue with personal and professional subjects. Although this a small scale research piece, with clear limitations, this thesis has identified some concerning inconsistencies in the importance placed on gender by pre-service teachers relative to the role gender plays in early childhood development. This likely reflects a reduction on gender in the professional and educational lives of pre-service teachers along with the developing resurgence of the biologically determent discourse of gender. Despite this concerning conclusion literature suggests that the incorporation of gender equity programs into has teacher education and early childhood teacher professional development will support greater awareness and understanding of gender equity. Although I propose that this is best supported with a reflexive approach rather that a direct transmission of information. This appears to be crucial to avoiding pre-service teachers developing subjectivities regarding gender which are conflicting, uncontested and confused, pre-service teachers who are left asking "don't you perceive gender as different because of the chromosomes?"

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Appendix 1

The University of Waikato
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato
Private Bag 3105
Hamilton 3240

[date]

<u>Research Project: Sugar and Spice and all Things Nice: Examining the
Impacts of Gender Discourses on Pre-Service Teachers.</u>

Dear Participant,

This letter is to introduce myself and my research project. I am Margaret
Lyall, a Masters student, from The University of Waikato and qualified
primary teacher. I am completing a thesis as part of my Masters
programme and as part of the study wish to investigate what pre-service
early childhood teachers think about gender and gender development.

The study, exploring how pre-service early childhood teachers understand
gender development and how this may impact on their pedagogy, is an
opportunity to examine the discourses that impact on early childhood
educators pedagogical approaches. I intend to analyse interview data from
focus groups composed of no more than nine 3rd year early years'
education degree students from the University of Waikato in each group.

The focus group will be video and audio recorded and take approximately
one hour and will be conducted at a time that is mutually convenient on
the University of Waikato campus. Following the interview you will be sent
a transcript to read and comment upon to ensure you feel your experience
and perspective has been reflected.

Any follow-up comments or communications will also be welcomed. Each
participant will also be invited to instigate further one-on-one discussions

with the researcher. This is an optional aspect of the participant's contribution but has been included to insure that the research allows for the participants to continue contributing to the research. If you wish to instigate further discussions you can email me on mvl4@waikato.ac.nz.

Your willingness to be involved would be appreciated. Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to answer a question, or withdraw from the focus group at any time. The information you provide will be used for a thesis for my Masters of Education but I anticipate also publishing in journals and conference presentations. Should you consent to be involved you will be asked to choose a pseudonym (a made-up name) for use in the report or any publications or presentations, to ensure complete anonymity. Once the research has been completed the video, audiotapes and transcripts will be held in a secure location until destroyed as is required under University of Waikato regulations.

A consent form for you to complete is attached to this letter. If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to call me on 021 0762878 or email me on mvl4@waikato.ac.nz. You are also welcome to contact my Supervisor, Dr Jayne White; by phone 07 856 2889 ext 6696 or email whiteej@waikato.ac.nz should you have any concerns or issues.

I now invite you to respond by completing the attached consent form and returning it to me in the attached self-addressed envelope to the reception desk at the School of Education foyer.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Lyall

Professional Studies in Education

Appendix 2

University of Waikato School of Education

'Sugar and Spice and all Things Nice: Examining the impacts of gender Discourses on Pre-service Teachers.'

Consent Form

I understand that this research is part of an assignment for a Masters of Education student and is completely separate from my work within my course.

☐

I have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about

the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

☐

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time up until I have approved the focus group transcript(s).

☐

I have been assured that I will have the opportunity to amend any of my contributions in a transcript following interviews

☐

I also understand that my involvement or non-involvement in this study will have no impact on my course work.

☐

I am aware that the focus group interview will be audio recorded and digitally
filmed.

☐

I understand that any later conversations I have with Maggie will be at my own initiation.

☐

I know that the focus group data (audiotape and footage) will remain confidential to the student researcher, and my identity of will be protected

☐

by the use of a pseudonym.

I am assured that all records will be destroyed after being held in a secure location of five years. □

I have been made aware of the possibility of receiving a report of the final project when complete. I can do so by emailing Maggie. □

I _____ agree to participate in Maggie's study.

I wish to be referred to as _____ (Pseudonym) in the report and any future publications or presentations.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

If you have any concerns about the study you are welcome to contact my Supervisor, Dr Jayne White, by phone 07 856 2889 ext 6696 or email whiteej@waikato,ac,nz .

