



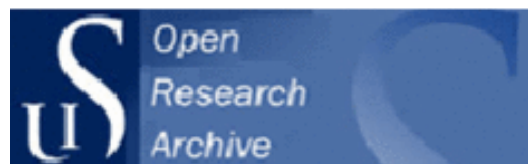
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THE PRESCHOOL CHILD OF TODAY – THE WORLD-CITIZEN OF TOMORROW?

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SUMMARY

Ideas of sustainable development, globalization and global citizenship raise questions about justice, rights, responsibility and caring for human beings and the world. Interest in the role of education for sustainable development has increased during the last decades, however little attention has been directed to early education. Even if the moral dimension in learning for sustainable development is evident it is seldom discussed or analysed. The aim of this paper is to discuss issues in everyday interaction as aspects of learning for sustainable development in preschool. The examples used as the basis for discussion are drawn from research on morality among young children (aged 1-6 years) in various daycare contexts in Sweden. From the analyses certain core values and competences are identified as tentative dimensions in early learning for global citizenship.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – A MORAL ISSUE

The concept ‘sustainable development’ has been interpreted in various ways and often with a normative accentuation of “the good life”. A basic principle in the discourses of sustainable development is that economic, social and environmental issues are interrelated (Björneloo, 2007). Indeed, ideas of sustainable development often raise questions about solidarity, justice, rights and caring for human beings and the world (op cit, 2007). One of the central proposals in this paper is that sustainable development is a moral issue based on intersubjectivity (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). We are as humans, part of, and responsible for, a common world. The philosopher Peter Kemp (2005) analysed ideas for sustainable development and the ‘world citizen’, which he maintains as a necessary ideal in all education. According to Kemp, the world citizen identifies her (or himself) as a part of at least two societies. One identity is as a member of the (national) society in which we are born and/or live our lives. Another identity refers to our existence as human beings in a shared world. The idea of sustainable development is a moral issue and justice is the base, says Kemp. Schools and preschools are inevitably bound to an obligation to present the moral voices of society: “If this moral voice of today is not a voice of the world citizen, then the system of education has become bankrupt.” (Kemp, 2005, p. 24, my translation). With these statements Kemp underscores two important issues: 1. the moral dimension in sustainable development, and; 2. the important role of early education in learning for global citizenship.

Keywords: learning, “sustainable development”, “global citizenship”, preschool-children

Interest in the role of education for sustainable development has increased during the last decades, however little attention has been directed to early education and to the moral dimensions of learning in early education settings. The aim of this paper is to discuss the moral issues evident in the everyday interactions between children and teachers in preschool as potentials for learning about sustainable development and identities of 'world-citizenship'. The base for the discussion are previous investigations of morality among children (aged 1-6 years) in different day care contexts in Sweden (Johansson, 1999, 2007). The data used in this discussion consists of video-observed interactions between teachers and children in preschool. The interactions have been analysed with a focus on the following questions: What kind of moral values are considered important in early learning for global citizenship and sustainable development? What kind of competences do children need to develop today being a member of a global society of tomorrow? From the analyses certain core values and competences are identified as tentative dimensions in early learning for global citizenship. These dimensions are scrutinised against the background of a neo-liberal society, the context of preschool, and previous research on moral values in early education.

INDIVIDUALISM AND COMMUNITY – A TENSION?

The position taken here is that the idea of sustainable development and the world citizen concern intersubjectivity, and the relation (and tension) between the individual and the (local and global) community. How can this relationship be described in today's post-modern society? The Swedish society has, according to Sven-Erik Liedman (1997, 2001) changed; from being a society built on authorities, to a society built on individuals' freedom and autonomy; from being a society built on a relatively homogeneous religious ground, to a secularised society; from being a society based on values such as stability and safety, towards a society that prioritises change and flexibility. This picture of increasing individuality in society has been described as a worldwide process characterising post-modern societies (c.f. Bauman, 1997). This picture of increasing individuality is also often viewed as a tension in education, where senses of community and responsibility for others are assumed to be replaced by an individualistic morality (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2005). From an international perspective, there also appears to be an interest in maintaining democratic values while, at the same time, respecting different systems of values (Berger & Luckmann, 1995). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children should experience and internalise values for human rights, and develop their own opinions and moral responsibility (Swedish Government Report 1997:116). Particularly in the formative early childhood years, education has an important responsibility for assisting the future adult citizens of the world to be moral and respectful individuals. There is however not a common system of values in today's society, on the contrary a diversity of values develop and take shape in different communities, situations and phases of life. Preschool today, in Sweden and internationally, is to a larger amount than ever before, a place where different opinions and values meet and are confronted. The democratic values emphasized in educational programmes and curriculums are also being challenged in media and other forums. Cultural codes and values are given new expressions. On the Internet for instance, many children gather in "the global village" and childhood itself can be seen as a gigantic identity-project (Bauman, 1997).

