A Comparative Exploration of Parental Involvement in Bangladeshi Early Childhood Education Centers

ECE Centers as Societal Actor Interfering with Cultural Assumptions of Family

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Abstract

This comparative study explores parental involvement during the process of mainstreaming Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Using an ethnographic approach with emphasis on a subtle realist ontology it compares two ECE centers operationalisations of parental involvement and staff's experiences of this aspect of their work. Findings showed that the centers had to navigate cultural underpinnings of parental mistrust and knowledge deficiency in their operationalisation of parental involvement. The centers navigated the cultural conditions by allowing parents CCTV access, or by providing parental education and workshops via scaffolding techniques of experts to gain an audience amongst parents. The center's proactive or reactive approach during the initial stages of parental involvement resulted in various implications for the continuous collaboration between staff and parents at the center. The study contextualises parental involvement within the broader Bangladeshi society, suggesting that the ECE centers becomes an external societal actor interfering in home life, creating a collision between cultural understandings of the home (poribar/bari) and the ECE center, which presented hindrances to parental involvement. The study additionally discusses implications of the Covid-19 epidemic and suggestions for the future of ECE mainstreaming in Bangladesh.

Key words
Parental involvement, Early Childhood Education, ECE, Pre-Primary, Dhaka, Bangladesh, Mainstreaming, Ethnography
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List of Abbreviations

BEN - Bangladesh Early childhood development Network
BRAC - Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (Building Resources Across Communities)
CCTV - Closed Circuit Television
DAM - Dhania Ahsania Mission
ECCD - Early Childhood Care and Development
ECE - Early Childhood Education
ECD - Early Childhood Development
EFA - Education for All
ESA - Educational Sector Analysis
ESP - Educational Sector Plan
GlobalCIE - Global Comparative and International Education Forum
GoB - Government of Bangladesh
GO-NGO - Governmental and Non Governmental cooperation
IIEP - International Institute for Educational Planning
ISCED - International Standard Classification of Education
LDC - Least Developed Countries
MG - Millenium Goals
MOOC - Massive Open Online Course
MoPME - Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MoWCA - Ministry of Women and Children
NGO - Non Governmental Organisation
SDG - Sustainable Development Goals
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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

1.1 Relevance to the Field of International and Comparative Education

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is experiencing a global mainstreaming process. It is evident not only as the international community intensifies practical efforts, but it also becomes evident with the growing attention of researchers. Such examples are the global CIE community through Raikes, et al. (2019) (Raikes, et al., 2019), the European Early Childhood Education Research Journal through Sollars (2020) (Sollars, 2020) and Early Childhood Education Journal through Smit et al. (2020) (Smit, et al., 2020). These articles draw attention to the fact that ECE is embedded in an even broader global narrative currently taking shape. Discussions of new ECE methodologies concerning quality, evaluation, and practices in previously under-researched social contexts are now taken into account.

The current study is relevant to the field of International and Comparative Education, as it also draws attention to the broader global mainstreaming context and two local practices in previously under-researched contexts. Therefore, by exploring parental involvement in Bangladesh through a comparative frame, it is possible to understand the complexity and duality of parents as stakeholders in the mainstreaming process and consider their position as intertwined with other topics currently researched within ECE. Other issues that are brought to attention by, for example, Sollars (2020), on how to define quality in the various ECE organisational structures globally, where pedagogical and didactic purposes and aims still have not been mainstreamed.

1.2 The Mainstreaming of Early Childhood Education

Worldwide 175 million children below the age of six are excluded from Early Childhood Education (ECE). During international efforts on education via Education for all (EFA) in the Millennium Goals (MG) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), ECE and Pre-Primary Education has received growing attention. The points of departure and rationales in the process of mainstreaming ECE have been to provide quality and equitable education for the youngest in society, with the incentive to increase educational outcomes (UNICEF, 2019). The link between ECE enrolment, quality of services, and higher educational outcomes has
been well established (Källebo & Jacobsen, 2019). By the growing consensus on the implications of extensive efforts on ECE, further measures are taken worldwide to mainstream the educational level (ISCED 0) into educational sector analyses (ESA) and educational sector plans (ESP). High-income countries such as Australia, Ireland, Japan, Sweden, Finland, and New Zealand successfully mainstreamed ECE with an average 83% enrolment across nations. However, the development in low-and middle-income countries is just accelerating in recent years. In 2019 the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), together with UNESCO, UNICEF, and Global Partnership for Education launched a venture directed towards educational officials in low-and middle-income countries to intensify practical efforts on mainstreaming ECE into national education systems (Borisova, 2019). As this specific venture targeted executive and management within the mainstreaming ECE, much is yet to be undertaken in terms of setting a framework of pedagogical aims to be strived for. As of today, ECE is a fragmented educational level globally, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Purposes and educational contents are diverse, and further efforts are still needed to be made in terms of building didactical frameworks surrounding pedagogical efforts in ECE.

1.3 Understanding Parental Involvement in the Lights of a Mainstreaming Process

A linked aspect in mainstreaming ECE is the standardisation process. This implies the didactical and pedagogical aspects in the development of coherent curriculums, policies, and guidelines for implementation (Kaplan Toren, 2020). This stage of mainstreaming is often halted in practice since it requires long ongoing efforts by stakeholders (Borisova, 2019). In the light of mainstreaming ECE, policies on parental involvement are especially vague and broadly described on national and global levels, since it requires a fine-tuned-in knowledge and experience of local communities. Parental and community involvement plays an important role and acts as a critical factor in the mainstreaming process. The roles of parents and communities do not only imply as being the central connection between education and homes but furthermore to enable the continuation of the various ECE services practically. Parental funding is a significant contributor to the sustaining of the services through enrolment- and monthly fees. While comparing the mainstreaming of ECE and Primary Education, the goals for universal primary education implied free and accessible education for children while the mainstreaming of ECE is hitherto dependent on parental funding (Borisova, 2019). This situation poses a dilemma in the mainstreaming of ECE in low-and middle-income countries. Since accessibility, quality, and equity of ECE services becomes dependent on parental funding, equal implementation of policies becomes inequitable.

Bangladesh poses as an example of a country that has recently made remarkable advancements in education and, furthermore, where ECE is in a mainstreaming process. Hence, understanding how parental involvement is operationalised in Bangladeshi ECE centers in the midst of a national mainstreaming process can give insights into how to intensify further policymaking and didactical measures to strengthen ECE as a subsector in ESAs. Furthermore, in order to understand how parental involvement as a phenomenon becomes a manifestation of the complex intertwined relationship between poverty, culture and the views of the child, it can contribute to finely calibrate national and local policies in order to provide and meet the needs appropriate to ECE provision.
1.4 The Stages of Developments in Bangladeshi ECE

The development of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Bangladesh has proceeded through stages historically. During the initial stage in the 1970s and 1980s, ECE was sporadic and spontaneously organised through informal efforts in local Primary schools. These so-called "Baby Classes" became the initial recognition of viewing the earliest stages of childhood as a crucial stage of human development, and it emphasized the need for formal daycare for children under the age of five. Children also attended madrasahs (Islamic religious education settings) informally, which during later years has received heavy criticism (Khondoker, 2019). Furthermore, during the later parts of the 1980s, research institutions and academies such as Bangladesh Shishu Academy focused efforts on bringing ECE into attention in the broader society. However, the lack of interest from the Bangladeshi government halted further development of curriculums for the "Baby Classes" (Islam et al., 2016). In the early 1990s, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) led the efforts on the "Integrated Non-Formal-Education Programme" where preschool-like activities such as pre-writing and numeracy skills were employed by organisations such as Save The Children, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), and Bangladesh Early childhood development Network (BEN). Simultaneously, the Bangladeshi Education For All (EFA) efforts encouraged the continuation of "Baby Classes" through community and NGOs. However, no further measures to formalise or institutionalise these were provided by the government of Bangladesh (Akhter & Chaudhuri, 2013).

During the later stages of ECE mainstreaming governmental initiatives accelerated. Efforts on governmental-non-governmental organisations (GO-NGO) corporations to establish a comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) project, and as a result, the ECD Network was launched. The first of two significant steps in mainstreaming ECE was taken by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), Ministry of Women and Children (MoWCA), Dhaka University, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and UNICEF through the 2008 "Operational Framework for Pre-primary Education". The purpose was to mainstream the view on Early Childhood through declaring why ECE is essential, core needs and developmental stages of children (ECD), management structures, early foundations for educational analysis and planning, and aims of curricular frameworks (MoPME, 2008).

Within the "Operational Framework for Pre-Primary Education," special attention was given to emphasize the role of parents and community in mainstreaming ECE in Bangladesh. The framework also contained guidelines and purpose descriptions for ECE practitioners and professionals; "community participation will be encouraged through monthly parental meetings" where other interested community members may also be present. Through this meeting, parents will come to know about the importance of pre-primary education, how they can help their own children's development, and how they can help the pre-primary centers function well". Furthermore, "to foster knowledge and understanding of the role and responsibilities of parents and family members" as well as encouraging parents in the role of children's caregivers, to provide "age-appropriate care" (MoPME, 2008, p. 30).
Additionally, the second significant step in the mainstreaming process, contributing to the rapidly growing ECE enrolment rates, was the reformed Bangladesh Labor Act (2006). The act held new legislation that came into effect requiring companies and employers to provide ECE as an employee-supported childcare solution for children aged 0-6 years. This legislation implied that companies needed to allocate, either within the office building, or in close connection to it, an ECE service if staff consisted of more than 40 women. This direction of the mainstreaming of Bangladeshi ECE is named "Corporate-ECE" which is reasoned to raise female labour market participation (IFC, 2019). Official female labour market participation in 2006 was 23%, and increased to 30% as of 2019. However, if this specific ECE legislation is the central benefitting factor for increased female labour market participation can be argued. However, it did contribute to the mainstreaming process of Bangladeshi ECE.

Furthermore, the provision of ECE in Bangladesh has increased rapidly over the last decade. The development of center/school-based programs and family-focused efforts is gradually growing, as well as endorsement of policies to enable quality standards. Organised and formal ECE services are growing, but national standards for policy, quality, provision, and accountability are "yet to be put in place" (Sikder in Fleer & van Oers, 2018). Despite vast regional disparities, gross enrolment rate has increased from 11% 2009 to 40% in 2018 (see Figure 1). Although, only 13% of three-four year olds are enroled in ECE while the number is 45% for five year olds. Disparities in enrolment are especially visible while comparing rural regions and urban areas, where rural provision of ECE is further scarce. However, since Bangladesh has high rates of urbanization, big cities like Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna have vast slum areas which produce large urban disparities in ECE enrolment (Cameron, 2017). Additional governmental efforts following the 2008 framework further intensified and directed the mainstreaming process in Bangladesh via the 2013 "Interim Financial Report of PEDP3 for Various Years" and "Guideline on GO-NGO Collaboration Guideline for Universal Pre-Primary Education in Bangladesh" by MoPME and by "Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development" by MoWCA, where the latter described the importance of
collaboration between stakeholders. Furthermore, the latter also includes parental involvement as a necessary measure to ensure a holistic approach to child development (Worldbank, 2020).

Today, many challenges persist and impede the goal of providing universal access to ECE in Bangladesh. Mostly, quality issues are widespread, as well as unequal regional coverage. Additionally, receiving permission to establish and run an ECE center is difficult to retain as it is permitted by the government (Islam et al., 2016). Retaining a "Corporate-ECE" contract is highly competitive as described by participant P7C2 in the current study, as it depends on the overall business plan created for the purpose of running the centers, and if these are considered to be sustainable to the corporations providing the contracts. Moreover, the lack of available data contributes to hinder informed policy and program decisions for creating sustainable ECE service solutions. Additionally, the lack of available data further contributes to the issue of default policies on didactical measures surrounding ECE in Bangladesh, especially frameworks on parental involvement more precise than the deficient guidelines only mentioned as "monthly parental meetings" or "parental involvement as a necessary measure to ensure a holistic approach to child development."

1.5 Rationale of the Study

Sikder (2018) describes how low parental awareness regarding early care, support, and stimulation is an urgent issue in Bangladesh. Without the necessary awareness, children will not receive appropriate care during the most formative years, which causes delays in their cognitive, language, and social development, impacting school readiness (Sikder in Fleer & van Oers, 2018). Early Childhood Education centers can play a vital role in counteracting the issue of low parental awareness by operationalising parental involvement at the centers in Bangladesh. Through parental involvement and cooperation with ECE centers, children could receive further holistic care and attention when there is a broader community involved supporting and caring for the child's development. Parents could also receive support on how to care for their child when centers have appropriate parental involvement methods. Furthermore, since the national guidelines in Bangladesh only mention the importance of monthly parental and community meetings, much is yet to be explored on how local ECE center enables further progressive measures for parental involvement. Hence, through an exploratory approach, this study inquires into how parental involvement is operationalised in two of Dhaka's local ECE centers in the midst of a mainstreaming process of Early Childhood Education and how teachers and staff members experience this aspect of their work. In the lights of the ongoing mainstreaming process of Early Childhood Education in Bangladesh, limited or no policies guide how parental involvement should be constructed or for which purposes and needs it should meet. Therefore, it is important to understand how current operationalisations could shed light on the importance and future development of this didactical area in the Bangladeshi context.
1.6 Aims, Objectives and Research Questions

The study aims to examine and compare how parental involvement is operationalised in two Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers in Dhaka. The objectives of the study are stated as follows:

- To gain an understanding of the development of mainstreaming ECE in Dhaka.
- To understand ECE teachers and daycare staff's experiences of parental involvement and school-home cooperation.
- To understand how parental-involvement in constructed and operationalised in ECE centers.
- To explore how ECE centers create conditions for and facilitate parental involvement.
- To gain an understanding of what challenges and possibilities parental involvement plays in mainstreaming ECE in Dhaka.
- To gain an understanding of what motivation teachers experience parents have for enrolling their children in the centers.

Furthermore, these aims and objectives are examined through the following research questions (RQs):

1. How do teachers and staff members perceive and experience parental involvement?
2. How is parental involvement operationalised in the centers?
3. What differences and similarities are made visible through comparison of the centers?

1.7 Key Concepts

There are different definitions, traditions, and models of parental involvement (Share, Kerrins & Greene, 2011). Whitmarsh (2009) claims a lack of a common definition and understanding of the term amongst scholars, which causes confusion since the term 'involvement' can be defined equally as 'participation', 'partnership,' 'collaboration' or 'cooperation' (Whitmarsh, 2009).

In this study, parental involvement is defined as; the ongoing processes between staff and parents that enable and harbor aims and beneficial purposes for participants within the specific context with the incentive to support children's learning.

Parental involvement as a phenomenon has an intrinsic striving nature, where the process is central for reaching short- and long-term goals, contributing to the holistic experience for all participants. In this study, the term "involvement" is ascribed to both staff members at the ECE centers and parents of enrolled children, since parental involvement could be regarded as being a phenomenon aiming to harbor multiple interests of participants simultaneously. Interests that could be assumed to appear in the context of parental involvement are both staff member's interests in striving towards goals built on an understanding of the broader purpose and impacts of parental involvement. In contrast, the assumed interests of parents could be
seen as aims to optimize their attainment and their child's outcome of the parental involvement. Additionally, the concept of *operationalisation* of parental involvement implies methods and strategies that created the daily practices and interactions with parents within the ECE centers of the study.

### Chapter 2

#### 2. Theoretical Framework

##### 2.1 Epistemological and Ontological Assumptions

As Bangladesh, its culture and values were unfamiliar to the researcher prior to current study, it is central to describe how this fact impacts the epistemological and ontological assumptions. In the meeting with the local context, the strive to comprehend and grasp participants' realities creates an interpretative dilemma which implies a differentiation in the multi layered analysis of current ethnographic study. Additionally, the comparative nature of current study further creates dimensions to consider. To address this dilemma a description is provided.

While first providing a rather descriptive clarification of epistemological assumptions of the study which implies viewing reality as co-created, consisting of multiple realities and truths simultaneously. Within the co-created reality, the ontological assumption values subjective and co-constructed knowledge. Hence, to understand reality and knowledge, interpretation becomes the appropriate and aligned measure according to the constructivist paradigm (Cohen, 2018, p. 63, 112-113, 906). In this study, interpretation of the co-constructed and co-created becomes a reflexible tact. On the one hand projecting epistemological and ontological assumptions upon the phenomena being researched and on the other hand, projecting it towards the researcher’s own position in the interpretation of the observed subjectivity.

To deepen the assumptions further, according to Hammersley’s description (1992) of ethnographic research as the understanding of microcosmoses, it implies understanding the particularity in social life itself. However, since the researchers interpreting the particularity of social life have preconceptions of universality in and from related fields of research, ethnography could be reasoned only to become the generating of universality from particularity. With this understanding, the aim of ethnographic research becomes compromised. However, Hammersley suggests an alternative to these opposing assumptions of naïve realism and relativism, and suggests *subtle realism* (Banfield, 2004). *Subtle realism* acknowledges the interpretative dilemma of ethnography and states that all research implies subjective preconceptions that affects the interpretations of social life and the participants within it. Moreover, the fusion between International and Comparative Education (ICE) and ethnography creates an epistemological dilemma which compromises the nature of ethnographic research and differs from the interpretative ontology. If the aim of ethnography
is to understand the particularity of social life, the very comparison of two particularities becomes a measure for generating a universality through a comparative analysis of it. This reasoning further needs to be argued in conjunction with the very purpose of the comparative aspect, and if it is to be considered as a tool for emphasizing or deemphasizing particularities of social realities. Alternatively, “a convenient way to reduce complex behaviors into manageable concepts” (Suter, 2019, p. 12). Hence, it can be argued that this ethnographic study only seeks to emphasize particularities between the two centers of the study. However, as the same ontological assumption of subtle realism applies in interpreting the same social and cultural values surrounding the centers of the study and are assumed to impacts it, it also contributes to the dilemmas in the fusion of the nature or ethnography and the purpose of comparison in the meeting with subtle realism ontology. Despite the dilemma, using Hammersley's contribution of subtle realism as the point of departure for interpretation is necessary, however, it could be seen as an intrinsic delimitation whilst conducting ethnographic research within an International and Comparative frame.

Furthermore, as the ontological assumption of subtle realism is a precondition for conducting this study in a previously unfamiliar context, experiences of the participants are considered to be manifestations of particularity in their social life. The researcher’s foremost role is to strive for an emic perspective, further enabling an interpretation whilst being reflexive of the limitations and translation into reconstructing their manifestation of social life within the study. Moreover, as mentioned initially, these considerations furthermore impacts the theoretical framework. Concerning both epistemology and ontology is what initially was stated regarding abiding to the constructivist paradigm, which in turn lays the grounds for possibilities of theoretical frameworks for the study. Hence, using a social constructivist theoretical framework enables specifically viewing co-created realities and co-constructed knowledge, which through the notion of subtle realism can be interpreted.