Appendix 3

Focus Group Script

Welcome

"Thank you for making your time available to attend this Focus Group"..

- As people gather invite people to create a nametag and help themselves to a drink and something to eat.

"Firstly I am going to explain what we are going to do here during the focus group and discuss how the group discussion will work."

"We are going to have a group discussion on gender and gender development over the next hour. Your help and involvement is very valuable to me and anything you have to say will add to the discussion. I expect the focus group to take approximately one hour"

Introduce myself

- My name and role
- One quick paragraph about myself
  "My name is Maggie Lyall, I am a Masters student here doing me thesis year. My interest in looking at gender started when I had my little girl and started looking at how and why she was developing the way she was. That has continued on to looking at how gender involved in education and teacher training."

Group Rules

"I want to take a few minutes to explain a little about focus groups. Focus groups are a type of group interview. The information I will gather will be from both your personal opinions and the conversation that occurs when we are all talking together. This allows me to gauge the groups attitudes towards the issues we will be talking about, a kind of group perspective of the issues."

"So we will let's go over a few ground rules for today's discussion:

- *Your participation in this is voluntary, and you can stop at any time by raising your hand and leaving the room OR saying 'pass'.*
- *There are no wrong answers today; please let everyone speak and respect everyone's opinion, even if it is different from your own.*
- *We take our promise of confidentiality to you very seriously so please also refrain from discussing what particular people said here*

outside of this group. Basically "What is shared in the room stays in the room."

- *Sometimes discussions can challenge us or take us out of our comfort zone but I want this to be a safe space to discuss things that might make us feel uncomfortable. If you do though feel unsafe at any-time you don't need to answer and can employ the strategies outlined above*
- *Please feel free to meet your own needs during the session. If you need more food, water or juice. Just help your-self.*

"I am also happy to keep the discussion going if you have any more information or ideas you would like to share about your views outside of this forum. You are invited to contact me to arrange a 1-1 interview at a later date. This can be as simple as a chat at school so I am happy to set up a time to meet."

These rules will be on a poster and the group will be invited to add any more they see as necessary. They will then be displayed on the wall.

Explain how I am recording the session

"I will be audio and video recording the discussion. All recorded information is confidential and will be used only for the purpose of analysis and, with pseudonyms, in reporting the research. I will be the only one who sees the video and listens to the audio recording. None of the staff at the university, except my supervisor will see the raw data. In this case she will have access to the transcripts only which will include pseudonyms. Behind the camera is (To be announced). They will be running the equipment for me but have also signed a confidentiality agreement so anything they see or hear will be kept confidential".

- Introduce the technical helper

Consent agreement

I will already have the consent forms returned by now as I will be attending a class to disseminate and explain these but I will double check that each person has and the form in and has signed. I will also call for any questions to make sure that each person who is attending understands and agrees.

Participants introduce themselves

Ask all participants to introduce themselves. This is to break the ice and make the participants feel less isolated. As an ice breaker get each participant will be asked to share one narrative example of a person or experience which influenced how they perceived or have perceived gendered activities or roles.

"To start we are going to have an introduction round. We will give our names and share one detail about whom or what influenced you to grow up to think about gender roles the way you do or did"

Give personal narrative as example clarify the question to start the round.

"For example when I was growing up I was really involved in Brownies and guides I loved getting badges and worked really hard to get as many as I could but they were often in really traditional home-making skills for girls things like cooking, tiding, hostessing all very feminine things traditionally done by girls. I believe that that experience influenced me to think, when I was younger anyway, that house work and helping around the house was a thing that girls but not boys should do, especially when this was reinforced by the very traditional gender roles my parents acted out'

Discussion

Prompt discussions with each of the questions and then facilitate discussions

- The focus groups will be based around the following key questions:

    1. How do you perceive gender as being different from sex?
    2. How do you believe gender develops?

    3. Do you think 'gender norms' are important in early childhood education?

    3.a Do you think this boy would fit into the gender norms for boys? If not why not?

3.b What about these girls?

4. In terms of education what do you understand the term 'gender equity' to mean?
5. How prepared do you feel to deal with gender equity issues when you go out teaching?

Each question will be in a flip chart for easy reference. Ensure even participation of the participants. If this is proving difficult consider using round table discussions as a last resort or mentioning with to the group asking for ideas about how participation can be increased.