To sum up, the development of Swedish society indicates on the one hand an increasing individualization and on the other hand an increasing globalisation. This tension between individual's freedom (individuality) and responsibility for others and the world (solidarity) is inevitably part the moral life in preschool. The tension complicates, but does not exclude, the issue of early learning for global citizenship and of the idea of the world citizens.

THE PRESCHOOL CHILD – A MORAL AGENT

What do we know about the child's moral life from previous research? There is no doubt that morality is an important dimension in children's lives. The child is seen as an interactive agent, a member of culture and society, involved in manifold life-worlds and engaged in various existential periods in life which influence his or her morality (e.g., Killen & Smetana, 2006). Early in life children show care for others' wellbeing, and a sense of rights and of justice (Dunn, 2006; Johansson, 1999). Friendship is highly valued as is reciprocity and power (Corsaro, 2003; Greve, 2007). Children differentiate between moral, conventional and personal issues. However, the boundaries for these domains may be defined differently (Turiel, 2006). Research also indicates that children contribute to each other's moral understanding (Dunn, 2006). In their interaction children (and teachers) develop different moral contracts, for how to treat each other (Johansson, 2007). Children's morality is not separate from society; they struggle with values regarding existence, ownership, justice, respect for and understanding of others. Even if the theoretical agreement on these ideas is not always apparent, Shweder et.al. (1997) suggested that children's morality is oriented towards individuality, community, or divinity.

CORE VALUES: TO SHOW CONCERN AND DEFEND RIGHTS

Findings from previous research has revealed that conflicts of rights as well as acts that threaten one's own and others' wellbeing hold potential for children's moral learning (Johansson, 2006; Killen & Smetana 2006). Let us now follow a moral interaction between several children in a Swedish preschool:

Jack (4:10), Oscar (3:7) and Gustav (4:1) are playing in the 'dolls-room' with some bats made of plastic. Tomas (6:4) is watching them. The bats belong to Oscar who has brought them from home. Tomas points at the bat Jack is playing with. "Can I have that bat?" he asks. Jack looks at him. "I am playing with the bat now!" he objects. He leans towards Tomas and sounds determined. "It's not yours!" shouts Tomas pointing at Jack. "But I am using it," says Jack, now with a lower tone voice. Gustav and Oscar are silent, watching the others. Tomas turns to Oscar, he points at the bat asking: "Oscar, can I have that?" "Yees," says Oscar. Tomas stretches his arm towards Jack, who quickly turns around protecting the bat with his body. /.../ Jack gets up from his chair. Tomas follows. "No, No I want to!" Jack protests loudly as he tries to hinder Tomas from grabbing the bat. Jack turns around to the wall, holding the bat with both hands. He cries loudly. Tomas continues trying to pull the bat from Jack. There is a tension in the room.

Now Gustav gets on his feet: "Hey, hey, you!" he shouts. He lifts his bat up in the air in a threatening gesture towards Tomas. "My big brother is really strong!" he says firmly. Tomas shakes Jack a little. "My big brother is really strong," Gustav repeats. Oscar is coming closer. He sucks his bat looking tense. Tomas keeps on shaking Jack. "But I have it now," Jack sobs. Gustav repeats his message: "My big brother, my big brother is really strong." Gustav jumps up and down on the floor. Now Tomas succeeds in taking the bat from Jack. He turns around and Jack hits him in the back. Tomas pushes Jack against the wall. At this moment Gustav takes a step forward. He hits Tomas with his bat. Tomas replicates and hits Gustav with the captured bat. Oscar gazes quickly at the camera and then at Jack who is crying. Jack looks helpless. "Not yours, I had it first," he says. Tomas holds the bat towards Jack. "So! So!" he says. "It is not your bat." Tomas voice sounds gloomy.