2.2 Social Constructivist Framework

Applying a social constructivist theoretical framework (Adams, 2006) in the study enables parental involvement to be viewed as a social phenomena that is co-created and co-constructed in the local context. Since the rationale for the study implies researching teachers and staff operationalisation and experiences of parental involvement, the assumption through the theoretical framework is that experiences, methods and strategies of teachers and staff becomes a manifestation of co-constructed realities existing in the realm of parental involvement. Within this realm it implies the symbiosis of co-constructed realities are constantly negotiated in practice at the centers of the study. Teachers and staff’s assimilation and accommodation of and to subjective realities creates deliberations and results in deliberative and non deliberate actions to handle parental involvement and cooperation. Moreover, with the assumption that behaviour is not a priori in social constructivism (Adams, 2006), the study views the operationalisation of parental involvement at centers as manifestations of teachers and staff’s experiences in the context-bound setting. In the Bangladeshi context, social and cultural values are assumed to impact how co-constructions of parental involvement are created within the ECE centers. Bangladeshi culture values family as the main institution for trust and reliability. As parents are not participants of the study, it is assumed that the operationalisation of parental involvement shows how ECE centers need to
navigate the social and cultural values existing in the broader surrounding society to enable parental involvement. Similar to Kim (2018) are broader exo-and macro systems assumed to impact parental involvement in developing countries such as Bangladesh to a higher extent than in western context which is contextualised as the mainstreaming process ongoing in Dhaka (Kim, 2018). Within the study it is therefore assumed that a deficiency of frameworks for parental involvement, and collisions between social values, impacts the operationalisations of parental involvement in the centers. Hence, the social constructivist theoretical framework enables understanding how negotiation between staff and parents within the involvement is impacted by the broader societal negotiations active in the mainstreaming process of ECE.

2.3 Country Context of Bangladesh

The research was conducted in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is therefore of uppermost importance to give an overview of the historical and societal developments in Bangladesh in order to gain an understanding of the country, context of the study’s location, and its connection to the theoretical framework.

The People's Republic of Bangladesh, or Bangladesh for short, is located in South Asia. The country achieved Independence from East Pakistan after the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. With Bangladesh's large neighbour India to its West, North, and East, it's separated from Bhutan and Nepal by the contested territorial corridor, Siliguri Corridor, also called the "Chicken Neck" (World Bank, 2019a). With Myanmar to the Southeast, the Bay of Bengal with its massive delta in the South, Bangladesh is called the "The Land of Rivers" since most of the territory is shared with the Ganges and Brahmaputra river systems. Bangladesh's population is estimated through the Population Censuses to approximately 164 million (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2011). According to the World Bank 28% of the population are children under 18 and 9% of the population are under five (15 million) (World Bank Data, 2020b). Although, the national birth and death registration officially entered force in 2006, making statistics unreliable (GoB, 2014). The population is by 98% Bengalis and 2% minorities (Khashea, Chakma, Tripura, Rohingya etc.). Multidimensional poverty is widespread in Bangladesh. Within the population, 41% are affected by several aspects of poverty and multidimensionality implies deprivation of health, the standard of living, or education (HDR, 2019). One-fifth of children in primary education are deprived of formal education and 13% of children 4-14 years old are engaged in child labour, with a vast majority as unpaid labourers (Sikder in Fleer & van Oers, 2018).

However, in the last decade Bangladesh has made a remarkable journey. Its booming economy and development has enabled the nation to shift from being a low-income country into qualifying as a “lower-middle-income-country”, and in 2018 it was removed from the United Nations list of Least Developed Countries (LDC) (Worldbank, 2019b). Economic poverty has decreased and the national GDP has increased by 6.5 percent annually, much due

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1 Matriarch tribe originating from Mongolia living in the Khasia Hills in north east of Bangladesh (NEB, 2015)
2 Or Changmas, the largest tribe in Bangladesh with origins from Chittagong and Rangamati (ibid)
3 Origins from Tripura Kingdom in parts of India and Bangladesh until it joined union with India in 1949(ibid)
4 Stateless tribe originating from Myanmar, now refugees in Cox’s Bazaar in southeast coastline of Bangladesh (ibid).
to efforts on infrastructure, textile manufacturing and rural microfinancing (Mahmud et al., 2018). The rapid growth has also brought societal development and improvements to various sectors. The educational sector has received additional allocated funds and efforts are now focused on planning, monitoring and evaluating. Foremost are the standardisation efforts of the educational system, in order to achieve higher levels of equity and equality, to increase educational outcomes and limit dropout-rates (Prodhan, 2016). The development in Bangladesh moreover brought increased efforts on ECE in the last decade, and despite the limited attention historically, the mainstreaming of ECE is finally being intensified.

2.4 Bangladeshi Culture and Values

Bangladesh is ascribed as being a traditional, collectivistic, and male-dominated society, where family and community take a central role. As a collectivistic nation, individuals regard themself as a part of a community or atmiya-svajan, either based on religious beliefs, family origins or village belonging, rather than as individuals. As the close social connections within groups become the foundation for reliability and trust, group members depend on the close-knit community for support and assistance in everyday life. As people in the highly urbanised, large cities of Dhaka, Chittagong, and Khulna often travel back to their home villages, or paras, majuras or grams and minor cities, the connection to their origin and village community remains even in their city lives. In interactions with the broader society, it is valuable to interact according to social norms, tending to hierarchies where position and age are determining factors for respect. Elders are therefore granted high respect (IES, 2017).

Moreover, both in interactions with the inner and outer group, terms such as apu, api or apa are used as a sign of respect, meaning kinship by adding respect to one's presence and position. Moreover, as the value-based notion of harmony is present in many aspects of Bangladeshis lifes; it acts as a remedy of the social and culturally diverse landscape existing throughout Bangladesh, as many groups share cities and rural areas. As parents tell their children “manoush hou”, meaning “be human” or as “the humanity of others guides how you treat them” instead of religious or social belonging (Chowdhury, 1995).

Furthermore, data collected contributing to The World Values Survey (2008) shows Bangladesh as having traditional and survival values within the Islamic cluster. From the beginning of the data collections for the purpose of the World Values Survey in 1981, data from Bangladesh has been inconsistent and was first conducted in 1999. The values in Bangladesh has seemingly been similar from 1999 to 2008 when the latest data collection was made (Inglehart et al., 2014) (see Figure 2);
Despite various populations, including Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist, the family acts as the central institution in Bangladesh, the term *bari* is referred to the home, which is often intergenerational, or *poribar*, residing three generations of family members. *Bari* brings social status and economic stability and is both patriarchal and patrilineal or *gusthi*, meaning male family lineage brings further respect and weight in decision-making. Additionally, economic development in Bangladesh has brought further prosperity, and gender roles are very slowly loosened up. Women are participating in the workforce and have gained more economic freedom; however, decision-making is still often family-based. Additionally, as “*purdah*”, or the “veil” or “isolation”- an Islamic system previously frequently applied to hinder women, often middle and high-income adult women, to attend education and work. It has decreased vastly over the last 50 years, but it is still referred to. Nuclear families are decreasing, as well as intergenerational *poribar*, which is often ascribed to as due to economic development (IES, 2017), or, as a result of poverty, pushing families to become migrants in other Asian or Arabic (gulf) countries, splitting up families (Chowdhury, 1995). The phenomenon of expat-workers migrating is often described as the “Bangladeshi Diaspora,” as almost 15 million Bangladeshis work abroad (DhakaTribune, 2019). Additionally, international views of the child within the Bangladeshi society is often associated with child-labour, poverty, and malnutrition. Despite this being an enormous issue with devastating implications for children’s lives, further informed research ought to be conducted on the understanding of public notions on the child

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5 *Purdah* was further referred to by P1C1 as “*purdah* was not considered” when she enrolled in master's studies.
and their position within Bangladeshi societies. However, Rahman and Chowdhury et. al. (2019) described the Bangladeshi parents participating in the study to consider “childhood” as a stage children enter after the age of five. Moreover, Ball and Wahedi (2011) studied fatherhood as a critical element in the construction of male identity in Bangladesh, and children were described as “valuable to both men and women” (Ball & Wahedi, 2011, p. 367).

**Chapter 3**

3. Previous Research

Due to limited research on parental involvement in Early Childhood Education within the Bangladeshi context (Sikder in Fleer & van Oers, 2018), previous research will be presented through three sections. To enable a comprehensible overview of comparable and related research fields, the three sections are combined to provide a further elaborated understanding of the field of parental involvement in ECE in Bangladesh. Initially presented is previous research on the topic of parental involvement, to increase understanding the role of parental involvement in education and its importance.

3.1 Parental Involvement in Education

Previous research on parental involvement in education is often described through a western perspective. However, previous research within western contexts is not necessarily generalisable to other contexts. Kim (2018) conducted a meta-synthesis of qualitative studies on parental involvement in developing countries, using Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological framework as a comparative framework while comparing parental involvement from western/welfare and developing countries perspectives. According to Bronfenbrenner, the embedded levels that shape children's development are described as; *Microsystem*: family and home environment and home-based involvement, family structures and sizes, and physical aspects of the home learning environment. *Mesosystem*: school-based involvement, parent-teacher interaction. *Exosystem*: parents' social networks, workplace, neighborhoods, and educational policy. *Macro system is the social class, ethnic or religious groups, and belief systems of those groups* (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). These levels are central to understanding the conditions for child development, but it also informs conditions for parental involvement. Within the meta-synthesis Kim (2018) argues that parental involvement in western/welfare countries often only include and consider the first embedded levels of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework of what shapes children's development and the understanding of parental involvement (e.g. home learning environments and school based involvement). However, to understand parental involvement in developing countries, such as Bangladesh, further levels have to be considered in how exo-and macrosystems (e.g. deficiencies of
educational policies and ethno/religious/social classes) impacts children's development and by extension, parental involvement (Kim, 2018). Furthermore, as exo-and macrosystems (eg. structural conditions contributing to poverty and low access to education) add additional layers of challenges hindering both children's learning development and parental involvement in developing countries, it is central to consider these dimensions to understand parental involvement for the current study.

Additionally, other studies contributing to the understanding of the many factors influencing parental involvement is made by Hornby and Lafaele (2011). Their research investigated barriers to parental involvement, where multiple findings could be comparable with the topic of current research on parental involvement in early childhood education in Bangladesh. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) described societal, historical, and political issues acting as barriers to parental involvement. Moreover, the authors emphasize the historical context in which parental involvement exists within. This gap is often unacknowledged as a barrier to involving parents in education. In many historical and political contexts, the general school environment is associated with inflexibility and formality and therefore acts as a hindrance to parental involvement, as it requires flexibility. This is comparable with the current research topic in the Bangladeshi context, as described by Hornby and Lafaele (2011), as the structural changes within families, further female workforce participation, and less ample time for families to involve in their children's education. Political barriers can arise in regard to parental involvement due to a lack of official policies in this field. It leaves educational settings to develop their own guidelines for involvement, which in turn leads to inequitable implementation. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) describe fundamental factors associated with family beliefs surrounding parental involvement, to what extent it is important for children's learning, beliefs on what expectations school has on their involvement, and therefore, what "involvement, participation or collaboration" actually implies in practice. Additionally, factors acting as barriers to parental involvement is described as individual families' capability and confidence supporting their child's learning (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Furthermore, Joyce Epstein's (2009) contributions of the framework of six types (levels) of involvement is well established and used in various research evolving parental involvement, including developing countries. Epstein's (2009) research describes practices for enabling parental involvement with the incentive to reach specific outcomes for children, parents, and teachers. Caño, Cape et al. (2016) conducted a quantitative-exploratory study using the Epstein framework to establish the connection between parental involvement and student performance in primary education. Findings showed that parental involvement as a support function contributes to academic achievements among students as an equalising effect rendering socioeconomic disparities between families in Cebu, Philippines (Caño, Cape et al. 2016). Cheung and Cam (2019) research pre-service ECE teacher attitudes towards parental involvement in Hong Kong, using the Epstein (2009) framework. Findings showed perceptions of parental involvement as decision-making to be considered least feasible and least important (Cheung & Cam, 2019). Despite being often applied within other educational settings, the Epstein (2009) framework could contribute to the understanding of how parental involvement could be operationalised within ECE;

*Type one* of Epstein’s (2009) framework describes how school practices of parental education, workshops, and support programs aimed to assist parents with Early Childhood Development (ECD) such as health and nutrition. Practices including home visits as a forum for schools to understand parents and communities to bridge families' efforts to understanding schools and purposes with education. These efforts are described by Epstein (2009) to increase parents' feelings of accountability and build a trusting relationship between schools and
homes. The main goal of these school practices is also to bridge barriers that hinder children's educational outcomes, with increased school attendance, understanding the importance of school, and a balance between home chores, leisure and related academic activities. Type two of Epstein's (2009) framework of parental involvement describes communication between school-home and home-school. This stage involves forms of communication, parent-teacher meetings about their children's progress, continuous dialogue on improvements, and newsletters communicating important information related to the school and the education. These school practices aim to deepen parents involvement in school further, as well as developing an increased understanding of policies and parental responses to children's adversities. Type three of Epstein's (2009) framework implies volunteering and school practices to recruit and organise parents for help and support. This opens up further practical parental involvement that increases parents' understanding of the teacher's work. It also enables the teacher's view and understanding of parents as a resource within education, pedagogy and didactics. Type four Epstein's (2009) framework implies school practices aimed to enable children to learn in their home environment; providing parents with material to continue, support and develop school-related skills and knowledge to create further holistic learning opportunities for the child. This level of parental involvement further deepens the relationship between home-school and parents gains accountability and insights on children's actual school activities. This practice also emphasizes parents as valuable resources for the child's learning development. Type five of Epstein's (2009) framework for parental involvement describes decision-making; by forming parent networks for advocacy, committees for advisory purposes and lobby groups for school improvement and reforms. The school practices encourage parents' feelings of ownership and influence of decisions affecting children, and it also provides parents with insights into the interconnectedness of school policies and the local/regional/national perspective of education. The highest level of parental involvement according to Epstein (2009) is type six; collaboration with the community. This type implies school practices to identify and incorporate resources from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and children's learning development. Information, opportunities, and forums for families to interact with the communities to gain a sense of belonging and to contribute with services and talents (Epstein, 2009).

3.2 Research on Parental Roles in Relation to Young Children in the Bangladeshi Context

To further broaden the understanding of the complexity parental involvement implies for stakeholders, the second section of previous research narrows down the perspective focusing on the Bangladeshi context. The latest comprehensive overview of ECE in Bangladesh was conducted within the International Handbook of Early Childhood Education (Fleer, 2019). According to Sikder (2018) is the research field within Early Childhood Education in Bangladesh limited and "undertaken sporadically" (Sikder in Fleer & van Oers, 2019, p. 594), this being due to the fact that research within the field was not initiated until after the year 2000. Research within the Bangladeshi context, connected to a broader concept and interpretation of parental involvement, has focused on issues concerning children's wellbeing, nutrition, and health. In this research field, most national and international research has been carried out since the 1980s. Even though there have been studies made in connection to the field of parental involvement, these are not immediately comparable with the current research topic. This is due to the fact as the research is not mainly concerned with parental involvement.
within Early Childhood Education, but it informs the research and several issues parallel the findings.

One such example is Banu (2012), who conducted a study on the quality of rote teaching practices for school preparation. The study examined and compared practices throughout private, governmental, and NGO- run preschools. Findings related to the field of parental involvement showed a lack of parental involvement in curriculum and material development (Banu, 2012). Khanom et al. (2013) studied the effectiveness of implementations of a comprehensive child development package aimed to increase children's language development, hygiene, and cognition within preschools in Haluaghat, Gopalpur and Kaligonj (North rural Bangladesh). One of the conclusions within this study was that the implementation package needed to provide tools to increase parental engagement in the preschools with the incentive to improve their child's general development (Khanom et al. 2013). Furthermore, Chowdhury and Rivalland (2012) conducted a study on the value of play through the understanding of parents and ECE staff in Bangladesh. Some of the findings showed that parents understood the value of play as leisure time only, and that there was limited encouragement of children to engage in play. Both parents and ECE staff had understandings of the value of play as a tool to enable higher acquisition of academic skills (Chowdhury & Rivalland, 2012). Aboud et al. (2013) researched the effectiveness of parenting programs. Findings showed that the participating parents could further support their children in cognitive and language development after participating in the program (Aboud et al., 2013).

### 3.3 Research on Parental Involvement in the Bangladeshi Context

Despite limited research in the field, one recent major qualitative study was conducted on parental involvement in ECE centers within the Bangladeshi context. Rahman and Chowdhury et al. (2019) researched Bangladeshi parents' perceptions of their involvement in preschools, examining parents' roles and barriers to involvement. Parents of five to six years olds n=16 and two teachers from two preschools were selected for the study. The study showed that there is a discrepancy in how parents understand early childhood development and the belief that children's development starts at five years old. Further findings revealed that some parents view their role within parental involvement as merely dropping off and picking up their child at the center. The study also found that parents communicate with teachers about their child's learning and development; however, they experienced limited opportunities to be involved in classroom activities. The parents experienced monthly parental meetings as a forum for discussing children's study-related issues.

The main barriers to parental involvement in the study included poverty, occupancy with work, and a lack of awareness. Moreover, parents experienced that the general lack of opportunity to get involved posted as an obstacle for actual involvement. Teachers emphasized the importance of parents to observe class activities to provide them with ideas of what and how early childhood stimulation could look like in practice. Additionally, the study also found that teachers experienced the main challenges for parental involvement in the ECE centers to be the lack of awareness of the significance of parental involvement as well as parental occupancy with other everyday life activities. The study's conclusion is suggested as a nationwide "sensitization campaign program" for showing the importance of parental involvement in children's learning activities and development. The study also emphasized the need for advocacy at an administrative and policy level for providing guidelines on how
opportunities for parental involvement could be organised through a collaborative approach between teachers and parents (Rahman, Chowdhury et al., 2019). The above previous research aimed to broaden the understanding of the complex landscape parental involvement presents to stakeholders both from the center-child-home perspective and society-center-parent-child perspective.

Chapter 4

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Strategy

As the rationale of the current study formed the outlining of the research strategy where the enablement through methods, tools, and data analysis aimed to create an epistemological and ontological obedient ethnographic study (Yeganeh & Su, 2004). Utilising an inductive research strategy implied viewing observations and findings prior to theory. Hence, it created a link between data and theory, often associated with a qualitative research strategy (Bray, 2014). The inductive research strategy using an ethnographic method implied in situ adjustments not comparable with a deductive strategy but rather aligned with the inherent task of ethnography as to enhance “eliciting sociocultural knowledge from participants, rendering social behaviour comprehensible” (Cohen, 2018, p. 626). The central strategy of the research considered the emic perspective as quality criteria acting as the enabling measure for withholding the epistemological and ontological assumptions of the study. Hence, while conducting the research, the assumption of subtle realism became leading not only in creating a methodology, preparing for data collections, gathering and interpreting it but moreover as a measure present during the whole process.

