

Abstract

This study aims to provide insight into *musicking* in two Norwegian kindergartens. From higher education I have expanded my perception of what it means to be musical, and become intrigued by others'. Through practical training in my education to become a preschool teacher I have become aware of an unused potential in kindergarten practices. This seems to aspire from a limited perception of what it means to be musical, leading the 'un-musical' to experience uncomfortable situations. Wondering how children then use music in these institutions and what they consider to be music became a motivation for conducting this study.

Contemporary social studies of children and childhood have been the theoretical frames relating to study children's musical worlds for this thesis. Within these frames children are considered as owners of knowledge, which is essential to understand their lifeworlds. Through the use of qualitative research methods, mainly observations and conversations, empirical material that this thesis is grounded in was generated.

In relation to music there has been a lack of research on this topic, hence, literature from different music related disciplines have guided the focus in this study, leading to the concept of musicking. Within this concept the attention lies in doing music, not the object such as recorded music.

The findings in this study aspire from the analytical concepts of *musical agency*, and *musical structure*. Being essential to understand the frameworks and perceptions within which the participants acted musically, musical structure led to an awareness of adults ambivalence when trying to define music and musicality. Inspired by a boy's perspective on music, clearly dividing between doing and making music, leads me to think that emphasising the difference between the object of music and the musical experience might benefit adults' own practices and experiences.

Musical agency appeared in a range of ways. It seemed as if children had individual musical 'toolboxes', which could be utilised in different ways depending in the specific situation, e.g. creative pleasurable leisure activities, giving social power and for participation. In social interaction such as role play, children's music, amongst other ways, appeared when establishing frames for the play and the continuous amendment of these.

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Prologue

I am 13 years old, I am in my bedroom and I have put the music on as loud as possible. I sing along to the music while dancing. I practice another language when performing the lyrics and feel the rhythms of the song. On the other side of the door my mother craves a break. She has probably had enough of this song since I have played it for at least ten times today, repeatedly over the last year and, which none of us knew at the time, the song will be played for another year until the CD disappears when moving to a new home.

Today I still remember the lyrics, the music and my particular interest in the Danish language. I remember it with great pleasure and can recall all the emotions and feelings I put into the particular song. Not necessarily the meaning of the lyrics, but I felt connected to it somehow.

As a child I often listened to music and was singing while doing other things. The song¹ described above was by a Danish band. By listening to this music I got a feeling of belonging to Danish culture, a vague concept for me at the time, which I otherwise did not experience other than during holidays in Denmark and gatherings with my Danish family. I also practiced the Danish language through the song, although I rarely spoke it in public. It became an important part of my everyday life and when I hear the song now, many years later, my musical memory takes me back in time and I ‘become’ 13 again. Since then, other types of music have been proven important and influenced my feeling of identity, and I often hear that I have had and still have a peculiar taste in music. Still, what I consider as ‘my music’ depends on the context in which I find myself, and especially the mood I am in; while on the bus the music can take me to a faraway island, and when feeling frustrated specific music might help dealing with the frustration.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxzpwtdQ3l0>

² <https://tv.nrk.no/program/KOID21003513/musikk-som-vaapen>

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Even though I never considered myself as particularly musical when I was younger, music was, and still is, an important part of my way of being. Through higher education I have expanded my perception on what it means to be musical and I now consider most of the population, including myself, as inherently musical. This change in perception has been part of the reason for choosing to focus my education around music, and choosing the topic *Musicking in Norwegian kindergartens* for this thesis. When I am asked about my topic of study the immediate response often is “*What instrument do you play?*” or “*Do you have a musical background?*”. However, the emphasis for me, as the musical being I am, is experiencing music through listening or being in it with movements and when it feels desirable, improvising with instruments. Even though I know the basics of how to play a few instruments such as guitar and ukulele, I rarely mention this as it is not the primary way I mainly do or experience music.

1.1 Research motivation

Through own practical training as a preschool teacher I have continually experienced an underlying potential with music in kindergartens. This potential lies in the attitudes and approaches of staff in relation to the topic of music, such as feeling uncomfortable and avoiding musical activities. The way music is present in kindergartens seems to vary depending on the people working there. The staff structure and organise the content in the everyday lives that goes on within the kindergartens. They do this by deciding which objects that are available, types of projects, which may often be inspired by their personal interests. Not arguing that it is wrong to focus on own interest. I consider it to be beneficial to have people with different interests in the kindergarten, as this may lead to a varied and rich daily life. What I would however argue is that by reflecting on own attitudes towards music one can find new ways of experiencing music and might therefore appreciate it more. Music seems to be a big part of children’s free activities in kindergarten, which means that staff is surrounded by it often during their day at work in the kindergarten.

In the current Framework plan for the Content and Tasks of Kindergartens (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012) the subject areas were more specified than in the previous

version. However, from the publishing of the new Framework plan and until today there has become an increasing focus on maths and reading, as preparation for school. This means that the more creative subjects are left to the spontaneous and individual kindergarten staff to include and interpret. Musical activities are usually carried out in assemblies or circle time. I have experienced these are easier to cancel, than 'school like' subjects, if, e.g. the staff leading the assembly is not comfortable singing or feel pressured by time. Arguments in recent debates relate to a concern in regards to the consequences of the path the kindergartens now follow. It is argued that kindergartens are becoming more like schools and that some subjects, such as maths, gets increasing amount of attention at the cost of subjects such as music (Bakke, Sæbø, & Jenssen, 2011). What do these trends mean in relation to music in kindergartens?

When kindergartens were established in Norway around the 1970's, as will be further introduced in chapter 2, singing and creative activities seemed to be important components in the everyday activities. A concern of mine is the position musical activities will have in the future if the focus in kindergartens continues to be more in line with the schools. Will it maintain a position in which it is valued both for the activity itself and the quality it may have in a learning situation? Or will the subject slowly fade out to something that we used to know, disappearing from the kindergarten completely to make room for what is considered necessary for academic achievements when the children start school?

Maybe a different path is what to hope for, a path in which both the intrinsic value and the utility value are acknowledged? For a music teacher this will mean that he/she should see what the child is in the here and now, as well as anticipating the future (Vestad, 2014). The latter part leads to a combination of previous and more recent theoretical arguments concerning the dualism between children's subject and object position, which seems to be more integrative of children as social actors within early childhood music education. This path may also in the future diminish the tensions in what seems to be taboo topics within contemporary theorizing childhood (Thorne, 2007; Tingstad, Forthcoming), considering children as human becomings, and using music and play as tools for achievement. These contemporary theories emphasise children as beings (e.g. Lee, 1998; Prout & James, 1990, further presented in chapter 3), and music and play as valued for the activity itself. The word taboo is drawn from how the pedagogically educated staff talked about the subjects, always emphasising the being of children and music as valuable in itself if they were to have a

comment that pointed in the other direction. Relating several musical disciplines to current discourses in childhood studies, Vestad (2014) argues that by engaging actively in music children can be seen as competent subjects instead of incompetent objects, as musical agents and not observers, both “in and for their own lives” (pp. 271).

1.2 Soundtrack of our lives

Proverbs one often hear among friends, musicians or peers of some sort, such as ‘music saved my soul’, ‘music is life – that is why our hearts have beats’, emphasise music as an important part of life. These, and numerous amounts of similar sayings are common in Norway as well as the world in general. My 10-year-old brother recently said; “*Well, I actually am music. It is just a part of me, it is inside me*”. This shows how also young people value music.

My younger brother’s reflection on music relates to what Campbell points out as the nature of music in children, “[it] is on their minds and in their bodies” (Campbell, 1998, pp. 168).

During work in kindergartens and through my education as a preschool teacher specialised in aesthetic courses (drama, art and music), I have found different understandings of what music is and what it means to be musical. The adult way of viewing music, especially in European culture, is, in my opinion, often limiting the way we understand situations. This makes the way we understand children’s musical behaviour different to the way they do themselves, and it may not receive attention at all (Bjørkvold, 1992). For children, to sing and to jump at the same time is for children considered as *one* activity, while adults see it as *two*. And when children are making sounds while playing with a doll, this may not be considered by adults as music (ibid). Adults may be reluctant to act musically as they consider themselves non-musical. But if singing with a doll is not music, what is? And what does it really mean to be musical?

Children’s spontaneous singing is what Bjørkvold (1992) describes as *the muse-ical mother tongue* arguing that it is as natural to use for the child as both laughing and crying. And according to Campbell (1998), the music is within each child, and does that not mean it is in all of us? Or have we abandoned the music and our muse-ical mother tongues on our way to adulthood? These are some of the questions I have been asking myself during my previous studies, an education that opened my eyes for the phenomenon of music and made me more aware of the unused potential of music as well the amount of children’s musicking that was

not recognised due to narrow definitions of music and musicality. Instead of making people feel liberated in ways of expressing and experiencing music, these narrow definitions often seem limiting when it comes to musical activities. Childhood studies have continued to trigger these types of questions, why is children's *musicking* not recognised by the adults? Do adults who consider themselves to be un-musical and feeling uncomfortable doing music, still use it with children? The tension when defining children and childhood in contemporary sociology of childhood (e.g. James, 2009; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998) has also led me to the questions if there are some characteristics within childhood that makes it more desirable to musick and whether or not adults abandon this characteristic when growing up?

1.3 Musicking

There are numerous definitions of what music is, often depending on the purpose for which it is used, and the disciplines that make them. Within pedagogics, Sæther and Aalberg (2012) argue that music is organised sounds or/and interaction between people. Music can also be seen as sounds that are considered as signs that have a meaning, and could be a language that is based both in culture and society (Blacking & Byron, 1995). This musical language encourages and appeals to the involvement of the whole person as it can be felt, as well as made and heard (Ruud, 1996). It is thus seen as a multiple language that can be experienced as social by creating and experiencing something mutual, independent of different backgrounds and experiences (Sæther & Aalberg, 2012).

Although this study is not directly linked to pedagogics, my background and the context in which the research has been conducted are. Having this in mind I continued to search for a concept that was more suitable for my current study and topic of research, leading me to the concept of musicking by the musicologist, Christopher Small (1998). The argument for this term is based on his theory of music being an activity we engage in, instead of a thing or a collection of things. Instead of a noun he considers it as a verb. With this he argues that music is something we do; it is beyond performing and practicing – because amongst other things we listen, compose and dance it. Despite Small being a musicologist, his concept is considered inherently sociological as it intertwines music and interaction (Roy & Dowd, 2010), which connects the two disciplines musicology and sociology of music. Sociology of music can be seen as being closer to childhood studies in relation to perspectives and ways of seeing music and children than musicology often seems to be. They can be seen as separate as

well as intertwined based on an acceptance of music as a social enterprise, something which has become increasingly accepted within musicology (DeNora, 2004). This connection makes it suitable for researching music and children within childhood studies.

Although the argument of music being inside us may be acknowledged, this is beyond the field that this thesis will explore. Rather, the focus concerns what the concept of music may include, and how this is present in the kindergartens everyday life. With my presumptions from previous education I wanted to explore music, or the concept of *musicking* and the activity *to musick*, in kindergartens everyday life and this therefore became my research topic.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

Musicking in Norwegian Kindergartens

The aim of this study is to explore musicking in two Norwegian kindergartens.

Research objectives:

1. In what ways are music part of children's play and learning situations?
2. In what ways are music part of organised activities and structures?
3. Explore the concept of music and musicking with participants.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is structured in 7 chapters. This first chapter has been an introduction to the topic, motivation for doing the research, and the aim and objectives that the research and thesis is grounded in. This is followed by chapter 2, which presents the theoretical and contextual background of the research as it affects the lives of the participants as well the institutions that they are occupied within at the time of research. The theoretical framework of the thesis is outlined in chapter 3 to establish a platform of knowledge that the following chapter 4 has been directed by. This is the methodological chapter that has the aim of providing insight into the methodological perspectives, approaches, challenges and ethical considerations, which has occurred in the planning stage as well as in the practical period of generating empirical data. Drawing on the knowledge the participants provided, chapter 5 and 6 has the purpose of making sense of what has been studied in relation to theory. Chapter 5 concerns the activities the participants engaged in spontaneously, and chapter 6 focuses on making sense of the music in the perspectives of the participants, the staffs approaches for organised musical

activities, and how these were carried out. The final chapter, number 7, will connect the pieces in this thesis by summarising what has been discussed followed by concluding remarks.

Chapter 2: Background

The purpose of this chapter is to contextualise the research on musicking within two Norwegian kindergartens, as well as introducing the framework guiding kindergartens in Norway. Although both theories of childhood and music will be presented thoroughly in the next chapter, it will be introduced here to encourage the reader to keep the theories in mind when continuing reading the thesis.

2.1 Norwegian kindergartens

A historical backdrop

The history of Norwegian kindergartens is founded in a common social and pedagogical European tradition (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2008-2009). The social root originated with the asylum movement that created the first children's asylum in Norway in 1837, which was called "The asylum for poor young children" (Asylet for fattige småbørn). In these institutions children could spend whole days, and the purpose was to provide supervision, care and upbringing to underprivileged children (ibid).

The pedagogical root started with the German philosopher Friedrich Fröbel. He opened his first Kindergarten (original name) at the same time as the asylums. In his Kindergarten he ensued his thoughts on the importance of children's free play and their positive processes of learning (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2008-2009). The funding of Fröbel's kindergartens was mainly fees paid by parents, which meant that it was only the middle class children that could afford attend. This idea is the foundation for Norway's first municipal kindergarten (ibid). From the 1920s the asylums were either reorganised or closed, and a clear distinction between kindergartens and day-care centres arose. The kindergartens, which were open 4 hours a day, were mainly private and lead by educated women. The day-care centres, which were open 8-9 hours a day, had municipal economic support. However, no education was acquired for the employees to work there (ibid) until these two institutions were merged in 1975 into what today is known as kindergartens (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006-2007).

Within the National framework for kindergartens, music is considered as a part of the phenomenon of art culture and creativity (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). Although childhood and art are to be found before the 18th century, it was at this time the encoding and discovery of human made phenomena are argued to have started (Ariés, 1982;

Bakke et al., 2011; Røyseng, Pettersen, & Habbestad, 2014). The art, at this time, was something made by an artist to be passively experienced by an audience (Valberg, 2012). It was not before the 1900's that art became accessible for all, regardless of class, gender and age (Bakke et al., 2011). From the establishment of the phenomenon of art it has been a changeable perception and interpretation of what art is or should be, and how it is supposed to be experienced (Røyseng et al., 2014). Whether or not children and childhood are universal and unchangeable phenomena similar to established facts within the natural sciences, is heavily debated within contemporary social studies of children and childhood (ibid). An argument that can be read in many documents is the distinction between viewing children as human becomings, future perspective, contra viewing them as human beings, here and now perspective (e.g. Lee, 1998; Prout & James, 1990).

2.2 Kindergarten musicking

A dominating view within the field of pedagogy is that children are passively exposed to art (in this case music) as an object, an object with a potential for both cause and effect (Bakke et al., 2011; Roy & Dowd, 2010). This thesis focus on the other array of meetings with music that has been more in focus since the 1900's, the one of experiencing and doing it, introduced earlier as musicking (Bakke et al., 2011; DeNora, 2004; Roy & Dowd, 2010). Vestad (2014) has recently conducted a similar research on a larger scale, focusing on recorded music. My study, however, focuses on *participants'* own musicking. With more of a focus on musical meetings, experiences and doings, related to music's intrinsic value.

Further, this way of acknowledging music is in line with the proverbs concerning music presented in the previous chapter, as well as one of Ramones albums called 'Soundtrack of our lives'. The latter has become a common saying when referring to a particular musical piece people feel portray their lives. For this to make sense in a pedagogical setting it might be approached by discussing the *intrinsic value of musical experience* (Varkøy, 2015). By considering the experience it is not as easily mixed with the use of music valued for the outcome. This may also be an approach to differentiate between using pedagogy as a tool for emphasising musical experience and using it with a purpose of achieving something else in an activity, e.g. learning or developing skills.

2.2.1 Studying musicking

Ever since the beginning of kindergarten history in Norway in 1837, music has had a prominent presence in the everyday activities. A tradition in Norwegian kindergartens is to have at least one assembly during the day in which the whole group is gathered around an adult and they often sing songs about days, names of children and weather. This tradition is still strong in kindergartens today, and thus a part of the following thesis. For some time there was a fear that this started to disappear and that it was left less room for singing and doing music together in the kindergartens everyday life. However, from what I have seen assemblies with singing is still very much present, and kindergarten staff argues that these assemblies are ways of working with a ‘group feeling’ (a feeling of belonging in a group) in the specific kindergarten groups. During a day this is often the only time that all the children are gathered together physically with a central focus. As musical activities occur both organised and spontaneously on several occasions during a kindergarten day, it is mainly in the spontaneous that I have decided to have my empirical focus.

Although the framework plan (introduced below) is a governmental document with guidelines for how the pedagogical teachers should work with subject areas within the kindergartens, free play is deeply rooted in Norwegian pedagogical thinking as well as in the Scandinavian discourse of childhood (Vestad, 2014) This is a root that can be traced back to Fröbel’s kindergartens. In Norwegian kindergartens there are specific periods organised for free play in which the adults are not supposed to organise activities. Although, by deciding where the children may play, structuring the toys and deciding what is available, the adults still have some sort of power of the free play. However, children may, in the period for free play, choose what to play within the rules, whether to play with peers or not, and the free play are at times taking place indoors as well as outdoors.

A decade after musicking started to be in focus within sociology of music, researchers still find themselves in the beginning of developing methodological and conceptual tools with which one may capture the social dynamics of music (Roy & Dowd, 2010). In the future, with more research on this, we will benefit from both the discipline of the sociology of music as well as the human knowledge as a whole (ibid). A desire for this thesis is to be able to contribute to this body of knowledge, as I find music in the human life as a whole important to children, and in this way childhood studies and sociology of music is connected. Being in the kindergartens and experiencing music with children and adults has generated qualitative

data that helped me explore musicking in their context. This way of researching the concept has had the advantage of being able to clarify the way in which music work as a resource for constructing meaning and social settings (DeNora, 2004).

2.3 Norwegian kindergartens

Kindergartens today

The population in Norway is relatively low compared to its area. Amongst approximately 5.140.000 inhabitants (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2014c), there were 316.409 (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2014b) children between the age of 1-5 in the beginning of year 2014, which is the kindergarten age group in Norway. Recent statistics show that 90% of Norwegian children (age 1-5) are attending kindergarten on a regular basis (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2014a). As 92% (ibid) of these children spend minimum 41 hours in the kindergarten per week, one may argue that there is good reason for improving kindergartens practices to become the best they can be for the children who spend most of their awoken hours, five days a week in this institution. In the Kindergarten Act §8 municipalities are given the responsibility to provide each child between the age 1-5 a place in a kindergarten within the Municipality the child lives (full kindergarten coverage) (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006).

The way in which kindergartens are structured have changed from the traditional ones, which were divided into small units or sections, to becoming more open and having base areas surrounded by rooms designed for different types of activities (Kjørholt & Tingstad, 2007). These new kindergartens along with the acceptance for more open interpretations of the adult/child ratio opened for having more children in the groups and kindergartens in general. After the increase in female employment in the 1990s and the aftermath of the establishment of full kindergarten coverage the number of kindergartens increased rapidly (ibid). However, even though the number of children attending kindergartens have increased rapidly the number of kindergartens have not increased as much as it would have with the traditional model due to the new kindergartens being built for many more children, (and, one can argue, on an economic rather than pedagogical premise) (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2014a).

2.3.1 Governmental documents

Through the development of Norwegian kindergartens the government has initiated a Kindergarten Act (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006) on which the framework plan is grounded. This plan provides guidelines for kindergarten practice relating to values, content and tasks (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). Since the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) in Norwegian law in 2003 children's participation has become a mantra within documents and educational practices. How it has been practically implemented in the kindergartens vary and it has also been discussed whether children are actually participating or if they are just given options to choose between. Within the Norwegian society children are privileged to grow up amongst adults that view them positively as participating beings. However, their implementation of it is within adult restrictions and interests (Jensen et al., 2004; Kjørholt, 2004). This has not been a focus of this thesis, but it is interesting to keep in mind as I have studied the practical everyday actions of children in relation to music.