Gustav has left the room but soon he comes running back. He holds a large plastic dinosaur in his raised hand. He quickly throws the dinosaur towards Tomas. The dinosaur hits Tomas head. "Ohhh!" Tomas shouts. Gustav runs quickly out of the room. "Mama," he cries. A teacher comes.

She asks Tomas what has happened. "He threw a dinosaur," says Tomas. He sounds offended. "And he..." Tomas points at Jack (who is still crying). "He wants this bat, even though I was allowed to borrow it from him." Now Tomas points at Oscar. "But, if Oscar let Tomas borrow the bat, and the bat belongs to Oscar you know, then Oscar has the right to decide," says the teacher. "I also wanted the bat," cries Jack. "Yes, but ... You have no bat. Then you have to wait," corrects the teacher. /.../ Later Jack goes out into the hall. The bat lies on a bench. Jack takes it up, looks at it and then he puts the bat on the bench again. /.../ Now Gustav enters the hall. He hands his dinosaur to Jack saying friendly: "You can borrow that." But Jack does not take the dinosaur.

The most dominant value in the situation above is about rights, in particular about who has the right to play with the bat and under what circumstances. Tomas wants to play with the bat Jack is using and he gets permission to do this from Oscar, the owner. From the perspective expressed by Tomas ownership confers the primary right to the bat. From Jack's position, however, it is his access and use of the toy that motivates his right. Tomas pursues what he believes is his right while Jack also defends his perceived right. What might be the reasons for Oscar's approach in this situation? Maybe it is an issue of justice and rights? Maybe Oscar thinks that Jack has played enough with the bat and now it is Tomas' turn. Perhaps Oscar lent his bat to Tomas because Tomas is older and bigger and that he often claims his rights through his bodily strength? There are several possible interpretations. Nevertheless Oscar acts from a position of having the first right to the bat because he is the owner.

Jack's weak position is evident; he shows his disgrace; he cries; he looks down and turns away. His resistance is in vain; he holds the bat tight but is forced to let it go. The other boys watching the conflict seem involved but act differently. Oscar remains quiet and still during the conflict. Why is this so? Maybe his position as an observer to the conflict is taken because of Tomas' known powerful position in the group? Maybe he expects me, the researcher, to intervene or maybe he waits for a teacher to take care of the situation? Oscar is part of the situation for another reason – he has suspended Jack's permission to borrow the bat while giving the right to Tomas. Oscar seems to be in a state of tension, with his raised shoulders, sucking at his bat. In contrast, Gustav acts explicitly to support Jack. He does this in various ways. He protests loudly, he waves the bat in threatening gestures, he jumps, and he strengthens his argumentative stance with threats about a big brother. Besides, he hits Tomas and throws a toy at him. In the last part of the interaction Gustav shows support for his friend in a different way – he makes an offer to Jack to borrow his dinosaur. The value of others wellbeing is upheld by Gustav by way of attacking the victimiser but also through comforting the victim.

Now consider the ideal of the world-citizen and the skills that might be needed. The courage and the responsibility for the other that is shown in this interaction are extremely interesting. The idea of world-citizen presupposes human beings are able to reflect, to take responsibility and to act in the purpose of supporting their own and others rights, as well supporting justice and others' wellbeing. Gustav shows these abilities and defends these values in the situation above. Although Gustav has a weaker position (in this group of children and in relation to Tomas), we can imagine that he is a bit frightened of Tomas. In spite of this Gustav stands up for what he seems to believe is Jack's right. The moral challenge of the situation appears stronger than the fear of Tomas. Gustav defends and protects Jack with the various strategies that he has at hand. Indeed, the courage and responsibility expressed by this young boy is important to consider from the perspective of a world-citizen. Gustav has the courage to support a friend regardless of the fact that he runs the risk of getting hurt himself. Gustav overrides expectations often expressed by other children in the group in other interactions that he is a person who is morally bad, who destroys and hurts others. In understanding the interactions of these children about rights and responsibilities, about solidarity and individuality, teachers need to acknowledge the skills that children possess in their interactions.