4.2 Research Methods

The multimodality of methods within ethnography implied using semi-structured interviews, fieldnotes, mind maps, photos, and other materials such as information pamphlets and documents provided by the centers in the study. The methods were combined with the comparative aspect as an inherent feature in the study. This shaped the overall methodology and understanding of how the comparative feature created another layer within the constructivist paradigm. "Studying two contrasting cases using more or less identical methods. It embodies the logic of comparison, in that it implies that we can understand social phenomena better when they are compared in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting cases or situations” (Bryman, 2012, p. 65). The semi-structured interviews were accompanied
by foregoing observations at Center A and Center B. These observations included participating in everyday practices in the centers, which aimed to deepen the emic perspective before conducting interviews. In accordance with the ethnographic method, changes were made in situ, where the interview guide that initially consisted of seven questions were adjusted and elaborated on during interviews depending on topics brought up by participants (Cohen, 2018, p. 626). The interview guide's initial questions were of a broader nature, where experiences and descriptions of parents and parental involvement were asked and explored. These were subsequently narrowed down by specific questions related to discussing experiences, methods, and strategies of parental involvement at the centers (see appendix III).

4.3 Sampling and Data Collection

4.3.1 Sampling

This study was granted the NIAS Supra Nordic Scholarship from The Nordic Institute for Asian Studies at Copenhagen University in October 2019. The researcher spent one month in Dhaka, from the middle of December 2019 to the middle of January 2020 for the study. After approval of the initial research plan and methodology, sampling for participants was initiated. The process was continued by receiving contacts from staff at Stockholm University to a key person in Dhaka. The second phase consisted of emails discussing potential participants for the study. A snowball sampling led to the sampling of all participants partaking from Center A. An initial visit to Center A was done on 26th Dec 2019, enabling outlining on what grounds the comparison could be made valid. Hence, sampling for the second ECE center with similar conditions and context as Center A was done as guest lecturer holding a session and workshop on Nordic ECE in Dhaka on 28th Dec 2019. Different opportunities were presented amongst partakers (students and ECE professionals) at the lecture who were interested in participating in the current study. However, the grounds for comparison considered socioeconomic characteristics of the areas the centers were located in, the amount of staff and children, and the general interest and experience of parental involvement in their centers.

4.3.2 Data Collections

The study consisted of nine participants total with five participants from Center A and four from Center B. The participants work at the two centers in various positions, ranging from child caregivers and teachers to managers and supervisors.

The full data set collected through the interviews consists of eight interviews with nine participants. From Center A five interviews with five participants and Center B three interviews with four participants. From Center B two of the three interviews were conducted with two respectively two participants acting as a collective inquiry with a translator (P6C2). All interviews have been anonymized, fully transcribed, and given a code number (P1C1-P5C1, P6C2-P9C2). All participants are female aged from 21-55 years old. Their
educational backgrounds varied, including secondary education diplomas, engineering masters, and various teaching educations. Additionally, all participants except P4C1 and P5C1 have received in-service ECE educational training (see Table 1 & 2):

Table 1: Data and participant description Center A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>P1C1</th>
<th>P2C1</th>
<th>P3C1</th>
<th>P4C1</th>
<th>P5C1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>Center A</td>
<td>Center A</td>
<td>Center A</td>
<td>Center A</td>
<td>Center A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Head teacher</td>
<td>Teacher/admin</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
<td>Caregiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview duration</td>
<td>22 mins</td>
<td>17 mins</td>
<td>24 mins</td>
<td>21 mins</td>
<td>19 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language / Translator</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Bangla Translator P1C1</td>
<td>Bangla Translator P1C1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Data and participant description Center A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>P6C2</th>
<th>P7C2</th>
<th>P8C2</th>
<th>P9C2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>Center B</td>
<td>Center B</td>
<td>Center B</td>
<td>Center B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Teacher/admin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview duration</td>
<td>37 mins joined P6+P7</td>
<td>37 mins joined P6+P7 + 8 mins</td>
<td>Joined P8+P9 33 mins</td>
<td>Joined P8+P9 33 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language / Translator</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Bangla Translator P6C2</td>
<td>Bangla Translator P6C2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Method of Analysis

The interviews were thematically analysed through an inductive latent approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In contrast to a semantic and deductive approach, this approach enables searching for more in-depth and hidden meanings in the data, and the themes were arrived at by coding the data and combining these codes into broader categories. This approach aligns with the qualitative framework and interpretivist ontology by eliciting meaning-making processes (Cohen, 2018).

The comparative approach of the study impacted the process of conducting the thematic analysis. The full data collection was divided into viewing one center at a time, which implied eliciting data fragments, coding, and themathesise separately to enable a comparison. Data fragments were elicited in relation to the research questions which corresponded to teacher’s experiences and ways of operationalisation of parental involvement. This was done to be able to interpret and separate experiences from methods and operations of parental involvement.
and foremost due to enabling a comprehensive presentation of the findings. The following data fragment is provided to visualise the process of the thematic analysis (see Figure 3):

| But I felt that if I have CCTV, since there is a lot of competition, I will get more children and it worked. I have a lot of more children because I provide the CCTV camera. | CCTV to increase enrollment | CCTV as competitive advantage |

Figure 3: Data fragment example

The divided data fragments were coded with descriptions of the content, and these codes were elevated into broader themes, and further thematised into final themes representing the separate ECE centers. It was, therefore, necessary to deconstruct the transcriptions into four separate sections, where Center A's data was transcribed and divided into descriptions of operationalisation respectively experiences. This is paramount to enable an analysis according to the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework enables a reconstruction of the participants' realities making possible an interpretation. Since ethnographic research requires a multilayered analysis, the minor observations, field notes and recordings aim to enable a rich context description and thereby to increase readability and credibility (Cohen, 2018, p. 617-618, 622-623). As the thematic analysis was conducted by dividing transcriptions into viewing one center at a time, then further divided into experiences respectively descriptions of operationalisations, the complete themes are provided (see Figure 4); (for full size see appendix IV)

Figure 4: Overview of complete final themes
4.5 Ethical Considerations

Conducting the study in Bangladesh posed various situations where ethical considerations had to be taken into account. According to the EU data regulations (GDPR), research conducted outside the European Union and brought into the EU or EAA area are still affected by the regulations. These considerations apply to the data collection gathered in Bangladesh and transferred to Sweden for the purpose of the current study (Vetenskapsrådet, 2020), and according to Stockholms University guidelines on data storage, these had to be followed. During the sampling of participants from Center A the manager was provided with information on these regulations, and a discussion was held. The consent form provided a section with a shortened version of the GDPR and this was explained to all participants or translated by the translators before recording (see Appendix II). The manager of Center B was contacted about the GDPR after the first meeting at the guest lecture session as a preparation for the first visit to center B. All participants were also informed of these regulations.

The study also implied visiting and spending time at the ECE center, where children under the age of 15 were present. The managers from both participating centers had announced on their center's social media platforms that a foreign researcher would be present at the centers, and parents could receive and comment on this online or during pick up or drop off at the center. No concerns were raised to teachers or staff by parents regarding this researcher's presence at the centers. Since the nature of the study does not include collecting data about pedagogical issues, or other issues practically related to children at the centers, no parental consent was collected. Although pictures have been taken at the centers, these only captured activities, materials, and environments where no children could be identified. In order to prevent the children at the centers from feeling uncomfortable or unsafe by the visits, the researcher acted openly by inviting them to play while sitting down on the floor, offering toys as described by Johansson (2003). These ethical considerations were taken to create a comfortable environment where the children could feel free to interact or to continue to participate in their everyday activities (Johansson, 2003).

To maintain reflexivity and a conscious approach during the visits in Dhaka required continuous reflection. Both during the visits to the centers of the study but also in regards to the overall presence and interactions in the city. As a foreign researcher, it implied being attentive and empathetic while adjusting to the context. Meeting people in vulnerable positions, such as the members of the transexual community in Tejgaon and Shahinbag and streetchildren in Lalbagh posed dilemmas while inhabiting the role of a researcher and an individual simultaneously. Bangladesh has one of the world's most strict Islamic legislation. Adjusting to this implied using modest clothing and being accompanied by male drivers during all travels covering more than a 10 minute walking distance. Moreover, Dhaka does not inhabit many western expatriates. Westerners that live in the city have welded cohorts, separated groups that organise social life via social clubs excluded from other Dhaka residents. Hence, the presence during the fieldwork in areas without Westerners' residence areas caused much attention from many curious and generous people, which created further implications for ethical considerations.
All consent forms have been stored separately during the stay in Dhaka and in Stockholm. All audio recording has been transferred to a USB and uploaded to online storage hosted by Stockholm University only accessible to the researcher and supervisor.

### 4.6 Limitations and Delimitations

The interviews at Center B were conducted through joint interviews with participants P6C2, P7C2, P8C2, and P9C2 due to time issues at the center. Participants P4C1, P5C1, and P8C2, P9C2 either only spoke Bangla or expressed the need to speak in Bangla to be able to communicate their experience fully and translators were needed. The participating managers in the study (P1C1 and P6C2) acted as translators during the interviews. The fact that the managers acted as translators could have impacted the other participant’s ability to speak freely during interviews and this has been addressed in the transcripted findings (see section 5.4.4). There has been no cross-checking of translations, and the managers translated answers have been transcribed during the thematic analysis. Likewise, as the author does not speak Bangla, further resources that might have brought value to the thesis have not been attended to. No caregiver from Center B was interviewed which could have impacted the nuances of experiences presented from the center.

While researching parental involvement, no parents have been interviewed for the purpose of the study. Parent experiences and descriptions could have brought important aspects and understandings to the analysis of operationalisations at the centers. With consideration to the feasibility of the study, this aspect has been deselected. Furthermore, time spent in the field conducting observations is central in ethnographic research to enable an emic perspective. However, with consideration to the feasibility and time frames of the current study, one month was spent in Bangladesh. Lastly, considerations of whether to conduct the study with a phenomenological or ethnographic method were held. Implementing a phenomenological method would have required a further extensive time frame and possibly brought a shift of emphasis of the current topic. It could have contributed to further understandings of the meaning-making in social operations such as in methods of parental involvement within the centers, but further deemphasized the broader implications in the microcosmos that parental involvement as a phenomena implies in the Bangladeshi context.

### 4.7 Quality Criterias

#### 4.7.1 The Process of Conducting Research

As previously mentioned, since the central strategy of the research considered the emic perspective as quality criteria acting as the enabling measure for withholding the epistemological and ontological assumptions of the study, the emic perspective has furthermore been the central outlook for enabling an ethical procedure within the ethnographic
study. It is, therefore, essential to describe the whole process of enabling striving towards an emic perspective. As the researcher previously wrote a Bachelor's thesis on the topic of parental involvement in Sweden, with focus on how the Swedish equivalent principle applies through inclusive and complementary methods for parents without majority language skills, and additionally, has an educational background as a preschool teacher, the emic perspective can further be discussed. The researcher's previous experience in the field of current study enabled immersion into some of the participants' assumed topics prior to data collection. Although the realities and understandings of parental involvement indeed differ between Sweden and Bangladesh, there are, however, some similar problem descriptions concerning parental involvement shared between the contexts. With prior knowledge from the field of the current study, it furthermore accompanied the considerations surrounding the ontological assumption of subtle realism while viewing the interpretative limitations. Hence, with further considerations to the feasibility of the current study, the striving to gain an emic perspective was pursued through multiple actions.

As the aim was to understand parental involvement in Dhaka, it was necessary to take into account the presence and impact of this inquiry in the local context. Additionally, Hofstede (1997) described culture as being embedded in a context and shared by members of the particular group, hence, describing the process and reflexivity in the role as a foreign researcher and the strive to pertain access to the particular group, it is of importance to highlight the process of striving for an emic perspective according to the ethnographic method.

The emic perspective in ethnography is understood as invoking the perspective of participants of a study as the foundation for analysis (Markey, 2012). It seeks to understand how local contexts impact the meaning-making process of groups and individuals, and this aim is central to eliciting an interpretation of heterogeneous realities. Creating the methodology and building a network in Bangladesh was a parallel process from the outset. A vital part of striving for an emic perspective was through contact with key persons in Stockholm and Dhaka. Through these contacts, the preparations to enable the data collection could be made into a practical strategy. As a first step for enabling an emic perspective for the study, building a mutual relationship has been central. The opportunity to hold a guest lecture on Nordic ECE was requested and provided as one of the key contacts in Dhaka was engaged in educational efforts with a newly started effort on Early Childhood Education. The lecture was held on the 28th December 2019, and four participants from Center A and B in the study were present (see sampling section).

This session acted as an important phase in understanding the local ECE context in Dhaka, and mostly, to be able to discuss and explore the reasoning amongst people involved in the expansion of the ECE sector and issues related to this. As a part of the lecture, a workshop was held on pedagogical environments, which provided the opportunity to observe practical insider examples of preschools and daycare structures, especially with regards to parental involvement. Moreover, this enabled striving for an emic perspective since students of the session described parents and discussed how to create environments for parental involvement at future ECE centers. This context further assisted in adjusting the interview guide based on these contextual understandings aimed to reach a further deepening of the emic perspective for the study.

In Dhaka, there were multiple visits to the participating ECE centers to interact with participants and children. This implied taking part in preschool classes, inclusive pedagogical sessions and to observe the daily practices. These experiences guided the data collection of field notes, mind maps, and pictures that lead up to conducting the interviews with teachers and staff members on the thesis topic of parental involvement.
4.7.2 Trustworthiness, Reliability, Conformability, Transferability and Credibility

Trustworthiness is strived for by using various parts of collected data to thoroughly describe the procedure of striving for an emic perspective with the ontological assumption of \textit{subtle realism} (Hammersley, 1992). As the interpretative process is assumed to be impacted by these measures the themes created through the thematic analysis is not necessarily inherently present in the data itself, but is rather a product of the interpretative procedure (Braun, 2006, p. 80). According to the ethnographic method, in order to increase trustworthiness, the aim is to provide rich context descriptions, enabling the reader to submerge in the interpretative underpinnings of the analysis.

Reliability within ethnographic research implies prolonged visits and multiple interactions with studied participants and contexts to adequately interpret and describe diverse local realities (Cohen, 2018, p. 626). It should be argued if four weeks in Dhaka and reparative visits and interactions with participants and contexts equals to the broader meaning and understanding of "prolonged". Although, it could be argued as equitable and reasonable within the frames for a master thesis (Bryman, 2012, p. 390-393).

Confirmability for the current study is very difficult to obtain. On the one hand, as ethnography captures local realities described by participants, one can argue that participants' views are ever interchangeable, resulting in varied descriptions and experiences, thus never confirmable. On the other hand, confirmability is neither possible as no other studies with similar research questions nor rationale have been conducted in this context (Korstjens & Moser, 2019).

Transferability and generalisability is not an inherent goal of ethnography. As it aims to describe the diversity of local realities, it does not aim to fulfill the quality criteria of transferability. However, the findings of this study aim to contribute to the understanding of how parental involvement is constructed and operationalised in Dhaka, where similar research has not been conducted. Since similar and comparable findings were found in both studied centers, it could, therefore, be argued that some of the findings of the study where participant's descriptions of their reality could, to some degree, be transferable to other similar contexts within Bangladesh. Transferability and generalisability is an inherent limitation of ethnography, however, in junction with the above reasoning, according to Delamont and Atkinson via Beach et al., (Beach, et al., 2018) ethnographic research within educational sciences could consider generalisability as a possible contribution while discussing research findings. This could be understood as those specific findings of the current study (e.g., staff having negative associations with being CCTV monitored during work and Figure 11 "Parental involvement contextualised within the societal context in Bangladesh" p. 64) could be considered as \textit{generating generic concepts} (Delamont, & Atkinson in Beach et al., 2018). This due to that is not necessarily only could be understood in the specific context, but to be considered to be generalizable to other contexts outside the current context study is located in.

Credibility is strived for by transcribing all interviews fully, to guarantee that no data or information is kept inattentive to.
Chapter 5

5. Findings

5.1 Descriptions of the Early Childhood Education Centers

This section holds the descriptions of the ECE centers of the study. It is organised by initially describing the background of the center, with contexts, information and internal organisation structures. Following is the further descriptive contextualisation of the daily practices at the center with an insight to the participants realities. Moreover, the organisation of the section implies a separated description where Center A is fully described to be and followed by a full description of Center B. It is of utmost importance to highlight that neither of the centers of the study had formal policies or guidelines for parental involvement when the research was conducted.

5.1.1 An Insight from Center A

Center A is part of a large NGO in the Dhaka area which has various social venues and projects. The NGO focuses its efforts on hospitals, institutes for higher education, book distribution, child rights advocates, and hajj finaciation. However, international funding and foreign investment is decreasing and the NGO has adopted new strategies to maintain the social enterprises. The funding is described as decreasing due to the overall economic development Bangladesh is undergoing. With Bangladesh qualifying as a low-middle income country since 2015, investors have moved funding and relocated to countries still classified as low-income countries. Center A is an example of strategies being implemented where social enterprises are started with the incentive to generate internal funding for the NGO at large. Recognised is the fact that the running of ECE centers, especially Preschool Classes are lucrative, and the strategy is to start 20-30 new ECE centers within the NGO, with Center A of the study as a pilot and starting point.

Center A is an early childhood center in Dhaka that offers daycare and preschool-class. The daycare is run from 07.30-19.00 every day except Fridays (weekly holidays are Friday-Saturday in Bangladesh). The center further offers pedagogical activities, and children are cared for by caregivers and teachers. The enrolment fee is 20,000Tk (210€) with a monthly fee of 8000tk (85€). This fee can be seen in contrast to the average monthly income in Bangladesh of 8000Tk/month. A minority of the children enrolled at the center attend daycare. The majority are enrolled in preschool only. Preschool services is organised as a Preschool Class that comprises one two-hour session of which there is a dedicated head preschool teacher holding the class. These two hour pedagogical activities target pre-reading, writing,
and counting. Since Preschool Class is what most children are enrolled in, Center A provides Preschool Class in two allocated time slots, one from 10am-12am (“morning-batch”) and one at 4pm-6pm (“evening-batch”). The parents decide themselves if they wish for their child to attend either the morning or evening time slots 2 days/week, 3 days/week or 5 days/week with fees of 1000 Tk (11€)/per day of attendance. Center A has one head preschool teacher, three caregivers, one administrator/communicator, one daycare supervisor and one program manager. Furthermore, through the minor observations during field work, a description of the daily operations in Center A is provided to invite the reader to the realities of the participants of the study.