Within The Framework plan for the content and tasks of kindergartens, from here named 'the framework plan', music is now part of a subject called *art, culture and creativity* (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). With this subject cultural inheritance, socialization in the sense of fostering cohesion, as well as encouraging children to get experiences with different ways of expressing themselves are emphasised. Music, crafts, visual arts and drama are some modes of expressions that the subject covers (ibid). However, as Bakke et al. (2011) points out it is peculiar that amongst other modes music and drama are not nuanced in content, such as arts and crafts which are presented in 5 different ways. Does this make music too abstract to work with? In that case, there may be a light in that tunnel as dance will be included in the revised version (based on the latest draft that is published), which will be enforced from fall 2017. It also includes finding collective rhythms as a feature in fostering cohesion, developing a sense of belonging and feeling of togetherness (Aukland et al., 2014).

In the framework plan there are high demands both in relation to children's learning outcomes and experiences, as well as the tasks for the staff to ensure this. However, it is evident that one should not take for granted that kindergartens work systematically with the subject (Bakke et al., 2011). This does not mean that staff oppose to working with music, but that the school like subjects, as mentioned earlier, are valued more. These subjects may also carry less

discomfort in relation to the staffs feeling of lacking musicality, as I will get back to later. In the draft of the upcoming revised framework plan it seems as if the intrinsic value of music, focusing on the musical experience, seems to be emphasised. E.g. pointing to the value of doing music together and being more specific in how subject areas relate to music and how one can work with it (Aukland et al., 2014). As I will get back to later, the intrinsic value of music might seem challenging to grasp as music is an object. However, by referring to the intrinsic value of musical experience, music as an object is a tool for the experience that may have value in itself (Varkøy, 2015).

2.4 Point of departure

In contemporary social studies of children and childhood, ways of viewing children are contrasting to the past by emphasising children's active role in constructing their childhoods, and their society, children as beings (James, 2009). Previously, adulthood was seen as some sort of end point, hence, children as becomings. The whole purpose of being a child was to become a rational adult, and a well-functioning citizen in the society. In recent years, childhood has been more acknowledged as valuable in itself (ibid). When it comes to research relating to children, James and Prout emphasise that "children's social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right, independent of the perspectives and concerns of adults" (Prout & James, 1990 pp. 8). With this in mind I designed the research with a genuine interest of knowing more about children's musicking in their everyday lives in kindergarten. I also had a focus on the adults working with the children. I choose to have this focus due to the authority adults have in kindergartens. Furthermore, I sought the adults' opinions and observed their practices relating to the topic as I believe their perspectives and practices can influence how free children are in their musicking. It may also influence how the adult staff make space for musical activities in their everyday practices, being inspiring role models for children's musical activities.

Chapter 3: Theoretical perspectives

With a background in Early Childhood Education from studying preschool teaching specialised in aesthetics, I have developed a critical thinking in relation to how I experience music in kindergartens with children. The practical training also triggered reflective thinking of own musical experiences. Similar reflective thoughts appeared from discussions with co-students and other adults about how we felt somehow limited in our musicking due to not being talented enough. Talented enough compared to what? Compared to professional music artists or compared to the average neighbour? As written earlier I had a lot of questions regarding music and children, and music and adults. During education in Childhood Studies I gained insight into how concepts are socially constructed (Montgomery & Woodhead, 2003; see: Prout & James, 1990) indicating that we do not always understand and use the concept in the same way. My interest lies in seeking to explore children's musicking, their musical activities (see: Bjørkvold, 1992; Small, 1998; Vestad, 2014), trying to get a better understanding of why music seems to be so 'natural' for children and may make adults feel uncomfortable if expected to musick themselves.

This part of the thesis is organised by first introducing the concept of *musicking* and what this entails, followed by a conceptualisation of children and childhoods. This is followed by a review of previous research on children and music. Finally, in this chapter the conceptualisation of children and childhood will be connected to musicking and generate the main analytical concept, *musical agency*.

3.1 Developing the concept of musicking

To supplement the introduction of *music* and *musicking* presented earlier, this part of the chapter will go further into different ways of defining music, outlining theoretical roots and how these affect the understanding of the concepts. Further, discussions on *musicality* and whether this concept is appropriate to use in pedagogical institutions such as kindergartens will be presented. All of which will have a focus on conceptualising and describing what is important for this thesis, focusing on children's musical agency within the structural framework of two Norwegian kindergartens.

3.1.1 Music

Kindergartens are pedagogical institutions. Hence, music in preschool teacher training programmes is grounded in the field of music education: a field with interdisciplinary roots from social science, humanities, psychology, pedagogy, philosophy and musicology (Ruud, 1996). This interdisciplinary theoretical incorporation set the base for reflections on the practical work. To understand conditions of learning and development one can draw on theoretical perspectives from psychology and pedagogy. Sociology and anthropology provide a theoretical ground for understanding musical life and education with a more holistic view connected to history, society and culture. Musicology provides insights into the phenomenon of music, and philosophy is intended to connect all of these disciplines to values and scientific perspectives through philosophic reflections (ibid).

As preschool teachers one are taught about the interdisciplinary music education. From my experience this variety and un-clarity in what to lean on led to confusion in defining music and finding a balance between acknowledging both music's intrinsic value as well as its utility value, as either –or seemed inappropriate (Ruud, 1996). In political documents these disciplines are united, which in kindergarten practice may lead to an experience of ambiguity, as the goals may not be consistent with the means for achievement.

Music pedagogues often refer to different positions when answering what they include in the concept of music (Ruud, 1996). Some may consider music as something absolute, as a constant in our world. Others may focus on music as an exploration of self-realisation and therefore believing that there are as many ways to see this phenomenon as there are individuals living in this world. Here, the music is seen as mirroring social and interpersonal relations amongst humans. Some pedagogues also consider music as an extension of the inner self, in which the music is considered a tool, a language that this inner life is expressed through. Considering music as a language does not primarily relate to verbal language, but rather what is communicated through a particular piece. How this is interpreted depends on the individual recipient, grounded in both the history of the musical piece and the subjective history of the recipient, as well as the biographical-cultural context in which it is experienced (Ruud, 1996).

Based on these positions, Ruud (ibid) argues for considering music as a *symbol* that is applicable to all the positions, and thus he has applied a broad interpretation of what music

may be. 'Symbol', being an umbrella covering several perceptions of music into one, together they may cover more of the social practices and understandings to give a more holistic picture of what music may be.

Metaphors are often used in descriptions and meaning making of what might be considered as music (Ruud, 1996). When conceptualising music through language, what is intended to be communicated might not necessarily be the same as how it is understood (ibid). It might be understood differently based on the subjective histories and knowledge of people taking part in the situation. Another way to orally describe the art of music is analogically, focusing more on the intention and technical production by the artist. As the analogy focuses on the specific piece and what it actually is supposed to be, metaphors are connected to the effects and experiences of the art (Cooke, 1959). The metaphors introduced earlier in this thesis, such as 'music saved my soul' refer to what we experience with the art emotionally. That it carries us away, describes our lives, or even saves our souls. The distinction with analogically and metaphorically descriptions of music is presented below to introduce that this thesis is more concerned with the human aspects of music such as social relations and how to do music, rather than focusing on particular musical pieces and characteristics with them.

Ruud (1996) shortly explains the main content of the phenomenon of music within the disciplines starting with psychologists' reference to music as consisting of individual tones that further relates to timbre and frequency. Within philosophy there is an emphasis on phenomenological natural features such as how music affect listeners, and sociology answering by having a focus on what is commonly understood by the population. Within a pedagogical framework, if we are not to have one discipline's definition of music as ground, a pragmatic approach arguing that music consists of sounds that have a meaning might be useful (ibid). However, for this to be applicable for this thesis an additionally factor is needed. A factor that emphasises the relational aspect of the phenomenon, meaning how music is understood, needs to be explicit through a relation between the music and the subjective listener or musicker. Taking into consideration the way sounds are organised, and the social, historical and cultural processes give these specific signs meaning.

Considering music first with a broad definition as a symbol, consisting of sounds that have a meaning and adding a relational aspect, one can proceed to the next step finding a concept that continues the evolvement of concepts. For this thesis, I have chosen the concept of

musicking, based on its focus on the activity of doing music, which is what I was most interested in, which I considered as researchable within the limits of my study, and finally what I observed in the kindergartens.

3.1.2 *Musicking*

A modern way of viewing music as a product, an object (as written above), often deprives music of its quality of being an action, an activity that people engage in (Small, 1998; Varkøy, 2015). Although in Norwegian we have the verb ‘*musisere*’, which means doing music, most European languages do not have this. Their words in relation to music are rather considered as nouns which might be related to common thinking of music as for example something produced for radio and records (Small, 1998), and online music, such as YouTube, Spotify and Tidal, which are often used in contemporary music industry. This production, or composition, is in European music culture commonly viewed as artistic in the manner that it brings one of these audible entities into existence. The way of viewing music within this culture may limit the ways in which we understand children’s musical behaviour – according to Bjørkvold it may not receive attention at all (1992). For children, to skip and to say a rhyme or sing a song at the same time is considered as one activity and not necessarily as separate events. Children’s use of sounds when playing may not be considered as a *musicking* activity by adults who are not trained to recognise them as such (*ibid*). Within the Reggio Emilia philosophy, children are entitled a hundred languages with which they communicate and express themselves through (Rinaldi, 2009). The issue then, if not recognising children’s *musicking* activities, this may lead to depriving children of one of their languages, a loss for adults trying to listen to them.

Within the concept of *musicking* one considers music as an activity that includes different ways of doing it, such as listening, dancing and composing (Small, 1998). Although there might not necessarily be a traditional audience, the audience exists within the composition. With this perspective, the activity of producing and performing works continuously (Small, 1998). In this thesis the word music will be used in relation to the artistic object of produced music that children and adults are exposed to. Similar to *musicking*, *musick* will relate to musical activities the children and adults engage in. Based on the extent of children’s use of rhythms and sounds in their activities, *musicking* seems to be a continuous activity during

childhood. Although these may not always be intended to be musical, they often are (Campbell, 2010).

3.1.3 Musicality

It is considered difficult to agree on a single definition of what musicality actually is. Blacking (1973) points to ethnocentrism when it comes to this, he refers to the great variety and amount of music in the world, arguing musicality to be a human characteristic. When considering musicality, it is often mixed with the Eurocentric concept of talent. Thus, it often has the connotation of subscribing some to be born musically gifted (Campbell, 2010). This notion often considers musicality as something unique for the few that might be seen as bearing these gifts, thus excluding the majority of the population from musical participation (Vestad, 2014). In her research she refer to ‘only-the-talented can’ narrative, and the ‘everybody-can’ narrative (ibid). However, in a global perspective this argument is highly questioned, as Blacking’s research on the Venda people shows (Blacking, 1973). In this study, it is questioned whether the minority of the population only becomes musical if the majority is considered unmusical. As written in the introduction part of my thesis, one of my concerns is that children’s musical impulses and initiatives may fade away over their years in pedagogical institutions if other issues and subjects are considered more important. In relation to the Eurocentric focus on talent, Campbell (2010) is worried that if educators do not focus on developing what is ‘natural’ for children, children’s musical impulses and initiatives will disappear along with the focus of learning techniques and skills. And, as it often is the case that musical education is provided for the few – for the ‘talented’, the majority instantly becomes musically disadvantaged by the society that claims to provide all children with opportunities to develop their abilities through educational practices (Campbell, 2010).

As mentioned, this is said to be a Eurocentric concept, and does not necessarily represent a worldwide perspective. In some societies the focus rather points to some people being better at performing, while emphasising that all are capable of doing music as this is seen as just as ‘natural’ for humans as breathing (Campbell, 2010). A holistic perspective on the learning processes of children considers music as a basic skill and that the ability to create is universal – we are all born capable to musick (Bjørkvold, 1992; Small, 1998). This does not imply that all humans have equal skills, but that all have the ability of musicking. When thinking of musical abilities this often relates to singing or playing instruments, however, these only

represent a part of the opportunities. The fundamental ability of listening is often undermined, although it may be considered as just as essential to music as for language (Blacking, 1973). The continuity of music depends as much on the listeners as it does on its performers, listeners being part of the activity as well as being an audience (Blacking, 1973; Small, 1998). The listening activity then may be part of the production process, working as a continuum through communication and interaction. In these activities where both adults and children engage on the same ground, having no focus on distinctions related to their competencies in musicking, the adult-child imbalanced power relation is dissolved (Small, 1998). An arena in which everyone that wants can engage may open up for different kinds of communication in which all children take part.

3.1.4 “*Music carried me away*”

In our everyday lives music is present to a great extent; we are exposed to it on different arenas and take part in it on different occasions. It is also argued to have social power over us as it, through structural factors, affects our behaviour and state of mind (DeNora, 2000a). DeNora describes for instance that owners of stores play music based on what kind of behaviour they want from their customers. In stores with calm music (e.g. low pace and sounds) the owners may want their customers to feel comfortable and take time in making decisions, with the opposite type of music (e.g. high pace and sounds) owners want their customers to make quick decisions and not spend too much time in their store (ibid).

Music may also have social power in being able to change a state of mind. In everyday language, music often carries an aspect of transport, as it is able to take a person from one emotional place to another. Examples can be seen in the metaphor ‘being carried away’ (DeNora, 2000a) and in sayings that specify that music has the power to transport a person from being sad to becoming happy, e.g. ‘this music makes me happy’. According to DeNora, verbalising what is in reality wordless entails some challenges. How something is described is grounded in a subjective *bag* of knowledge, experiences and preferences. This relates to social constructionism, which will be presented later. A challenge may occur as the way something is expressed might not be always understood in line with how it was intended, due to recipients having their own *bags* with differing content (Ruud, 1996). The use of metaphors may then be grounded in this personal *bag*, based in own associations. A song has, for example, the ability to make me happy, but a friend of mine becomes sad as she used to listen

to it before a rough period of her life. What is interesting too is that these metaphors, or oral images, as they are transferred from one person to another, may develop as some kind of myths, becoming part of the cultural repertoire in describing music (ibid).

Musical affordance will not be a focus in this thesis, as I have not conducted research on what music may afford the musicker. However, it was useful to know some of the theoretical perspectives when considering the various concepts, informing the field, and searching for my own analytical concept. As musical affordance is a dominant idea that influence many of our perspectives on musicality, individual understanding of the self and practices in kindergartens, it is an interesting concept to have some insight into. The concept of musical affordance will be explored further in chapter 6, in relation to musicality. Research on musical affordance includes children's experience of music, what they do with it and what "the music does for, to and with the children" (Vestad, 2010, pp. 243). As I interpret the concept of affordance, its main purpose is to understand what the *children do with the music* and what the *music does to them*; the latter is not part of this project and thus the concept cannot reach its full purpose in this study. However, it is worth mentioning as the concept is considered important when it comes to exploring music in everyday lives, emphasising the variety of relationships between the social actor and the music (DeNora, 2000b; Vestad, 2010). My focus has been on observing how music is actually used, not why it is used or in search for an inner motivation for using music. Musical meaning-making, is based on how the recipient connects to music through memories, how it attends to it, associations and the context of consumption. This can be described as 'human-music interaction', when music through a reflexive process is articulated or connected with something external (2000b, pp. 33). Thus, what constitute music's affordance is the circumstances in which it is used (DeNora, 2000b). Music also has an emotional characteristic relating to affordance based on emotional reactions to the music, e.g. being scared or laughing (Vestad, 2010). At risk of taking the shortcut, as described above, interpreting the data in relation to the audible and visual emotional state of the children will be part of the analysis. Not trying to explain how the music affects the children emotionally, rather focusing on what they express with it.

3.1.5 *Intrinsic value versus utility value of music*

The intrinsic value of music seems to entail ambivalence for pedagogues to acknowledge. A focus has been on music being valuable per se, as well as having an opportunity for learning and teaching. The ambivalence may originate from a perspective of music as having intrinsic value and an economical way of thinking within modern (western) expectations focusing on the ability for everything to be good for something else (Varkøy, 2015). Thus, the only important activity is one that results with a product, as this activity is considered to be useful beyond the activity itself (ibid). It has become taken-for-granted in educational settings that technical rationality is the ‘right’ way to think. An endless focus on developing and optimising oneself is a characteristic of perceiving humans increasingly as technical resources, considering ourselves as nothing other “than producers, consumers and resources” (Varkøy, 2015, pp. 52). This economical way of thinking, a desire to benefit from everything, leads to always asking the question of what this is good for/how can one benefit from this. These types of questions show the difficulty in exceeding the dominant approach, focusing on how the outcome of it can be useful (Varkøy, 2015).

A recent argument that may lead to a less ambivalent perspective when emphasising music’s intrinsic value, as having meaning in itself, is to have a focus on the musical experience’s intrinsic value instead of the one of the musical object or product (Varkøy, 2015). By distinguishing between the musical object and the musical experience, the object, that cannot be entitled as having meaning in itself, is considered a *mean* for musical experience, with value in itself (ibid). Within this recent argument the focus, when it comes to musical action, is on the subjective experience, meaning that the intrinsic value is not found in the music as an object or product, but rather in the action of musical experience. The object is a means, an important one too, to the musical experience, but does not hold a value in itself as the intrinsic value is rooted in the musical experience as an activity based on human action (Varkøy, 2015).

3.2 Conceptualising children and childhoods

3.2.1 *Raising children's voices*

Despite its criticisms, Ariès' *Centuries of Childhood* (1962) sparked attention to discussions and theories on how children and their family relationships were viewed (Corsaro, 2011). Ariès' argument was based on studies of medieval art in which children were painted as miniature adults instead of presenting them with childlike proportions. By saying that in the medieval period, childhood did not exist, he did not argue that children were neglected at this time. Instead he focused on the social worlds of children and adults and did not see them as distinct as they were seen later (Ariès, 1982). Children moved from childhood to adulthood when they did no longer depend solely on adults. They were then expected to take part in adult activities, contributing to the household and participate in the adult society (Ariès, 1982).

This way of seeing childhood is challenged within contemporary social studies of children and childhood, based in the interdependence of these concepts (Lee, 2001). As written above children's and adults' social worlds today seem entirely different. However, discussing childhood only makes sense when it is compared to adulthood, if one concept did not exist, the other would have no meaning (Leonard, 2009). This creates a binary opposition between childhood and adulthood.

In the deterministic socialisation model, children have a relatively passive role, being shaped into societies that already exist (Corsaro, 1997). In the constructionist socialisation model, however, the child exists as an active agent, a change-maker taking part in constructing a social world (ibid). This latter model can be seen as consistent to contemporary social studies of children and childhood as children are considered having agency and being social actors constructing their social worlds. Instead of exclusively focusing of what children are to become, their lives are valued in the present, for the present (Leonard, 2009; Prout & James, 1990). Agency is often seen as in opposition to and not compatible with social structure. However, in this thesis, they are seen as inexplicitly connected, as the one cannot exist without the other. Structure provides people with frames for social action, and from these actions the structure is shaped (James & James, 2008; James et al. 1998). As social actors children do something, and as agents they do something with others, and while they are making things happen they contribute to change and develop what goes on around them in

relation to social and cultural reproduction (James, 2009). Children's agency and autonomy are encouraged to a great extent within social studies of children and childhood. From this perspective children are seen not only to be children and to be studied in their own right (Prout & James, 1990), but they are also recognised as *persons* in their own right (Leonard, 2009).

3.2.2 *Facts of culture*

One of the key features of social studies of children and childhood is that the concept of childhood is a social construction, that childhood cannot be excluded from the culture in which it exists (Prout & James, 1990). In the social constructionist approach the nature of knowledge is grounded in thinking that ways of viewing a social phenomenon always have an alternative. Social constructionists do not see facts as possible. They have a critical perspective towards knowledge and often they use deconstruction as a tool to analyse and find assumptions and preconceptions that are taken for granted (Montgomery & Woodhead, 2003). Recognising that knowledge of a phenomenon to a great extent is constructed by the owner, and the process of discovery is a subjective interpretation that always results from human action (Montgomery & Woodhead, 2003), one may construct different knowledge through social interaction opening for a varied interpretation of the phenomenon. For this thesis the notion of social constructionism is particularly applicable when exploring music and musicality. Trying to extract the essence of what a child and a childhood is, along with how music and musical ability is understood, it is necessary to acknowledge how it varies across time and place.