We can look also at the teacher's role in the interaction above. Initially, she listens to the words of Tomas, thereby assisting him to assert his rights in the situation. The teacher supports his right to play with the bat. She is motivated in her position by the fact that Oscar is the owner of the bat; therefore he has the right to decide who can play with the bat. Since Tomas has been given this right from Oscar the consequence that follows is that Jack has to wait. From the perspective of the teacher (and Tomas) ownership confers the primary right to the bat. In terms of democracy, which is a core value in the Swedish curriculum, we can ask whose voice is primarily heard in this situation? What possibilities are given to the other children to have a voice?

From this example, and from previous studies on children's morality (Johansson, 1999, 2002, 2007; Johansson & Johansson, 2003) it is possible to conclude that values such as rights, justice and the wellbeing of others are core values in children's interactions in preschool. These values are also proposed by Kemp (2005) as important in a global society. The competencies of the children apparent in the above interaction include courage, responsibility and reflection. These competences evident in young children's interactions reflect important dimensions in early learning in preparation for global citizenship. How do children learn these values and competencies?

From the literature the competences and conditions proposed as central to children's moral learning now diverge. On the one hand, it has been stated that moral principles (i.e. the rules for how to act) guide moral actions. Research has also proposed that moral judgements (Fjellström, 2004) are vital in a child's moral development. A child needs to develop the abilities to discern and consider both situational and more general moral principles. On the other hand, research has concluded that morality is not mainly a question of interpreting and reflecting on abstract principles. Rather, children's morality is concerned with the ability to discern the complexity of social situations in which values and norms arise and are negotiated (Frønes, 1995). Discernment in complex social situations requires a capacity to communicate and be open to various social perspectives. Communicative competence (Habermas, 1971) emerges from the child's experiences of interaction with others, especially with peers. A child can learn about morality under certain important conditions, these include; the other's reactions; their perception of the implications and consequences of what the acts might be, and their personal closeness to the other (Johansson, 1999). Moreover a certain "room of distance" (Johansson, 2007) can be of importance for children's morality. Indeed, this is not a distance from the other; it is rather a distance that allows room for reflection. The totality of the situation also seems important for the children's actions. A supplementary idea is that children need to develop identities as moral persons with inner motives to act in a moral way towards others (Nucci, 2001) and through such participation with others children develop a sense of community.

Several studies have shown that children can consider the moral complexities in social situations (Johansson, 2006; Killen & Smetana, 2006). Children are aware of particular values and norms about how to treat others and they have the ability of discernment in complex social situations. This is an important condition but not sufficient to ensure moral actions. A child must also develop knowledge about moral values and see his or her ability to act with the intention to support others.

RIGHTS – FUNDAMENTAL VALUES IN PRESCHOOL?

According to Kemp (2005) justice and rights are core values in the idea of global citizenship. These values are connected but they are not the same. In considering the next interaction we can discuss the question of rights and justice from the perspectives of the children. Sometimes the children are confronted with dilemmas about how decisions could be taken and shared:

Hanna (6:8), Magnus (5:1) and Fredrik (5:0) are about to start playing. A central issue is who has the right to be a doctor. "Everyone," suggests Magnus and continues, "I mean everyone. Anyone." "Yes," Fredrik agrees, "All of us were the doctor." "Yes," confirms Magnus. /.../ The children move about, organizing the waiting room while they are reasoning about the play. Hanna places some chairs in a row as in a waiting room. "Now you have destroyed this!" Fredrik says with an accusing tone of voice. He goes up to the chairs and points out an empty space where one of the chairs was placed before. "They should stay as they were," he says. Hanna carries one of the chairs back to the empty spot and says: "But then the waiting room can actually be here." She sounds satisfied. Fredrik picks some papers up with a pair of tweezers saying: "No." Hanna objects firmly:

“You are not the only one to decide!” “Magnus also decides,” says Fredrik, but Hanna declares once again: “But I also want to decide!” “No,” says Fredrik. “Yees,” says Hanna. Now Magnus makes his voice heard: “Everyone decides,” he says and then he adds resolutely: “I have decided!” “Hanna has decided that the cushion should be there,” Fredrik says disappointingly. Hanna moves the carpet for the cars. Now Magnus objects: “Hanna moves everything.” He looks at her. Hanna leans her head to the side and protests: “No, I am not moving everything.” She emphasises the word everything. “Yes, you moved those chairs,” argues Fredrik. “I just moved them because you said that they should not be there. You said that,” says Hanna. /.../