The early childhood education center is located in the central parts of Dhaka, surrounded by markets, educational settings and offices. A few alleys away from the hectic intersection where cars and rickshaws are competing for space, the center lies behind an anonymous metal gate with a small door open for entry. It is a residential housing complex with the first level allocated to the center. Removing the shoes outside the preschools inner doors moving inside after buzzing the doorbell. The first visual is the bright coloured play unit with a slide leading into a ball pit expanding into the room with two children playing, surrounded by three staff members observing and chanting uplifting words in Bangla and English. “There is no outside space for children in the city, so the play unit is important to stimulate motorical skills” the manager describes. The first room has a small outside balcony to the left and to the right a kitchen and a corridor leading on to three rooms; the toilet and shower room, the preschool classroom and a sleeping room. It is 10 o’clock and the Preschool Class is about to start. Children arrive during the first 30 minutes and are brought by staff members into the room, no parents are allowed during the class. Ten children and four staff members joined. The head preschool teacher sings songs, clapping hands enthusiastically, pointing at letters attached to the wall, A for apple, and I for Igloo. These children know the routines, songs and letters and count unison to twenty when instructed to by the head preschool teacher. The activity tables are brought out and materials flood the space on top, all children know what to do, so they assemble, draw and sort in the way taught. After preschool class ends, a majority of the children leave the center, getting picked up by parents at the entry door, the doorbell buzzes and staff members open exchanging brief words.

Three children and five staff members are left after the others are picked up by parents. “What do you usually do now?” - “Playzone time, lunch and napping” the manager answers, for the remaining children who are the ones enrolled in the daycare service provided by the center. “It is open from 7 to 19. The manager asks for recommendations and suggestions on the development of the center. In the meantime other staff members heat up the food brought by the remaining children’s parents, “Biryani with vegetables and some meat is common”. We sit down inside the room of the preschool class session, and staff members try to spoon feed the children, but the newly blown up balloons are catching all the children’s attention and the staff are happy when a small bite is taken in between hitting the balloons up to the ceiling. Before naptime one staff member showers and cleans the children - “do you shower them everyday?” - “yes we have to, the dirt from the street comes in the air”. The children are taken to the nap room, and the manager shows a newly rented space in the resident housing complex, just next to the preschool entry door. “This will be the parents waiting room”. We interrupt two men busy painting the walls white and the manager asks when it should be ready. The waiting room is for the parents of the children in the “batches” only attending the two hour preschool class. “We want to provide this for the parents because other centers do”.

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“They don't want to be outside during the mosquito-filled evening while waiting for their kids to finish”, “It is good for the competition”.

5.1.2 An Insight from Center B

Center B is privately owned and run by the owner together with her other ten ECE centers. As a part of the owners mission to establish ECE in Bangladesh, she has relocated after 35 years in Canada to her native city Dhaka. Initially, the owner started working on establishing ECE centers when new legislation came into action 2006; all companies with more than 40 female employees must provide “one or more rooms” allocated to children under the age of six. With this legislation many “corporate ECE-centers” or “employer-supported-childcare solutions' ’ (IFC, 2019) have been started. The owner of Center B presents her ECE business ideas to companies and governmental agencies to receive a two-year contract to provide ECE to the children of the employees. This is a phenomenon with high competition, where ECE contracts with the major international companies such as H&M, Grameen Phone and Adidas are valuable and lucrative. Although Center B is a public ECE center open to all parents and children, it is not connected to a company. It provides daycare and Preschool Class in joint provision, similar to that in Center A, Preschool Class is enroled by the majority of children. Daycare is provided for children from 6 months when maternity leave ends. Center B has approximately 40 children, one manager (the owner), one supervisor, one administrative staff, three preschool teachers and four daycare staff. An insight to the participant’s reality is also provided for Center B.

The boulevard across from one of Dhaka's affluent areas is busy. Some people are constructing a sidewalk out of bricks on the bridge while others are transporting tractor tires by rolling them through the midst of traffic jams. The area is bubbling with energy. Turning left away from the boulevard a labyrinth of allies are spreading out. To find the right alley to the preschool is difficult and helpful people from the neighborhood are reasoning - the place cannot be in this area? I've never heard of it, some say. Finally, getting out of the frustrated driver's car walking inwards on a small road covered in construction dust, a woman stands with a small child. Showing the information brochure from the preschool and pointing”keee?” (meaning what). She points into yet another anonymous residential apartment complex. Well inside, a garage security guard sees the brochure and points at the elevator, showing two fingers - second floor it must be.

While coming through the preschool door, a staff member greeted parents good morning and received children. It is a calm and welcoming room, filled with light, documentation and pictures of children playing. It is the reception room, parents must stay in this area and wave their children goodbye while the children are being brought into the preschool and daycare area behind a door. “It was quite difficult to find the place!” “yes, we don't have any signs or commercials in the area, you know… because of safety issues”. Behind the doors the daily activities are ongoing, a morning gathering is held with an enthusiastic head preschool teacher. Bangla and English are mixed and incorporated into the songs and rhymes. The manager introduces the foreign visitor and I'm given a small round sitting cushion by one of the older children. We observe the morning activities while she explains “I brought the electric textile piano from Canada and we try to use ICT here”. Outside of the morning gathering room, six children are playing separately with three teachers by their side chanting uplifting words in
Bangla instructing them. One child runs up and hugs my leg and wants me to join the activity he is doing. “These are the special children, they have Autism, ADHD and some other diagnoses” the manager mentions. “We are working with mainstreaming them into regular activities during some sessions but parents want them to have one on one interaction with teachers to stimulate everything”. Besides the group of children a 6 month old baby is being rocked in a car seat crib by a caregiver. “She doesn't have any grandmother to be at home with, and the parents are working, so she is in the daycare but not with the other children, she is too small, it is for safety reasons”.

To the left of the main room lies a kitchen, sleep room and toilet and on the right a preschool classroom. All rooms have various lists and protocols attached to the walls. A milestone progression list “if a baby counts to ten, this is a milestone, or if a baby cuts with scissors” the supervisor explains. In the kitchen is a diagram over the recommended amount of nuts a child should consume according to age group “this is a part of the food information we provide to the parents, because they bring the children's food, and we want to make them understand and not to bring sweets and only rice for them” the manager adds. Preschool class is held simultaneously as other activities, some children are doing play-doh and others have their turn in the preschool class. A session with the head preschool teacher and six children aged five is held. The children are given stencils of a dolphin and the task is to colour it in the right color and write the letter underneath. When they have finished, a red traffic cone is placed on their desk “good job you finished first!”.

5.2 Findings in Interviews

This chapter is organised by presenting the findings from the interviews of each center separately. The findings from Center A and Center B are presented through the themes that occurred through the thematic analysis. These are presented chronologically, where the operationalisation of the centers are described in the first section, and experiences are described in the following section.

5.3 Operationalisations of Parental Involvement in Center A

This first section presents the themes related to participants’s descriptions of operationalisations in Center A. The section consists of five themes and are presented below.

5.3.1 Enrolment Meetings as Initial Forum for Understanding Parental Needs and Demands

Teachers and staff members described how the initial contact with parents made visible needs and demands about the purpose with enrolment in the center. These meetings enabled a generalised understanding of the parental group as a whole and the current needs and demands
within the group. Teachers and staff members described how both the generalised understanding and specific demands from individual parents set a frame for the overall parental involvement at the center. These became a starting point within the parental involvement where topics and voiced demands during these meetings is what guided the following parental contact and further on the continuous parental involvement. They described how the generalised understanding of parental needs and demands holds concerns connected to growing demands for ECE and mostly mothers' realisation of ECE as a better alternative for child development than the traditional way of keeping children at home together with grandparents. Moreover, as a starting point that sets the frame for continuous parental involvement is the parental concern about the child's socialisation and the need for them to interact with other children. Specifically, “speech delays” were described as a reason for enrolling children at the center:

“We have a lot of parents coming to the centers because of speech delay and professionals now recommend us, because there are not a lot of centers like ours so for speech delay, doctors recommend taking the children to a preschool or a daycare... The reasons for speech delays are lack of awareness from the parents, too much screen time, they let them watch youtube all the time. It's a big issue in the bangladeshi society”. P1C1

Further parental needs and demands concerns the parental view of ECE as school preparation:

“Parents put their children in our preschool so that the child can get used to staying without their mothers and fathers and learn colours and shapes, rhymes so they can answer during the interviews. I’ve had a lot of children like that (...) “Because school, they will take you(the child) to the gate and return them after two and half three hours, so first, children who have never been separated from their parents”” -P2C1

The “interview” mentioned is in regard to the school interviews which are held two years before enrolling in prestigious primary schools. Teachers experience that many parents have this motivation for enrolling in ECE in general and in Center A specifically.

5.3.2 CCTV Provision as Central to the Operationalisation

Central to the operationalisation of parental involvement in Center A is CCTV\(^6\) provision. It was initially provided to all parents with a child enrolled in the daycare practices, but they experienced that parents with children in preschool class also demanded access to it. The initiative to offer CCTV access for parents was taken by the manager, where the need for “competitive advantages” was described:

“I felt that if I have CCTV, since there is a lot of competition, I will get more children and it worked. I have a lot of more children because I provide the cctv camera (...) since it’s (preschool and daycare) not subsidised, establishing a preschool is really hard. In Bangladesh I have seen a lot of preschools that close after a while. So we need (to get) ahead of competition”- P1C1

\(^6\) Closed-Circuit-Television also known as video surveillance.
CCTV access was provided to parents through an app and has coverage of the whole facility except for the children’s sleeping and changing room. Parents from the daycare services and the manager, who often worked off-site, could monitor the activities all day:

“We have CCTV in the whole centre and we have it here (sleep and breastfeeding area)... but we have it closed. So the parents can’t access this room, because we change the children’s diapers and clothes in this room, it’s for security issues, expect for this room, all rooms have cctv cameras” P1C1

5.3.3 Restrictions of Parental Involvement

Teachers and staff members in center A described how parental involvement is operationalised differently in regards to “which parents” it was involving. The participants described that general interactions with parents within the daycare is further common and frequent than with parents within the Preschool Class. This being due to the restrictions within how the daily activities are operationalised; parents with children in Preschool Class dropped their child off at the entry to a caregiver, who led the child into the classroom, where the head preschool teacher held the class. After two hours, the parent picked their child up at the entry and shared a few words about the wellbeing and activity from preschool class. The interactions between the head preschool teacher and preschool class parents were limited. The manager motivated the restrictions by describing events causing Center A to infuse these restrictions of parental involvement:

“We used to allow parents access in the play zone, they could sit there, but lately I feel like it was a hassle, it was a lot of problems, lots of problems were created. They were interfering, going inside the classroom, plus the parents themself were fighting and having issues, then I decided, in the last two months, that we won’t allow any parent inside the center (...) they literally started fighting in front of the kids in the center. From that time I don’t allow inside the center” - P1C1

This event described how parental interference and conflicts in the center affected daily activities. Events similar to this occurred while parents were waiting for their child to finish preschool class or during the short time of social interactions with other parents in the time after class finished. By allowing parents physical presence at the center, it hindered and disturbed the daily activities. This led to changes in the operationalisations since there had to be mitigations of the negative impacts on the daily activities that parental involvement brought.

5.3.4 Physical Involvement in Daily Practices

Staff members (caregivers) had additional contact with parents in the daily practices in comparison to the other staff groups. Their interaction with parents involved practical issues with emphasis on reporting events of the day concerning basic early childhood development:

“I receive them in the morning, when the parents come to pick the child up, they ask me what
did I feed them, what did they do all day, did they sleep and what happened (...) “I talk with them but not so much, just what is necessary” - P5C1

“In the morning they come and explain the food, and the snack and they explain the clothes and deposit the clothes and food to me” - P4C1

Moreover, staff members (caregivers) were aware of what issues parents brought up during the conversations, which often regarded the safety of the children and to hinder conflicts between them. The caregivers described how this knowledge made it unnecessary to interact with parents continuously:

“The madams(mothers) explain how to take care of the babies and the children and they told her and I work that way... now I don't need to discuss because I understand how to take care of the babies .. before I used to have these conversations though... I don't leave the kids alone and I stay with them so they don't get hurt or fight” - P4C1

“the parents give advice on how to take care of the child this way” - P5C1

Furthermore, in the daily parental involvement parents mostly communicated with staff through directions on how to take care of their child. Although, parents did not ask caregivers for advice regarding their child:

“The parents give advice on how to take care of the child this way” (...) no they never ask us” - P4C1

The CCTV was described as the reason for why parents don’t communicate with staff by asking about further specific issues such as who their child is playing with during their days at the center:

“No one in bangla ask about this (who their child is playing with)... because they can see in the CCTV” - P5C1

In terms of physical involvement, Center A grants specific areas of the facility to parents and their needs. The center had a breastfeeding area without CCTV monitoring and recently started renting an extra space next door to the center:

“So in the evening (...) the morning batch parents who are not working and who are staying here and they do yoga downstairs and are happy (outside the centre) but in the evening it gets dark and there is a lot of mosquitos and the parents don’t have any place to stay, so I gradually I have seen the number of students going down. (...) So to get ahead of competition I feel that we need to provide the parents with a place to sit, a small room” - P1C1

Since parents were not allowed inside the center, those who had their child in Preschool class’s “morning batch” spent their waiting time (2hrs) doing yoga in the yard of the apartment complex (same as which the center is located in). Although, since this waiting time option was not appealing to parents in the “evening batch” due to mosquitos (and risk of dengue fever) the center had to provide other options. This was also because the manager had seen a decline of enrolments and parents voicing concerns regarding their needs.
5.3.5 Digital Involvement

Center A also enabled other kinds of digital possibilities for parental involvement. Whilst enrolling a child in the preschool or daycare, parents were invited to join a Whatsapp group. The digital platform was mostly run by the manager or head preschool teacher. In the group, the center chooses what material to share with the parents, and it involves sharing videos or specific activities, pictures of children's arts and crafts as well as sequences of children singing. All parents had the same access to the group and could see materials of all of the children. It was within this forum where most communication between parents and staff on pedagogical aspects occurred. Staff used this platform for communication regarding pedagogy and for presenting underlying motivations and purposes of the activities. Parents communicated positive and encouraging messages with direct appreciation for activities to the staff and they also complimented the children of other parents in the video:

“We also have an WhatsApp group and we keep the parents updated and umm to keep them updated. The parents can always knock me or call me up from the centre to ask how their children are doing” - P1C1

“What they do during preschool class.. We say crafting and we show the parents when they come.. Sometimes we video this and show them and they are so happy. We send in the whatsapp group”. P2C1

Other social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram were also used for digital parental involvement, although within these there was not much communication or parental involvement with the enrolled parents. These forums acted as media channels for recruiting new parents, enrolment, as well as offers on discounts on enrolment fees and so forth.

5.4 Experiences of Parental Involvement in Center A

This second section presents the themes related to participants’s descriptions of experiences in Center A. The section consists of five themes and are presented below.

5.4.1 Parental Mistrust and Lack of Knowledge Impacting Parental Involvement

All teachers and staff members experienced that parental mistrust is a widespread issue in Bangladesh and in Dhaka. They also described that this mistrust affected their experiences of parental involvement in their center. The CCTV is closely connected to their experiences of parental mistrust. The CCTV is experienced on the one hand as a useful tool for transparency
and accountability, but on the other hand as a status quo. Parental trust is depending on the possibility of monitoring teacher and staff actions:

“*It's because the parents don't trust us*” - P3C1

“I don't appreciate this too much, because it is basically a trusting issue. And trusting...If the parents trust in us... and in Bangladesh system CCTV is a good idea, that parents can see what we are doing, they are doing this and because this parents can rely on us” - P3C1

During the daily parental involvement in the conversations, this issue was also apparent. Parents in the daycare service could pick up their child and notice a bruise or a mosquito bite and immediately suspect teachers and staff members of misconduct. The CCTV was used as an argument by teachers and staff to reassure parents that they haven't neglected or hurt the child:

“We tell them we provide CCTV also... “you can see there what your babies are doing” but some are okay and some are not. Some parents say ”no no what happened there, you are not taking care of them” - P5C1

Teachers and staff described that parental preconditions prior to enrolment shaped their experiences of parental involvement in their daily practices. All teachers and staff members described that parental lack of knowledge regarding both early childhood education in general, the purpose of the ECE center and a fundamental lack of knowledge of early childhood development impacted parental involvement negatively. In the daily practices, the parental lack of knowledge was described as the main issue that caused negative experiences for all staff members and how it impacted and shaped the overall interaction with parents. Parental involvement in the daily practices revolved around issues of children’s food intake, behaviour and acquisition of academic skills:

“Yes, for the daycare especially. They...want the children to eat it all, the children don’t want to eat all things, but if they don’t eat if they don’t want to eat, the parents call us up and say `my child is not eating, why is my child not eating’” - P1C1

They described how they experienced that parents' interpretation of their child’s behaviour was manifested through the parental involvement. Parents' misunderstanding of the children’s behaviour and developmental stages at home often led to demands on the center to take action. Specifically, when it concerned nutrition, staff experienced that parents demanded that the center should compensate for the child’s lack of food intake in the home, and parents sent large portions to the center for the staff to feed the child during the day. The staff spoon fed all of the children at the center. Despite some efforts by the staff to discuss the importance of children becoming self dependent, and attempting to eat by themself, parents expected staff to spoon feed the children:

“In the home the children might bite... and they don't understand so daycare... so parents like Daycare and their children understand many things. They see that is good preschool and they see that the child is... sharing, playing and many things and they like it” P4C1 (...) “parents expects the caregivers to feed the children” P1C1
Furthermore, teachers and staff experienced that parents had a positive reaction to daycare since children's behaviour changed in the center. There was a discrepancy between how the child was perceived in the home by parents, versus in the center. Parents observed positive behaviours and development of the child in the center and this affected their view of ECE.

5.4.2 Parental Involvement Compromised Pedagogical Efforts

Moreover, there were further aspects experienced by the teacher’s and staff on how parental involvement compromised the pedagogical efforts at the center;

“some parents demand to entry classroom, to see if their child is happy and to see everything, when the mother go they (children) are crying, jumping and mothers also ask why dont allow (To let parents enter the class) it's difficult” - P4C1

Parents handing over the child to the caregiver at the entry (caregiver led the child into the preschool class) caused the child separation anxiety, like any other separation of child and their parents might cause. After the emotional eruption, when the child had calmed down inside the classroom, some parents demanded to go into the classroom to check if their child was okay. When mothers then entered the classroom, the child became emotional again, since this caused another separation. At this point parents were unaware that it was the emotional reaction natural among small children, but they were rather questioning the method of not letting parents inside the classroom, rather than questioning how their actions impacted the child in the setting. Staff experienced that parental involvement and communication with parents regarding these specific interactions within the center is difficult to handle. Moreover, in connection to the sometimes short enrolment periods, teachers and staff members focused their pedagogical efforts on developing specific abilities amongst the children. This due to meet parental demands that were voiced during the parental involvement:

“To make parents happy now when the child is coming for this short time we practice food habits and speech… so the parents are happy. We tell them to not have a gap and to come regularly to preschool” P3C1

5.4.3 Parental Involvement as Micromanaging and Source of Conflict

Teachers and staff experienced that the CCTV impacted the daily parental involvement and that it created conflicts. Parents observed events in the center through the CCTV and commented on the practices in conversations with staff:

“They are arguing with us, “why this, why not this”, then we manage them, we tell them some admit here and some don't want to because they don't believe in us. They are afraid” - P2C1

They also received specific requests during the daily interaction with parents concerning comments on pedagogical and caring efforts:
“They want the caregivers... in Bangladesh kids are not that self dependent. There are parents that say my child needs... likes to be held so could you please hold him longer... could you hold him all the time” - P1C1

Moreover, teachers and staff member also experienced that parents are micromanaging the daily practices through what they have observed in the CCTV and phone:

“They saw in their mobile and they call us and ask what the babies are doing. “they are not eating, now it's time to put out their food” - P2C1

Parents were aware of the daily schedule at the center, and called the staff up when they thought they were running late according to it. Staff answered the phone confirming that, for example, lunch was about to start.