Prout and James (1990) emphasise that the biological facts of children are indisputable. However, the ways in which these facts are understood are cultural, and therefore vary across time and place. The concepts of children, childhood and music are given meaning through communication amongst people in a specific culture due to knowledge being constructed through people's everyday interactions (Burr, 2003). Regardless of what a child, childhood and musical concepts are supposed to be understood as, social constructionists see these concepts as depending on the specific time and place in which they occur, and not as essential facts of nature. The concepts are not *only* specific to their time and place, but are products of the particular time and culture (ibid). Burr (2003) argues that "particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are therefore artefacts of it, and we should not assume that *our*

ways of understanding are necessary any better, in terms of being any nearer the truth, than other ways” (Burr, 2003, pp. 4).

3.2.3 *Who is a child and what is childhood?*

Wiggins and Campbell (2013) consider defining childhood as a *struggle*, a struggle that has been going on for a long period of time. Still, in more recent literature within the contemporary paradigm of studying children and childhood, this has become challenging, e.g. for educators who teach children and prepare them for what to come. In this thesis childhood will be used about the period of time in which a person is between birth and until reaching the age of 18 (Alanen, 2001). In general terms and for this thesis, childhood concerns the period of time presented above, but also acknowledging children’s own experiences of their own subjective/local childhoods, as being socially constructed (James et al., 1998).

The tension between seeing children as human beings *or* human becomings (James, 2009) (as introduced previously) has been on-going for years, creating a taboo topic of valuing childhood and children for something other than in the present, their state of being. Voices in academia and from my experience within pedagogy, connecting this notion of children as beings, which is highly valued in social studies of children and childhood, to child development where children are seen as human becomings, has seemingly become silent (Thorne, 2007). However, this connection has a potential to enrich discussions concerning children. By highlighting approaches in human development historically, emphasising children’s negotiation in their process of growing and participating in their social institutions, this may pave way for diminishing this being a taboo, something to be avoided (Thorne, 2007; Tingstad, Forthcoming). Refreshing from previous chapter, *being* means that children’s activities *in* the present are valuable as activities *for* the present. One are not focused on what one can get out of it in a future perspective. Future benefits are, however, the focus when seeing children as *becomings*, future rational adults (James, 2009). Considering children exclusively as human *beings* may risk neglecting the fact that children actually are growing up, becoming adults. However, on the other hand considering children exclusively as human becomings, a common view as well, may risk neglecting children’s competencies and the present of their existence.

Vestad (2014) argues that there should be a different approach, one that both focuses on children as human beings as well as having an eye directed to the future and their becoming of youths and adults. In this thesis the focus is especially in relation to children between the ages of 1-6 years old. Within this group they will be divided into *small children* (1-3 years) and *big children* (3-6 years), not referring to the rest of their childhoods.

Picking up from social constructionism presented above, the ‘taken-for-granted’ meaning in concepts such as childhood and musicality, is established through interactions between people within a society, a community, a social group they have a sense of belonging to (James & James, 2008; Montgomery & Woodhead, 2003). This meaning, and other kinds of knowledge, is challenged by social constructionists through critically searching for meaning in observations questioning what it immediately is conceived as. Hence, knowledge is not considered as a universal truth or to be universally useful (Burr, 2003; Montgomery & Woodhead, 2003). Agency and participation is considered important in Norwegian kindergartens, and it is manifested in our Kindergarten Act (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006) and have become part of what is considered to be a good Norwegian childhood. This may not be so in a global perspective, hence, a global concept of a global child and childhood seems inappropriate for this thesis. There are many local childhoods, and by using the plural of this concept one acknowledges the different truths and rules as well as the biological facts. Emerging from existing childhoods one can find an ideal one that is affected by experiences, structural conditions and culture (Dewey, 1916; Leonard, 2009). ‘Childhood is a particular and distinctive form of every society’s social structure’ (Qvortrup in Leonard, 2009, pp. 117).

3.2.4 Playful children

In several languages the word *play* originally included musical elements such as movement and sound, and the words do have the double meaning of a game or to make music (Bjørkvold, 1992). To define play is often considered impossible and unnecessary (Chudacoff, 2007). In a pedagogical dictionary it is, however, defined as physical or mental undertakings that are made because they provides joy or diversion (Bø & Helle, 2008). It is characterised by being something children voluntarily take part in, it is free within prescribed limits and it will be dissolved if either of these changes. Characteristics I had in mind when observing play, was that it should be an interaction with something, either an item or a friend (Haugen, Røthle, Løkken, & Abrahamsen, 2005), including imaginary friends and items.

Children play differently, and what is considered fun for one child, might not be so for other children. Their different interests appear in play, and also their maturity. Children that have deficient abilities either socially, physically or intellectually may not find any joy or interest in play that is beyond their capabilities. Hence, regardless of how positive and delightful play often seems to be, it might have a profound dark side for those who fall out (Chudacoff, 2007).

As children change lyrics and play with the construction of these, their use of humour can be part of their musical behaviour. To be able to do this experimentation children have to master some basic principles in language, and this is often an engine for laughter (Sæther & Aalberg, 2012). Opposing to structures, such as changing lyrics in songs or singing when it is not considered appropriate as well as their urge to be free can be seen in relation to children's joy (Bjørkvold, 1992; Søbstad, 2006). As they are acting within structures and norms often set by adults in play and everyday life, they may through humour be able to challenge these and it is this unexpected break with conventions that provokes laughter. A child that has the capability of challenging the conventions is considered to be a preferable play partner (Bjørkvold, 1992). Young children's friendships are often established by mutual interests and proximity (James & James, 2008). However, as children normally consider play with others and to develop friendships as a high priority (Søbstad, 2006), the risk of not being good at it becomes critical. According to Mouritsen (2002) children have to practice to be good at playing, so good that they are able to improvise. If able to be this good at playing, it enhances the child's status in a group. As children practice their playing skills there will be a difference between younger and older children's activities based on what they know and can do (Mouritsen, 2002). An arena for this is role-play, which is considered an open game where participating children create rules and norms along with the development of the play (Bjørkvold, 1992), or as Åm calls it, social fantasy play (Åm, 1989).

When it comes to gender, none of the genders are more engaged in musical activities than the other. However, it may be different types of involvement. In some cultures, for example, there may be gendered codes, such as craftsmanship for boys and taking care of siblings for girls. These might appear in children's musical play, as in other type of engagements (Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). Children often use sounds and singing that they invent as the play develops. By doing this they have the opportunity to bring the environment into the activity and makes it possible to explore. What is sung might therefore depend on, and evolve from the concrete

situation and context (Bjørkvold, 1992). This spontaneous singing is what Bjørkvold (1992) describes as *the muse-ical mother tongue* arguing that it is as natural to use for the child as both laughing and crying. In relation to other children, their skill in imitation appears for example as mimicking the other. This skill plays a big role when it comes to be identified in and belonging to a social group (Wiggins & Campbell, 2013).

3.2.5 Children and culture

The concept of *culture* can cover a broad area of human practices and values. It has been written a lot on the concept of culture in general as well as children's cultures. However, for this study I have focused on what can be seen in relation to music and peer culture. For this thesis, culture will include creative and symbolic products, forms of expression and their context (Mouritsen, 2002). In kindergartens children participate in, create, recreate and renew their own cultures based on social interactions with children, adults and situations they encounter (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). This implies that children's cultures are under constant change, which should be acknowledged and taken into account when studied. Within the current theoretical approaches in childhood studies, peer culture, as a set of social characteristics shared through interaction with peers, is considered worthy of studying in their own right (Corsaro, 2009). We find peer culture, or child culture, whenever two or more children are interacting in a way that shares norms and rules that new impressions will be linked to. However, they are also modified through children's *cultural disobedience*, their protest against them (Bjørkvold, 1992). Play is an arena whereby cultural disobedience may be practiced through the use of imagination when technical reason is experienced to be restraining. If feeling restrained by what is seen as the reasonable way to approach a situation, children might protest to this by exploring alternative options using their imagination (ibid). In ethnographic research, children are often studied as if they were a tribe. My approximation to studying children is inspired by an ethnographic approach, which will be further elaborated on in the following chapter. When the distinction between children and adults will be explored this means that the study should involve tribal children, referring to a minority group that inhabit their own social category (James et al., 1998).

Children are *members* of peer groups, and *producers* of peer culture, but peer culture may also include culture *for* and *with* children (Corsaro, 2009; Mouritsen, 2002; Sæther & Aalberg, 2012; The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). These cultures change and

develop when new and older traditions meet, and cannot therefore be considered as “cut off from the rest of the world” (Vestad, 2010, pp. 244). It is modified to the particular group, through *cultural disobedience*, making it meaningful for the members. Bjørkvold writes that “imagination is reason seeking to transcend itself, reason reaching for the beyond” and argues that through play this reason may get wings (Bjørkvold, 1992, pp. 38). His argument concerning play includes play as a way of being, a continuous state of mind, in which children’s reason and imagination challenge and make sense of each other. Bjørkvold (1992) understands music as being within each human, that it has a direct contact with the body and the senses. Through this connection the music may serve as an inspiration for the imagination. In this way one could say that he naturalises music as an inherent part of a human being.

Bjørkvold’s (1992) great emphasis on play is based on his understanding of children as musical beings. For this thesis I have not studied the music within children, as this would have been based on speculations of what goes on inside a child’s mind, which I, from my perspective, do not have insight into. However, I support the argument of children as musical beings based on the observations in which I heard children included musicking to a great extent in their activities. The concepts of culture in what follows will be *peer culture* and *child culture* when I write about culture amongst groups of children. *Children’s culture* will be used when it is more general about children as producers of culture as well as culture for and with children, such as recorded music or musicking with adults. Within social groups and cultures there are often rituals that can be observed as daily practices. In this thesis rituals are defined as repeated and structured activities or actions that follow specific rules and have a symbolic meaning (Boynton & Kok, 2006).

3.3 Recent research in relation to children and music

The two longitudinal research projects of Campbell (2010) and Vestad (2014) are both interesting for this project as they focus on children and music in early childhood. Campbell first published her book in 1998, and for the 2nd edition published in 2010 she conducted additional research that shows the relevance for research on the topic more than a decade later. Vestad’s more recent research also supports this. What Campbell (2010) points out when it comes to children’s musical behaviour, is that it is as if music is visible in everything children do, in their playful behaviour. When being with children it is common to see and hear their musical utterances. They often occur spontaneously and might at times seem

unconsciously. Campbell (2010) writes that children use familiar music in their activities and adapt it to the circumstances and for their own purposes. She argues that musical utterances originate from inside the mind's ear, that they are songs in the children's heads, a claim which is the main argument in her book with the title *Songs in their heads*. Young (2009a) opposes to the claim that children's musicality stems from a natural source inside each child. She does not argue that they are born as blank sheets, musically speaking, but rather that their music arises when they engage with their peers and environment "turning the possibilities they hold into active music that they then go on and play around with and [are] inventive with" (Young, 2009a, pp. 13).

Although Vestad (2014) focuses on recorded music, the research approach is similar to the one conducted for my thesis. They have similar theoretical points of departure when it comes to music theory and childhood studies in exploring children's subject positions. Vestad's (2014) focus (in relation to the child's subject position) is on children as subjects, co-producers of culture, children as beings and becomings, and children as competent and vulnerable, aiming to avoid the polarised dualism, the either-or perspective. Some of these distinctions will be discussed later. The combination of viewing children as both beings and becomings in educational settings, as Vestad (2014) promotes, is fresh and intriguing based on previous discussions in literature emphasising either or, not both.

3.3.2 *Researching musical children*

Traditionally, and before old paradigms were challenged, children were in some disciplines approached as blank slates, meaning that they are being filled with knowledge from adults that are trained in subject matters and techniques (Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). At the same time as, and maybe in relation to, the shift in paradigm within childhood studies, music educationists started exploring music and children outside the school setting. The ways of studying children and music, were more explored in their own right (DeNora, 2004; Prout & James, 1990). This focus frequently related to children's songs as in the project of Campbell, *Songs in Their Heads* (1998, edited in 2010), which is based on conversations with children and their descriptions. Within previous research in ethnomusicology children were viewed as naïve subjects to conduct research on, and in ethnography by educators they were studied in settings that had an instructional purpose, not questioning what happened to children musically outside of the classroom (Campbell, 2010). The interest in studying the "wider

social and cultural processes” were insufficient, as the ground for studying children’s musical practices and behaviours has been grounded in developmental psychology (Young, 2009b, pp 695). Within the changing focus in sociology of music, music became conceptualised as a social activity exploring links between social processes and contexts instead of structures (DeNora, 2004). However, this is a slightly explored field that is waiting to be studied.

There has been a lack of interest in music and children within ethnomusicology, when reviewing this field there is not much literature and research to be found (Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). Research has been evolving around music as a profound product of society or individuals, and less often has it been researched as a product of individuals *in* society (Blacking & Byron, 1995). Instead of focusing on musical products and structures, it is argued that it rather should be an emphasis on individual’s and society’s musical processes and practices when searching for the role of music in everyday life within a society (DeNora, 2000a).

Although he studied adult cultures and saw children as belonging to these (ibid), Blacking’s (1967) study of the Venda people on South Africa paved way for a different direction in this type of research; a direction including children in studies as *part* of a culture, not as *growing into* it. Through their search into ethnomusicology’s research and literature finding some studies through time that study children and music, Wiggins and Campbell (2013) argue that it is only recently that researchers are acknowledging children’s autonomy and them being separated from adult culture. Seen in relation to anthropology, ethnomusicology has developed from reporting observations to acknowledging children as participants in research and being able to express themselves (Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). In the same line as Campbell (1998), other educationalists studied how children process, preserve and share their songs (Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). Although there has been an increasing focus on researching children and music across disciplines, ‘musical childhoods’ is still a field that suffers from the lack of research. The gap in researching musical children appears particularly when it comes to child-centered approaches that seek children’s voices and presenting their perspectives on matters concerning them (Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). It is this gap that I seek to fill, with a research exclusively intended to explore what the participants actually do, mainly focusing on children but also including what adults working with them do and how they view their own practice.

Along with the shifting focus in research, research methods were changed to suit the topics for exploration in ways that presents actors using music in and as social activities in a variety of situations (DeNora, 2004). Ethnographic studies, especially observations have been increasingly used based on its ability to grasp social action (ibid). This technique's great advantage is its ability to explore meaning within social settings (DeNora, 2004). This will be further introduced in the next chapter in which the methodology of this research is presented.

Within the educational system today developmental psychology has a fundamental presence, it is taken for granted and appears 'unconsciously' in conversation focusing on what the child can or cannot do. Early childhood educationalists often experience a need to justify their practices in relation to developmental benefits. There has to be a purpose for each activity or lesson, with an outcome that can be measured somehow (Young, 2009a). This is in contrast to how Ruud (1996), more than a decade earlier, explained a common way of legitimising the use of music, in which pedagogues often relate to music's aesthetic character, the intrinsic value and the present tense of music. After this argument was presented the kindergarten laws and frameworks has been initiated. These might be a reason for the more instrumentalist way of justification.

Young (2009b) emphasise that although there has been conducted structured observations on music in relation to the natural child, she is critical when arguing that a focus is still put on generalisation in equalizing differences. Her emphasis continues by stressing that the challenge in "understanding children's musical development is to understand the wider processes of social and technological change and their impact" (pp. 696). Thus, what is needed when studying musical childhoods is not a new approach, instead there is a need for an interdisciplinary framework that is both inclusive and integrative (Young, 2009b).

3.4 Musical agency

By focusing on musical concepts in relation to doing and being capable, along with children being social actors and change makers in their lives, as having agency, my empirical data will be analysed by leaning on the concept *musical agency*. This does not mean that musical structures are not of interest, but it is the child actor that is the main focus. When children engage actively in music they may be seen as competent subjects, rather than incompetent objects, as musical agents and not observers, both “in and for their own lives” (Vestad, 2014, pp. 271). As stated above, agency and participation is manifested in the Norwegian Kindergarten Act (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2006). According to the intentions, this should provide children with opportunities within structures, and through cultural interaction, education and musical engagement, their musical sensibilities are developed.

The next chapter will present the methodology of the study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter methodological reflections will be described, methodical decisions will be presented based on the theoretical perspectives presented in the previous chapter. This entails a review of each step in the research process, from the preparation of the research until the analysis and writing of this thesis, making the research process transparent and illustrates dilemmas and reflections, particularly in relation to the ethical dimensions.

4.1 Methodological perspectives

4.1.1 Young children in research

In contemporary research relating to children and childhood, it has been recognised an importance of studying young children in a familiar environment and including the adults that co-exist with them socially. This is in contrast to previous research that often were conducted in laboratories, and separating the child from any familiar context and relation (e.g. Langston, Abbot, Lewis, & Kellett, 2004; Woodhead & Faulkner, 2008). In my study I sought to find out more about music in the kindergartens, as these are the places where many children spend most of their time awake. For me this meant that I had to go into the kindergartens to observe their everyday actions. Data collected outside the kindergartens, introducing them to different kinds of music, isolating the informants from the co-actors and the context in which the music happens, would not have been appropriate for my intention with this study.

When Clark (2005) designed the Mosaic approach, which is an approach used to listen to young children, one starting point was an expectation of competence of knowledge about one's own local community. This explains well my starting point when it comes to music in kindergartens. I see, in this context, both children and staff as owners of this knowledge. My approach was to be observant, interested and in general, curious. This curiousness was the driving force in my research. I asked for the participant's thoughts and explanations in order to get rich data. Observing and asking questions about what I noticed, and when I was invited into the activities I participated in ways that I was comfortable with. In this way I gained experiences of participating in the activities with the informants, which will be further presented in paragraph 4.2. I believe in the competences of young children as I do in any other person regardless of age. I was therefore in the kindergartens as a student, seeking to

learn from children as well as adults. In line with Albon and Rosen (2014), I consider *being with children* as fundamentally important when it comes to building mutual understandings and relations with them in research. Further Albon and Rosen (ibid) point out that it takes time to generate data in research building on observations, and not all activities the researcher takes part in will necessarily generate empirical data.

4.1.2 *Qualitative research*

A commonly mentioned distinction in methodological approaches within the social sciences is between quantitative studies, with data in form of numbers to indicate the frequency in what is studied, and qualitative studies focusing more on descriptions and exploring topics in depth (Hammersley, 2013). Qualitative research is particularly different from quantitative research by not aiming for a precise measure of a set of hypotheses. Qualitative research focuses on trying to reach a better understanding of complex realities and a hypothesis may emerge during the research process (Mayoux, 2006). This project about music in the kindergarten has been conducted as a qualitative study as I sought to explore a phenomenon in depth within a society (Hammersley, 2013). To learn their practices and get a better understanding of the phenomenon, I needed to take part in their everyday life and experience it together with the informants.

What is significant with qualitative studies is that they focus on small-scale topics such as one group of children and the data collection process is often long and intense (Gudmundsdottir, 1992). One of the most common and important methods is that of participant observation. Within this method the researcher often writes field notes, and this makes the researcher one of the most important instruments in the process. I will come back to this later in the chapter. Within qualitative research studies the researcher needs to be sensitive both towards the informants as well as the social relations in the study (ibid). By researching small-scale topics one has the opportunity to explore them in-depth, which may open for “mak[ing] the unknown known” – one of the greatest tasks of qualitative researchers (Gudmundsdottir, 1992, pp. 269).

Ethnographic studies are traditionally long term studies in which the researcher is occupied in the field for a long time, e.g. being in the field for several months at a time. This study is

inspired by the methods in ethnography, however, the period of time spent in the field is not comparable. Ethnography comes from the Greek language focusing on writing about people, describing and explaining their life and culture from their insider's perspective (Montgomery, 2013). It concerns an aim of exploration and presentation of *individual* people's views on themselves as well as their societies through presenting the empirical data with thick descriptions including the entire contexts (ibid).