Initially the children seem to agree upon that everyone can be a doctor. They also seem to agree on sharing the decisions but they do not approve when this actually occurs. Fredrik and Hanna disagree about where to place the chairs. Hanna refers indirectly to a common right to decide: “You are not the only one to decide!” Fredrik’s counter-argument is built on the same idea. He argues that Magnus also has a right to decide. Magnus gets involved in the dispute and he takes a central decision: “Everyone decides, I have decided”. The contradiction in his statement is an interesting one on which to reflect. It shows the children’s pragmatic use of values and norms. The boys seem to imply that Hanna has ignored their agreement. She has decided too much when she moves the chairs. The moral agreement built on the idea of a right for everyone to influence the play and that this influence should be equally shared. This shared right to decide can be interpreted as a democratic ideal. However, the children’s experiences with this idea then diverge. One experience expressed by Hanna is being denied the right to decide. A second expression is that someone decides too much, noted by all children. A third experience expressed by Magnus is that everyone has a right to decide.

The situation described above is one of many similar examples from my research where children deal with issues of rights and justice (Johansson, 1999, 2007). How can it be that rights have such a dominant place in children’s morality? And why has this knowledge that young children know a lot about moral values and norms been so little understood? Research about rights seems to have low priority, even if the area now has become more visible in the literature (Killen & Smetana, 2006). The research has focussed mainly on issues about children’s experiences of certain individual rights, such as personal freedom, right to express oneself and right to make choices (i.e., Emilson & Folkesson, 2006; Sheridan & Pramling Samuelsson, 2001). Charles Helwig (2006) maintains that 6-year old children have a basic sense of rights and that they can discern and differentiate adults’ rights from their own rights. Ruck, Abramovitch and Keating (1998) found that children and younger teenagers have a preference for their right to physical care rather than to self-determination. These authors reject the idea that children’s understandings of rights develop in stages. Children’s understanding and preferences for certain rights are, according to these researchers, contextually related and connected with their direct experiences in the exercise of certain rights in everyday life. Helwig (2006) has similar reasoning. He holds that children’s conceptions of rights and freedom are linked to their concerns about self-determination, personal choices and wellbeing and that children are involved in these issues in their everyday life. The argument here is that it is important for children to develop ideas about their own and others rights in their early education. But how are rights considered from a societal perspective?

INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE RIGHTS

Swedish society has, according to Liedman (1997, 2001), increasingly become built on the idea of the individuals' freedom and autonomy. Similarly, this idea has become more important across Europe and western societies across the world. The picture is, however complex. Roger Fjellström (2004, p. 192) describes different displacements in philosophy of education in Sweden during the 1980s and 1990s, turning from social-democratic equality towards a liberal market-orientation and freedoms. This is often described in terms of neo-liberalism (Bourdieu, 1999). Parallel to these displacements is an increasing adaptation to the diversity of culture, to pluralities in religions and values, at least on a discursive level. It has also been suggested, according to Fjellström (2004), that it is important for families to recapture their influence over school and preschool.

Another displacement has also taken place; the proposal that society ought to take a stronger and more sustainable grip over the formation of citizens. The idea of lifelong learning, says Fjellström, is not only about developing knowledge and skills; lifelong learning is about developing the total personality (Fjellström, 2004). This mixture of liberal thoughts, in which individual rights are maintained, while respecting diverse values, is likely to become increasingly important for the life-world in preschool. The strong maintenance of rights in preschool is understandable against these social influences. When looking at the Swedish society it is evident that the importance of individual rights has been highlighted during the last two decades, and the discourse on rights in the context of preschools are simply a reflection of this. Practices in preschool are, in the main part, organized around rights, for instance rights to play with things, to share worlds with friends and peers, and rights to be able to create and express meanings (Johansson, 1999, 2007). For every child in preschool it is (or becomes) of existential importance to be active with things and to be part of the common life with peers. This is what the activities are all about within children's everyday interactions with friends and teachers in preschool. Therefore, rights are important to children in the context of preschool. This does not mean that children always gain their rights or that rights are equally shared, rather that the structures of preschool are based on notions about rights and this will, of course, influence children's developing sense of morality. The culture, the organisation and the context in preschool create conditions in everyday life that contributes to 'an ethic of rights'. In an extension of this idea, we can ask ourselves – what does this mean for the recognition of the child as a world citizen?