5.4.4 Violations of Staff’s Accountability and Integrity

Teachers and staff experienced that parental involvement implied an interdependency on the CCTV. On the one hand as a necessary measure to ensure parents that they were trustworthy, but on the other hand, this was experienced as a violation of their accountability and integrity. Although, the CCTV was also experienced as a safeguard for teachers and staff that could protect them from parents' mistrust, suspicion and conflicts in the daily interactions;

“The parents wont believe in them(teachers) but they will believe in us because they can see. Parents tell us this... and in Bangladesh there are security issues...” P2C1

“Most parents don't trust us, so with the CCTV cameras I'm safe” -P4C1

Staff used the CCTV as an safeguarding argument with parents when accused of mistreatment or conduct. Examples of this was when parents noticed mosquito bites or bruises that occurred in the childrens play during the day. Another example was when children told their parents stories of what happened at the center during the day, where fantasies and reality were mixed up, and parents took their child's words very literate. This caused the parents to confront teachers and staff with accusations. They experienced that these situations were helped by referring to CCTV surveillance, so parents could see for themselves what happened during the day:

“and i say apuu you said that it happened here, if you want me i can show you the cctv camera and i'll show you it didn't happen” - P3C1

Since the manager (P1C1) was translating for P4C1 and P5C1, their experiences and possibility to speak on this issue might have been impacted. While asking them about their experience of the CCTV they answered:

P5C1 "(Laughing nervously)
P1C1: I tell her to tell me more freely and not just because im here

[Bangla translation]
P5C1: it's their right and it's a necessity”

The manager (P1C1) was aware of the staff’s uncomfortability and spoke in general terms of her experiences of the CCTV and how she noticed the staff’s behaviour in the daily activities. The manager worked off-site often, and when she monitored the center through the CCTV she noticed that teachers and staff couldn't be seen on any of the cameras, and she was aware that they were in the only room without CCTV to get some privacy:

“The teachers and staff is not comfortable with this… they are mostly in this room (only room without cctv cameras) they want a little privacy” - P1C1

5.4.5 Parental Involvement with Different Staff Groups

Staff members (caregivers) described that there were differences in how parents treated them as staff members. Since most of the parental involvement in the center was with caregivers, these were also the staff group that handled parents emotions and suspicions:

“Yes there is a difference, the parents also treat the (staff) differently... “ - P5C1

The manager was also aware of this and described how the parents tried to compensate for the mistreatment of the caregivers by giving them gifts during Eid festivals:

“We have two Eid festivals and all the parents give the caregivers very nice gifts and they always try to compensate”- (P1C1)

5.5 Operationalisations of Parental Involvement in Center B

This third section presents the themes related to participants’s descriptions of operationalisations in Center B. The section consists of six themes and are presented below.

5.5.1 Family Involvement Strategies

Center B operationalised strategies to involve a larger part of families in the process of enrolment. The staff described that it was most common to meet with mothers, and that they were the most frequent family members involved in the enrolment process of the child in the ECE center. Mothers initially went to the center to talk to teachers and staff, to see the facilities and consider if their child should enroll. Staff then specifically invited fathers via the
mother to visit together with them. Moreover, the center also invited grandmothers to visit since they were the most hesitant towards enrolling grandchildren in ECE:

“Mothers is coming most of the time to speak to us, fathers they don't want to come” - P6C2

(...) “and grandmothers, they don't want to come, so its like very tight situation, so I invite the fathers first (both parents to come to centers) and then i invite the grandmoms” - P7C2

The manager described that inviting grandmothers to the center was a strategy to enable further support from them in their grandchild's education. Since grandmothers were hesitant to enroll their grandchild, the center focused on describing the pedagogical aspects of the center to convince them of the importance of early education for their future:

“So this is the reason we also invite grandmothers to the centers, and fathers to visit us. We show them that is not about that they don't care about the grandchildren but here is the learning processes we are doing at preschool, and with the kids, and for the children's future this is needed” - P6C2

5.5.2 Collaboration with Experts for Accountability

The staff at Center B described that by using “experts” in their operationalisation of the center was both a method for attracting more parents to enroll their child in the center, and also for showing accountability. Experts were involved in their operations of parental involvement and communication from the enrolment of the child and throughout multiple instances when the center was interacting with parents. This was described as a collaboration between the center and individual experts from a variety of areas:

“One therapist, dietitian, psychologist, they report in collaboration to management, and which category the baby is in; speech communication delay, autistic baby, ASD baby” - P7C2

Specifically, during the enrolment meetings, teachers and staff “scanned” the child to see if there were any developmental delays. They then had the capacity to further refer parents to specific experts in hospitals. The center’s network of experts increased their own accountability towards parents;

“At first when the babies are coming we are scanning them, we are the experts on eced. If we find any kind of delay, we offer them to go to the city centre to the hospital (...) we just suggest they go there, when they are going there, child development centre. They are doing a psychological assessment on the child” - P6C2

Moreover, the center described that while supporting children with developmental delays, parents gain respect for teachers whilst their accountability increased in the parental interaction.

Furthermore, since this instance of initial parental involvement presented a possibility to show accountability, it also presented a forum to enable a holistic approach to individual children’s learning development:
“So what we are doing when they (doctors or child psychologists) give us the paper, we are managing what to do with the baby. They are giving us advice and we are mainstreaming the baby with this little management” - P7C2

5.5.3 Parental Workshops and Education

The method of using experts continued into other forums of parental involvement in Center B. The manager described that this method was useful since parents listened more to experts than to teachers and staff, even when teachers discussed the same issues with parents as the expert did:

“During workshop we also invite some resource person to had knowledge about the baby nutrition practitioner or child psychology, so when parents hear their messages, parents more easily receive these things” - P7C2

Moreover, the teacher and staff described how the center operationalised parental involvement by establishing parental guidelines, code of conducts and other policies. This due to being able to have a physical document to refer to if parents broke rules at the center:

“We give the parents a code of conduct and a policy of enrolment, they have to give 1 month notice before we admit children, also a policy for pick up and drop off. Policy on safety, cameras, there is five… medicine consent form, antibiotic, we don't administer this, they have to give it to them” - P7C2

They also described that they held mandatory parent meetings three months after enrolment and in connection to this they also offered a one-to-one meetings with parents where they could discuss specific issues and concerns:

“After 3 months we are doing the parents meeting, and we offer a workshop every parent comes there and if they want 1 to 1 sitting with teachers about their baby or any other issue. We talk about all the issues, diapers issues, camera issues, safety issues, so we invite all parents. We have some messages for the parents that we want them to know, and they should know about these things, they communicate about issues they have” - P6C2

Parental workshops were described by staff as a vital forum for parental involvement. The workshops became the forum where staff could direct focus towards parental responsibilities, clarifying the center’s role and how collaboration could be made possible. Moreover, the workshop also became a forum where teachers could target specific parental learning outcomes connected to ECE and ECD. This aim was also utilised through the newsletter and other notes, informational pamphlets that existed at the center as well as sent home to parents:

“We also communicate with the newsletter and activities calendar and also after Parents meeting we try to give them some messages about positive child guidelines, and workshops” - P7C2
The content mediated through the meetings were on specific topics that could enable a further holistic approach to the children. Also for increasing the outreach of the centers competence and to impact more children in families households:

“We have a workshop, one is positive guidelines, parents handling, homework, sometimes they don't want to so we teach them how to do homework, that is we do the workshop and they apply it to their older sibling and the one child in daycare, both children in the families get help by this. I teach them about nutrition, because they give the children so much food, that's why I have workshops. We give them the lecture from a nutritionist about portions, food groups” - P7C2

Furthermore, the content aimed to foster parental responsibility and knowledge about developmental stages of the child as well as positive parenting guidelines:

“The positive parenting workshop we convey the message on how to communicate with your baby, how to play and what materials you give the baby. How to communicate with the baby when she is having a tantrum, in the winter season how to care for the baby and such things..what is the quality time, parents think that youtube is quality time, they give them the tablet and work on the laptop. Also we give them one on the behavioural problem, what is the problem, why is the baby bed wetting and why is the baby lying, why is this happening... how to handle the tantrum and how to handle the babies, also the nutrition part, how a 6 month baby is eating and what food they should give them. Also that they should know that the pink eye is spreading and explain... so if someone comes to us and say uhh the pink eye is hurting her we call the pediatrician and they explain” - P6C2.

Moreover, the content of the workshop was also included for the purpose of providing parents with tools to increase their understanding of the child; why tantrums happen, why children lie and why bedwetting occurs. Other issues connected to nutrition and well-being were also addressed in this forum.

5.5.4 Restrictions of Physical Parental Involvement

There were some instances where Center B had to restrict parental involvement and interaction in the daily operations. Parents were not allowed inside the preschool or daycare but were allowed to drop off and pick up their child in the foyer/reception. In this room the administrator sat and received the parents. The manager described how the issue of separation anxiety motivated this restriction and the supervisor argued that it was for the development of the children and to enable smooth operations at the center;

“Because of separation anxiety, kids get this very easily, even though the doorbell, at certain times we don't ring the bell during the day” - P6C2 (...) we are doing these kinds of policies for the betterment of the babies. We think about their development, betterly and the smooth operations here” - P7C2 (...) “parents cooperate them i'm here at the center, when i'm not here they just run inside” - P6C2 (Manager)

Although the manager also described that the parents only follow this rule if she herself is present at the center. Moreover, with the same motivations of having smooth operation at the
center, parents are not allowed to call during the day unless in an emergency, although parents still call asking about how their child is doing:

“And we don't receive phone calls at 2 oclock, and parents should only call if there is an emergency, but they call and ask about the food” - P8C2

5.5.5 Collegial Methods in the Daily Practises

In the operationalisation of Center B there were collegial methods for parental involvement. There were differences between how teachers and caregivers should interact with parents, and how managers and supervisors should interact with them. These methods were also described as something that parents noticed, but not always appreciated and that they led to confrontations:

“We ask the parents why they don't trust the teachers, and parents say that our messages are different from the teachers... because they are communicating with them directly and we do it differently, with a schedule, we first go to the baby and say hi baby and then we are giving them the information... so we are also training them” - P7C2

The supervisor described that teachers communicated “directly” to parents while addressing issues, and parents interpreted it as “negative” since the interaction held emergent issues regarding their child. Parents did not feel comfortable in this direct communication since teachers did not use any “attenuating approaches”. The supervisors on the other hand described the “schedule” for communications with parents that they used in the daily practices. This schedule held the “attenuanting approaches” where the supervisor and manager first complemented and gave attention to the child in front of the parent, to then initiate the conversation, which also held emergent issues regarding their child, but parents didn't react negatively.

To render conflicts in the daily interactions between parents and teachers, the manager and supervisor trained teachers and caregivers on how to interact with parents:

“(...)and when we are training them to always be positive and to always give positive feedback. And for this reason, if the parents are not trusting them or say anything to them or are angry with them, we tell them (teacher and staff) to just say yes apuu and smile. To say yes apuu we will take care of it, we see it like this” (...) “They are always showing 'happy' but sometimes parents want more info and raise critical questions, so I tell them (teachers) to ask our seniors... apuu and tell the parents to talk to the seniors and the teachers to always be smiling. And we tell parents to communicate with teachers because they work close to the babies” - P7C2

Teachers described that this approach implied not conveying negative information even when it concerned a child, but to let managers and supervisors handle interactions that held “negative messages” to parents. Moreover, teachers should not answer critical questions from parents, but refer them to speak with the manager and supervisor instead:

“But don't answer any kind of critical question, just say yes apuu yes apuu (teachers to parents)” - P8C2
“Parents are always taking it negatively but we are always positive about information” - P9C2 (...)

Although, teachers described that when conflicts occur between themselves and parents, if they continued their work undisturbed and not attending to parental criticism, parents' trust increased when they observed the teacher continuing their work:

“Parents sometimes don't trust us, but we carry on with the work and what we should do with the babies. And when parents see that teachers are carrying with their work, parents trust them more because they see that they are continuing working.” - P8C2

5.5.6 Managers Acting as Barriers

The operationalisation in Center B also revolved around the manager, supervisor and administration staff whom acted as barriers between parents and other staff member groups:

“We as managers are like a barrier... We talk to teachers...so everytime I come to the center I communicate with parents and teachers, and about the current things here” - P6C2

The staff member working as both the administrator and teacher (P9C2) described that the barrier worked to increase parental trust towards teachers, as well as to increase the confidence of the teachers. The manager and supervisor conducted weekly observations at the center, to keep updated with topics and conflicts; they could support teachers by confirming their information or events in conversations with parents:

“We go via the supervisor level so parents will trust us and the teacher will feel confident. That is why every week make an observation with one daycare to know about the topics and conflicts in the bottom-level, and communicate yes yes we see that the baby is doing this and this is not happening at the daycare. Noo nothing has happening here, how this is possible”

-P9C2

The barrier also functioned as a operationalisation for rendering conflicts and limiting interaction between teacher and parents in the daily practices:

“Sometimes parents are very rude with the teachers (...) just if anything happened just to communicate with us first” - P7C2

The barriers were described to be in use even in every day information transfer:

“Parents talk to us and we talk to teachers... also observation, parents can talk to us about the food is not provided properly by teachers and if there is some issue with clothes. At first we investigate the issue of what is happening, then we message the parent” - P6C2
“I communicate with parents, and they ask me, we update children files, or parents ask about certain food for children and teachers know, they ask and we give them(teachers) the messages. Did they eat, did they sleep, did they have a good day?” - P7C2

The everyday information transfer obtained issues on food preparation or clothes which was first looked into by the manager, talking to the teacher to later communicate back to parents.

5.6 Experiences of Parental Involvement in Center B

This fourth section presents the themes related to participants’s descriptions of experiences in Center B. The section consists of three themes and are presented below.

5.6.1 Community Mistrust and Social Taboos Impacting Parental and Community Involvement

In Center B was community mistrust and social taboos described as to have an impact on parental involvement. In the initial involvement with parents and community through the enrolment process, grandmothers were described to present the most hesitation towards enrolling their grandchildren at the center. The hesitation was experienced as a manifestation of the social taboos existing in Dhaka and Bangladesh:

“They are the ones that are stopping the children from going to preschool, they are saying ‘Why do you want to put the child in preschool/daycare? I'm here!’ ‘Why do you want to put a social taboo to the family, to my generation! Children should learn from us!’(grandmothers)”

- P6C2 (...) this is how they think, it's the bangladeshi culture and generation, they think that “grandmothers are not taking care of grandchildren (by enrolling in preschool) and this is humiliating to them. Like they are are not authorised to take care of grandchildren or that they are not good at it, “that is why you enroll in preschool”” - P7C2

This was described as a common point of departure when it came to involvement with specific families. Also with the realisation that it mattered for the individual family to have a supervisor at the center that has understanding and methods to explain, involve and render the social taboos that enrolment brought on the grandmothers.

Moreover, staff members experienced that parental mistrust led to specific questions about the daily practices. Parents had to get reassurance of how their child could receive proper care at the center when teacher-child ratios were lower than what parents wished them to be:

“Parents ask how can you help my baby is she is crying when there is not good ratio, and if there is other children how can you have one to one with my baby is she is say, so I explain how i do it practically” - P7C2

Furthermore, social taboos were also described as hindering parental involvement with the incentive to increase the learning development for children in need of extra support. These experiences came from noticing parental resistance to discuss inclusive pedagogy during
workshops. The manager experienced that parents became very sensitive when discussing or implying that a child might be in need of extra support or inclusive pedagogy:

“And the we give the workshop about behaviour guidelines, we cannot do the inclusive one, because parents get very sensitive about their baby if we talk about this problem, Noo my baby is fine, no problems... parents don't want to admit that the children have delays” - P7C2

Teachers also experienced parental mistrust, although it was manifested in the way parents choose to seek the highest authority available to interact with. Teachers experienced that parents go directly to the manager instead of communicating with teachers regarding current issues:

“This always happens (that parents go to managers instead)” - P9C2

The same issue was present amongst the manager and higher level staff, where they have to seek higher authority to get across information to parents by using the experts collaborating with the center:

“Because if I say the expert is saying this, parents don’t receive my message (as a teacher). That’s how we convey them” - P7C2

Moreover, teachers and staff members experienced that parents asked why the center did not provide CCTV monitoring. The supervisor described how parents misunderstand the purpose of CCTV and that it conflicts with the idea of parental involvement:

“We have close monitoring, parents should know when we change diapers, which babies have rash... they should know that we are monitoring this and that we know where there is a mosquito bite so we have close monitoring... we have no cctv camera, we are corporate daycare and parents ask why you have no ccvt, and the camera vision is not the purpose... so parents misunderstand this... parents should ask us instead, we have some videoclip, we upload this with facebook or chat group” - P6C2

5.6.2 ECE as Parental Service and School Preparation

The manager experienced that parents viewed the center as school preparation for their children and that this impacted what services the center provided to families. The manager described that parents enrolled their children for a shorter period of time with an option to pay extra for one to one classes. Moreover, she described how there was a high turnover of children at the center:

“There is an issue... preschooling... They want to make ready their children to enroll in school. When parents know we have preschool sessions at the daycare they want to enroll. They enroll the child for one year, for the child to get prepared. I have a lot of turnover amongst children - P7C2 (...) mostly three year old, and I ask is he going to school? ‘Yeess in july’, so I know I have six months and I ask the parents if they want to pay extra for the one to one session for the child with a teacher or do you want informal regular mainstream education for them. They choose and I have a price for that, so they pay full-day charge and extra for the
one to one session (...) yes that is how we solve the problem. Before I was... okay daycare.. But it's the preschool that is making the big income, it is a huge business in Bangladesh. The daycares here are very smart so they are now starting the preschooling” - P6C2

The manager experienced that since parents request “to make ready” their children for school, this awareness made the center prepare a solution to this demand by extra fees and service.