Through conducting qualitative research the focus is on searching for individual perspectives and experiences with the social world around us. As researchers the interest lies in what these narratives and observations can tell us in relation to the context and other observations, as well as previously conducted research (Hammersley, 2013). There is a risk of drawing wrong conclusions from what the informants have said and what has been observed, especially in cases where the informants have not been conferred with the extracted data in the aftermath of the data collection process (ibid). In my study, I presented the extracts from the interviews with the informants in order for them to clarify or add information if they saw this as necessary. This has not been done with the observations, which makes the interpretations exclusively based on my ability to make rich data and critically use my theoretical perspectives and analytical concepts. This leads me to clarify my role as a researcher in these kindergartens.

4.2 Negotiating the role as a researcher

4.2.1 Informants' question: "Who are you?"

Researcher thought: "Who am I?"

As a researcher I expected to meet some challenges with my own approaches and previous knowledge in the kindergarten, based on my educational background as a preschool teacher. I experienced the challenge in taking on an unfamiliar role in a familiar setting from the very first day. I had to consider my role thoroughly, being aware of my professional competence both as an advantage and disadvantage. Through my education I have become used to position myself as a leader for both children and staff, and as a researcher this was not part of my role at all. When preparing to go to the kindergartens, I had made distinct rules for myself to avoid crossing any boundaries, such as not correct children's behaviour, taking responsibility in activities or having professional opinions in relation to the staffs' practices.

This helped me not to intervene with children and staff other than as a researcher seeking answers relating to understanding their practice and their use and thoughts of music. Originally, my thought was to be inspired by a membership role, being the ‘least adult’ (Mandell, 1991), a role in which the researcher leaves behind adult superiority, reduces physical differences and participates in children’s activities in their ways, interacting within their perspectives. As a ‘least adult’ researcher one does not try to diminish adult characteristics (Albon & Rosen, 2014). What distinguishes the researcher from a regular adult is that the researcher does not take on any adult responsibility in leading activities or enforcing rules. It is not an easy role to take with a background as an educator (ibid). The researcher submits to adult autonomy, questions the generational order, and participates in children’s everyday lives to get good information on topics from children’s own experiences (Mayall, 2008; Warming, 2005). This was a dilemma that particularly concerned me before entering the kindergartens, as it could have a direct effect on how I was accepted by the children and staff, and thus the empirical material.

However, my intentions of being a ‘least adult’ researcher seemed confusing for the informants and challenging for me as a researcher, when I entered the kindergartens. Due to illness there were many temporary staff members. I struggled with the urge to assist in a crisis situation and maintain my intention of not having a pedagogical role. For the informants, I became another new person, a different kind of adult than they were used too, and this on top of trying to understand all the other temporary members, seemed to lead to confusion and reluctance. Due to my limited period of time in each kindergarten, I then decided to be what Christensen (2004) describes as an ‘unusual’ kind of adult, having a sincere interest in understanding children’s world. The researcher appears as a social person, and secondly as a professional that has a genuine purpose with the research. I became a visitor and told the children that I went to school and that I had been lucky to be allowed to visit them to learn about their musicking. Children are used to visitors from their homes so this was not entirely unfamiliar to them. When a child insinuated that I was a regular staff member, I made sure to remind them of my presence as a visitor. After some time the children seemed to remember this distinction and included me in games instead and came to me in other situations like talking, comforting and time off from playing. I accepted this as a part of the role as a visitor. Although I in the long run benefitted a great deal from the renegotiation of my role, such as from a confusing adult role, to a familiar visitor role.

During the period my role had some flaws, such as in situations in which I suddenly was left alone with the children and they started to tease each other, or making plans to jump from the tallest spot they could reach and down on the solid ground. However, this contributed to establishing my role during the period. In one situation I accepted to be given responsibility as a regular staff member, overseeing an activity during the second week of my stay. That particular day there were few staff members at work due to illness, and I sensed a difficulty in getting everything done. The teacher asked: “*Would you mind joining these children while they paint, but I know that you are here to observe...?*” The teacher acknowledged my role, so when she requested my participation I knew she did not ask me as her first option. As it was only five children in this group and mostly children from outside my main research group I did not feel that this affected my role in relation to the participating children too much. What it did affect though, was my reflections that helped me establish my role the following weeks. These reflections particularly related to how these children would perceive my role afterwards. E.g. would it lead to confusion, would they exclude me from further play, or would they expect me to give support in situations in which I would have to reprove another child? However, from this situation I did not experience a difference in their behaviour towards me, but it led me to make sure that I did not find myself in a similar situation that could have resulted differently.

4.2.2 How do I affect the research?

Recurring reflections during the data-collection period were; how do I influence the situations as a stranger, visitor, researcher, and as a researcher with focus on music? As a stranger and a visitor I was not an everyday member of the group and I was prepared for them having to get used to my presence. In one of the kindergartens I entered a room, where I had heard singing and guitar play, and the two adults present there seemed to become tense and stopped playing. By sitting down, communicating with children, smiling encouragingly to the staff they continued with their singing and playing. During the research period I repeatedly informed them that my intention was not to evaluate the quality of their musical activities, but rather to observe what they were already doing and what happened during these activities. By repeating this intention to the adults when they seemed bothered and by being positive and focusing my attention towards the children, the staff seemed more relaxed and comfortable with my presence to such a degree that they asked me questions they had concerning the research.

4.2.3 Personal background

Ahead of the data collection period I reflected on ways in which my previous education could affect attitudes and focus in this process. Benefits could be that I am used to children, both when it comes to talking with them and different ways to approach them. Practical training have provided me with experiences in communication with adults who try to answer my questions correctly. Emphasising that it is their answers I seek, hence, I do not have an answer to the questions I ask that I will cross check with. General knowledge about kindergartens in Norway, the framework they work within, common challenges, kindergarten history, approaches and respect for children being emphasised in early childhood education and care make up some of the knowledge I experienced as beneficial when it came to preparing for the research period. But this may also affect what I see and what I do not see in a kindergarten compared to what a researcher with a different background would. As my specialisation was aesthetic courses (dramatics, art and music) I also possessed presumptions on how this is used (and not used) in kindergartens. One presumption of mine is that of music being something positive. During the process I became aware of how I sometimes had a tendency tend to glorify it, to break this limiting view on musical activities I challenged it by watching a documentary on the use of music as a weapon². In situations in which children used musical preferences or activities to exclude other children I struggled with an urge to intervene. However, this was not in my place so I kept an eye on the excluded children and notified other staff members if necessary.

To begin with I felt that my presence as an educated preschool teacher was more of a concern of my inner battle between the researcher and the preschool teacher, as I found it difficult to release myself from the role I had worked to develop for three years. However, being in the role as researcher this became easier with time as I became more comfortable with it. Through conversations with the staff I understood that they not only saw me as a researcher, but also a preschool teacher, and on top of that my preschool teacher education was specialised in aesthetic courses. It therefore became evident that it was not only for me the role I sought to have was unclear. This became clearly expressed through one conversation with a staff member. I asked for her perspectives on music and musical activities in the kindergarten. She told me that she was relatively new in the field as a music teacher and that I probably knew more about good musical activities with children than she did. I reflected on how this affected

² <https://tv.nrk.no/program/KOID21003513/musikk-som-vaapen>

the way the staff accepted me in the group, and it might have been a source for an enhanced feeling of me being there to evaluate them. From this I made sure to emphasise as often as I found necessary that it was not my intention to evaluate their practice or musicality. I was rather concerned with what they did and not how they did it, and this seemed to make them more comfortable.

4.3 Sample and access

Through reflections on the knowledge about the field, my role as a researcher as well as theory and literature in relation to musicking and childhood studies lead to a broad foundation upon which to design the research. What follows is how I designed the research as well as how it was carried out.

The one kindergarten that the pilot interview was conducted in was only visited once, this was a kindergarten specialised in music. The two kindergartens selected for the research did not have music as a specialised subject area. They were different in size and kindergarten 1 was particularly adapted to children with special needs. This was the largest with two groups of small children (0-3 years old) and two groups of big children (3-6 years old), located in the ground floor below an institution for children with special needs. The four groups each had their main group rooms, and were divided after age so that the two age groups mainly met outdoors. The kindergartens were similar in the way that they both had an art room and a music room, however, in kindergarten 1 the music room was rarely used, being small in size and not being suited for doing music as a group. Kindergarten 2 was smaller, but also divided into age groups. Here, however, here they spent many hours of the day together, sharing the rooms. In this kindergarten the music room was larger, had a variety of instruments, CD-player, and large pillows. This room was one of the most used rooms in the kindergarten.

In the first kindergarten I made 77 observations and 1 interview. In the second kindergarten I made 63 observations and 1 interview.

4.3.1 Accessing the kindergartens

For the pilot interviews it was difficult getting in contact with kindergartens. As I planned to conduct these in kindergartens with music as their subject in focus, it was a limited number of institutions to contact in the area that I was going to carry out the research. Only one

kindergarten confirmed that the head teacher wanted to participate. After unsuccessful phone calls and e-mails I decided, together with my supervisor, to go for the one that had responded positively.

The next step was to access kindergartens for my main study. After the same kind of challenges as I had with my pilot study, I ended up with two kindergartens, and expanded the period to three weeks instead of the two we had previously agreed. This also gave me the opportunity to get richer data from each kindergarten. It will be important for me to take into consideration that the general interest in music might have been above a general level in these kindergartens as they showed interest in participating particularly based on the topic of study. My intention is, however, not to generalise my findings to kindergartens in Norway.

4.3.2 Participant selection

In the planning process the pilot interview was conducted to get insights into why music in this kindergarten is valued to the extent that they have it as their specialised subject area. By contacting as many kindergartens I could find with this subject area in the same city, my aim was to get rich data from a variety of institutions. However, as only one head teacher chose to participate, the information from one kindergarten is what I have worked from. As written earlier, however, this interview provided much in-depth information that worked as a solid preparation in developing the research design further.

Within the two kindergartens in my main research, I included as many informants as possible to reach a wide array of information, both from children and adults. The scope of informants should be as many as needed to get a rich amount of data, meaning that the number of informants depends on the information they provide (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I considered the number of interview informants, both in the pilot interview as well as other interviews, as enough based on the insight they provided into their understandings of the topic. All children I was able and permitted to observe were included and they provided a great variety of data. However, as the observations concerned music some children were not observed as frequently as others, depending on preferred games as well as where they chose to play. Due to an intention of not disturbing children in their play, some play areas have not been used for observation. I conversed more with some children than others, simply to get as much data as possible within the limited time frame. This means that some children have been

observed in more physical play, and others through conversations. Similar to this participation by children was the situation with the staff, as some engaged more in conversations with me, and others have been observed more in their activities.

4.3.3 Entering the kindergartens

When entering the kindergartens it became important to get familiar to the circumstances and routines in order to organise the schedule of when interviews and observations were most appropriate to carry out. When possible, I met and informed the parents of my research. I was open for questions from both parents and staff. In regards to the children, I spent the first days in each kindergarten to set my role as a visitor. I told them that “*I am here to observe what you are doing with music for my school project*”. I spent three to five hours a day in the kindergartens, mostly at times when all the children were awake and present. The times were adjusted to fit with the scheduled activities, such as trips, morning and afternoon routines.

4.4 Research tools

Through designing the project description, the topic of investigation was more clarified and why it was necessary to conduct this kind of research was highlighted (see ch. 1-2). This led to questioning *how* to explore the topic of musicking (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Within qualitative research the process of analysing is continuously occurring from the planning stages until the final report (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). During the study period themes emerged from the empirical material and highlighted topics. An example of this is exclusion from play, which I was not aware of to begin with and in the aftermath made me understand other observations better. The project description included a collection of methods to use and I needed to be prepared for using any of them depending on the situations that would occur during the collection period. When researching in this exploratory way with children as informants, it felt almost impossible to take account for exactly what tools I would need. Therefore, by having various tools at hand, they might work as resources in order to be able to follow up initiatives from children. The methods were not selected to be particularly child friendly methods. Rather, they were selected based upon the purpose of the research and with the intention of being appropriate for all the informants in the study (Christensen & James, 2008). The following paragraphs include the methods that were used during the process of generating empirical data.

4.4.1 Interview

Qualitative research interviews, such as those which were conducted for this particular study, are meant to get insight into informants points of view concerning a topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), here, musicking in the institutional context of two Norwegian kindergartens. It is through social interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee that knowledge is constructed, knowledge about the informants' subject experience and views on the topic (ibid).

When it comes to interviewing the pedagogical leaders the purpose was to get insight into the particular kindergartens practices before entering, and what was considered to be music as well as their personal opinion on the subject. Developing an interview guide (see appendix 1) became a way to structure the interviews, so too for the pilot interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), and to function as a guide in covering the subject from different angles. Although these interview guides included specific questions, they were constructed mainly in relation to topics with the purpose of being easy to adapt to a particular conversation. From experiences with previous interviews in practical training and final thesis for my bachelor's degree, it became important to know the guide well. Making it easier to be both flexible and structured, which I consider important when searching for insight into the interviewee's subjective understanding of a topic. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describes this approach as a "semi-structured life world interview" (pp. 27). It can be compared to a regular conversation; however, it becomes professional by having a purpose, specific approach and technique.

In relation to the number of informants for interviews, Hammersley (2013) argue that by having more than one participant in a setting one often may allow to check accuracy of the data as well as the phenomena that is studied. In this study, I linked the interviews with the pedagogical leaders to the informal dialogues carried out throughout the study. This data became both enriching both in relation to the topic and practice, and opened up for a deeper insight into the behaviour and reflections within each kindergarten.

How open interviewers are about the topic vary from full openness to closed revealing the topic at the very end (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). These interviews were located in an open approach, open to the extent that the interviewees received only topics beforehand. For the pilot interview, held with a head teacher of a kindergarten, the questions were sent before the interview was to be held. In this way she could look at them and get a feeling of what was

important in the interview. The interview was first situated in a room with a small table and the two of us sitting opposite of each other. Right before the interview started the participant suggested that we should do it in their room for aesthetics where the black box (as is often used in theatre, being a large room with black fabrics on the wall) is. The tape recorder was placed between us and most of the time she lead the conversation, the interview was only spiralled back to the questions when it seemed necessary to concretise the content of what was being said.

The two pedagogical leaders received only the topics beforehand, as they desired some insight. The particular questions were not given prior to the interviews as this could have been leading their replies. Having the questions available could have encouraged a wish to answer 'correctly'. Instead, they got the topics to be covered. The aim was to enable them to start reflecting on the topics beforehand, and then answer spontaneously in their interviews. The choice to do it differently than in the pilot interview is that in the pilot interview the aim was to learn more broadly about the general practice in the specific kindergarten, and in the other interviews the aim was to search for personal interpretations. The interviews with the pedagogical leaders were held in a meeting room/lunch room of the kindergartens. Before the interviews started the pedagogical leaders informed about the kindergartens and how they work. Then the tape recorder was placed between us and the note pad was close by in case it came up pieces of information or something in the context that was necessary to write down.

During these three interviews the interview guides were used mainly when the conversation paused or the informants stopped talking. Most of the time, the informants talked freely around the subjects, encouraged by nodding and confirming replies from me, in a way that did not stop their line of reflections. Even though the informants unknowingly talked about several of the questions not yet posted, the questions were still asked later in the interview in case there were more reflections on the topic than what they had already covered. In this way some of the answers seemed more reflected, maybe because it had already been related to other parts of their work.

The interviews were transcribed directly from the tape recorder and then the audible version was deleted. As the informants speak different dialects, some belonging to the research area, the interviews were translated into bokmål, which is the national written language in Norway. In this way the anonymity of kindergartens' and the various staff members are maintained. I made a thematic analysis while reading the interviews and found patterns and organised these

further into sub-themes using quotes that summarised what the informants said about the topic (Aronson, 1995). They were not rewritten. The quotes used in this thesis are directly from the informants, who have approved these summaries for use. The quotes will be presented only in English, as the Norwegian saying is not necessary to understand the meaning. In this translation process, however, it is essential to remember that interpretations may affect the data to some extent. When transforming oral language to written language, translating into another language, and condensing the content into narratives, all the various steps may risk changing some parts of the original meaning and nuances. I have been careful to keep what I have considered to be in line with the participant's descriptions. However, the interpretations of these are solely mine.

4.4.2 (Participant-) Observation

The aim of using participant observation was to learn about musicking in kindergarten, mainly in relation to children, by taking part in the everyday activities there (Warming, 2005). By approaching children with this method one may seek to challenge the generational adult-child distinction and open for a possibility to explore children's understandings of their social lives (Mayall, 2008).

There are various ways of using observation as a method. The extent of active participation or passive observation is where this variety may be seen. When passively observing most of the observations are made from 'outside' of the activity. This means that the researcher observes the things that happened from a distance and not as a participant. Observations are accurately noted down. The other array focus mainly on participation and the researcher actively engage in events, act freely with the children through conversations, reflections, watching and listening (Mayall, 2008) in trying to 'learn about the other' (Warming, 2005, pp. 56).

Observations are noted down in the aftermath of the activity and are not as accurate and detailed. This study includes both of these arrays, which is the reason why this method is presented as (participant-) observation. Some of the observations are made from outside the activities to respect the rules of social interaction, avoiding to impose my presence in activities that I was not invited to join. Others are from the inside when I was invited into the activities and got to experience musicking with the informants. The reasons for choosing this method are my own presumptions of musicking being characterised by spontaneity, being contextually dependant, and changing continuously depending on the different informants in

the interactions. Hence, there is no clear children or adult perspective on the topic, as this is constantly changing depending on the contextual and social interactions (Warming, 2005). Participant observation enables the researcher to study a topic within the social and contextual surroundings instead of studying narratives about these activities that one would be provided with when using interviews (Warming, 2005).

As a method, observation enabled me to participate in activities initiated by the children and therefore helped me to be accepted into their groups. By using this method I experienced a great potential when it came to listening to children (Warming, 2005), in broad terms. Broad terms because listening was more than hearing what was said, it included the contexts and the ways in which it was expressed which made me use all my senses at all times. In participant observation, Warming (ibid) expands the meaning of 'all senses' from physical ones to include empathy and feeling the situation with the body. Empathy alone is not a way to get knowledge about the other. It is through reflections of oneself (with one's culture and personality) in relation to what is being studied that experience is formed (ibid), she argues. In processing the data, the main focus has been to keep the observations as accurate as possible, not including my own interpretations within them. In order to present the voices of children and adults as clear and precise as possible, these will often be presented as quotes and extracts in the text. They have been translated as the interviews and this might add some interpretation. The quotes, however, are transcribed as directly as possible. By representing the observations in this style there has been a great emphasis to stay loyal to the children and adults in my representation of their voices (Warming, 2005). I will argue that this procedure makes the collected data more reliable.

In relation to observing the staff, participant observation became a tool I used to make my role as a researcher less intimidating and judging, and gave the experience of being included in more and more activities. In situations with mostly interaction with the children, the staff seemed to be less disturbed by my presence and thus I was able to capture the musical activities as they spontaneously occurred in the everyday lives.

Ethical considerations have particularly concerned presenting the data as pure as possible from the informants. Focusing on contextualisation and giving thick descriptions of the data presented as short stories contributes to placing the observation or quote within the particular context (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This gave the opportunity to see what was going on and

make reflections and discussions grounded in the observations, rather than universalising or making generalisations, as that is far from what was the intention of the research (ibid).

4.4.3 Field notes and research journal

During the period in the kindergartens I always carried a small notebook and pencil in my pocket. Whenever a situation occurred, I noted it down as soon as possible without disturbing the activities. This was especially essential in the instances when I was fully immersed in the children's play, as taking notes would have disturbed them and the captivating magic of the game might have been broken. In addition to observations my own considerations were included in the field notes (Warming, 2005). These notes included considerations like experiences, feelings as well as changes and dynamics in the group.

After some days it seemed like the children had become used to the strange act of a visitor, sitting down and writing alone. This acceptance contributed to an opening in which the researcher role distinguished me from other staff members. Children used to ask what I was writing, why it was written, and why writing at all. This opened an opportunity to create dialogues about the topic, and informing/reminding them about my presence and why I was there. Some gave the expression of this to be the strangest thing they had ever seen. Others told me to write what they had done or crosschecked if it was already noted. Some children also wanted to write in the notebook. They were allowed to and although their writing is not understandable for me, they conversed continuously about what they wrote and I noted down this in the margin afterwards. This was an activity that involved *some* of the children, and it also provided information as well as it became an arena to build social relations with them (Warming, 2005). Such situations occurred many times during my data collection period.