Consider the words: "Everyone decides." proposed by Magnus in the interaction described above. The significance is here that the right to decide is shared. The supplementary words "... I have decided!" might be understood as an expression of his awareness of his powerful position in the group. Magnus often suggests solutions and decides when the children negotiate on different issues. The contradiction in his statement is interesting because it shows that children interpret values and norms from their understandings and issues of importance to their own life-worlds. Interestingly, rights also seem to include a collective dimension. In contrast to the described picture of individual freedom and autonomy as an evolving ideal in society the children show a strong sense for shared rights parallel with their concern for individual rights (Johansson, 1999, 2007). The moral contracts negotiated between the children often concern both collective and individual rights and both solidarity and individuality. Magnus' utterance, "Everyone decides", is one example of this kind of collective right.

THE RHETORIC OF CARE

Educational policy in Sweden emphasises an integration of priorities for education and care (Swedish Government Report 1997:157; The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2005). The ideal promoted is of a synthesis of care and education. Several researchers in Sweden, as well as internationally, however, agree that the dominant moral ideals in preschool and school are caring for others' wellbeing and that girls learn to represent this ideal better than do boys (Davies, 2003; Gannerud, 1999; Grieshaber & Ryan, 2006). From a historical perspective, teaching formerly based on a model of paternity has shifted towards a model of motherhood, not least among teachers working with young children. Most teachers are women who base their work primarily on solicitude, which has resulted in preschool and the early years at school coming to be based on a caring ideal (Tallberg Broman, et al., 2002; Thornton & Goldstein, 2006).

Gannerud (1999) has studied how Swedish female teachers at the junior level of the compulsory school conceive their profession. She found that there is a caring culture, which is a part of the teachers' pedagogy. The teachers themselves emphasize that their relationships with children, and their care for the children, were the most important parts of their role. According to Jalongo (2002) and Murphy and Leeper (2003), early childhood teachers take the position of caregivers by protecting, and by offering children affiliation and comfort. In contrast to this picture of a caring ideal in preschool, we have learnt in the examples presented in this paper that the preschool practice and children's interactions endorse an 'ethic of rights' including individual as well as collective rights. Children defend each other's rights, as we have learnt in the first interaction when Gustav defends Jack's right to the bat. But Gustav also shows a caring solicitude towards his friend. Nonetheless rights seem to be given a prominent position in the life-worlds of children and teachers. How can this disparity between care and rights be explained?

On the one hand we can understand children's and teachers striving for individual rights as a consequence of a neo-liberal society described above. On the other hand the collective dimension of rights can be interpreted as a stream partly taking another path that in some respect counteracts the picture of an increasing individualisation. The question here is if teachers are aware of this direction. Do teachers realize that the context in preschool, and their work is highly influenced by a discourse on rights which seems to be in sharp contrast with their ideal of caring, and with efforts to unite care and education. Maybe this is an important part of the discourse – a way of talking, as a teacher, about the purpose of early childhood education. The issue is also how teachers regard individual and collective rights and the implications for children's moral learning and the idea of global citizenship that follows from these? Is it likely that individual rights are supported while the collective rights are neglected?

It is important for teachers to reflect on their own moral ideals and also on the societal discourses, and how these are lived out implicitly and explicitly through the moral contracts constructed in everyday interactions between teachers and children in preschools. Teachers' knowledge of moral values in society and the preschool is of essential importance if the ideas of global citizenship and education for sustainability are to be made visible for children. If (individual) rights dominate the preschool structure and interactions, then it must be particularly important to reflect on how care for others' wellbeing is encouraged among the children.

MORAL PLURALISM

Rights, justice and care are important moral dimensions in children's interactions (Johansson, 1999, 2007). While rights seem to be a priority for the children, care seems to be the priority for teachers (at least on a discursive level). From this paper we have also learnt that the pedagogical practices in preschool are focussed around rights. A comparable discussion is to be found in moral philosophy, where justice is often found to be in tension with care. Whereas care seeks for the specific and the contextual, on the one hand, justice on the other hand, refers to common and universal principles (Noddings, 1999). The philosopher Kenneth Strike (1999) however claims that an ethic of justice does not exclude an ethic of care. Every moral judgement rests upon the specific case and its specific circumstances. Therefore Strike suggests the idea of moral pluralism involves both justice (rights) and care.