Additionally, the parental mistrust issue was experienced by teacher P8C2 by parents treated them like service staff and that the caregiving is supposed to be carried out by them because the parents paid them to do so:

“Teachers are not trusted by the parents, and they are treated like this that they are paying us and we are doing the caregiving” -P8C2

5.6.3 Parental Involvement as Source of Conflict

Parental involvement was described as associated with various conflicts. Teachers experienced that parental mistrust often led to conflicts in daily practices. The manager described that parents insult teachers in front of her and that there was a lack of compassion for their effort for the children:

“We are saying these things but the parents are not trusting us, they are just arumenting with us” - P8C2

“Sometimes parents are angry... communication with teachers and parents... when I'm in front of them. Sometimes there is bad expressions from parents and teacher... teachers says apoo i do a lot for your baby, but parents cannot understand and see this... parents say why is people like you here” - P6C2

Moreover, if a parent asked to do an observation at the center (which was possible if a parent was concerned about the care of their child in the center) regarding eg. diaper rashes or mosquito bites, other parents reacted by also accusing teachers of misconduct. Teachers experienced that this happens as a protective reaction from parents, despite they are not concerned for their own child, parents would rather join other parents in their accusation of teachers:

“But when one parent is doing an observation, the whole parental group is protecting themself (...) they come to us and accuse us like why this is happening... maybe also parents who are not affected, the issue is not about their own baby but with some other baby in the parental group” - P7C2

Additionally, the manager described that this experience was shared amongst more teachers in the center she is supervising:
“Sometimes they communicate with the teaching and raising their voice and threatening them, teachers communicate with us... this is happening in 3 out of my 6 centers, teachers calling us managers and inform that parents is threatening us” - P7C2

Furthermore, the supervisor experienced that conflict with parents occur when communication was vague, and when parents manifest limited knowledge on ECD, and that this impacted parental involvement:

“So parents are calling to ask what is happening at the center? (...) did someone put something in her ear because my baby is touching her ear a lot (...) We as managers explain the situation after communication with teachers, like the child is not crying in the daycare during the day, and noone has put food in her ear during the days... we tell the parents that the first thing they should do is to go to the doctor (...) the doctor says it's the tonsils because it is cold season (...) this is more common for the babies. So when parents are not communicating this message, I have to ask them and I call them because they have not come to school for some days, and the parents answer sorry apuu I was just panicking... doctor said tonsils... but (parents asks manager) why did you not tell me that it was tonsils when baby was in center, she was crying... that's why she is sick” - P7C2

The center advised the parent on how to handle the situation with the sick child, providing support to the mother simultaneously as managing the reaction as well as encouraging the parent to communicate about the events.

5.7 Summary of Findings

The previous chapter presented findings of the study, and this chapter summarises all findings to avoid data overload for enabling the ethnographic study to remain comprehensible (Cohen, 2018, p.1334). Presented below is a direct comparison of equivalent themes from both centers findings that occurred through the thematic analysis. Initially answering the first research question of how parental involvement is experienced in the ECE centers?

Answering the first research question implied similar findings between the centers. In Center A:

**Parental mistrust and lack on knowledge impacting parental involvement**

Parental mistrust was described as widespread and as impacting the participants experiences of their involvement. It was closely associated with the use of CCTV in the center, where parental trust was described as dependent on the possibility of CCTV monitoring at the same time as it hindered the possibility for actual parental trust in the daily practices. Parental Knowledge deficiency of ECE and ECD was described as the main issue contributing to negative experiences of parental involvement.

Findings in Center B showed:

**Community mistrust and social taboos impacting parental involvement**

Staff experienced a community mistrust towards ECE in general, where social taboos impacted the willingness to enroll children at the center. They experienced that grandmothers
were most hesitant, concerned with social taboos and shame associated with ECE as a solution for grandmothers perceived inability to care for the families children. Staff also experienced the appreciation from the community when staff had understanding and methods for rendering concerns. Staff experienced social taboos through parents and the perceived hesitation towards acknowledging children’s need of extra support due to developmental delays. Staff also experienced parental mistrust due to parents seeking the highest authority to interact with while engaging in parental involvement.

Moreover, diversity of experiences was found between the centers. Findings in Center A showed;

**Parental involvement compromised pedagogical efforts**

Specific events in the daily practices where parents trying to enter the preschool classroom was experienced as a hindrance to the pedagogical efforts being made. Parents not being reflective of how their actions impacted the children caused hinders in the communication between parents and staff. Due to sometimes short enrolment periods for children in the center, staff experienced how they had to adjust pedagogical efforts to satisfy parental demands on learning outcomes for children as a preparation for primary school enrolment.

**Parental involvement as micromanaging and source of conflict**

Staff experienced that parents micromanaged the daily practices via the CCTV. Parents called pointing out that the schedule was not being followed. Staff also experienced how parents had specific requests and demands after monitoring through the CCTV for teachers to hold the children longer since the child liked and needed it.

**Violations of staff accountability and integrity**

The CCTV was experienced as the interdependency upon it where it on the one hand acted as a necessity for parental trust, on the other hand as a violation of their accountability. Staff used the CCTV to safeguard them if accused of mistreatment of the children. The manager was aware of staff’s uncomfortability with the CCTV, where they hid inside the only room without CCTV when they needed to elude monitoring. The staff were hesitant to speak negatively about the CCTV in front of the manager.

**Parental involvement with different staff groups**

Caregivers were the staff group that had more instances of parental involvement during the daily practices than other groups. Staff experienced that parents tried to compensate for their mistreatment of caregivers by buying gifts.

Further experiences showed some similarities in Center B;

**Parental involvement as source of conflict**

Parental involvement was experienced by staff as a source of conflicts. The underlying parental mistrust towards staff was experienced as often leading to conflicts. Conflicts occurred in instances where communication was vague between staff and parents, leading to misconceptions. The manager also experienced that parents threatening staff was common and frequent in the center.

**ECE as parental service and school preparation**

Staff experiences of parental involvement was impacted by the fact that parents viewed the ECE center as primary school preparation. Parents needing to “make ready” their child for
school impacted pedagogical efforts and the services provided to parents by offering optional extra one to one classes for extra fees.

Answering the second research question of how parental involvement is operationalised within the centers implies some similarities;

Center A: enrolment meetings as an initial forum for understanding parental needs and demands

The enrolment meeting became the initial forum where the early parental involvement started. Teachers and staff described how this forum assisted their understanding of parental needs and demands upon the center. These were regarding perceived speech delays amongst the children, school preparation and increased demand for ECE due to increased female work market participation. This knowledge became the starting point for the continuation of the parental contact and further on for the parental involvement at the center.

Similar findings were found in Center B:

Family and community involvement strategies

Center B operationalised community involvement strategies, where fathers and grandmothers were specifically invited to the center to observe and be given explanations on how and why the center was important in order to ease hesitations and concerns.

Main methods for parental involvement from each center were found:

Center A: CCTV provision

CCTV was the central aspect to parental involvement at the center and was described as both a competitive advantage to recruit parents and a necessary measure for increasing parental trust during enrolment. CCTV was available to the manager and parents with children enroled in the daycare service through an app that made monitoring the whole premises except the changing- and sleep room possible.

Equivalent findings of main methods in Center B showed:

Parental workshop and education

Parental guidelines, code of conduct and other parental policies were used in the center’s operations to be able to refer to a physical document if parents broke rules. Mandatory parent meetings after three months of enrolment and parental workshops on parental responsibilities, the role of the center and how parental involvement could be organised. Teachers described how this was also connected to their learning goals for parents on ECE and ECD. The meetings consisted of information and practical aspects on how-to assist with homework, positive parenting guidelines and nutrition to be utilised by parents with all of the children within the households. Information and reminders were also communicated through newsletters and pamphlets on the same topic.

Additionally, findings in Center B showed collaboration with experts as part of their main method:

Collaboration with experts for accountability

By collaborating with ECD experts, the center could increase parents' view of their accountability and competence. Collaboration between the center and practitioners, therapists, dietitians and psychologists was utilised throughout enrolment meetings for “scanning children” for developmental delays to parental meetings for conveying information.
Restrictions of parental involvement was current in both centers:

**Center A: Restrictions of parental involvement**

Parental involvement was operationalised differently depending on if parents had children enrolled in the preschool class or the daycare service. Parental involvement was further frequent and common with parents in the daycare service. No parents were allowed inside the center due to conflicts occurring at the center where parents were interfering and fighting.

Findings show similar operationalisation of restrictions in Center B:

**Restrictions of physical involvement**

Parents were not allowed inside the center except during drop off and pick up at the reception. Staff motivated this restriction by arguing that smooth operations and mitigation of children separation anxiety only was possible by restricting parents access to the premises.

When it came to other instances of operationalisation of parental involvement at the centers, differences was found:

**Center A: Physical involvement in daily practices**

In the daily practices parents communicated with caregivers on how to care for their children practically, how to hinder conflicts among children and ECD related issues such as feeding, sleeping and hygiene. The CCTV were described as the reason for why parents don't communicate about specific issues with staff in the daily practices, since parents can observe all events and not think it was necessary to communicate further with staff. The center provided parents with a physical area outside the center acting as a waiting room. This due to voiced parental dissatisfaction about waiting outside during Preschool Class and declining enrolment due to the lack of areas for parents.

Additionally, in Center A findings showed digital involvement as a part of operationalisations:

**Digital involvement**

Parental involvement also took place digitally through a Whatsapp group where chosen material, videos and pictures were shared with parents. Positive and encouraging communication between staff and parents happened as a response.

On the contrary, Center B had internal instances for operationalisations amongst staff members:

**Collegial practices in the daily practices**

Teachers and caregivers, as well as managers and supervisors employed different approaches in their communication with the parents. The supervisor instructed teachers and caregivers to communicate submissively with positive affirmations, avoid answering “critical questions” and refer to higher level staff if parents demanded answers or reacted confrontative. The manager and supervisor communicated via a deliberative approach by complementing children in front of the parent before discussing emerging issues to ease negative defensive reactions by parents. Parents were explained to react negative to the perceived difference of approaches which lead to conflicts.

**Managers acting as barriers**

The operationalisation of parental involvement revolved largely around the manager, supervisor and administrator acting as barriers between teachers and caregiver, and parents. This was to both increase parental trust towards teachers by backing them up in conversations
with parents as well as strengthening the confidence of the teachers. The manager, supervisor and administrator acted as barriers in the daily parental involvement, through both information transferring and rendering conflicts between parents, teachers and caregivers.

Chapter 6

6. Comparative Analysis

In the previous section, all findings have been summarised in order for the ethnographic study to remain comprehensible and to avoid data overload (Cohen, 2018, p. 1334). The comparative analysis is presented in this section and is organised by presenting an initial recreation of the full interpreted data collection gathered through the ethnographic method (see Figures 5 and 6). Furthermore, to elaborate on the initial recreations, these are made into flowcharts to enable a foundation for theoretical analysis (see Figures 7 and 8). Moreover, by analysing the findings through the theoretical framework, additional visualisations are used to compare and contrast approaches of operationalisation and experiences of parental involvement in Center A and B (see Figure 9 and 10). The analysis of each center is also further contextualised according to the theoretical framework. The understanding of how exo and macro systems impact parental involvement in the studied context is visualised (see Figure 11). Lastly, a visualisation of a concluding comparison to summarise the analysis and the results is provided (see Figures 12 and 13).

Central to the comparative analysis is the understanding that neither Center A nor Center B had existing frameworks for how parental involvement should be operationalised or constructed. This reality could be understood as leaving a void where parental involvement had to be invented, constructed, and carried out by either individual staff members or handled directly in the meetings with parents at the centers. The center’s lack of guiding structures for operationalisation implies occasional co-creation of the meaning and purpose of parental involvement, which could lead to inequitable implementations. Hence, this understanding implies different practical approaches and measures which result in diverse operationalisations and experiences of parental involvement in the studied contexts.
6.1 Recreations of the Parental Involvement

Introducing the analysis are figures (see Figure 5 and 6) which aim to lead the reader through the analysis by recreating the full ethnographic data collection. Initially is a recreation of the interpreted data on how the operationalisation is constructed in Center A. These are further elaborated on using flowcharts which will be fully described and presented separately. The visualisation shows the complete context of Center A;

![Figure 5: Recreation and interpretation of full data set in Center A](image)

This visualisation of the complete data set shows how parental involvement in Center A could be recreated through the analysis. For comparison, the full data set from Center B is visualised to contrast the initial reconstructions:

![Figure 6: Recreation and interpretation of full data set in Center B](image)
6.2 Flowcharts on the Operationalisations of Parental Involvement

To further elaborate on the previous recreations to enhance the understanding of operationalisations at the centers, and to facilitate a foundation for theoretical analysis, flowcharts are provided. These show the most critical instances of each center's operationalisation of parental involvement, which are explained thoroughly. The flowcharts visualise the complete context of which parental involvement exists within together with the key concept definition of the current study. Similar in both centers was the need to navigate around parental mistrust, which is described as existing cultural conditions (values and culture) for parental involvement. The flowchart of Center A is described initially (see Figure 7):

Figure 7: Flowchart of operationalisation of parental involvement in Center A

The flowchart shows how the enrolment was the forum where parental involvement was initiated. In Center A these meetings made it possible for teachers and staff to understand what needs and demands parents had. The approach from Center A was to respond by catering to the direct demands and parent satisfaction by providing CCTV to render parental mistrust. Parents gained CCTV access, but teachers experienced how parental knowledge deficiency about what ECE implied, and methods and pedagogy surrounding it, that misinterpretations occurred and led to micromanaging. Parents micromanaged activities by correcting staff into carrying out what individual parents found suitable for the children. This in turn led to conflicts between parents and staff which increased parental mistrust where staff, especially caregivers, experienced violations of their accountability and episteme. Since the staff experienced how parents lacked previous knowledge on what the purpose of the ECE center was and the differences between the parental and teacher roles, it also led to intra-parental-group conflicts at the center. Moreover, these incidents caused the center to infer restrictions on the possibility of physical parental involvement at the center, by not

\[\text{Knowledge entailing care, diligence and practice (Parry, 2020)}\]
allowing parents inside. These restrictions led to further conflicts, fueling parental mistrust towards the center. To counteract the lack of physical parental involvement and the growing mistrust, the center rented the extra space next door to the center to convert into a waiting room. This being due to parents voicing the lack of space in the evening while waiting for their children to finish the preschool evening batch. The purpose of the whole parental involvement hence shifts into avoiding physical parental involvement, and thus, most communications occur digitally via chat groups or brief daily interactions, transferring information about practical issues concerning food intake and childrens daily wellbeing.

Comparing Center A with Center B, the second flowchart (See Figure 8) shows how the interpreted data could be visualised of how the operationalisation is constructed in Center B. The visualisation shows the complete context of Center B:

![Flowchart of operationalisation of parental involvement in Center B](image)

Figure 8: Flowchart of operationalisation of parental involvement in Center B

The initial forum for parental involvement in Center B also occurs during the enrolment meeting. The actions taken by Center B differs from how Center A chose to respond to the parental demands, where in this case it implied using measures to counteract already known concerns of parents such as mistrust. The staff’s previous experiences of parental and community mistrust towards ECE made Center B collaborate with experts on ECE as a scaffolding method to increase parental and community trust, which sets the frame for the continuation of parental involvement. Enforcing parental code of conducts and policies obliging parents to follow certain rules at Center B caused some conflicts, where parents were hesitant to follow the rules regarding proper food preparation. Even though these were regulations by the center that correspond to safety concerns from parents.

Moreover, further measures taken by Center B, which did not occur in the operationalisation in Center A, was to counteract already known issues associated with parental involvement which implied mandatory parental meetings after three months of enrolment. These meetings also held parental workshops on issues contributing to conflicts between parents and staff. Fostering methods with content of ECE and ECD, explaining purposes, contents and aims of the center, parental responsibilities and positive parenting guidelines aimed to benefit all children, including siblings in households. Moreover, the manager and supervisor introduced collegial methods for communication with parents, implying different communicative approaches by different staff groups. This led to conflict where parents thought different
information was conveyed. Caregivers also experienced parents threatening them in these instances. This led to revised collegial methods for interaction with parents during parental involvement, although, this implied reinforcing an already set frame for parental involvement; caregivers and teachers referring to manager and supervisors while communicating with parents, referred to, or used scaffolding techniques to amplify information by using experts to convey and convince parents.

Additionally, as per both centers descriptions of caregivers, managers or supervisors acting as barriers within the parental involvement, it becomes visible that operationalisations at both centers concerns keeping parents from actual educational efforts at the centers as a deliberate or non-deliberate strategy or outcome of operationalisations.

6.3 Initial Co-Construction of Parental Involvement

Comparing the two centers' approaches to enrolment meetings through the theoretical framework shows how different operationalisations led to diverse implications for the continuation and development of parental involvement. As the Bangladeshi culture values family, or poribar/bari, parental mistrust towards the centers becomes evident as the centers could be experienced by parents as a function acting as an intervention in family life. Hence, the approaches employed by the centers to navigate mistrust becomes vital for the co-construction of parental involvement.

As Center A’s approach to meet parental demands and needs by providing CCTV to counteract mistrust embedded in the context, could actually imply an early focus for what parental involvement should be intended to mean. This is due to the CCTV acting as a technical solution aimed to increase parental trust, but the CCTV does not target the relational efforts needed to build actual trust between the stakeholders in the context. Furthermore, providing a technical solution aiming to bridge cultural and value based understandings results in collisions within Center A. As parental trust is not increased by CCTV access, it only leads to fuelling conflicts where parental mistrust and lack of knowledge hinders and shapes the operationalisation of parental involvement. Center A’s approach could be understood as setting a frame for parental involvement signaling parental satisfaction and service rather than; “the ongoing processes between staff and parents that enables and harbours aims and beneficial purposes for participants within the specific context with the incentive to support children’s learning”; as the technical solutions could be experienced as a shortcut rather than providing actual relational building between staff and parents. Additionally, as CCTV is described as a marketing strategy and a “competitive advantage” in Center A, which attracts more parents to enroll their children, it could further shine light on how the lack of policies and guidelines for parental involvement results in misleading and disfavorable methods directing the purpose of parental involvement to rather act on the intersection of the parental knowledge deficiency of ECE and cultural values favouring demands for parental control. Hence, the initial direction of purpose for involvement is being negotiated within the “void” evident due to the lack of existing structures and guidelines for parental involvement.

On the contrary, Center B takes a different approach in that on the one hand they use scaffolding methods based on the cultural context valuing respect towards people in higher position, ie. expanding on the already larger existing parental trust towards “experts” and canalises it towards parents to associate Center B with accountability. Moreover, Center B
initially uses its policies and code of conduct for parents to oblige to, which also could contribute to setting a different frame and direction for parental involvement than in Center A. This frame which initially claims the “void”, would rather signal to parents that parental involvement implies collaboration with teachers for beneficial purposes for all participants, favouring equal expectations of one another based on trust. Since teachers and staff from both centers described how the parental lack of knowledge of ECE and ECD hindered involvement, the centers' different approaches during the initial meetings with parents created separate trajectories of how the continuous development could be unfolding.