After each day in the kindergarten I immediately noted down in the journal personal reflections on the day, experiences, ideas, challenges and reactions to what I had just been a part of. This contributed to developing my presence in the kindergartens as well as providing relevant information throughout the research process (Ennew & Abebe, 2009a)

4.4.4 Informal dialogue

This method was initially not designed as a tool, but was included in the observations. Through the period, it proved to be very useful and made focus group discussions unnecessary. I used informal dialogue spontaneously including questions and topics. When children were asked these questions they answered with ease. However, when I asked the staff open questions such as what they considered to be music, they seemed to have difficulties to answer. Hence, as mentioned earlier the research methods did not have to be adapted to children (e.g. ‘child-friendly methods’), as is commonly done in contemporary research with children. I had to adapt the questions to the staffs practices and lead them on to the topic from there, using their practical examples. Thus, when asking the staff the method was ‘adult-friendly’.

4.4.5 Drawing

This method was used spontaneously as a boy, through conversation initiated it while he was drawing something else. We were the only ones by the table and to start a conversation I asked him about music. I asked him how he makes music and one of the ways he does that is to draw chords and so he did (appendix 2). The first time he drew them was on the back of his original drawing of something else, so for the research he was asked if he wanted to make one that could be brought to school and used in my project. This time he drew bigger and more detailed while explaining what it meant.

4.4.6 Scope of data

The data collection period had a time span on approximately 45 hours divided on three weeks in each of the two kindergartens that participated in the research. These hours were mostly during what the kindergartens called their core hours, between 9am-2pm, a time when there are most children, activity and staffs present. To also include other activities and get insight into the rest of the daily activities, I included morning and afternoon routines and rituals some days. Before entering the kindergartens, I planned the research hours according to the schedules to account for participation in activities and to be present at certain times when there was a specific plan. Throughout the period this plan was flexible and was continuously amended depending on changes in the kindergartens’ schedules. Initially the plan was, as mentioned above, to stay for 5 hours a day. However, from the first day, I found this

unnecessary as it was hard to be fully focused for that many hours. The next day I stayed for three hours and the quality of my presence was clearly approved, hence, in agreement with the kindergartens, I changed my original plan.

After the research period the data collected are comprised to three interviews, one drawing with description, 77 observations from kindergarten 1 and 63 observations from kindergarten 2, as well as a written journal from each day in the kindergarten.

4.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations became a main ingredient when planning, generating empirical material and presenting the informants 'views as fairly as possible'. This to act with a genuine respect for the informants during all the stages of the research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011, pp. 40). Ahead of carrying out the research the project description was sent to the ethical review board *Norwegian Social Science Data Services* (NSD) for approval to proceed. The project was approved without any comments or demands to follow up contact in the aftermath of the study.

4.5.1 Access – Information – Consent

The kindergartens gave consent to participate, giving access to the informants. In each kindergarten I was assigned a contact person. Ahead of the consent from kindergartens they were informed about the project and what it meant for them to accept to participate. Before each interview the pedagogical leaders were asked what they knew of the research and if they wanted a more thorough insight into it before the interview started. By doing this confirmation and information about the research could be clarified leaving them well informed about the research, purpose, challenges and they were also reminded of their option to end the interview at any time (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). These were also the persons meeting the staff and parents on a daily basis so it seemed necessary that they had particular insights into what was going on. I informed about the anonymity of the informants as well as the kindergartens, and this was an important factor for them to let me get access to the sites. This will be specified later. In the first kindergarten information letters were handed out to the parents about the research with contact information if they had any questions (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). As the main hours were after children entered the kindergarten and before

they were picked up, there was not much time to meet the parents and have dialogues with them during the research.

In the second kindergarten the parents had been informed of my presence and research by the kindergarten before entering and more often than in the first the parents were there to talk, question and listen about the research. In this case information letters were not handed out as the parents seemed well informed and they were encouraged to ask questions or take contact if anything occurred. During the period I kept informing informants and others of the research as they got more and more into it. Both children and adults asked new questions, and through the research they seemed to be more comfortable in doing so. In this way the informants and I had a two-way dialogue about the research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). I got an understanding of what the informants saw as important as well as opening up to resolve misunderstandings.

The children were not informed about the research as a group in one activity (Warming, 2005). During the period, I had individual dialogues where children were informed one by one. These dialogues most often happened when they saw the notebook and asked, "*What are you doing?*" Some children came back and asked more during the research. Especially one boy showed interest in what was written and tried to understand better by coming back. After the first explanation he looked at me for a while and went away without saying a word. From previous experience with children this did not concern me. However, I kept this incident in mind to be prepared to follow up if he did not come back after processing it. When he did come back he asked, "*What are you writing now?*" Again he looked at me and walked away after I had explained what I had written, referring to our previous conversation. At this point, I prepared to approach him differently and initiate a conversation asking him what he thought I was doing there. But then the boy came back for the third time and said, "*I think it is a bit weird. Why are you writing about this?*" For the third time the purpose of my project and my presence was explained in a new way and then he answered by saying, "*Ahh, now I understand. I did not understand it before, but now I understand it*". During the following weeks this boy came over and told me what he had observed and when he was asked for permission to write down what he told, he smiled and came back later with more observations. He also explained to some of the other children that asked us what we were doing the aim of the study and that he helped me writing down the music. This relationship between the boy and me is very much similar to what Warming (2005) experienced, having a

child communicating her role as a researcher in the field. It seemed like he took on the role as a co-researcher contributing with observations as well as informing other children continuously about the research in ways they seemed to understand.

The observations in this research focused on the activities that occurred in the kindergarten, and not one child trying to make sense of it. It was the actions they made and not them personally that were studied. This way of informing them had the intention of being less intrusive than either gathering all the children for collective information and or asking for formal consent forms to be signed with fingerprints (Warming, 2005). However, when the situation with drawing came up it was different as it was one to one and he offered physical data in the shape of a drawing. I asked him if he wanted to make one for the school project and explained the purpose of it. When he was finished I asked him if it could be used in the project emphasising that it was ok if he did not want to. He confirmed that he thought it was ok and told me to bring it to school. I wrote the parents a consent letter as this data was based on something he gave to me. I asked the pedagogical if it was fine for me to suggest that they would give their consent to her, which it was. In the letter the parents had the option to consent, or not consent, directly to me by phone, email, signing the paper or they could choose to go through the pedagogical leader that they already knew, and this is what they chose to do.

4.5.2 Power relations

Power imbalances appeared in the beginning of the period in each kindergarten in relations with children and staff. Children immediately considered me as a substitute staff and tested the limits until it had been made clear that my role was not to have any power over them. The staff saw me as an educated preschool teacher and often mentioned that in conversations saying that they knew less based on my previous education. Emphasising that it was not this information that was interesting for the project this became less apparent. Approaching the informants with a genuine curiosity might have contributed to encouraging a more relaxed attitude towards me as ‘the competent person’. With some children the language used in conversation changed to be clearer when I used words that were not understandable, although, adapting language was mostly necessary with the adults (as presented in 4.4.5) (Ennew & Abebe, 2009b). Another way of diminishing the power of being a grown up and educated preschool teacher, I submitted to the power of the pedagogical leaders and other staff (as

presented in 4.2). If children asked for permission to something, I told them that they had to ask some of the adults that worked there, and that I was not in a position to allow anything, since I was a visitor.

The methods in use placed the participant in centre, whether it was a child or an adult. By spending time with them and not being off the field for several days may have contributed to a more continuous connection by not being interrupted or becoming distant (ibid.). During the period the voice and language used were characterised by what ‘naturally’ (personal dialect) including jokes, this was also a tool to develop a connection with the informants and having a good time with them (ibid.). One boy said, “*You joke a lot*”, and when asking him what he meant by this he told me that I was ‘silly’ (tullekopp). I asked him if he wanted me to stop joking, if he thought it was too much or did not like it, and he told me “I like it, I think you are funny”. This introduces the next paragraph, focusing on building rapport with the informants for the research.

4.5.3 Rapport

In this research building rapport with the informants became an essential factor for the quality of the data, as well as the research to be as less intruding and uncomfortable as possible. Building rapport means that the researcher and the informants have a relationship based on trust (Ennew & Abebe, 2009b). When entering the kindergartens, an insider introduced me to the site and the informants. In the first kindergarten this was a pedagogical leader, and in the second it was the head teacher. Before entering I prepared to spend time during the entire process to develop and maintain these relationships, and it became just as important as the research itself (ibid). Techniques for developing good relations were for instance to share some issues from my life and family, showing pictures when some of them asked to see. It did not seem ethically proper to ask the informants to share their experiences and thoughts with me if I did not share of myself with them (ibid). In working out the role as a researcher, as explained above, a focus was to show a genuine interest in the informants. I sought to learn about their practices and their thoughts about music in the kindergarten. To be accepted into smaller groups it became important to follow up all initiatives to play (as long as I was not already in one), comforting children when needed, participating in dialogues about topics children wanted to discuss, and supporting children faced with challenging activities they did not believe they could do, but managed with support. Through supporting the staff in their

activities and being interested in their reflections they opened up to include me more into their groups.

4.5.4 Privacy and confidentiality

For my study, it became unnecessary to involve in children's private matters and it seemed important not to intrude into this sphere to maintain and respect their privacy. Throughout the process the preservation of confidentiality has been maintained by concealing identities, meaning that private data that could identify children or others has not been gathered and will not be presented in the following thesis (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In the field notes, I have sometimes noted informants' gender and age where this seemed necessary to understand the situation. As it is not essential information for the research, Kindergartens will not be named and neither will the area of Norway in which the research has been conducted. The differences within the collected data may vary just as much between kindergartens within the same area as elsewhere in the country. If the area would have been named, the kindergartens could have been recognised and that would have broken my agreement to keep them anonymous.

The interviews have been transcribed and kept anonymous meaning that names mentioned by the informants have not been included in the transcription (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). As written before, the audible files have been deleted to maintain the privacy of the informants and names of those that were mentioned in the interviews. Although, for the consent letters of the gatekeepers that gave access to the kindergartens their signature is on the consent letter and will be destroyed after the thesis is approved. These are the only two names that my data includes, and have been kept in a private locker separate from other data material. In letters to the parents the names were written by hand after printing to avoid keeping any record of it on my (or any other) computer. As the parents of the boy who drew for me gave consent to use the drawing through verbal confirmation to the preschool teacher, these names are not in the material. I offered this way of consenting for the parents to have a choice in whether to sign a paper or not.

In each kindergarten I signed a confidentiality agreement as a regular employee. This agreement is standard for all kindergartens and is found in paragraph 13 in the 'Public Administration Act' (The Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 1970). In this paragraph

there is a clause for researchers, which was read thoroughly to make sure not to break this agreement in any way. This also ensures the kindergartens that Norwegian law protects the research.

4.6 Reliability and validity

Reliability concerns the consistency and trustworthiness of the findings in the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). E.g. would the answers in the interviews have been the same if another researcher interviewed the same participant? By avoiding leading questions in the interviews and not specifying what I thought in relation to the topic and the interviewees' approving of the summaries I managed to maintain the reliability and validity of the research. However, as I followed up on hunches of what seemed to have more interesting knowledge in it this would not necessarily have been the same as another researcher might have picked up on. Based on this I will argue that the answers are to a great extent reliable as the interviewees were positive for the summaries to consist of their perspectives (ibid). However, another researcher might have followed up different hunches during the interview and in this way ended up with different data.

Validity concerns the strength of the arguments drawn from the research. In this research it depends on the techniques used in the exploration of the topic. By continually asking questions, observing similar situations, questioning what has been seen, and in the end interpreting what has been found in relation to theory, one is able to validate the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In the next two chapters, the empirical data is presented and discussed. Children's *musical agency* is the main analytical concept, however, *musical structures* will also be part of the discussion.

Chapter 5: Musicking *in* activity, and musicking *as* activity.

In this chapter I will start to answer the first research objective, ‘in what ways are musicking part of children’s play and learning situations’ in the two Norwegian kindergartens I have studied. I will do this by presenting observations from what I conceptualise as unorganised activities (as oppose to organised activities, which will be presented in chapter 6) and discussing these in relation to theories previously introduced. There are differences in types of activities within the kindergartens, which are therefore often named kindergarten 1 and kindergarten 2 in situations where this seems relevant.

The concept *unorganised activities* needs a clarification. As the pedagogical leaders to some extent organise and structure the whole day in the kindergarten, it might seem unclear what is meant by this concept. Unorganised activities include all activities that were not organised to particularly relate to or have the purpose of including music or musicking. Examples are observations from trips and lunchtimes, although these are, in general terms, activities organised by staff. In Norwegian kindergartens, children’s free play is highly valued. Within the schedules of daily activities you will find a great amount of time devoted to free play. During these hours children may choose, within limits set by the adults often relating to sound and space, what they prefer to do. Most of the observations in this chapter were done in these periods of the day. Prior to the observations I expected children’s agency to appear differently during their free play compared to the organised activities, as these periods of the day are structurally different. Anticipating their musical agency in unorganised activities to function as a continuous interplay with peers or items, and in organised activities to be more dialogical as to promoting arguments and affecting the content in these activities.

As written in chapter 3, the main analytical concept for my study is the one of musical agency. In this chapter the focus is on how the informants themselves use music both *in* activity, and *as* activity.

The first part of this chapter will focus on characteristics of musicking that occurred in the kindergartens, followed by a part focusing more on the social aspects of these activities.

5.1 Musicking “to go”

Musicking appeared in many forms and variations, as if it was an invisible item the informants carried along. From an observers perspective, at one moment it was not there, and by a blink of an eye it was. The ‘invisibility cover’ was removed, and the children acted and reacted as if it had been there all along. These descriptions are based on my experience of the action, not knowing what inspired or triggered it to happen. This type of music being considered as a childhood constant takes into consideration what is argued as a natural part in children’s play, and in their social interactions (Campbell, 2010). In one of these occasions I was enchanted. The whole group of children and staff in the kindergarten had watched a movie. By the end of the movie, one of the younger boys turned to me and started to sing about a lamb, followed by a trumpet solo played on an improvised trumpet made with his hands. He maintained eye contact with me with what I experienced to be a playful expression. He held my attention. It was not before he finished I came to realise that the others had moved along and were rearranging the room. I assume that this boy knew that I would pay attention to him in these types of situations, as we often had interactions one to one in which I had not been distracted by the surroundings. With this in mind it could be that this boy practiced his musical agency to introduce and maintain a social interaction with me. This observation leads me to emphasise the importance of adults having their eyes and ears open throughout their days in the kindergarten, as I assume many similar situations to be lost amongst the adults’ experience of being busy with other things. To me it became important in establishing connection and a close social interaction with the boy.

Campbell (2010) emphasise the songs within the child, that they have songs *in their heads*. Even if Campbell’s claim may seem essentialist, naturalising all children in this way, I find the claim interesting. It seemed to occur on several occasions and in one of them I followed up with questions to get more insight into ‘where’ this musicking ‘came from’. This time two girls and I were outdoors at the swings. One girl was singing with a discreet voice, and I moved closer to hear what she was singing. I could hear it was the Norwegian national anthem. I was wondering what made her choose to sing this song in particular as it was months since the constitution day (17th of May) when the song is sung.

Girl (5 years old): “*We learned it in the kindergarten, I sang a Christmas song and a 17th of May song*”.

Researcher (with growing curiosity): “*Why did you sing those songs?*”

Girl: “*I just remembered it in my head*” (alternative translation - researcher’s interpretation: It just appeared in my head).

Her immediate reply to why she was singing those songs was with a tone of stating the obvious. These songs seemed as natural to sing as any other song, despite being season specific. The musical structures in these kindergartens apparently seemed to have made an impression on this girl, as the songs were clear in their appearance within her head. Even though it had not recently been either of these celebrations the experience of the, and the practice I know many kindergartens have ahead of the celebrations might still be fresh. From conversations with the staff on their musical activities, several of them pointed to occasions in culture, such as these celebrations, to guide them as they practice for performing for parents or in nursing homes for elders.

Spontaneous singing of what comes into the mind can be seen in relation to self-directed speech in which children often converse with themselves. However, as one gets older this becomes more internalised (Vygotsky in Corsaro, 1997). This difference in audible and non-audible expressions of oneself might be what triggered my feeling of surprise. However, children were often observed strolling and swaying with consistent rhythms without any audible music. Hence, not all the music or musicking children did appeared to be heard or experienced by others than themselves. This self-directed speech then, cannot be argued to be a childhood constant. It might, however, be a way of relating the differences in amount of singing adults and children do. Children more often seemed to sing out loud than most staff did. Bjørkvold (1992) argues that what adults particularly do, or do not do, of spontaneous musicking has been through a selection process when it comes to what is seen as appropriate or not in relation to age and competencies. However, this has not been further explored with the staff except in interviews with the pedagogical leaders. In both of these interviews they emphasised that some of their staff members were often singing throughout their day in the kindergarten. The way I see this is that they have a different selection process than the others, considering more singing and musicking to be appropriate in different situations. This sort of narrative singing will be explored further below.

At times, musical activities included strolling, swaying and balancing while humming recognisable songs, then it could turn silent, continue in the same pace, and could then start again at a different place in the song. The context of being outdoors or indoors did not seem to affect children's musical activities to the extent that I had expected, the expectation being that it would be more physical and loud outdoors than indoors. The ways in which children included musicking as part of their play were similar in both places, although more space and

other elements were available. Musicking seemed to depend more on who and how many children were present and involved. As can be seen in the observation below children did not necessary engage in the same type of musicking even though they were doing it in near proximity of one another.

In the outdoor area one girl (4 years old) is balancing on some rocks while humming a melody. After a while she leans to a lamppost and turns around it while holding on with one hand. When she does this, the melody of the humming changes character to become more floating (by holding each tone longer) than before. Around her there are a lot of activities going on, both high in speed and sound. However, she does not seem to pay attention to this, and those around her do not pay any attention to her either.

This leads me to an association of music being ‘soundtracks in our lives’, personally I have experienced being fully immersed in the music, maybe even to an extent of music being my life for some minutes. Children in these observations did not seem to pay any attention to others unless they were stepped upon or disturbed in any other way. And the other children did not pay attention to the musicking unless they became obstacles in their more physical actions. Similar observations to the one above were often done when children were getting dressed to go outdoors, when cutting paper or doing other activities that involved a certain level of concentration. Then children often started humming or singing silently, so silent that it was nearly impossible to hear if one were not next to the child.

Children used songs in a variety of ways, and in the next paragraph children’s narrative singing will be explored.

5.1.1 Narrative singing

This kind of singing seemed to have the ability for me as an observer to transform, or picture an item or activity as something different than what it appeared to be. Using lyrics and particular sounds clarified the story that was played both in context and content. In different ways this ‘magic’, as I experienced it, was revealed. The following example demonstrates the magical ability to transform an object into another through the use of sound:

In the main indoor area a boy (4 years old) is sitting on the couch with a Cinderella figure and her carriage made of Duplo. He makes one specific sound when it drives and when it stops and drives again. After some time he takes off the wheels and he says that it is a boat now, which is illustrated with a change of sound to one that is more floating than the sound of the carriage.

Two techniques transformed the carriage into a boat. As the environment in which the carriage and boat moved was exactly the same, this transformation would not have been as explicit for me as an outsider or to a potential play partner if it was not specifically strengthened by the use of sound. The magic, as I experienced it to be, also appeared in songs in children's activities, their singing often illustrated what happened through telling narratives of what they did through singing. A broken bridge became included in the play instead of being instantly repaired. When this railway bridge crashed the girl sung "*bro, bro, broken*", and when the train passed a farm she sung "*iaiaå*" with the tones from 'Old MacDonald had a farm'. Together these sounds and songs give meaning to the game for observers, other play partners, maybe for the player him-/herself, providing a context that is otherwise impossible for outsiders to grasp. There was no farm to pass and no water for the boat to sail at. For these two children it might have been a way to illustrate and challenge what they were not in possession of, materially, but what they were in possession of, imaginatively (Bjørkvold, 1992). This is also explicitly illustrated in the example below. A boy (5 years old) had built a plane out of plastic material without the physical ability to move the wings, but with his imagination, and use of sound and rhythm, these wings became big and were able to make large movements as a bird using its wings to fly.