Closing the session

Thank the participants for their time; explain again about sending them the transcripts and getting them returned signed. Then adjourn the meeting.
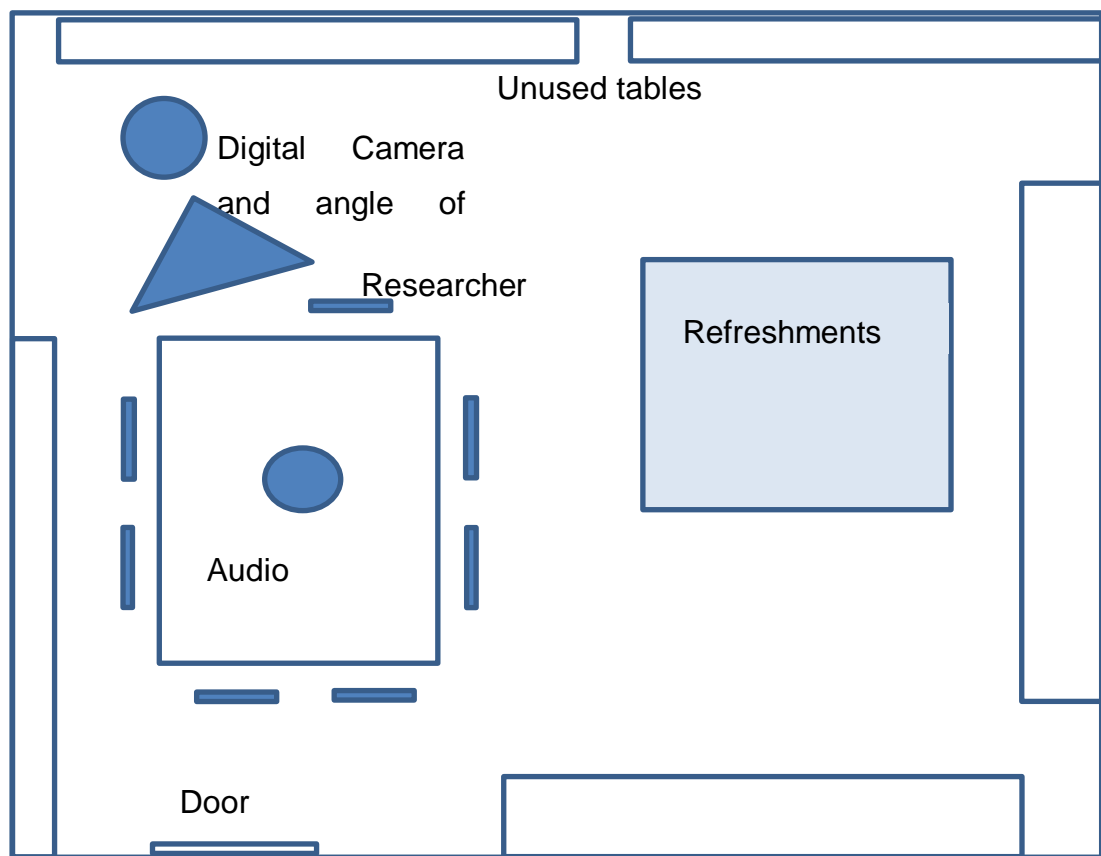
Appendix 4
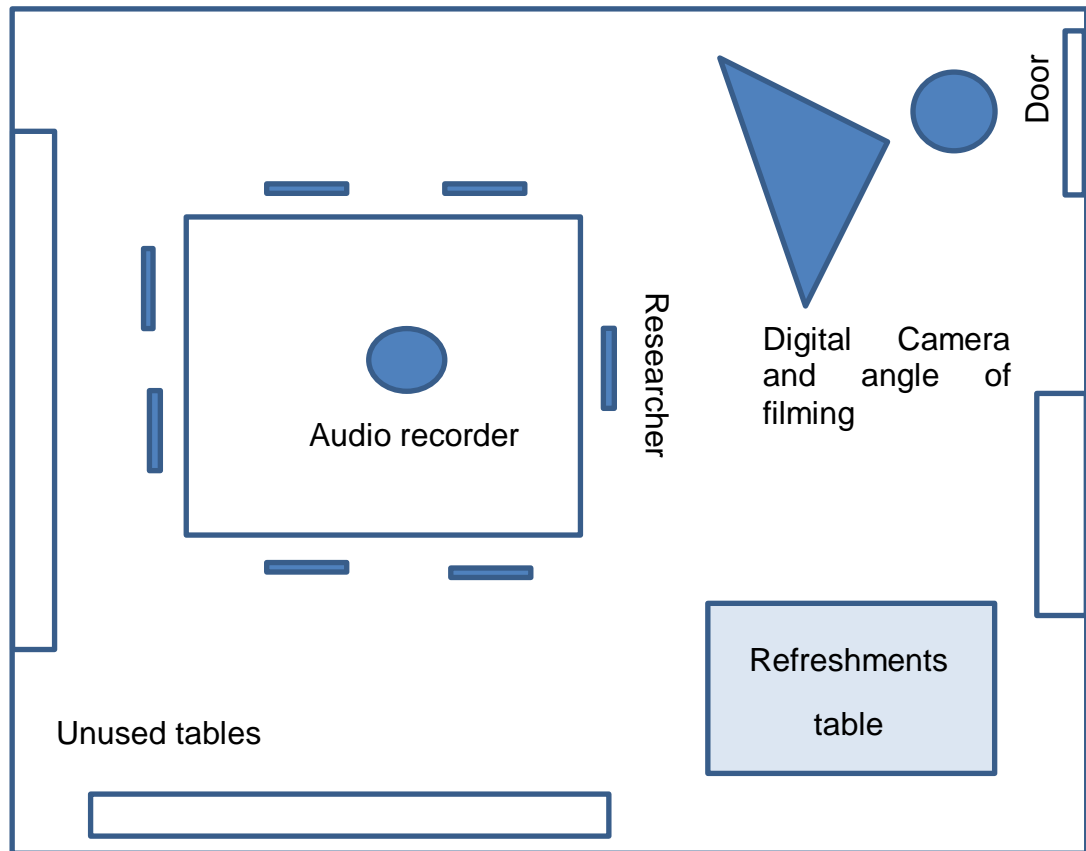
Room and Camera Placement for Group One
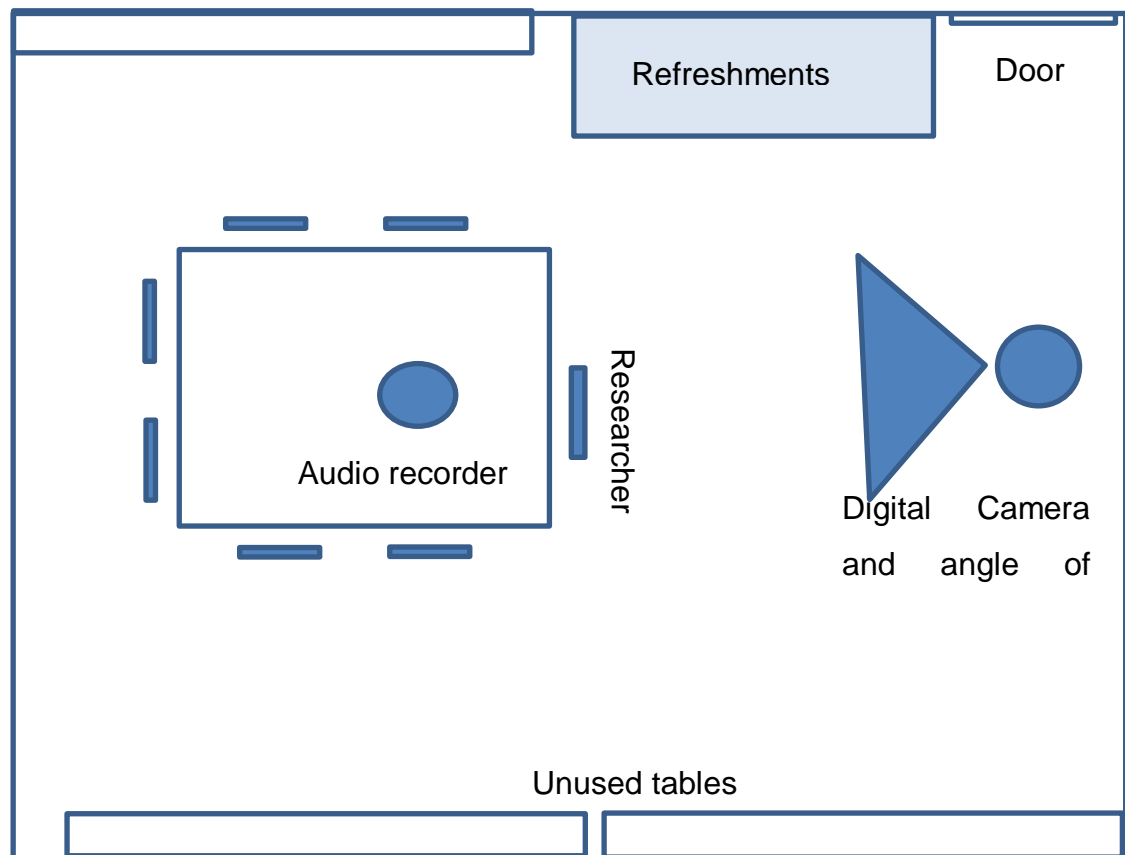
Appendix 5