In these two centers, the co-creation and construction of what parental involvement should be is being constructed between parents and teachers. Although, with the experiences and participant descriptions of parental knowledge deficiency of ECE and ECD, the continuous co-creation in their context becomes inflicted. This could be due to the knowledge and information asymmetry between the two (or more, parents and teachers) co-constructing partners in the context. Additionally, the knowledge and information asymmetry could also be eminent between different staff members, where more experienced staff could be more advantageous to take further eminent part in the co-construction of establishing the foundation for parental involvement at the centers, since none of the centers had actual guidelines or policies for parental involvement. With the above understanding, Center A’s approach could be seen as a diversion or digression from previous episteme about parental involvement, leaning towards technical solutions (CCTV), amounting to a shifted purpose, where service and customer satisfaction becomes a priori and central to parental involvement rather than collaboration for the child's learning development. Moreover, Center B’s scaffolding strategy could contribute to the co-creating and co-constructing of what parental involvement should imply, in keeping with their aim and purpose of the a priori of children's learning as the incentive central to parental involvement operationalisation.

In order to further understand how the initial meetings with parents becomes a molding phase that lays grounds for the continuation of parental involvement, inquiring into how the centers navigate the similarly described parental mistrust is important. With the assumption that parental mistrust originates from within the cultural context, the meeting of poribar/bari and the external societal actors interfering in the realm of family, as the responsibility of children becomes shared between parents and staff at the centers, conditions for the cooperation between the stakeholders needs to be negotiated. Hence, parental involvement becomes the forum of where to negotiate the shared responsibility of the children as an extension of poribar/bari in the meeting with an educational setting acting as a societal actor. Furthermore, to understand how the intertwinedness of parental mistrust and knowledge deficiency of ECE and ECD creates conditions for operationalisation of parental involvement as the centers employ different approaches, the main methods from each center are explained separately for comparison:

The main method at Center B targets the above mentioned parental knowledge deficiency of ECE and ECD by having mandatory parental meetings and workshops. The workshops moreover becomes the method to counterweight the parental mistrust by building a professional relationship, thus increasing trust through a rigid platform. Since the workshop became the method to create an advantage to counteract the cultural aspects and conditions existing in the Bangladeshi society (knowledge deficiency and mistrust) within the parental group, the workshops claims the void (evident due to the lack of frameworks for parental involvement) to develop methods to foster the operationalisation of parental involvement at the center. Hence, balancing the main methods at the center with the existing parental
preconditions enables the center to claim the void, and it becomes a proactive approach to parental involvement (See Figure 9):

![Diagram](image)

Figure 9: Method for targeting cultural conditions in the co-construction of parental involvement in Center B

This approach could be seen as a proactive approach in the co-construction of parental involvement, where staff could lead and direct the following operationalisations by proactively counteract hinders known to cause conflict. Moreover, the workshops could be understood as a method to counteract and mitigate the parental knowledge deficiency, by contributing to their understanding of ECE and ECD which could impact the continuation of parental involvement. This could also imply that Center B takes on a fostering approach to parental involvement, equipping parents with the necessary and appropriate tools to become an equal co-constructing part, and to enable a further symmetrical co-construction of the operationalisation of involvement at the center. This could show how the efforts are made to enable a further equal and trust-built relationship between the parents and staff at the center. Through the parental workshops, the center can transfer knowledge to elicit and emphasize issues that are important and vital to not only parental involvement with the incentive to support children’s learning, but also for the general parental understanding of ECE and ECD. Additionally, the workshop creates a forum for where staff and parents could further interact, building trust between each other, as stakeholders responsible for the children.

Moreover, as previously mentioned, the corresponding and main method in Center A was to provide parents with CCTV access. Similar to Center B, it is reasoned by staff to target parental mistrust. However, in contrast to what value parental workshops bring in terms of building trust, the CCTV becomes a technical solution, not actually contributing to decreasing parental mistrust and knowledge deficiency of ECE and ECD. Furthermore, as the cultural conditions are not targeted through their main method, the CCTV results in a catapulting force increasing friction between parents and staff resulting in misinterpretations of events observed in the CCTV (see Figure 10);
This could imply that by providing CCTV access, it narrows down the possibility for Center A of where to develop further methods for parental involvement. The CCTV rather enables parents to claim the void (evident due to lack of frameworks for parental involvement). This could also imply that Center A takes on a further reactive approach to parental involvement, equipping parents with leverage through a direct monitoring position. Although, despite this leverage, it does not contribute to parents becoming an equal co-constructing part in the operationalisation of parental involvement, but it rather acts as a dividing force directing the purpose of involvement into striving for other aims than for the support of children’s learning. The CCTV could also be seen as a method that actually prolongs the initial phase of negotiation within the existing “void” of what parental involvement should mean to imply, into only harboring parental satisfaction.

Consequently, the rather reactive approach in Center A, staked out by providing CCTV, as a technical solution acts as a reinforcement of the cultural conditions of where the ECE centers can operate within, and limits the possibilities for a mutual co-construction of what parental involvement ought to mean in the context. It could furthermore be understood as leading to following non-deliberate actions and measures in the operationalisation of parental involvement. While Center B’s proactive approach can be understood as setting a foundation for deliberate actions and measures succeeding the parental workshops.
6.4 Implications of Proactive or Reactive Approaches Within Parental Involvement

Since neither of the centers of the study had pre-existing guidelines or policies for parental involvement, it becomes contextually and occasionally created within the centers. With the assumption that Center A has a reactive role in the co-construction of parental involvement while Center B has a proactive role, it could be seen as a contributing factor in what shapes staff members and teachers experiences of the phenomenon, since it either leads to non-deliberative or deliberative measures in the operationalisation at the centers. The further reactive approach in Center A allows parents to be a counterpart in the co-construction of parental involvement. However, parents actions became the foundation for staff members' reactive role in the negotiations in daily practices. The reactive approach furthermore limits the possibility for staff in Center A to develop methods for parental involvement, seemingly since it is constructed according to the parents actions, which are further rooted in cultural aspects, hence the center becomes an adaptable forum enabling parental satisfaction, for example with the parental waiting room.

Moreover, since Center A does not have any fostering methods to counteract the parental knowledge deficiency nor effective methods to counteract parental mistrust, the involvement becomes a forum of where other social and cultural values could be further manifested. An example of this are the social hierarchies manifested in the ECE context, which contributes to the understanding of why caregivers in Center A are the staff group experiencing further conflicts and violations of accountability than other staff groups. This could further be understood as caregivers having the “lowest position” in these ECE contexts, as considered through the Bangladeshi culture. Despite that social hierarchies are recurrent in both centers, the manifestation becomes visible in Center B in that the parents are always seeking to interact with the highest available authority, either with the manager, supervisor or experts. With these separate manifestations of social hierarchies existing within the parental involvement in both centers, it could be assumed that these are micro-manifestations of the cultural values existing in the broader Bangladeshi society. Furthermore, Center B’s rather proactive approach to parental involvement implies mobilising space and opportunity for directing and creating methods enabling the maintenance of the purpose of parental involvement as an incentive for children’s learning. Additionally, the broader space for developing methods also imply further possibilities to create a shared understanding surrounding parental involvement to be undertaken by both staff and parents.

As above described, the initial approaches to counteract parental mistrust and knowledge deficiency of ECE and ECD determines what trajectories parental involvement takes in the centers. Since the lack of frameworks for how parental involvement should be operationalised, a void is constructed within the social contexts of the centers. It becomes an issue of claiming the void by either parents or ECE staff that set the directions for the trajectories and the unfolding of operations. The reactive approach found in Center A implies depriving staff of the possibility to determine the trajectory, as parents gain CCTV access. Hence, parents become the leading co-constructing part within the center, however, as the knowledge deficiency impacts the purpose of parental involvement, its trajectory is directed towards service and parental satisfaction, catering to aptitudes originating from the broader social and
cultural context. As previously described, values within the Bangladeshi contexts combined with parental knowledge deficiency, creates an inability to foster parental involvement with the incentive to support children's learning. Hence, the unfolding of parental involvement in Center A becomes occupied with distancing parents from the actual educational efforts by limiting physical presence at the center and encouraging alternative solutions such as digital involvement and parental waiting room. This implies depriving the actual collaboration between staff and parents of the negotiation needed to be constructed between cultural values and the ECE center as a relatively new social context and phenomena in Dhaka.

On the contrary, the proactive approach in Center B implies that staff via scaffolding techniques become the leading co-constructing part within the center when mitigating parental knowledge deficiency and mistrust initially. Hence, as staff become the leading co-constructing part of how parental involvement becomes operationalised, the trajectory leads towards unfolding the collaboration between the parents and the staff with the incentive of children learning development. Conflicts occurring between parents and staff are handled by staff and through methods of communication rather than offering alternative solutions to satisfy short-term parental demands. However, as the methods of communication with parents resulted in some conflicts, the methods could rather be understood as a remedy of the collision between the contextually-bound values of understanding *poribar/bari* with the staff’s episteme of why parental involvement is important within the context of Bangladeshi parents and their relation to ECE. With the previous understandings the operationalisation of parental involvement can further be placed within a broader contextualisation of the phenomena within the Bangladeshi society (see Figure 11).

![Figure 11: Parental involvement contextualised within the societal context in Bangladesh](image-url)
The visualisation (see Figure 11) shows how parental involvement is embedded within an exo and macrosystem currently experiencing a mainstreaming process of ECE. Parental involvement as described in the study is also embedded and impacted by the cultural underpinnings of Bangladeshi culture with the notions of poribar/bari and the collision occurring in the meeting between the ECE centers acting as a external societal actor interfering with family (as parental involvement implies a shared responsibility for the children). Hence, the parental mistrust described by both centers in the study, which was needed to be navigated using various methods and approaches, can further be understood within the broader contextualisation of the phenomena’s placement within the Bangladeshi society.

6.5 Understanding Staff and Teachers Experiences in the Light of a Proactive or Reactive Center Approach

With the previous understanding of the different approaches operationalised within the centers, it could contribute to the understanding of the diverse experiences held by staff members and teachers alike. With the gathered descriptions of experiences of parental involvement from Center A, it becomes visible that participants from this center held further negative associations with parental involvement than in Center B. This could be understood as since participants from Center A not only had negative experiences of parental involvement in the daily practices, but they also had negative associations with the involvement due to the CCTV where it presents a further layer impacting their experiences. For the most part, this aspect is affecting the staff working directly with the children, where the possibility of being observed constantly by both parents, as well as the manager impacts their experiences of parental involvement. To develop further, the CCTV could be understood as creating a four-fold duality within the overall parental involvement. The four-fold duality of the CCTV on the one hand acts as a necessary measure to enable continuous enrolment, as the manager described it as a contributing factor in their competitive strategy to attract parents to the center. On the other hand, it compromises the very purpose of parental involvement. Additionally it acts as a safeguarding argument if parents accuse caregivers of misconduct but henceforth violate the staff's integrity, experiencing the need to occasionally hide away from the cameras view. However, to further understand how the cultural underpinnings favouring respect for people in higher positions impacts the staff experiences of their position in relation to parents' position cannot be answered within the current study. It would require extensive field work to grasp additional cultural aspects impacting the power relations between parents and caregivers. Although, the rather reactive approach to parental involvement in Center A could contribute to understanding why conflicts occur more frequently here than in Center B. With the assumption that the co-construction of what parental involvement should intend to mean in Center A, it becomes clear that parental involvement is conditioned by the support and dependency on caregivers and teachers to compromise their work conditions and accountability to enable involvement. Comparing this with Center B, it is not evident if the staff and teachers experienced more or less negative experiences associated with parental involvement. However, it can be assumed that the proactive approach which led to rather deliberate measures in the center led to fewer conflicts with parents, since staff members fostered the operationalisation of parental involvement, and mitigated the impacts of cultural aspects in connection to the ECE centers, to a greater extent than Center A.
6.6 Concluding Comparison of the Reactive-and Proactive Approach

As a concluding comparison the following figures are provided (see Figures 12 and 13). Visible are the different operationalisations and how they, as previously reasoned, can be understood as either reactive or proactive. The figures map out how the various methods and events benefitted either parents or the centers needs which contribute and create an overall approach to operationalisations of parental involvement:

Figure 12: Concluding Comparison Center A Reactive Approach

Figure 13: Concluding Comparison Center B Proactive Approach
Comparing the two approaches, visualised above, show vast differences between the centers. As the outlining of events and methods are included, it shows shifts in the operationalisations which is pending between being beneficial to either parents or staff's needs. For example, Center A providing parents with CCTV access is an event that benefited parents demands to a very high extent, and restrictions of parental physical presence benefited the needs of the staff and the center. The overall approach in Center A, compared to Center B, is reactive and rather enables staff to be adaptive according to parents’ reactions. On the contrary, the operationalisations in Center B becomes further understood as proactive, as methods and events create a dynamic process. Moreover, as the final stages visualised above show that the general “levels” of accommodating parental needs and demands in each center are different. This implies that by Center A’s providing a waiting room, it puts the overall parental involvement into being further attentive to parental needs and demands, which could be concluded as a final indication that the purpose or parental involvement is incentivised as parental satisfaction. Comparatively, Center B’s final stage shows that by continuous mitigations and internal collegial methods, the incentive for parental involvement can be understood as more equal between the parts in the collaboration, possibly maintaining children’s learning as the incentive for parental involvement.

Chapter 7

7. Discussion

This chapter is organised by discussing the key findings of the research, its implications, and recommendations in connection to previous research and events.

The key findings and interpretations show how the lack of further specific governmental, communal, or civic frameworks for parental involvement led to diverse adaptations within the centers of the study. The operationalisations within the centers showed the enrolment meetings as the prime forum for establishing local and occasional frames for parental involvement where conditions were negotiated in the interactions between parents and staff. Similarly, the operationalisation of parental involvement in both centers of the study had to navigate parental mistrust and knowledge deficiency of ECE and ECD. Center A’s rather reactive approach induced by providing parents with CCTV access led to deprivation of possibilities to develop further methods aimed to counteract parental lack of awareness and furthermore, for mitigating conflicts. Consequently, it resulted in non-deliberate actions surrounding the operationalisation of parental involvement at the center. This, in turn, led to further negative associations of parental involvement by staff members, foremost by caregivers experiencing most frequent interaction with parents and, additionally, a diversion of the purpose of parental involvement. In comparison, Center B’s rather proactive approach to parental involvement derived from parental workshops using scaffolding techniques aimed to target mistrust and parental awareness, which opened up possibilities further to develop methods for the operationalisation of parental involvement. Hence, staff equipping parents with information, to ascertain an equal partnership within the collaboration, resulted in further deliberate actions in the operationalisation of parental involvement, and consequently, fewer conflicts. Additionally, both centers operationalisations could be understood as claiming the void left by
the lack of existing societal frameworks for parental involvement. Although, the various outcomes equal to impacting the very purpose of parental involvement; to support children's learning development. Additionally, findings also showed that intra-staff barriers acted as a part of the operationalisation of parental involvement at both centers. As previously mentioned, this could be understood in the light of keeping distance between parents and core educational efforts (Preschool-Class) as either deliberate actions or non-deliberate outcomes of operationalisation of parental involvement with considerations to cultural clashes occurring between the traditional values and understandings and underpinnings of poribar/bari and the ECE context. In both cases, this could furthermore imply that the parental knowledge deficiency of ECE had a negative impact on the education undertaken at the centers, motivating those barriers as it is experienced as necessary for the centers to maintain and carry out the main educational mission. Additionally, the cultural underpinnings created hindrances for parental involvement, as relational building methods need to be extensive if children enrolled in the center ought to be considered as a shared responsibility during enrolment in ECE as an extension of poribar/bari.

Adding to the point, besides low parental awareness of ECE and ECD in Bangladesh, the parental mistrust heavily impacts the operationalisation of parental involvement as it creates a collision between poribar/bari and the relatively new phenomena of ECE centers. During data collections for the current study, this issue was further addressed by male drivers, ECE students, and in conversations with participants and non-participants, in several meetings discussing the reasons behind parental mistrust of ECE staff in Dhaka. A telling example was that societal mistrust towards nannies in the homes caring for children contributed to an association towards caregivers in ECE centers, as they, from a parent's perspective, had similar jobs. Additionally, a recurrent story was "the scandal of cold-medicine," where nannies abused children and gave them cold-medicine to make them sleep. As a non-participant reasoned: "of course parents will not understand how one caregiver can make five children go to sleep at the same time in the daycare, they will think she gave them something to make them sleep." Despite that the cultural underpinnings were not researched directly through the research questions of the current study, but rather acted as a deepening of the emic perspective and the notion of subtle realism in order to conduct an ethnographic study, the non-participant statement contributes to interpretations of what collisions the cultural underpinnings in Bangladesh in contact with ECE centers brings. The non-participant statement rather manifests the vast bridges needed to be built between staff and parents within the Bangladeshi ECE context, where long-term goals are to be strived for to increase the trust and parental knowledge.

The above mentioned key findings and interpretations of the study could further be elaborated in connection to the overall thesis. While considering the operationalisations and experiences of parental involvement made visible, there are several junctions to previous research. Initially, the understanding of Kim (2018) of parental involvement in developing countries needs further consideration of how outer exo and macrosystems impact children's development and, by extension, parental involvement (Kim, 2018) becomes visible through the analysis. As the lack of frameworks for parental involvement in Dhaka creates a void ought to be claimed by either part in the collaboration, it impacts the possibility for parental involvement in acting as a forum supporting children's learning and development in ECE in Dhaka. As this analysis acts as a central understanding of the overall phenomena of parental involvement as being constructed within an ECE mainstreaming context, it could further be elaborated on and used in other contexts. However, as the current study is conducted with an ethnographic method, the findings are not generalisable, but the various figures in the analysis
can contribute to the understanding of what considerations need to be accounted for while expanding research of similar nature to other contexts. Additionally, the contextualisation of how parental involvement is placed within the broader societal landscape reveals further challenges to the mainstreaming process of ECE. Cultural underpinnings of traditional, religious, and survival-oriented values present direct hindrances for ECE as these have to be negotiated in conjunction with the general purposes of ECE. With the assumption that ECE is crucial for women's liberation, workforce participation, and moreover for children's human rights to education, it stands in direct conflict with traditional and conservative societal values. With the above understanding, it becomes clear that parental involvement in ECE centers manifests itself as an indication of where the surrounding society is heading.