A boy (5 years old) comes towards me presenting his plane with great enthusiasm. I ask him what it is best at doing, what it can do. He says "*it can fly like this*" and illustrating with his voice with higher and lower sounds as the plane goes up and down in the air "*vvvvVVvVv*". When it turns, the sound changes to become a continuous v, and then he continues with the same as when it started. It moves like a snake, flying here and there. After some time he focuses on the wings and moves them by saying "*vinge-vinge-vinge*" (visual and audible illustration of the wing combined with the activity of flapping them to fly) in a constant pace.

When children were together in their musicking they used sounds to illustrate objects, and through songs they were able to situate rituals (Boynton & Kok, 2006). In role-play, particularly, songs were used as symbols to illustrate time for sleeping, eating and celebrating birthdays. During play a boy was asked if the ball needed a lullaby to fall asleep, he agreed and asked me to sing 'Trollmors vuggesang'³. When night-time is played, in my observations, this song and one from a children's book and film 'Karsten and Petra'⁴ are usually sung. The songs did not only contribute as a symbol of a ritual or routine. The length of a specific part also seemed to be directed by the song, e.g. birthdays often ended when the song was

³ Translated: "Trollmum's lullaby". A Norwegian traditional lullaby by Margit Holmberg.

⁴ Karsten og Petra "Nattasang" – Translated: "Lullaby". By Tor Åge Bringsværd.

finished, they had a piece of the cake and said hurray. What can be seen in the observation below is that the time span of the night was directly related to the length of the song.

Two girls and two boys are sitting in the doll corner. One of the boys dims the light and says, “*Now it is night time*”. A girl starts to sing a lullaby. The second boy tries to turn on the light again, but is told not to; “*It is too soon, the song is not finished yet*”. The other girl and boy puzzles with their own activities but do engage in the discussion and agree that it is too soon because the song was not finished so that the night time was not over.

Through singing then, the time zone changes and becomes more playable by relating it to the activities. It became a ‘rule’ in this open game (Bjørkvold, 1992), and when one boy broke this rule it created a prompt reaction amongst the others.

In these kindergartens musicking did not only have the magic ability to change one object into another or give flapping wings to a plastic plane. It also had the ability to control time, which will be further explored in the following part where music could ‘kill time’.

5.1.2 Killing time

Similar to when singing was used to control time of a ritual, such as night-time, it also often occurred when time seemed to ‘go slow’. Instead of standing and waiting in line while complaining, children and adults often initiated singing and other musical elements such as rhythmicing, movement and humming. In this way time changed from going slowly to rapidly. On a trip, a child that had complained that it “*took forever*” to get there said; “*oh, are we already there? It did not take that long*” when arriving at the destination. In this way the metaphor of ‘killing time’ is suitable. What could have become boring was transformed from going slow to going fast. On another occasion an adult started to sing while waiting for the rest of the children. The line started to move, sway and seemed to be more filled with joy than before when they were just waiting and “*it takes soooo long*” for the other children to get ready. The boring time of waiting was killed by their musical expressions as entertaining themselves while waiting. When this was part of the activity there were fewer complaints about walking far and fewer questions in regards to whether they were almost there yet.

5.1.3 Underground musicking

Children's individual musicking are particularly interesting when looking at the amount of singing and humming that occurred by the lunch table.

During lunchtime children get a specific place by the table, some of the tables have mixed age groups, but they are mostly around the same age. On one occasion a boy (3 years old) that is sitting at the end of the table is very quiet. While the other children talk about the food and other meal topics he does not engage in any of this. I move closer to him and realise that while he is eating and fiddling with his food he is humming and singing Norwegian children's songs.

By the table it is supposed to be what in Norwegian is called 'matro', meaning that there should be a calm atmosphere for eating and conversing. From the staff's perspective it was not considered to be appropriate singing by the table. This was explicitly explained when some children were singing with regular voices and other children were talking. It was made clear that it was inappropriate behaviour to sing while eating and they were told "*We do not sing by the food table*". Through the discovery of the quiet musicking, I paid particular attention to the silent children during lunch time. This led to an awareness concerning their singing and humming being so quiet that the sound was covered amongst the conversation of their peers. During the period in one of the kindergartens this singing and humming seemed to be continuously going on, not being recognised or corrected by either their peers or the staff. It is problematic through observation to see whether these songs were initiated for a reason or as something that spontaneously appeared in their minds as discussed earlier. At times there were songs about eating, other times they were about something entirely different and sometimes without lyrics at all. In some situations I experienced the singing in some situations to be as a means of entertaining themselves with by their own musical toolbox, and in other situations to be characterised as opposing to structures of for example being silent, conversing, or eating (Bjørkvold, 1992; Søbstad, 2006). However, I did not explore this further so these are questions grounded in my experiences of the situations.

In this context, these children's musical activities were not recognised by the adults, but this does not mean that the staff did not see them. They were told to eat their food as it looked like they played with it or refused to eat, when they in fact were singing and eating. This did not necessarily take more time than the ones talking, but they were considered to be misbehaving as they were not engaging in the conversations, nor did they seem to eat. As I experienced it these children were disciplined as they did not seem to do anything, just sitting there, when

they were actually singing or humming. I did not experience it to be disturbing. However, when not hearing the singing or humming, they might be disciplined in line with not listening to adults directions. This may create a negative relationship to food and eating, more than it might hurt them to not have eaten one of their meals during a day. It is interesting to ask why singing by the lunch table is considered inappropriate, when this was actually a less interrupting action than the conversations or more playful behaviour occurring amongst the others. Due to singing not being allowed around the lunch table, this quiet type of musicking may be fuelled as the children try to challenge or bypass the rules. If so this might have been an arena for children to practice cultural disobedience, protesting against the rules and norms of what is considered appropriate by the staff (Bjørkvold, 1992). For example, this may be the case when a boy looks at the staff by the table when singing, as if checking whether the person hears it or not.

The fact that singing could be considered inappropriate by the staff was also obvious in other settings, such as in a school preparation group. The particular song the boy chose to sing here is often sung while waiting, bringing the context into his activity (Bjørkvold, 1992):

Many of the children were seated, but still we were waiting for some more to join and find their seats for the group activity to start. A boy (5 years old) began to sing a song and the adult told him right away to stop it. He opposed to this by arguing that he was singing quietly. He was still not allowed and was asked the question; *“if all of the children sing quietly, what would happen?”* He answered reluctantly, and other children joined in, that it would become really loud. He quit singing and stopped his arguments.

In some instances, such discipline is necessary to establish an atmosphere for learning and concentration. However, through my previous experience it might lead to frustration, and therefore having a feeling of being silenced when it is considered unnecessary. From the staff's perspective in this situation, the boy's singing was not accepted. Why that was, may have several reasons, but none were explained by the staff member. However, from an observer's point of view this boy was singing with a low voice instead of talking or playing with his peers. These preferred activities were more disturbing in the group in form of being both more physical and loud, some children were teasing each other, leading to more noise and arguments. Children used low voices, only becoming louder when the teasing or arguing escalated. The staff member in charge did not pay much attention to this other than when it became loud, telling them to be nice to each other. I would again like to draw the attention towards the singing boy. His activity was calm, with a regular/low sound in the voice, and

those that sat beside him watched him quietly and listened to his song. They did not take part in the other activities or making other noise. From my perspective this singing was less disturbing than the activities from the ones that were playing.

One interpretation of this incident is that the boy practiced musical agency, filling time with something momentous instead of quietly waiting, which, not surprisingly, many children find tremendously boring. The boy argued for it to be appropriate in relation to the context and how he had adjusted it to it by singing quietly (James, 2009; Prout & James, 1990; Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). The staff then denied him to practice his agency. Even in the discussion there was no room for the boy to influence what should be accepted or not. This type of activity along with mealtimes can be challenging to carry out, many children and adults being to be gathered at one place. As everyone are coming from different activities, the beginning of the new activity may seem a little chaotic or unstructured until everyone are seated. The adults exert control using conventions and rules that children to some extent resist, in different ways. This is why I labelled these activities as *underground musicking*.

The next section describes and discusses spontaneous singing in which children start to sing without apparent external cause, as seemed to be the case when the boy discussed above started singing while waiting for the group activity to start.

5.1.4 Spontaneous singing

Similar to what I conceptualise as underground musicking, this paragraph relates to what children do seemingly spontaneously with singing *in* their activities. Children often started to sing spontaneously in dressing situations when about to go outdoors or indoors. Particularly when going outdoors some children refused to put on their clothes and started with other activities instead.

One boy (3 years old) refused to get dressed and was left on his own for a while, starting to sing and dance standing upon his clothes. I turned to him and asked if he was dancing his clothes on. He answered with a nod and a smile.

By sitting in immediate proximity of the boy and hearing his response towards the staff member and him continuing singing, I felt tempted to try a different approach towards him than the one that had been used previously. It developed into a communication with a playful approach to getting dressed, one in which he did not refuse as he had done before. Through

the use of a different approach, the ‘play language’, this boy got ready to play outdoors without being told repeatedly with growing frustration. He left the situation running outdoors with a smile on his face. Similar to the girl that was singing while getting dressed, this observation highlights how children include singing spontaneously in their everyday activities. Being part of their play language, it seems as if they use their musical agency to change mood or atmosphere into something more enjoyable (Vestad, 2014). However, in the observation helping the boy get dressed I used musical agency and facilitated the boy to use his. Acting within the structures of the kindergartens, including this boy's apparent interest in singing, I adapted the setting in which the situation aspired to make it suit his interest at that moment, seemingly changing the atmosphere in which it occurred. Here, what seemed to be a boring ritual was transformed to something enjoyable by me, just pressing ‘the musical agency button’.

Spontaneous singing often occurred in conversations with children. At times they started to sing songs, or parts of songs, and then continued to talk afterwards.

Sitting outside a girl (4 years old) and I talk about two birthdays she is going to the following weekend. After telling me about the pirate birthday that her friend is planning she starts to sing ‘Blomster små’⁵ with different names of children she knows.

When she finished singing the first time I commented that I like this particular song because it is about spring. The girl then continues to sing it a few times with different names before she initiates to start talking about the weekend again. Similar situations arose for example when tidying up a game and making bracelets. Most of these observations are from kindergarten 1, in which the staff seemed to do the same, singing spontaneously while doing something else, such as tidying. When preparing for a hike they sang while getting everybody ready. They sang while walking together, dressing children and while they were walking by themselves. What mostly distinguishes this kindergarten from the other in regards to this type of singing, is that they also sang in conversations and as communication with each other. This is in line with what the pedagogical leader emphasised in her interview (see chapter 6). Not all the staff members were singing. However, quite a few did, and these were the ones spending most time with the children. Neither is it so that the staff in the other kindergarten did not do this, as it was also present there. What can be argued though, is that the amount and way of using

⁵ ‘Blomster små’, meaning ‘Small flowers’. A Norwegian song often used in assemblies to include all children's names in a song.

spontaneous singing in kindergarten 1 seemed to have created a culture for this type of musicking (Mouritsen, 2002). Including children in their singing, the staff often started to sing songs inspired by children's play or actions. E.g. when pushing a swing, seesaw, or playing with trains. In a conversation I had with a staff member she emphasised that they often "*Sing about whatever we do, using the voices we have*" (a common saying which means that even though their voices are not that 'nice', they sing anyway). The latter part of the sentence will be further discussed in the next chapter. The first part of the sentence though, proves that they bring the environment into their activities in line with what has been emphasised as something children do (Bjørkvold, 1992). On trips staff could start singing, with others, both adults and children, joining in. Appearing indoors it was at one time observed like this:

In the main common area an adult starts to sing 'Fireman Sam'. In the art room nearby some children and I are occupied building with Lego. When hearing the song, some children start to copy it and sing along, followed by a boy (5 years old) who changes the lyrics so that you cannot trust fireman Sam. He looks at me and the other children with an anticipating expression, and we all burst out in laughter.

By changing the lyrics he evoked laughter amongst his peers, and also from me. This boy had good language skills and seemed to experiment and master to use language in humour to generate laughter (Sæther & Aalberg, 2012). Observing his face it seemed as if he was experimenting, and along with the laughter his face gave the expression of relief, as if he felt he had mastered the task. It is interesting to see that this boy often had several play partners, which made me think that he is a preferred play partner, too. In the mornings he was, for instance, quickly integrated in play or searched for by others that arrived later. In contrast to the boy that turned on the light in an observation presented previously in this chapter, breaking with the rule of the game, this boy had mastered the technique. His ability to break with convention and at times challenging the structures and norms in the kindergarten might have been one source for this (Bjørkvold, 1992; Søbstad, 2006).

5.2 Being together through musicking

This part of the chapter focuses more on musicking that occurs with the informants acting musically *together*, than the part above that concentrated more on musick as a toolbox for individual agency. In this part the toolbox works as a fundamental part of the joint activities, seeing musicking *as* activities.

Staff often initiated singing together with children, some times by a table or in the sandpit outside, other times sitting on the floor or on the pillows inside. What, for me as an observer, seemed to be the biggest difference between the activities outdoors and indoors was that the ones that occurred inside had more of an intimate atmosphere. Children often gathered close to the adult and they sang with lower and softer voices. In the outdoor singing activities children were more fluidly joining and leaving. What also seemed to characterise them, was that they included more dancing, movements and adults swinging the children. It became activities in which the adults sung for the children in similar ways as they often read books or looked at pictures together. Children expressed wishes for songs through oral or physical descriptions and joined vocally in on different parts of the songs, otherwise often moving their bodies. They were actively engaging in the activities through their listening, movements and requests for songs.

5.2.1 Music matters

In the kindergartens it was mainly, nearly exclusively, the male members of staff that were playing guitar. Both genders contributed to the singing, but there were, however, more women than men that sung. Based on the knowledge of how children use imitation to learn and explore what they observe (Wiggins & Campbell, 2013) I searched for a connection between adult and child behaviour on this area. I was curious in relation to whether children had noticed this behaviour and then copied it to their own practices. However, I did not find any connections. Children of both genders initiated and played on ukuleles individually and in joint activities, both gender divided and not. When the staff played their instruments children reacted in different ways. Some lay down to listen, others moved in rhythm with the music, some played with toys or played a ukulele, and some took part in singing. What seemed to be apparent from the observations was that children responded to this playing of instrument in one way or another as their activities and behaviour changed when it started. As presented previously affordance has not been studied in this thesis. However, from these observations it

can be interesting to explore a connection between these and affordance, as a source for expanding the thinking of musicking. When a staff member plays something, it seems like whatever that something is, it also does something for some of the children (Vestad, 2010). In many of these situations the staff acted in ways responding to the responses and behaviour of the children.

An adult finds his electrical guitar and connects it to speakers in the main common area. Only the youngest children are present, together with another male adult and me. Every time the guitar is strummed children move, run, shake and laugh. The adult continues to play different chords while watching the children. After some time he starts to play and sing 'Fireman Sam'. Children are still moving and shaking, but now they have more attention directed towards the adult and join in with the singing.

This adult told me later that when he started playing he planned to play 'Fireman Sam' right away, but when he saw how the children reacted to the introduction, he continued improvising for some time before he played the song.

5.2.2 Music as context for social interaction

Recorded music had a prominent role in the kindergartens. Both through children's copying of it in their collective performances, as I will get back to later, but also in other kindergarten activities. When children listened to recorded music, such as CDs, they often started to move differently with their legs and arms in a more floating way than when they for example entered the room (see observation below). Children's listening was also often combined or/and followed by some of their own musical behaviour, such as playing on a ukulele, singing, playing with toys or small utterances like "*opa*".

In the music room a CD is playing. A boy (2 years old) enters the room and changes his style of walking, by bending his legs, to a rhythm similar to the pace of the music from the CD player. In the same room a girl (2 years old) is laying on the bench and after one song finishes she lifts her arms enthusiastically above her head and say "*opa*". A third child (3 years old) finds two toys with bells inside. He is shaking these for a while and then he asks for a ukulele, which he starts strumming and eventually he includes the toys with bells while also playing the ukulele.

Both of the kindergartens had what they described as a music room. According to the Framework Plan (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012), kindergartens are supposed to ensure that children have the opportunity to, and space for, experiencing aesthetic impressions and expressions. The two rooms were different in size and accessibility, and they were differently furnished. What they had in common was that they had instruments.

Although, in kindergarten 1 the instrument ukulele, that was played the most, was not stored here and this room was rarely used. Kindergarten 2 used their music room on an everyday basis and kept several of their instruments in it. It was used both for musical and non-musical activities, often characterised by being more physical than what was allowed in the rest of the kindergarten. Kindergarten 2 seemed to have managed to structure and organise a room that was well equipped for providing children with opportunities to explore and experience musicking. Kindergarten 1 however, seemed to have some struggles to achieve the same opportunities with the room, but had organised an area in one of the common rooms that could be used for a similar purpose when children wanted to perform or musick at the podium.

On several occasions when entering kindergarten 2, I was made aware that they were doing music in it. It could be that a male adult played his guitar and sung for and with the children, or that they listened to a CD and musicked along with that. Entering this room was then often experienced as joining a morning ritual (Boynton & Kok, 2006). The music was often calm and children played calmly with toys, instruments, relaxed on the floor, leaned on an adult etc. This was later explained as being done with the intention to set a calm atmosphere. One staff member said that it was nice for the children to have a calm start on the day to 'waking up'. Another commented that this activity was a nice way to wake up slowly for the adults, too.

The next example is extracted from a situation that occurred one morning when children (age 1-3) were still arriving in kindergarten 2:

When I entered the music-room I could hear that they played calm music (low volume, slow pace and smooth voices) from the CD player. What I saw was different ways of taking the music into and *as* their activities. Some children strummed ukuleles, some were playing with cars, and other lay on pillows either close to an adult or by themselves. The adult was humming along with the music and cuddled with those that lay next to him. One of the children that played ukulele was sitting casually leaning towards the adult, strumming his ukulele calmly in line with the music as well as singing along with some of the strophes during the song.

This way of using music, both through singing and playing CD, was initiated as a way to set a relaxing atmosphere when the youngest children were put to sleep during the day. The social power of music was practised by the staff for preferred behaviour and state of mind for the children (DeNora, 2000a). By using songs and music that were characterised by slow pace and silent tones, often seemed to contribute to closer and more intimate relations, like one to

one singing. Before sleeping, children often calmed down to music and were prepared for a rest before they were put in their buggies. By doing so music and musicking also became part of creating predictability for the youngest children that might not yet understand what is being said with words.

As described, music was used to set a calm atmosphere. However, recorded music also was part of directing more physical play. The song “It boils and bubbles” seemed to encourage more physical play amongst several of the children, as is illustrated by the next example:

Some children and I are playing in the common areas when a girl (5 years old) rushes out of the music room. Enthusiastically and short breathered she asks us; “*Would you like to listen to It boils and bubbles?*” Those playing ran into the music room. Following them I entered a room hearing a song with a lot of different sounds in it, quick pace and rough voices. Children were doing an obstacle path and other activities with big and loud movements and shouting. One girl (3 years old) that entered the room with me immediately took my hand and stood close to my leg. I sat down on a bench close to the door and she climbed up on my lap listening to the same song being repeated over and over again. After a period of time some of the children left the room and the sounds and activities were not that big and loud any more. The girl then climbed down from my lap and joined the rest in their play. “*Can we listen to the angry music?*” a girl (4 years old) asks, referring to the same song as before.