Room and Camera Placement for Group Two

Appendix 6

Room and Camera Placement for Group Three

Appendix 7

	Heather	Yep I would agree sex your sex, sorry your gender is if you're a boy or a girl whereas if you are both you're a hermaphrodite and sex is sex is sex.
	Maggie	OK thanks it's always good to get started. OK so now we are going to get into the slightly more nitty gritty stuff. What do you think or how do you feel, believe or perceive gender as developing? I know it's a whole big question but how do you believe gender develops?
12.42	Kristy	Socially definitely and expectations and environments
	Jasmine	I think the media has a big role in that too and like you can walk into a shop and see that the boys clothes are segregated from the girls clothes and they have their own colours like girls clothes tend to be pinks purples and whites and the boys are black and brown and sensible and what's on TV too between the cartoons you might see boys playing with transformers™ and girls playing with Barbies™
	Heather	Its how your conditioned to fit into that mould or not fit into that

Comment [M1]: Use of old fashioned language about trans and intersex.

Comment [M2]: Environmental determinism

Comment [M3]: Potential researcher bias about controversial nature of gender

Comment [M4]: Environmental determinism

Comment [M5]: Media influence

Comment [M6]: Gendering

Comment [M7]: Why are boys colours sensible?

Comment [M8]: Environmental determinism

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Second Stage Codes

Benefits of resistance seen

Centre culture norms children

Centre culture norms teachers

Children choice as paramount

Children as gender police

Defending gender norms

Gender is biologically determined

Gender is environmentally determined

Gender norms are overwhelming

Gendered geography

Gender norms are unacceptable

Gender norms as positive

Gender linked to trans-sexuality

Gender seen as non-issue

Gender self-defined

Gender variances linked to homosexuality

Language confusion over gender

Language confusion over gender/sex

Male teachers seen as magic bullet

Mixed gender geography

Modelling norms – clothing

Modelling norms – playing

Modelling norms – viewed

Norms do not apply

'Othering' viewing girls as lesser

Peer pressure to conform

Punishment for resistance

Researcher assumptions

Subconscious gendering

Teaching equity actively

Teaching equity supportive

Teachers

Teachers influence/impact children

Teachers influence/impact centre culture – positive

Teachers influence centre culture – negative

Teacher internal discourses recognized

Teachers out of date

Teacher reflection – needed

Teacher reflection – viewed

Appendix 9

Stage 3 & 4 Code Groups

Current teachers ECE environment	Children's own agency	Gender as binary & **Gender development**	Teacher Education
Centre culture norms children	Children choice as paramount	Gender linked to trans-sexuality ,	Language confusion over trans-sexuality and gender
Centre culture norms teachers	Children as gender police	Gender variances linked to homosexuality (gender/sexuality linked)	Language confusion over gender/sex
Male teachers seen as magic bullet (we can't fix the problem)	Gender self-defined	'Othering' viewing girls as lesser	No specific gender teaching
Subconscious gendering	Peer pressure to conform	Gender is biologically determined	Gender a non-issues
Teaching equity actively		Gender is environmentally determined	Gender linked to trans-sexuality
Teaching equity supportive		Defending gender norms	Gender variances linked to homosexuality (gender/sexuality linked)
Teachers out of date		Gender norms as positive	Benefits of resistance seen
Punishment for resistance			internal discourses recognized
Gender norms are overwhelming			
Teacher Reflection			
Teachers influence culture			
Teachers influence/impact children			