Furthermore, comparing the findings of the current study with the findings of Rahman and Chowdhury et al. (2019), and Sikder (Sikder in Fleer & van Oers 2019) (see p. 22-23) the studies showed a low or lack of parental awareness of ECE as a recurring issue discussed within the findings. However, within the current study, it was mainly recurrent through descriptions of staff's experiences and operations of parental involvement while the other authors' findings connected to implicit and direct findings amongst the affected group of parents. Although findings in Rahman and Chowdhury et al. (2019) showed that parents experienced "a general lack of opportunity" for involvement. This could also be further understood through the current study, where operationalisation of parental involvement includes excluding parents from the direct educational context and the execution of it acts as a deliberate or non-deliberative strategy employed at Center A and B. In addition, this hinders and limits opportunities for parents to become further involved or advancing the levels of involvement as described by Epstein (2009). As Epstein (2009) researched different types of parental involvement advance, several corresponding points were shown in the current study. Within Center A, neither of the lower types (Type 1-4) of parental involvement were shown, nor Type 6. However, as Type 5 described parental involvement as being a part of decision-making, a variety of this became visible in Center A, but with vastly different implications. Epstein (2009) described Type 5 of parental involvement as decision-making as, for example, "the school practices enables parent's feeling of ownership and influence of decisions affecting children" (see p. 20-21). This Type of parental involvement was only enabled through the provision of CCTV monitoring, which evidently impacted Center A negatively, as it brought parental micromanaging, both in terms of enabling operationalisations as well as the staff's experiences of violations of integrity and accountability. Hence, while further discussing the value and purpose of parental involvement in decision making, it becomes dependent on parental knowledge and understanding of ECE, if it ought to contribute to value in terms of maintaining core educational missions and overall educational purposes. On the contrary, findings in Center B manifested other types of parental involvement described by Epstein (2009). Found in Center B is Type 1, 2, 4, and 6. Where Type 1 (parental education and workshops) and Type 6 (community collaboration and incorporation of its resources) conjoint enabled Type 2 and 4 (parental meetings and the enablement of children learning in their home environment). Since the operationalisation of parental involvement held scaffolding strategies as utilising experts and moreover, the trust and accountability associated with them by parents, further advanced levels of parental involvement were made possible. The only Type of parental involvement not found in Center B was Type 5, (parental decision-making) which could be reasoned, discussed and questioned if it should be understood to be a result of not providing CCTV, contrary to Center A. However, it could also be reasoned that Center B as holding a further proactive approach, excluded parents from decision-making as a proactive measure to enable further valuable
inclusion later on, as parents gain more knowledge of ECE and ECD after partaking in workshops.

In order to compare and contrast the above mentioned discussion, it is valuable to discuss the pedagogical implications of the further contextualised key findings and interpretations of the current study. As previously stated, this study views the phenomena of parental involvement as a didactical presumption for enabling qualitative Early Childhood Education positioned within a broader societal context. Although, the same presumption becomes dichotomized as it poses dilemmas within the Bangladeshi ECE context, since it both enables and hinders operationalisations which aims to enable early learning, as shown through the current study. To enable further advanced stages of parental involvement, it requires higher parental awareness of ECE if previously mentioned values and purposes are to be maintained. However, arguing that limited parental awareness is due to the current process of mainstreaming ECE not yet has resulted in a broader societal understanding of ECE, it implies further considerations for Bangladeshi ECE centers. Hence, within the didactical field of parental involvement, pedagogical considerations need to be made to broaden the purposes and aims of it. This could imply broadening the educational core mission of Bangladeshi ECE, also to include parental education aimed to raise parental awareness. Therefore, it ought to become a substantial part of its mission if it ought to bring value to the center's operationalisations as "the ongoing processes between staff and parents that enables and harbors aims and beneficial purposes for participants within the specific context with the incentive to support children's learning." With the above reasoning it becomes furthermore clear that the concept of mainstreaming ECE not only implies that efforts need to be taken on standardising policies, necessity of further allocated funds and the counteracting of inequivalent implementations; it also becomes an issue of mainstreaming societal, cultural and value based assumptions of the child and their right to education, as a shared goal in mainstreaming ECE.

Moreover, as Hornby and Lafaele (2011) describe barriers to parental involvement, the findings in the current study have the same assumptions. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) described "historical, political, and societal factors as creating hindrances for parental involvement," and it becomes clear that their descriptions can also be translated and understood as the mainstreaming landscape in the Bangladeshi context. The mainstreaming context could hence be understood as the "gap often unacknowledged" while discussing parental involvement. Additionally, as Hornby and Lafaele (2011) described factors associated with "families beliefs surrounding parental involvement"; to what extent parental involvement is important, expectations of the school and own capabilities and confidence in supporting their child, it is indeed a vital issue in the mainstreaming context of this study. As it becomes evident, if no standardised policies exist guiding how parental involvement ought to be carried out, there are no indications of what "fine-tuned-in" accommodations and adjustments ECE staff need to take into consideration in operations of parental involvement in local ECE centers. Without united indications of what parental involvement ought to imply, parental involvement cannot act as a forum aimed to support and enable children's learning and development. Hence, the mainstreaming landscape in Dhaka is complex and interdependent on multiple actions, efforts and events simultaneously. However, as responsibility should lay upon the institutions to mainstream policies to enable equivalent implementation, it further ultimately connects to governmental funding and with that, teacher and staff education and supply, standardised quality indications and a determination of what role ECE should play in Dhaka and Bangladesh.
7.1 The Post COVID-19 Mainstreaming Landscape

As currently, the Covid-19 outbreak has a devastating impact on Bangladesh and its people. Despite predictions indicating high death rates due to Covid-19, it is only one aspect of the epidemic. As Bangladesh's previous journey of moving from being a low income nation into becoming a middle income nation, much is due to the central role in global textile manufacturing, supplying textile and garments to global retail comers. Out of all the industries in Bangladesh around 45% are related to textiles that contribute greatly to the national economy by employing millions of Bangladeshis. Now, as the world economy comes to a halt, Bangladesh stands still. The World Economic Forum describes Bangladesh as "especially vulnerable" to the afterplay of the Covid-19 epidemic (Saleh, 2020). Famine and a humanitarian crisis are on the horizon. Hence, it is an absolute necessity to consider the implications of the new Bangladeshi social context and its junctions to the post Covid-19 mainstreaming landscape. As it poses vast implications, light needs to be shed on issues explicitly impacting the mainstreaming of ECE.

As mentioned previously, the mainstreaming process in Bangladesh has been dependent on NGOs in its beginning and partially overtaken by cooperative ECE initiatives. The background description of Center B in the current study sheds light on the previous legislation enabling "employed-supported-childcare," where companies are obliged to allocate space in their office buildings to appropriate childcare services as a support to their growing female workforces. This legislation has played a vital role in providing ECE to many families, although, conditioned by the employment status. In the post Covid-19 mainstreaming landscape, this legislation will have decreased impact as unemployment will affect Bangladesh. As a traditional and religious nation, with conservative values, female work market participation is assumed to be further reduced than male work market participation as families have to resign to further survival-oriented values, often associated with crises. This will profoundly impact Bangladeshi children's right to education as ECE centers will be affected. Furthermore, findings in the current study showed participants' understanding of families' motivation for enrolling their children in ECE. This is assumed to change in the new social context. As families' abilities to pay high enrolment and monthly fees will decrease, as well as the "experienced need and motivation" to enroll children in ECE, as women to a higher extent will become unemployed hence, eliminating one major motivation for enrolment as women will be confined to their homes. As mentioned previously, whilst comparing ECE to primary education and the factors that condition the mainstreaming of these different educational levels, ECE is especially vulnerable in the post Covid-19 landscape. This is due to the fact that one major condition, both hindering and enabling ECE, is parental funding. As parental funding will decrease in Dhaka, the mainstreaming process will come to a halt. This leaves governmental funding as a last resort to maintain the mainstreaming process, which historically has not been high on the agenda. As Bangladesh stands in front of monumental challenges, it is with pessimism, this study concludes with an outlook on the future of ECE in Bangladesh as nothing more than disrupted. The mainstreaming of ECE is therefore assumed to need a restart in the post Covid-19 landscape, beginning with NGOs coming back to Bangladesh and Dhaka, assisting in the humanitarian crisis, possibly, and hopefully also directing aid towards ECE efforts.
A final addition to the discussion on the post Covid-19 mainstreaming landscape in Bangladesh is a reflection on the Covid-19 ECE responses rising globally. As many of the arising responses are only relevant to the western context, such as including ECE in basic education distance learning programs (Devercelli, 2020, via World Bank Blog, 2020), other considerations need to be taken within the Bangladeshi contexts. Although basic education through distance learning might be effective in terms of targeting children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds in Dhaka, and moreover, as the families enrolled in the ECE centers participating in this current study, it fails to apply for the rest of Dhaka's urban and Bangladesh rural families. Hence, while looking at the broader implications for parental involvement within a new social landscape in Bangladesh, other measures need to be considered. Parental involvement as discussed throughout the study, and what this ought to imply in the Bangladeshi context, can be further nuanced in the post Covid-19 mainstreaming landscape. Future parental involvement could imply further community efforts for mass re-enrolment of children in ECE centers, where staff collaborates with the broader community, emphasising ECE as an essential investment in times of crisis. Moreover, as previously mentioned, parental funding is vital for ECE, hence, considering uniting primary education settings with ECE centers could further lower costs, as well as facilitate parents' understanding of ECE as the earliest stage of children's education, enabling the cultural underpinnings to associate and include ECE as a central instance in their children's learning.

8. Future Research

Since this study was conducted right before the Covid-19 epidemic, it could be valuable to consider it as a contribution on how to rebuild ECE in Dhaka and Bangladesh, with new interpretations of how and where to focus efforts, since possibly, it can take time before international research efforts targets ECE, as other areas might be perceived as more urgent in the current times. At this present time, places such as Kyrgyzstan, Ghana, Sao Tome e Principe and Guyana face similar challenges to those in Bangladesh regarding the mainstreaming of ECE. With the understanding from current study, it becomes clear that parental involvement in ECE centers manifests itself as an indication of where the surrounding society is heading. Similar research in the above mentioned locations could further shed light on contemporary manifestations which are all embedded in the broader mainstreaming context, and how further research in the field could inform policy making and standardisations of curriculums. Researching the effects of Covid-19 on ECE mainstreaming by keeping parental involvement as a main starting point can become a central tool for evaluating the intertwinedness of the many factors impacting societies in a broader sense. As further attention has to be given to actual parental motivations for enrolling children in ECE and how these understandings can be combined with the educational purposes from a child right’s perspective. It could imply emphasising children’s right to education as a stronger incentive than of ECE as a mere solution aimed to enable higher female labor market participation. Moreover, utilising an ethnographic framework offered many possibilities while conducting this study. The combined methods for data collection enabled grasping participant’s reality from a holistic perspective. Despite the limited time frames which should be far more extensive when conducting ethnographic research, many insights were gained during field work. To further explore the ethnographic method, understanding more in-depth valued-based and cultural assumptions while researching Bangladeshi ECE would be very important. On the
contrary, it would also be interesting to learn how utilising other methodologies such as ethnomethodology or phenomenology and theories of new materialism could further contribute to capturing the many aspects of the phenomena of mainstreaming ECE, respectively, parental involvement. Theories of late modernity could also contribute to understanding the very process of mainstreaming ECE, as it could shed light on what qualitative ECE should and could imply in diverse social contexts, and how it could be argued in contrast to the strive toward archiving a further unionised ECE globally. It could also contribute to dialogue about the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 0 and how it ought to be further fused.

Additionally, as the current study has gathered rich data collections, which have not all been utilised for the current study, it could be intriguing to view the collections in conjunction with new data through different questions. Additional data from an interview with the director of the NGO mentioned in the description of Center A (p. 31) provides exciting prospects. The NGO mentioned not only regard ECE centers as a financial sustainability effort, but also as a forum for lifelong learning. Bangladeshi women seeking employment after either unemployment or a change in career path are recruited to work at ECE centers. Hence, the very phenomena of Bangladeshi ECE centers creates a full circle of lifelong learning. Not only in regards to educating the youngest children, but also in regard to the staff working with them. Moreover, another example interesting to explore is researching the Bangladeshi ECE centers as a separate phenomena manifested as a separatistic forum for women liberation; as Bangladesh’s values and culture is maledominated, and women labour market participation is low compared to male participation, ECE centers are a ‘new’ societal forum mainly employing women. Understanding how this notion affects women's sense of identity and self-efficacy would also bring attention to additional implications brought by the mainstreaming process of Early Childhood Education.
9. References


Appendix I Consent Form

Master’s Programme in International and Comparative Education 2019

We hope you are willing to take part in the study investigating Parental involvement in Early Childhood Education (ECE). The study aims to understand, compare and analyse efforts made by teachers and staff members to facilitate parental involvement in ECE centres. The implications of the study are to accumulate knowledge on how parental involvement can hold a central role in the process of mainstreaming ECE in Dhaka. In order to carry out the study we need to collect data through interviews and minor observations during the period of 26/12-19/1.

The study forms part of the compulsory program curriculum and is supervised by one of the assigned supervisors of Dept. of Education at Stockholm University, who will ensure that students adhere to all the necessary rules. The resulting thesis is assessed and graded by an examiner at the end of the course.

We ask for your approval to use the data collected for the study. Participation is always voluntary. In order to collect data for the study, we need your signed consent on the second page of this form. Even in the case that you sign the form at this point, it is still possible for you to withdraw from participation at any time without giving a motivation why.

During the course of the student working on the study your personal data are protected and will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons. We will store recordings and other details in a safeguarded manner. Any photographic/video/sound collected in the first phase will be anonymized, coded and transcribed as text. This will be done immediately upon transmission in order to disable any potential for detecting that you have participated. The consent forms will be kept in locked storage at Stockholm University so that they may not be linked to our recording. When the study is completed and the thesis has passed assessment, we will destroy the original data that has been collected.

The results of the study will be published in the thesis in a manner that will not reveal the participant’s identity. The study adheres to the guidelines on research ethics and common laws.

In order to complete the study, it is very valuable for us to receive your consent. Please contact us in case you need further information.

Supervisor’s name
Email: XXX
Telephone XXX
The student’s name: XXX
Email: XXX
Telephone: XXX

**Consent Form**

I have taken part of the information of the study and accept that the material is recorded and stored for use in the master’s thesis.

☐ Yes
☐ No

The name of the informant, date and signature………………

Print name………………

**Further regarding guidelines and legislation related to the study**

The personal data essential for carrying out the study are regulated according to the requirement of consent (samtyckeskravet) in the Swedish legislation (the Personal Data Act, in Swedish) Dataskyddsförordningen. Stockholm University is responsible for personal data. According to the law of protection of Personal Data Act (dataskyddsförordningen f.o.m. 25 maj, 2018) you are entitled free access to all information involving you and if needed, to have incorrect information amended. You also have the right to request deletion, limitation or objection to the use of personal data, with an opportunity to lodge a complaint to the data security officer at Stockholm University at dpo@su.se alternatively the Swedish Data Protection Authority at https://datainspektionen.se/kontakta-oss/. Please approach the supervisor or student for further information.

**Consent Form (School personnel)**

I have read the information about the study and agree to the material being recorded, saved and used for research.

☐ Yes
☐ No

Signature…………

Print Name……

Date
Appendix II GDPR information at SU

Personal data in essays
On 25 May, 2018, the European General Data Protection Regulation was introduced:
GDPR
It leads to changes for everyone who deals with personal data.

• The GDPR provides strengthened rights to individuals regarding personal privacy issues. Students, as well as researchers, must now have written permission/consent from the person about whom they are collecting personal data. Everyone has the right to know what personal data are being held about them (for example, by an authority or company) and have the right to have them deleted. GDPR stipulates that all personal data must be processed in a secure manner so that they cannot be passed on to unauthorised persons. Students must be aware of this and be given the opportunity, within the framework of essay preparation, to work according to the GDPR. We as an institution will inform students and document how we work according to the regulations. Read more at: https://www.datainspektionen.se/lagar--regulations/dataskyddsforskrift/rattslig-grund/.

GDPR in brief:
• Students and researchers must now have written permission/consent from the person about whom they are collecting personal data.
• Everyone has the right to know what personal data are being held about them (for example, by an authority or company) and have the right to have them deleted.
• GDPR stipulates that all personal data must be processed in a secure manner so that they cannot be passed on to unauthorised persons.
• Students must be aware of this and be given the opportunity, within the framework of essay preparation, to work according to the GDPR. We as an institution will inform students and document how we work according to the regulations.

Personal data are any kind of information that can be linked to a living person:
• name, address and social security number,
• photos, movies and sound recordings of people are personal data,
• a company number is often not personal data, but can be it if it is a one-man company,
• the registration number of a car may be a personal data if it is possible to link it to a physical person, while the registration number of a company car used by several people may not constitute personal data,
• IP addresses.

Sensitive personal information reveals an individual's
• ethnic origin,
• political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs,
• membership of trade unions,
• personal data relating to health or sexual life, for example, sickness absence, pregnancy and doctor visits.

Please note that it is always the supervisor who decides whether and, if so, which personal data may be collected and processed in your essay work, and that you and your supervisor together prepare the information that must be included in the consent form.

Students who collect personal data must have written consent.
• Note that consent of the guardian is also required if the informant is under 18 years of age.
• The consent form must contain information about the purpose of the data collection (i.e., the purpose of the study), how and by whom the data will be processed and stored until the essay is completed, and that the data will be anonymised and ultimately deleted. See the template you get from your tutors.
• The informants who give their consent must also be able to contact you and your supervisor as well as SU and the Swedish Data Protection Authority if they want to withdraw their consent.
• The permission/consent forms must be kept in a binder by your supervisor at SU (when the essay is completed, they must be archived).
• If you intend to film, photograph or record sound, this must be done in a safe way, i.e., so that the data cannot be distributed to unauthorised persons.
• When you have recorded audio/video on your phone, for example, then you should immediately transfer it to a folder in Box, to which you will get an invitation from your supervisor.
• As soon as you have recorded and transferred the data to Box, delete the original file from the phone/recording equipment.
• Anonymise the data as soon as possible. When the essay is approved, the raw data is deleted from Box.
• You may NOT save movies/audio files etc., locally on your computer, USB stick, tablet or phone, social media, in Google Docs or the like, or in other cloud services.
• You may NOT send files with personal data by email.

Does this seem a bit complicated? There are other forms of data that do not involve handling personal data!
• Research reviews
• Teaching material studies
• Policy studies
• Text analysis of media articles
• Re-analysis of data in previous studies
• Study of artefacts etc.
• Historical data

Appendix III Interview Guide

The purpose of this interview is to ask questions about;

• Experiences of parental involvement
• How the ECE center works to enable parental involvement and home-school collaboration

1. Tell me about yourself, how long have you worked here and what is your background?
2. Can you describe the school? What do the everyday activities look like?
3. Who are the families that attend your school? Can you describe them?
4. What is your experience of parental motivation for enrolling their child in your school?
5. How do you experience and describe the cooperation with the families?
+ Are there policies mentioning cooperation in school-home communication?
+ Everyday communication? Events/PTA meetings?

6. During communication with parents - What are the questions or points for cooperation that are discussed?

7. What are the challenges in the involvement?

Appendix IV

Full size (Figure 4) of complete themes from thematic analysis