The way in which this girl (5 years old) invited us into the activity, with her apparent enthusiasm and short breath from running, appeared to engage the other children that seemed to know what was meant by listening to ‘It boils and bubbles’, which I did not. ‘Listening’ in this case also included highly physical play. As it was my first meeting with this activity, the immediate response she got was surprising. The energy level was high, as in the music, and children were playing risky activities such as jumping on pillows that slipped on the floor, at times making them fall and they might have hurt themselves. In relation to children practicing musical agency it seems as if they use recorded music to direct activities, e.g. atmosphere, in similar ways as the staff did (Vestad, 2014). When they wanted to listen to music and do physical activities they asked for music similar to ‘It boils and bubbles’, and calm music when they wanted less physical activities. Another point from this observation is the way in which a girl (4 years old) describes the music, by saying “*angry music*”, a characteristic feature that provides insight into how she hears it; she associate the song with the emotion of being angry. (However, from my personal bag of knowledge (Ruud, 1996) this music was excitingly dark, not angry, but intriguing and full of energy, based on the rhythm, instruments and vocals).

In the following paragraph the focus will be on children initiating musicking together and musicking as a tool for exclusion.

5.2.3 Musical meetings: “*Want to play guitar with me?*”

Recorded music seemed to be a way for children to practice their agency towards adults, as well as in relation to other children, in a different way than above. The observations above focus more on the atmosphere for play, and the following section focuses more on communication *about* the music.

It is after lunch. Four children, boys and girls (4-5 years old), ask one of the staff members if they can listen to music, and present why they want to do so; “*to listen, sing and dance to it*”. The request is accepted and in one of the smaller common rooms a CD player is plugged in, playing a calm ‘Captain Sabertooth’⁶ song. A girl is wearing a princess dress, high heeled (adult) shoes, a purse and a tiara. She starts swaying and dancing similarly to dances in Disney movies with the dressed pulled to the sides so it becomes big and floating. A boy (4 years old) carrying a ukulele enters the room with tramping feet, and says with a harsh voice that he does not want to listen to a CD, and then he pull out the plug. The other children start to argue with him, telling him that they have asked and been allowed to listen to the music. He refuses to accept this. An adult interferes and tells him that they have been allowed to put music on and that he can either stay in this room with the music or chose to play in another room. He stamps out and come back in the room unplugging the CD player twice.

The argument that children were practicing their agency in this situation is based on the way they approached it, and the response they got. By the initiation, they had decided that they wanted to listen to music together, and to be able to do this they had to get approval from the adult person. As this person could have told them no, they presented what they wanted and why, seemingly to have a stronger case. Norwegian children are also well used to present arguments to support their case, and to explain and be explained to why some things are not approved. By telling the adult why, then, if rejected the adult would not only have told them that they were not allowed to listen to music, but also declining their request to listen, dance and sing along with it. In this situation the adult not only approved, but also supported them when the boy disapproved of the activity and rejected his wish not to listen to it. His arguments was that he did not want to, and that did not work as a strong enough case against the other arguments of pursuing the activity. The two types of responses to the arguments by

⁶ ‘Captain Sabertooth’ is a fictive pirate figure, initially created for a show in a zoo in Norway in 1990. Shortly after this the songs became popular for children all over Norway. It has led to a production of magazines, CDs, and it has become a great part of the structure in the zoo with shows each summer, a pirate harbour guests can live in, and a theme park.

children present in this observation can both be and not be linked to agency. The group of children, practiced their agency as the adult listened to what they said when explaining their cause and the reason for it. They are then both heard and respected by the adult that supports them later. By approaching children in this way they can be considered to have an impact in their own lives, as well as the lives around them (James, 2009). Children practicing their agency is not considered as letting them always having their way. This boy that intervened in the other children's activity became an intruder. My argument is not that it should be a dilemma whether to end the activity as he wishes or not, it is rather to provide this boy with knowledge of himself in relation to others.

With the boy, however, he apparently had an issue with the music being on even though he was not present in the room in which it was played. This is not taken into consideration when his wish to keep it off is declined. If he had been followed up on his wish, asked to tell what the problem was he would have been heard to and thus given the opportunity to practice his agency. In this reflection the distinction between being allowed to present ones own opinion and actually being heard in matters concerning them is apparent. By approaching the children differently the adult acted in a way that supported and respected children's agency for those who were in charge of deciding the premises for the activity that was going on. In this study it is musical agency particularly, and not agency in general, that has been studied. From this observation, the relationship between agency and structure appears. The group of children acted as agents within the structures of the kindergarten when initiating the activity, and their further actions are shaping existing structures (James & James, 2008; James et al., 1998). Meeting these structures the boy might have gained experiences with how to shape structures in a way that is accepted within norms of social behaviour.

Throughout the research period an aspect of preferred play partners appeared from the observations. When children initiated musical activities with each other it seemed as if the rules for choosing play partners changed. Children that usually did not play together were often found participating and initiating musicking with each other.

A boy (4 years old) is sitting in front of the CD player and starts to drum and strum a ukulele while singing along with parts of the lyrics. After some time several of the children leave the room, one boy sits down next to him, also bringing a ukulele and they start strumming and singing together, smiling at each other.

I rarely observed these two boys playing with each other in other activities than musicking, particularly playing ukulele. It seemed to be their common interest, an activity in which they both could engage and enjoy together. These two children were not often found playing with each other either, except from when they played instruments or were singing. A similar situation concerns the same boy that sits down in the observation above when he finds a ukulele and with an excited tone asks a girl; “*Want to play guitar with me?*” before he starts strumming. They stand opposite of each other strumming the ukuleles, singing and grinning. In this respect music may inhabit a quality for creating new friendships, or at least, other types of friendships based in their mutual interest for musicking. This seemed to occur with different children throughout the period I observed them, and it both seemed evident that the proximity had an impact as well as their interests (James & James, 2008). Being interested in playing mum-dad-child for example, seemed to lead some children to search for other children with the same interest. In similar way, children with an interest for musicking found each other when they were singing at the podium and playing ukulele together.

Continuing with musicking *as* activity, the following paragraph focuses on the different ways in which ‘a culture for performance’ was experienced in the two kindergartens.

5.2.4 A culture for performance

The act of performing initiated by children was frequently observed in kindergarten 1. In the other kindergarten it was only observed in small sequences, but then without it seeming to be a performance, as it did not appear to be an activity in itself. It just happened in the children’s play, and they easily and quickly moved in and out of it. In the kindergarten where performing seemed to be an activity in itself, it was a podium consisting of three different levels on which the children most often had their performances. In front of this podium, it was an open floor space and a couch facing the podium. The floor space was often used as a dance floor while other children were standing on the podium singing and playing ukulele.

When the singing and playing stop, one of the dancing girls sits down on the couch and the other tells the ones on the podium; “*I need music to dance to*”. Another girl that has been seated on the lower level of the podium singing along with the others, stands up and says; “*Would you like to dance with me? I can sing a beautiful song for you*”.

During the performances there was often an audience that listened, moved and sung while they were observing, often using the couch. Sometimes, the audience also started to engage in the activity by dancing on the floor. This act of listening often also led to copying, especially when the younger children observed the older ones.

A girl (3 years old) is playing with a doll and a nappy bag alongside a group of children (in the observation above) performing on the podium. She asks to join the girls, but the two on the upper level directing and choosing the songs reject her. Some times she is singing silently the same songs as the girls performing do, and when they finish she enters the podium and sings what she knows of “Lillebrors vise”⁷. She sings the correct melody, but she only sings parts of the lyrics and is babbling and humming the rest, quickly returning to the parts she seems to know well. Another girl is sitting close by and listens to the song that is sung.

Children’s ability to imitate can be important for social acceptance and belonging to a group. Younger children might find it enjoyable being on the side of the activity, as this gives the opportunity to observe the older children and bring their observations of structure and content into their activity later (Mouritsen, 2002; Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). When the podium became available, the younger audience entered the stage and performed in similar ways to the older children had been doing. Sometimes the younger children also entered the stage on the lower levels while the older ones performed, participating only with quiet voices and small movements. This age hierarchy seemed to be more evident in kindergarten 1 than in kindergarten 2, which surprised me, as kindergarten 2 had a broader age span between the children. When performing, it did not seem like the children were directly focusing on talent, other than those knowing the lyrics often having more powerful positions of leading the activity. Hence, this leads me to think that the concern within musicality focusing on ‘only-the-talented-can’ narrative was not as apparent with children as with the adults (Campbell, 2010; Vestad, 2014).

⁷ Translated: “Little brother’s song”. A children’s song by the Norwegian author Alf Prøysen.

5.3 Summary

In this chapter, I have described and discussed how music and musicking are brought into children's activities. From the observations it seems as if children musick wherever it suits them, picturing an association to a musical toolbox containing a range of tools to suit different occasions. They seem to be in possession of a toolbox that opens up for musical behaviour such as; singing while going to the toilet, humming while concentrating on balance, or strumming a ukulele and singing along. Musical behaviour occurred while doing something else, as a soundtrack – not necessarily as two different activities, but rather as one (Bjørkvold, 1992). I have also, to a certain extent, discussed the relations between musical agency and musical structures in cases where observations clearly show an obvious link between what children are doing and the structural framework that is set by the kindergarten staff.

One important framework for musicking is the physical space in which it may take place, and the influence of being inside or outside the building. What differentiated the indoor activities from the outdoor activities is that the outdoor ones lasted for a shorter time. I was expecting them to be characterised by more physical activities and loud sounds, as these are not behaviours considered proper indoors. However, this proved not to be the case to the extent that I imagined.

Children's musical agency appeared through establishing structures for joint play, seemingly to contextualise their musical meetings and activities.

In chapter 6, I will describe and discuss how the kindergarten staff understand music with children, and finally focus on what I have defined as organised musical activities, as this was observed in the two kindergartens.

Chapter 6: Approaching music

In the previous chapter, I described and discussed spontaneous musicking both *in* and *as* activity. This chapter will first explore the informants' answers relating to what they understand by music and staffs' attitudes towards doing music with children. In the last part of the chapter I will focus on organised musical activities. The aim of this chapter is to provide insight into the concept of music and musicking from the informants' point of view.

6.1 What is music?

In literature music has been discussed in a variety of ways concerning *how music is to be understood*, as has been presented previously in relation to the different roots and perspectives in music education (Ruud, 1996). Not surprisingly, various disciplines look at various aspects and have different theoretical approaches to the phenomenon. By trying to look at children and music from these various positions, I realise an ambiguity that also appears in the interview with pedagogical leaders and in conversations with other staff members during the process of generating empirical material. The exploration of what staff and children consider to be music will be presented in this chapter. In paragraph 6.1 and 6.2, I will use the concept 'music', when it comes to presenting the empirical material, instead of 'musick' and 'musicking' that have previously been used. This is because I, in conversations with the informants, I used the concept of 'music'. Musick and musicking, however, has been my analytical tools later in the process.

The two interviewed pedagogical leaders started off answering the question on what music is with; "*Everything can be music*". This was exemplified as a ticking clock, birdsong and children hammering their plates, although it was not the first that would come into mind when thinking about what could be considered as music in practice, which was more objective as recorded music. Both have specialisation of some sort in aesthetic courses from the same college, a college that from my own experience teach students that anything can be music if you listen for it. However, when the interviewees continue with their descriptions this broad sense of viewing music seems to narrow into a more conventional understanding of music, connecting it to a combination of sound and rhythm being heavily influenced by psychological perspectives (Ruud, 1996). One of the informants reflected on the characteristics of music as;

“For me it is melody I think, a lot, and rhythm. Melody and rhythm. And of course sound ... put together to a unit”

In conversations with the head teacher she reflected on the broad sense of understanding music that the pedagogical leaders opened with, adding that she thinks we all contain music and explain music as sound and movement, a perspective which easily can be connected to the first position that music pedagogues often refer to (Ruud, 1996). She exemplifies the sound and movement issues by mentioning two examples. The first being one about of a child that has not been much exposed to music saying that this child too will start “*Grooving in rhythm with the music in the kindergarten*”, meaning that they feel the rhythms in the music and starts moving to it. Her second example of music and movement is about a boy running outside with his arms stretched out, making sounds like an airplane. The idea that everyone contains music, from saying that “*Music is in us*”, seems to be an argument based on a search for explanation of where the music comes from. “*It has to come from somewhere,*” the head teacher says. As in previous studies, such as those of Bjørkvold (1992) and Campbell (2010), the argument of the nature of music in humans are deeply rooted, and may seem as an interesting explanation for what seems to be so ‘natural’ for children to do. However, the question where music come from in the first place is a philosophical question and out of the scope for my study.

Conversations and observations with children were often spontaneous and of a different character than with the adults. With adults it was more reflective talks, concerning what music can be good for, where it comes from, and similar issues. With children, however, the conversations were more related to what I, in my analyses, conceptualised as the practical musicking that occurred in their everyday lives. In the previous chapter, narrative singing was presented. It is interesting to take this further and explore how children might experience it. In the observation below a boy and I were walking hand in hand on a trip with children and adults singing alongside us.

... I was asked to sing a song about Goldilocks. I knew the story but not that there was a song about it and explained this to the boy (4 years old). He looked at me and said, “*well, maybe it is not exactly a song, it is more like a story*” and then he told me the story about Goldilocks and the three bears.

When this boy is saying that it is not exactly a song, but more like a story, it made me think that he has connected what in this kindergarten seems to be apparent when new songs are introduced and that the lyrics in these songs can be a mean for expression/being a language for communication (Ruud, 1996). He says that “*It is not exactly a song*”, but “*It is more like a story*”. Connecting it to narratives and lyrics, the distinction between them does not seem as explicit as it may be for others and adults. Being able to communicate the same by telling a story as through lyrics with melody, it can be challenging to separate what is a story and what is not. Are all lyrics stories? When children and staff sing about their daily activities, is that a story similar to the lyrics of a song, or text in a fairytale? Another observation, when a distinction in definition arose, was by the lunch table, from which the observation below is extracted.

A truck with food arrives in the kindergarten and a boy and a girl (4 years old) start repeating with steady pace and rhythm, “*Now we can get food*”. “*It is not allowed to sing by the dining table,*” a girl by the table points out with a correcting voice, getting the answer “*We are not singing*”.

What is singing then? The two children repeating themselves were apparently not singing, although they did not specify exactly what it was, but the girl that commented did. As referred to in the previous chapter it was not allowed to sing by the table when eating, and this might be a cause for them to not characterise it as such. Whether they challenged the structures on purpose or not, I do not know, but it seemed as if they had an experience of joy (Søbstad, 2006). Not focusing too much on these assumptions based on the observation, the following is a more concrete and elaborated situation in which a child defined music.

Conversing about music with a boy (5 years old) that was drawing created an interesting path of defining music, and seemingly he also differentiates between doing and making music: (see appendix 2)

Researcher: When you do music, what do you do then?

Boy: Everything really

Researcher: Like?

Boy: Like drawing, painting, eating

Researcher: Does it happen that you make music?

Boy: Yes

Researcher: How do you do that?

Boy: I make instruments and do like this (draws a music sheet on the back of his paper)

Researcher: Can you make one like that for me so I can bring it to school and use it there?

Boy: I can do that (he draws one similar to the first one on a paper for me)

Boy: This is the music (pointing at the music sheet) and I need some lines here (drawing lines to separate the notes)

He opens very broadly by saying that when he is doing music he does everything (Ruud, 1996). Then when asked if it happens that he *makes* music he becomes more specific as in making instruments or drawing music sheets, explaining that it is the notes that *is* the music and that he needs lines to separate them from each other. *Doing* and *making* music, then, are not activities connected to each other. His doing of music can be connected to the concept of musicking (Small, 1998), being an activity to engage in rather than an object or a collection of things, which seems to be what this boy considers when he is talking about making music, having a more instrumental perspective of producing than Small (1998). As have been argued previously, producing and performing or doing music can be considered as one activity (ibid). However, in the perspective of this boy and his doing and making of music it cannot proceed simultaneously. Meeting this makes it difficult to hold on to the definition of music and musicking as from before. However, being open to different perceptions based in our different bags of knowledge this seems to be an exception that is pointing to the great variety of how to do, make and perceive music (Montgomery & Woodhead, 2003).

As introduced above it was a distinction in the responses of adults and children, and in these situations an adult-friendly approach was necessary, with the staff in particular as they seemed to have problems answering the direct question of what music is. For this boy the answers were so clear and obvious, and his explanations without hesitation that it seems like the question was easy two answer for him. These responses from the informants cannot be understood as a valid interpretation of the empirical material as a whole, as the adult have a personal repertoire of knowledge, experience and frames which inspire different processes of reflection than with a child. With this said, the understanding from the child's perspective might be a refreshing contribution to the discussion, as it is grounded in his immediate reflections in relation to the question.

6.2 Why do music?

This part of the chapter relates to what the staff members think about music, and doing music with children in the kindergarten. Through conversations and interviews, the experience of joy appeared often and was particularly emphasised when concerning music and children. When asked about the importance or non-importance of music in kindergarten one participant added how she seems to experience music with the adults, too.

“The most important is joy. Humour too, but especially joy is important in the everyday life. I see that children get happy and that the adults may become happier, too, if they have a bad day”

In philosophy the ways in which music has the power to affect our feelings have been emphasised (Ruud, 1996). The quote above illustrates this in particular; what the music does with us (DeNora, 2000b). Following up on this statement to get insight into how the informants experience the way music affect us, the staff member pointed out that it was not always joy and happiness they experienced and based her argument on her observations of children’s and adults’ facial expressions when listening to music. However, these are her interpretations of what she has observed. I would like to emphasise that although a facial expression seems to be serious, the child might not be so on the inside. This line of thought, concerning music’s place in life and what it does to us, is further emphasised by saying that

“[Music] is an important part of the human being, it sort of reaches straight into your soul, emotionally.”

Not only does she argue that music is an important part of the human being, she also emphasise the context in which we live by saying, *“We have music around us all the time”*. Not only are humans musical, then, the nature and our contexts are, too. This broad interpretation may lead to a diverse practice of doing music in the kindergarten, as well as opening up to consider a range of children’s activities as musical. Hence, children’s spontaneous musicking might be acknowledged.

6.2.1 Musicality

Through conversation with the head teacher she tells me that she is fond of music, not meaning personally to listen to it outside of the kindergarten, but to have music as part of their practice based on the positive influence of it as have been mentioned above. However, she points out that some of the staff members are uncomfortable with doing music, considering

themselves as unmusical in the sense that they cannot sing or play an instrument. From her point of view this is only their perception, pointing out that none of the children think in that way, further pointing out that the staff can still feel the music and move to it if they are not comfortable singing. This latter argument is consistent with how musicality is defined in this thesis. Most of the responses from the adult informants, indicated seeing everyone as musical and that this musicality appears in different forms with different people (Bjørkvold, 1992; Campbell, 2010; Small, 1998). An example from the observations can illustrate this point. While the guitar is strummed it seems as if another member is waiting to join, which is confirmed by the guitar player, explaining that “*He is better at hitting the higher tones, so I prefer him to sing*”.

Considering the head teachers points and including continuous singing in their everyday activities “*About everything, making small snippets*” it is time to return to the part in the previous chapter of adults’ narrative singing in their everyday activities. This issue and what is said about “*Singing with the voices they have*” can be explored in relation to the other staff members’ understanding of musicality.

In some conversations this concept seemed to be considered in relation to ‘the everybody-can narrative’ (Vestad, 2014), that it does not matter how people are singing, only that they actually do sing. In other conversations it seemed to have the opposite meaning, in relation to ‘only-the-talented-can narrative’ (ibid), as singing may make them feel uncomfortable and thus they avoid doing it. When the adult informants talked about their colleagues or the staff as a group, it seemed to have the connotation of the first narrative. The latter one, however, particularly appeared when conversing about ones’ own singing and musicking. What has been interesting to see in both kindergartens is that even though the majority of the staff have said that they cannot sing, or that they are uncomfortable doing so, they still participate in these kinds of activities. From these conversations with the adult informants it seems to be a contradiction between what they consider to be the aim of the activity, and the lack of competence the staff experience that they have personally.

6.2.2 Social experience

Even though many of the adult informants were uncomfortable or dismissed their own musicality, as already mentioned, there seemed to be a positive perspective of it as being highly important in the kindergarten. It was emphasised as positive based on the possibility of developing a sense of belonging and togetherness in the group of children, as is pointed out in the Framework Plan (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012). Further, through learning songs, learning about the content in the songs and by performing them, one of the informants argued that “[music] gathers the children”. In similar lines, another one emphasised the social experience children get through knowing the same songs.