Rather than viewing justice and care as opposites, the suggestion here is to see these values as interrelated. This means that the preschool-child as a future world citizen needs to develop moral knowledge about the particular and specific in addition to the common and global and be able to discern moral concerns both in 'the close and familiar' and in 'the more distant and far away'. Values such as care, justice and rights need to be confronted with the specific and the global. Gunnel Colnerud (2006) analyzes the concept of care against the background of school practice. The ethics of care is problematic in the school context, writes Colnerud, since teachers always confront the issue of how to distribute care. Therefore the value of justice is inevitable involved in the everyday school practice. Besides, structures in school and preschool sometimes hinder teachers to show solicitude towards the children. There is also a dimension of power in care, between the teacher and the pupil, which is often neglected (Colnerud, 2006). In addition care involves a dimension of power between children, from the child that gives care towards the child that is the receiver of care, which we have learnt from previous investigations (Johansson, 1999; 2007)

THE IDEA OF WORLD CITIZENS – AN IMPORTANT CONTENT IN CURRICULUM

How democratic issues are treated in preschool and the kind of moral knowledge that children develop about themselves and others, is of significant concern for the future. The idea of the world citizen is about solidarity and individuality and how children will take care of themselves, as well as others, and the world. The educational practice of preschool is inevitably about children's and teachers' concern for rights, justice and others' wellbeing. It is also about democracy in terms of participation and influence. Who's voice is heard and on what conditions? These issues are global and of priority in all societies even if the implications and constructions differ according to society and culture. Moral issues such as those discussed in this paper are not new but they do take new pathways and forms in a changing society. These changing imperatives demand from teachers' different kinds of knowledge.

Every interaction in preschool can be analysed with regards to certain questions: What possible learning about global citizenship, solidarity and individuality, might come about in the preschool? What kinds of value conflicts evolve? What values (rights, justice and care) are of priority or subordinated, by whom, and on what grounds? What issues of power and powerlessness are actualised? How is participation or lack of participation expressed? What positions are given/taken by teachers and the children? The questions are numerous and complex.

The project of helping children to develop solidarity and individuality can be seen as full of contradictions. This accentuates that teachers and children need competencies such as courage, integrity, critical thinking and responsibility, but also that the expressed meanings of these concepts need to be scrutinised. We have seen some of these aspects expressed by Gustav in the interaction about the bat. Gustav seems to reflect on what is going on and he also acts. In spite of his weak position and a sense of awareness that he might get hurt he defends a friend in distress. The question is: Are these aspects visible for the teacher?

Recent research also shows that discipline and obedience are values of priority from the perspectives of teachers (Bartholdsson, 2007; Markström, 2005; Tullgren, 2004). This raises another question: Do preschools really provide for learning where courage and critical thinking are essential? To do so is challenging in terms of teachers' knowledge and skills. First of all, teachers need knowledge about moral concepts and systems of values. Second, teachers need skills to discern the complexity of meanings that can be given value in the curriculum contexts. Several researchers (e.g., Fjellström, 2004; Orlenius & Bigsten, 2006; Thornberg, 2006) have maintained that teachers need to develop a knowledge of moral theories (moral philosophy). Furthermore, teachers require moral 'languages' and moral concepts to be able to understand and interpret complex moral dilemmas in everyday interaction. Third, teachers need knowledge of the different meanings and interpretations children give values and how children develop and learn morality especially against the background of a pluralistic society. Moreover teachers need qualitative knowledge of the kind of ethic that structures, attitudes and approaches might support or hinder in the own preschool community. There is a need for knowledge on how children interpret and relate to moral issues. This kind of knowledge is currently rarely seen in educational research but is gradually growing (Johansson, 2006). All of this also gives researchers a huge responsibility.

How moral and democratic values are treated in preschool is interconnected with the idea of globalisation. If children are to develop at least the two identities suggested by Kemp (2005): one as being part of a local community, and another as being part of and responsible for a common world, then they need to be part of a community that put these issues at the forefront. Everyday interactions in preschool concern the kinds of understandings of self, of others and the world that children are given opportunities to develop. The idea of the preschool child as a world citizen is an amazing thought that assigns a significant responsibility to teachers and researchers.

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