“Even though some may know more than others they can still participate in one way or another. Some join by listening, some know all the moves, some know the lyrics, and some know everything. They can participate on their level and feel that they are part of the group. That is a bit nice with music because, at least when we are together it is not that visible who knows a lot, everyone can feel that they can do a little at least”.

Certain staff members educated in pedagogy gave the impression that it was a taboo topic to consider music as good for something other than the activity itself and the social experience of it, its intrinsic value (Varkøy, 2015). When exemplifying music in relation to learning or having a future perspective of children as becomings (James, 2009), they often rushed to point out the importance of music in itself, the here-and-now-perspective. One of the informants, however, seemed to both acknowledge the intrinsic value as well as the utility value of music in a roundel. In conversations she utters a wish to get back to a practice they had before, where they did more training on performing, learning instruments and written music. On the other hand she emphasised the value children have from their musical activities in free play. In this roundel she opened for different types of musicking in the kindergarten and did not value the one over the other, rather, arguing that these two sides might benefit each other. She also emphasised music as a tool of communication as well as to restore harmony in a group that have increasing disharmony, which is the background for the establishment of a special group for the three year old children. This group has the purpose of creating a feeling of togetherness, as it seems like one boy may need special support. By having the focus of not diminishing the free musicking during free play, but including more training and instrumental musicking in the organised activities she seems to hold the perspective of both focusing on children as human beings, as well as having an eye on the outcome/their future (Campbell, 2010; Vestad, 2014).

6.3 Organised musicking with children

In the interviews, the pedagogical leaders were asked what kind of musical activities that were organised. Activities such as making instruments, projects aspiring from children's interests and drawing to music were pointed out. However, the activity in which music was most apparent was said to be in their daily assemblies. In these occasions both new and older songs were introduced, and one kindergarten in particular worked to both communicate Norwegian cultural heritage as well as newer pop music and music made for children. It was in this kindergarten (kindergarten 1) that songs first were introduced as stories, and by doing so the leader told that particularly lyrics by Alf Prøysen include 'good values and behaviour' that children may learn from. Hence, organised musical activities most often were used to mediate culture, and preferred social behaviour.

6.3.1 Assemblies

In both kindergartens the structure of the assembly was quite similar. Children were sitting facing one staff member that was leading the activity. The other staff members were sitting amongst the children. The content in the assemblies varied along with topics and those leading them. However, all seemed to include musical activities at some point, activities such as rhymes with moves, songs, listening to sounds, trying to make associations with other sounds, and playing instruments. In one kindergarten they included children with no spoken language, or little language by including sign to speech in all songs. By doing this, the staff members are open for different ways of musical engagement (Small, 1998), in this case visual musicking⁸. Further, children often used these movements to communicate which song they wanted to sing when they were in lack of words.

Children learned about the Norwegian heritage by learning the lyrics of the songs, and also history about the Norwegian author, e.g. Alf Prøysen⁹:

The adult introduces a song by asking who wrote 'Lillebrors vise'. Children replied that it was Alf Prøysen, and one points out that it was "*Alf Prøysen, not ACDC*". The adult follows up by asking how old he would be now, and together with the children they answer "*a hundred years*".

⁸ This group invites deaf to workshops making visual music videos for those that cannot hear: <http://www.acm.no/visuellmusikk/>

⁹ Alf Prøysen is a beloved author, who also became known through TV and radio. In 2014 he would have turned a 100 years old, and this kindergarten (kindergarten 1) had recently had a project related to this.

The adult then tells the lyrics of the song as a short story before they sing it. When the assemblies were finished I observed several times that children used the songs they learned in play, either through performing or in role play. When doing so they can explore the song, what it means and bring the Norwegian heritage into their new and constantly changing culture (Bjørkvold, 1992; Corsaro, 2009; Mouritsen, 2002; Vestad, 2010). They copied the adult with her tone and dialect, as well as the other children when playing. The songs seemed to become part of their everyday practices after being introduced, and the relational aspects in this activity seemed to open for creating or maintaining friendships, as seen below.

In the assemblies children were encouraged to propose their preferred songs and activities, when the staff opened up for it. By inviting for different children at different times they were included in an equal and just way. One girl (3 years old) that rarely expressed a wish to propose activities was included in a different way.

One girl sings very quietly a song about the days of the week. The adult hears this and asks if the rest of the children would like to sing this song with the girl, and they do.

The staff opened for children to practice their agency within structured frames by encouraging children to bring their preferred activities, such as songs and rhymes into the activities, as well as acknowledging them when they opposed to activities (Vestad, 2014; Wiggins & Campbell, 2013). I had a particular focus on children to observe how they participated in this type of activity. What I saw was that the children seemed to be closer to each other when it came to musical parts than in other kinds of activities and the rest of the assemblies. While musicking children were often holding hands, hugging, smiling and holding around each other. This organised activity then, offered children songs they all knew and could bring into play with each other. As they all then knew it, it could also open for children not often playing with each other having a mutual repertoire, from which to meet and musick (James & James, 2008; Mouritsen, 2002). During these activities, they had a common experience that opened for physical contact and 'a social glue', which seemed linked to emotions as they were smiling and comforting each other.

6.3.2 A break with convention

Like a ritual (Boynton & Kok, 2006) one of the kindergartens had a special activity once a week: an activity that was not allowed any other day or at any other time. They were dancing on the table. During the morning assembly this day they started to introduce it by letting children choose songs they wanted to hear from a CD-player. When the children realised that the activity was happening several of them jumped from their seats putting their fists in the air, exulting. This observation is from when the activity was arranged outdoors:

An adult starts the CD-player and children run towards the area. Adults and children start dancing, both on the ground and on the table. Children shout with excitement when an adult dance with them on the table. Many seem to copy moves from adults that are close to them, others seem totally focused on their own moves including bending knees in rhythm with the music, fists in the air, hugging, shaking and clapping. The faces of both children and adults have big smiles on them, and I hear a lot of laughter.

This was a ritual that children respected as a single weekly activity; they were rarely seen dancing on the table at other times than during this specific moment. It seemed as if all those that joined had the feeling of joy, based on their facial expressions, sounds and moves. They shared an experience and when this was going on everything else stopped. This was the first point in the kindergartens that I experienced a sense of togetherness (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012) between staff and children, amongst all participating in a musical activity. They participated on equal grounds, even though children copied adults, it was the other way around as well, children copying children. The staffs' apparent engagement in the activity and the activity being based on a break with convention, breaking the rules of not being on the tables, might have contributed to the informants', myself included, strong feeling of joy and pleasure (Bjørkvold, 1992; Søbstad, 2006).

It is easy to connect to the huge amount of focus on joy when the adults described music. Children moved freely and copied from each other, but some adults seemed more restricted and children who did not dance or danced very slowly stayed close to these adults. One of the pedagogical leaders explicitly focused on music as a way to create a sense of togetherness amongst both children and adults. From all the observations it is in this one that I experienced adults and children to participate and engage to a great extent in bodily musicking. They seemed to get excited and inspired from each other, as well as laughing, smiling and hugging, much showing of affection.

6.3.3 Practice for performance

In the previous chapter the culture of performance where discussed, pointing to children in one kindergarten to have a lot of child initiated performances. The second kindergarten had more performances initiated by adults, and the pedagogical leader told me that they make performances for parents with rehearsed songs and one of these performances are set in relation to their summer party. Some of the children immediately find it to be ok to perform, and others might need years before they dear standing in front of their parents. They practice a lot beforehand and are encouraged to join, although, they are free to choose and if they do not want to perform they are not forced to. Those that do go through with it become proud and the pedagogical leader emphasise that it is a good way to experience standing out a bit too, that they get a good experience and feeling of mastery.

In one of the kindergartens the group of older children were preparing to perform in a nursery home for elderly people. They had been practicing in several assemblies and the songs could be heard in play situations and children often initiated the songs themselves when asked to choose. The following observation is from their last practice before the performance.

In an outdoors cottage children and adults are sitting having their lunch. Before lunch they practice the songs that they are supposed to sing for the old people in the care home, and they do the same standing in lines outdoors after eating and while waiting to leave the kindergarten. On the walk to the nursery a girl says; *“Now I know the song. We were not that good at it before, but now we know it. We have practiced”*.

The voice of this girl along with her enthusiasm and reflection in this utterance seems to be a way to express her feeling of mastery by learning a song, and acknowledging that through practice they are able to learn new songs. Days before the performance children said they looked forward to go there and that they usually had a good time. On the walk to the nursing home children expressed that they were excited, and talked about especially one lady that really enjoyed one of the songs they had practiced and that she usually clapped and sang along. When observing the children performing they seemed more confident than they had done the time I had joined them for practicing. They knew the songs almost without the adult’s guidance, which they had not seemed to manage while practicing earlier. During the performance they looked focused and concentrated, some were swaying and others were holding hands. One of the girls that were swaying stopped this for some time, and then her singing stopped, too. And when she started singing again, her body moved. From what have been observed children have both taken it seriously to practice and perform, but it also

seemed as if they enjoyed it when it came down to the performance. They had learnt new songs, performed them and experienced how the audience appreciated it.

6.4 Summary

In this chapter the ways in which music is perceived and approached have been presented. The staff seemed to have ambiguous and ambivalent reflections concerning the concept and the role of music in their institution, seemingly being drawn in different directions when focusing on music. Music could, for example, be seen having an inherent value per se, as something valuable for something else, as an object, as having influence on people's moods as well as the staff's own musicality.

What appeared to be a kind of paradox in the staffs' reflections on musicality was that when they referred to musicality in the group they were in line with the everybody-can narrative. Seemingly contradicting oneself when talking about own musicking it was more in line with only-the-talented-can narrative (Vestad, 2014). However, even though they were modest in describing own musicality most of the staff was observed taking part in musical activities, in varying degrees. They also held a positive perspective on doing music in the kindergarten often focusing on the experiences they and children got out of it.

Through the staffs organised activities it seemed as if children got resources they could bring into their free play activities, as well as gaining similar knowledge to bring into their social relationships. Further, children got experience with practicing their musical agency within structural frames in these activities. They could bring themselves into the activity with their favourite songs and rhymes, as well as having a voice to be heard in what was already planned. However, in the different kindergartens there were apparent differences both relating to the structures and staff.

However, my observations show some paradoxes and ambivalences and that there were some significant differences between the observations carried out in kindergarten 1 and kindergarten 2. In the last chapter, I will discuss some of these, connecting them to my research questions and analytical concept.

Chapter 7: What does this mean?

- Summary and concluding remarks

For this thesis I aimed to explore the term *musicking* in two Norwegian kindergartens. The research objectives guided this explorations to focus on the ways in which music is part of children's play and learning situations, the ways in which music is part of organised activities and structures, as well as exploring how my informants understood the concept of music.

My motivation for this research was inspired by my concern with music's role in the kindergartens as there seems to be an increasing focus on school like subjects, such as math, together with the kindergarten staff being uncomfortable in their own musicking. Through practical training I have experienced an underlying potential in kindergartens relating to music, a potential that is not always utilised. In this research I have been able to explore both children's and staff's practices within two kindergartens through a qualitative study. Taking a different role with a different theoretical focus than as a preschool teacher student, I have had the opportunity of seeing music and musicking from a different perspective.

In this final chapter I draw on all the previous ones, trying to make sense of what I have learned. Looking back to my research questions and theoretical perspectives, this chapter is organised by means of the concepts *musical structures* and *musical agency*. I start with a focus on structure, as this concept is essential to understand the framework and perceptions, within which the informants acted musically. However, structure and agency are intertwined concepts, as written earlier. Structure sets frames that people act within, and, on the other hand, it is from these actions that structure is shaped (James & James, 2008; James et al., 1998). It is important to clarify the fact that what occurred in these kindergartens at the specific time I made my observations, are not constants, but rather a glimpse into a limited part of the institutions' complex everyday lives. In the final part of the chapter, and this thesis, recommendations for further research is presented.

7.1 Musical structures

7.1.1 *Approaching music*

The ways in which music is perceived by the informants and approached by the staff were explored in a dialogical way, and the observations contextualised these by observing children's and staff's practices. When it comes to defining *music* as a term, one of the boys had, as we have seen, a practical differentiation between doing and making music. The staff, however, seemed to be ambivalent in their explanation intertwining the object of music and the effects music may have. Hence, they seem to be drawn between valuing music intrinsically and utilitarian, which appear to make them less secure when talking about this than necessary. Being clear in their differentiation and acknowledging both music's intrinsic and utility value, might be a source for confidence when talking about either or, not having to defend the one with the other. Distinguishing between the musical object and the musical experience can be tool to become clearer in perspectives concerning music. Hence, by viewing music as a mean for musical experience the language might be a source to make this clarification of what one wants to communicate (Varkøy, 2015).

Through conversations with the staff in kindergarten 2 about musicality it seems as if their relation to own musicking might be in line with what Norwegian's describe as 'janteloven'. This is a norm that negatively portrays and criticises own individual behaviour and activities in line with 'only-the-talented-can' narrative (Vestad, 2014). However, when pointing out others or referring to the group of staff, they had a different perception of musicality in line with the 'everybody-can' narrative (Vestad, 2014). They brought themselves into musical activities with children and other staff members from what they seemed to be most comfortable with. Although, some were rarely observed musicking, this did not match with my anticipation before I entered the kindergartens. In kindergarten 1 it was not as easy to get insight into the staff's perspectives on music and musicality other than in the interview with the pedagogical leader. It cannot, therefore, be said to be the same as in kindergarten 2. In kindergarten 1 it was usually the same members of staff that either participated in the musical activities and not, which is more in line with my anticipation before I entered than in kindergarten 2, leading me to think that the amount of organised musical activities and engagement in them would decrease remarkably if the staff that did music was not present. However, the once that did music, did this throughout the days both with each other and the children, making music present and a part of many of their activities. In these two

kindergartens it seemed to be a dependency on those that were ‘musical’, in their terms, to proceed with the musical activities. This, ‘only-the-talented-can’ narrative, challenge the overall aim in the framework plan (The Ministry of Education and Research, 2012), in which it is assumed that everyone at least know enough to proceed with the musical activity in case the ‘talented’ are not present.

7.1.2 Kindergarten structures

The two kindergartens that took part in this study were different on many areas, such as size and how they were organised. Drawn from what has been discussed previously it seems as if the kindergarten 2 have structures and attitudes which open for music and musicking to be included in many ways, both organised and unorganised. Their music room being an important place in their organised activities seems to facilitate music to be included on an everyday basis. Having their organised musical activities in this room may also have facilitated and inspired children’s own musicking.

Kindergarten 1 however, did not use their music room and used different rooms for their musical activities. This was also apparent in children’s musicking. In this kindergarten children more often ‘performed’ for one another on the podium, and used it more physically in the outdoor area than in kindergarten 2. From the observations it seems as if children in this kindergarten more often used music as an important factor in their play situations, as this is the kindergarten in which it was mostly observed as a ritual. This might be seen in relation to the staff that did music, as they used narrative singing in many of their activities, everything from organised assemblies to tying a shoelace.

The kindergarten structure seemingly affects how children include music in their play activities, what kind of musicking they do as well as where they are musicking. This leads me to the next paragraph focusing on how their musical agency appeared from the observations.

7.2 Musical agency

Children seem to practice their agency based in what their toolbox contains, and what could suit the situation. They could use it in a variety of activities and for different purposes, such as humming while concentrating and making it represent a ritual or a period of time. In organised activities they argued for or presented their preferred activities and opposed to others. By being taken seriously they were in a position to affect the activities and lives of themselves and those around them (James, 2009). However, as the staffs are in a position to overrule the children or choosing one child over the other in these activities, children are in a relation of power imbalance in which they can be deprived of their participation rights in these learning situations. Campbell (2010) and Vestad (2014) argue to include children's voices in teaching settings and to draw inspiration from children's spontaneous play activities. By doing so the activities will provide children a stronger role as an active agent. The pedagogical leaders said that they had projects in relation to music that at times were inspired by children's interests. However, these were not observed and are therefore not part of this study.

Their musicking in unorganised activities often appeared, for me as a researcher, while they were doing something else. However, as Bjørkvold (1992) points out, children might not see them as separate events but as one activity all together. Campbell's (2010) argument on children's life worlds not being as separate as adults perceive them supports this. It seemed as if their musical agency became a source for continuous development and establishing frames for their play, and thus contextualising their musical meetings and their activities. They used it throughout their play as to represent rituals and time. The age hierarchy became clear through exclusion and inclusion in play, as to whom and how they were accepted (Mouritsen, 2002).

When doing music individually it appeared from the 'toolbox' described above, which could contain activities to create pleasant leisure activities, give social power, to illustrate and to participate. They included it in many forms of activities, and an interesting point is how they included it in situations in which it was not accepted. To circumvent the rules it seems as if children by the food table, for instance, lower their voices and are often seated far from the adult in charge by the table. The boy that was singing while he was waiting for the rest to be seated seemed to know that he should not sing in that type of situations as it would be loud if all did so. However, he argued for his action, but adapted to the arguments of the staff that led

the activity. Even though this boy did not succeed in his argument, from other parts of my observations, not only being meaningful as activities in itself, children's individual musicking also had the possibility to change mood, atmosphere and activities into becoming more pleasant (Vestad, 2014).

7.3 Recommendations for further research

Finishing this thesis now, I find some areas that would be particularly interesting to explore further to get more in-depth insight and understanding of musical practices in kindergartens. With a more dialogical approach than what has been used in this study, in which I have mainly focused on observations, it could be possible to follow up one of the arrays that focuses on perceptions of music, both from children and staff, and further explorations on how this affect staff's approach to music and musicking in kindergartens. This dialogical approach could also be a way to get deeper insight into the rationale of children's musical agency; why children do what they do, as well as what they are actually doing, through more focused conversations and a more specific method of asking more questions.

The second theme that would be particularly interesting to explore is children's use of music in play, getting deeper insight into their musical toolboxes, what they contain and, not least, how musicking and musical agency represents rituals, communication, inclusion, exclusion, and friendships.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview guide – pedagogical leader

Appendix 2: Drawing

Appendix 1:

Interview guide – pedagogical leader

Introduction

- This master thesis will as informed previously evolve around the musical phenomenon in the kindergartens. The first aim of this project is to find out *where* and *how* music appears in Norwegian kindergartens. The second aim is to explore what the term music is/means/involves in today's Norwegian kindergartens.
- I appreciate that you agreed to participate in this interview.
- This interview will be recorded, transcribed directly from the recorder before the file is deleted. It is the transcription that will be kept as raw material and kept until the evaluation of the thesis is finalised. If you want me to I can send you a summary of the interview for your approval before it is used in the thesis. Then you can let me know if something is misunderstood or if there is something you want to add.
- In the thesis you will be given a different name for privacy precautions, and if you want to know which name is yours I will let you know, or you can choose it yourself.
- At any point during the interview you have the right to not answer and to end the interview.
- The interview will take approximately 45 minutes, and I will let you know when there is three questions left.
- Does this sound ok?

Background questions

To begin with I would like to get to know some of your background.

- How long have you been working in a kindergarten, and did you do something else before you started?
- For how long have you worked as a teacher?
- Is there any particular subjects in the framework plan that interest you more than others?

Introducing the topic

- Do you have some general thoughts about music and children?

Connecting question

Pick up something about music and children and relate this to this particular group of children

Key questions

If some of the questions are answered somewhere else during the interview these will be skipped, follow up questions might be added.

- Do you have some thoughts on what music is? Which?
 - (unclear: let the participant know of different definitions and ask again)
- What are the characteristics of a musical activity?
- In which way do you plan and adjust for the cause of music in the kindergarten?

At this point it is three questions left

- How do you experience music in the group of children and adults that you now work with?
 - (Unclear: attitudes, children's activities, how is it to initiate activities, what about spontaneous activities child-child and child-adult)
- Do you have any thoughts on why music can be important or less important in the kindergarten? Why?
 - (Unclear: social relations, experiencing music, can music be valued for more than just being music – how)

Closing

- Is there more you want to add?

Thank for the participation and repeat question if the participant want a summary of the interview.

Appendix 2:

Drawing

